Socialist Constructions: Modern Urban Housing and Social Practice

By

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Abstract

My dissertation, “Socialist Constructions: Modern Urban Housing and Social Practice,” investigates the modernist production of living space by focusing on housing reform in Weimar Germany’s Berlin and Frankfurt am Main as well as on the subsequent projects of German modernist architects working in the USSR in the early 1930s. Broadly, my work addresses questions of urban politics (primarily in Germany and Soviet Union), ownership, modernist urban visions, and everyday living practices. I take as a starting point the claim that home was central to the production of modern subjectivity, and, more specifically, that suburban public housing was instrumental in the production of Weimar modernity. By surveying a range of constitutive material and discursive elements for these new forms of settlement (including new technologies and construction methods, state and civic managerial bureaucracies, struggles over finance policies, discursive, aesthetic, and propagandistic legitimizing strategies, etc.), I look at how suburban, large scale, and publicly funded housing estates (Großsiedlung) were organized, constructed, and inhabited.

Informed by a conceptual model of “coproduction,” I aim to articulate how domesticity and public housing figured in the production of modern subjects and sensibilities and to re-connect discussions of policies to understandings of the sphere of the home as a site of everyday
life, paying close attention to spaces that shape and produce—and are produced by—complex networks of social practices in the modern city. I investigate the ways in which different actors (Social Democratic government, city planners, municipal authorities, housewife associations, residents) involved themselves in the construction, legitimation and provision of emerging modern organizations of space. My case studies target specific and resonant sites of coproduction of the modern home: Martin Wagner’s and Bruno Taut’s housing estate Hufeisensiedlung in Berlin; the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) in Frankfurt, which introduced the notion of “minimal dwelling”; such minimalist innovations as Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky’s Frankfurt kitchen; and the new industrial cities of the USSR, where German architects worked to adapt concepts of “minimal living” into a different cultural context.
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Note on Sources

The research for this dissertation was made possible by German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Research Scholarship (2010-2011) and Doctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) (2010-2012). In Berlin, I consulted the magazines and architectural periodicals held at the Staatsbibliothek, Bauhaus-archiv, Archiv der Akademie der Künste and Werkbundarchiv-Museum der Dinge. In Vienna, I consulted Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky archive at Universität für angewandte Kunst and in Frankfurt am Main I consulted the Mart Stam and Hannes Meyer collections at the Deutsches Arkhitekturmuseum.

I accessed the Archives of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State Microfilm Collection located at the State Archives of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, GARF) at the Lamont library at Harvard University, where some materials of the collections are on microfilm. The complete original archives are in Moscow. These Russian archival documents are cited according to the collection (fond), inventory (opis’), file (delo) and folio (list, l in singular, ll in the plural).

All archival sources along with secondary sources are cited in the Bibliography in alphabetical order.
INTRODUCTION

Pondering the interdependency of social transformation and everyday living space, Henri Lefebvre points out in *The Production of Space* that there is no easy or quick answer to the question of ‘socialism’s’ space; much careful thought is called for here. It may be that the revolutionary period, the period of intense change, merely establishes the preconditions for a new space, and that the realization of that space calls for a rather longer period—for a period of calm. The prodigious creative ferment in Soviet Russia between 1920 and 1930 was halted even more dramatically in the fields of architecture and urbanism than it was in other areas; and those fertile years were followed by the years of sterility. What is the significance of this sterile outcome? Where can an architectural production be found today that might be described as ‘socialist’—or even as *new* when contrasted with the corresponding efforts of capitalist planning?!

In both Soviet Russia and Weimar Germany, home assumed the function of transforming social relations and producing new modern men and women. My dissertation, *Socialist Constructions: Modern Urban Housing and Social Practice*, investigates the modernist production of living space by focusing on housing reform in Weimar Germany’s Berlin and Frankfurt am Main as well as on the subsequent projects of German modernist architects working in the USSR in the early 1930s. The work is informed and motivated by the insistence of critical geography on bringing into focus the precise ways in which space is contested and socially constructed.

Detailing a rather short period stretching from the mid-1920’s to the early 1930’s, this dissertation aims to address a series of broad questions. How was the modern home produced?
In what ways has modern architecture not only engaged social issues but helped to formulate them? What were the distinct dynamics and modes of intellectual and professional exchange among those architects, planners, and interest groups who found themselves involved and engaged in that process? As both a historical and a theoretical project, this dissertation addresses how a conceptual model of “coproduction” allows us to theorize relations between housing, home and politics.

I argue that a particular form of housing, large scale, suburban, publicly funded housing estate (Großsiedlung) —understood both as built environment and as a private domestic space governed by a variety of mechanisms, from floor plans and specific legal measures and policies to visual representations and home advice manuals promoting rationalized housekeeping— became a privileged vehicle for the production of modern subjects and modern sensibilities. I investigate the ways in which different actors (municipal and federal governments, housing reformers, city planners, architects, residents, housewife associations, critics and journalists, bureaucrats, etc.) involved themselves in the construction, provision and legitimation of emerging modern organizations and practices of space, whereby some ways of inhabiting these new spaces were normalized and others excluded, and, subsequently, how these spaces were lived. The upsurge in construction took place from around 1924 and continued until the economic crisis of 1929. Rather than tracing continuities or discontinuities from previous periods, my aim in this dissertation is to consider the shift to mass housing in Berlin, promoted and carried out largely by modernist architects and planners within a very short period of relative economic stability, as a “coproduction.” With this transition in focus, I wish therefore to highlight the folding and unfolding of discourses, of building and lived practices in the translation of planning ideas into practice.
Several overarching themes emerged in the course of writing this dissertation. One is the “migration” of policies (both as directives and lived practices), such as, for example, the “transfer” of the ideas of “minimal living” and rationalization of labour from the factory to the sphere of home in Germany and, subsequently, how these concepts re-emerged in a different cultural and historical arena, the industrial cities in the USSR of the early 1930’s. Another theme herein involves the intersections of modernization and production of subjectivity. In particular, I investigate the ways in which different actors (municipal and federal governments, housing reformers, city planners, architects, residents, housewife associations, critics and journalists, bureaucrats, etc.) engaged themselves in the construction, provision and legitimation of emerging modern organizations and practices of space.

In Germany, the social and political situation (the end of the First World War and the establishment of the Weimar Republic) proved a favourable climate for producing what came to be described as a “ferment in the arts,” marked by a proliferation of artistic societies and periodicals. At the same time, Berlin was undergoing a massive territorial and demographic expansion. Workers’ housing was in short supply and suffered from depressed conditions. As a result, the post-World War I period was viewed by avant-garde architects as offering a unique opportunity for the establishment of a new culture, one that could be based on the positive uses of modernization. I borrow Marshall Berman’s notion of modernity as a mediator between modernization and modernism. For Berman, such socio-economic processes of modernization as scientific and technological innovations and the influx of populations to urban environments, which was accompanied by new forms of class inequalities and characterized by mass social movements, all consequences of an expanding capitalism, were dialectically connected to cultural modernism—the visions, ideas, and values that “aim to make men and women the
subjects as well as the objects of modernization, to give them the power to change the world that is changing them.”

As the fastest growing urban area in Europe, Berlin in particular presented an enormous housing challenge. In Frankfurt, the newly elected mayor, widely supported by the social democratic party, focused on the need for affordable housing there. Out of this cooperation of municipal powers and modernist architects, both cities developed ambitious housing programmes.

In Weimar Germany, New Building (Neues Bauen), as it began to be called in the 1920’s, a far-reaching housing programme led by a group of progressively minded modernist architects and planners, in cooperation with the newly elected social democratic government, was shaped by changing social conditions. These changes included an increasing pattern of rural to urban migration and the need to provide shelter for returning soldiers and war refugees. Housing shortages had resulted from underfunding and the lack of construction during the First World War; by the 1920s spending for housing construction was radically increased. Housing reform was a broadly conceived project, which not only involved providing homes for urban populations and improving living conditions, but also envisioning the production of new social norms and directives about how these homes would be inhabited. To distinguish the new social aims of modernist architecture, Walter Benjamin famously theorized that the 19th century “cozy” bourgeois home had been a response to the alienating tendencies of urban life, resulting in the commodified creation of inward-looking “shells”; a potentially revolutionary modern architecture, with “with its porosity and transparency, its tendency toward the well-lit and airy, has put an end to dwelling in the old sense.”

The self-conscious attempt to live differently by countering the tendencies of the bourgeoisie to enclose themselves within cozy interiors marks, for Benjamin, a deliberate social practice: “To live in a glass house is a revolutionary virtue par
excellence. It is also an intoxication, a moral exhibitionism, that we badly need. Discretion concerning one’s own existence, once an aristocratic virtue, has become more and more an affair of petit-bourgeois parvenus."

But how was the instrumental role of modernist design that Benjamin emphasizes in this transformation of social norms and production of the new way of living to be socially secured? For the architect Bruno Taut, who, along with the urban planner Ernst May, is one of the key figures in this study, the effort to combat, for example, petit bourgeois tendencies towards “coziness” meant developing educational endeavours designed to teach residents how to live. The housewife, in particular, had to be instructed to decorate the home according to an “appropriate” domestic taste, and, therefore, the elaboration of modernist domesticity alongside housing policies will figure prominently in my discussion. In many ways, as modern housing acquired the function of transforming society, the “private space” of the home became a site of contention as well as of pedagogy. Modernist architects demanded inhabitants’ creative participation in the production of new interiors: the transformation of society and the deliberate transformation of space were to go hand in hand.

Groups of German and other foreign architects found themselves briefly employed by the Soviet state in the early 1930’s, were they encountered a very different context marked by a slower pace of modernization. They entered a country where there had once been marked enthusiasm for modernist architectural experimentation. For their Soviet colleagues, constructivist architects, new architecture was often intimately connected to the social project of developing new patterns and practices of everyday life (novyi byt), and constructivist discussion often involved in-depth analyses and endorsements of the experiments of minimal living in the West. Using and inhabiting buildings were to constitute revolutionary practices of social
transformation. No longer should architecture be perceived in what Benjamin later termed a “state of distraction.” Consequently, housing as the most important domain of social reform was considered central to the construction of the new socialist citizen. Just as with German modernist architects, Russian architects’ views on the reform of the domestic space can be approached in terms of spatial and social ordering, though often circumstances demanded that living arrangements were decided in makeshift ways rather than according to the logic of grand plans. “The content of the new existence,” in the words of the architect Alexander Vesnin, would eventually determine “the development of socialist architecture,” and so would “new content require new form.” This is a vision of an urban terrain to be shaped by experts who are steps ahead of the “masses”: the transformation of space was to be in the hands of professionals and realm of planners and architects. The expert knowledge of German and other foreign architects in both housing construction and attempts to regulate everyday domestic life became ambivalently and selectively drawn upon as the relationship between the Soviet state and the avant garde architects became more unsettled in the early 1930’s.

**Theoretical Influences**

Any attempt to combine, on the one hand, critical geography’s insistence on bringing into focus precise ways in which spaces are socially constructed and often contested and on the contingency of space and social relations, and, on the other hand, as planning ideas and designs drift into actual built spaces, an acute alertness to the dynamism and processuality of both spaces and subjects, necessitates a degree of theoretical eclectism. I have been drawn to the work of Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault and more recent theories of “coproduction.” Each framework has been instrumental to my project.
Marshall Berman’s emphasis on the interplay between modernization and modernism brings in focus relations between socio-economic processes of capitalism and artistic, architectural, literary, etc. responses to it. In my own work, I take as a starting point Sabine Hake’s understanding of housing as a central rather than merely complementary issue and site for modern architecture. Hake argues that a particular form of housing was key to the spatial production of Weimar modernity: “if the tenement and the factory were the structures most closely linked to Germany’s belated industrialization during the 1870s and 1880s . . . , it was the public housing estate on the periphery and the office building in the center that most clearly symbolized Weimar modernity and its divided allegiances: to the egalitarian principles of social democracy as well as to the maximizing of resources under capitalism, and to the interests of the people as well as to the power of organization.” For Hake, the contradictory space specific to modernity and exemplified in the site of the public housing estate was a product of planners and architects’ efforts at improving living conditions for the lower income earners, while carrying out their work according to the exploitative capitalist system. Yet, apart from an interesting discussion of the Hufeisensiedlung housing estate in Berlin, most of Hake’s examples have to do with public spaces.

Hake’s inquiry into the changing urban social topographies conceptualizes spaces as uniquely modern sites in terms of their contradictions, and refers to a theoretical body of literature that addresses modern urban experience as framed by the causal relations between capitalism and urban life, a body of works stretching from Friedrich Engels and Georg Simmel to Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, wherein the production of modern urban space has been largely understood as a production of public places, of places subject to economic control. Implicit in Hake’s thesis is critique of the political “neutrality” of production of space whereby
class, racial and gender contradictions become concealed. For Henri Lefebvre, another obvious influence on Hake’s work, the theory of the production of space is aimed at making concealing strategies of modern capitalism visible. Yet, the possibility of social transformation does not originate in the efforts of architects and planners.

Speaking particularly about the role of modernist architects in the production of space, Lefebvre emphasizes architects’ complicity in the formation of what he calls “abstract” or commodified space. “Abstract space” (corresponding for Lefebvre to the era of industrial capitalism) is homogenous, measurable. However, it is important to note that “the space that homogenizes has nothing homogenous about it. . . . [I]t subsumes or unites scattered elements by force.” Homogenous space camouflages its own contradictions, in other words, while remaining contradictory. For example, spaces developed by the avant-garde architects can be and often have been thought of as neutral containers, wherein diverse things and people can be placed and arranged under the illusion of coherence. Simultaneously homogenized and fragmented, “it is not the object of a false consciousness, but rather the locus and medium of the generation (or production) of false consciousness.” The examples of “abstract” spaces include those of banks, business centres, highways, or airports, whereby urban space eventually became the expression of exchange value as it became commodified through advertising and planning. In this sequence, the representational and mediated thus came to replace the lived experiences. For Lefebvre, modern space has a regulatory and oppressive character; it separates and divides people through more and less visible strategies, such as gates and railings; wealthy neighbourhoods are protected by signs, spaces are divided into designated areas of leisure, work, and so on.

Therefore, Lefebvre arrives at the Foucaultian understanding of the mechanisms by which a special construction of space (“abstract” space) is naturalized and privileged in
capitalism at the expense of “lived” space. While refraining from the diagnostic concerns of whether Weimar housing fulfilled the promise of social transformation, I want to emphasize how important a site “home” became in the complex social production of “modernity.” Housing and not only “architecture” made Berlin, Frankfurt or industrial cities in the USSR “modern,” and made us think of them as modern, and it is precisely modern housing as a productive arena that I will stress throughout what follows.

Often, more recent studies of Weimar housing reform take the approach that housing policies were largely shaped by broader political processes. What these studies usefully point to is to the larger socio-economic contexts in which housing operated in modernity. I owe much of discussion, particularly in Chapter One and Chapter Two to several such studies, including Ronald V. Wiedenhoeft’s *Berlin's Housing Revolution: German Reform in the 1920s*, David F. Crew’s *Germans on Welfare: From Weimar to Hitler*, Nicholas Bullock and James Read’s *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France, 1840-1914* and others. While many of these studies are incredibly detailed and informative, and will prove helpful to my project, in such an approach “home” itself becomes viewed as a neutral object or a container. Again, Lefebvre’s thinking becomes instrumental in pursuing the main aim of this dissertation, to re-link the discussions of policies with the locus of home. Flows of ideas and struggles over designs and appropriation of living space as well as of financial policies and legal regulations took place, very literally, at home.

In order to analyze how space is produced, Lefebvre distinguishes among spatial practice, a combination of daily routine and urban realities; the representations of space, “the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers,” or the scientific and institutionalized concepts of space, “the dominant space in any society”; and, finally,
representational spaces, space directly lived through images and symbols, the realm of experienced cultural meanings that can be passively accepted or imaginatively transformed. These should not be understood as separate spaces. As Lefebvre clarifies, “it is not as though one had global (or conceived) space to one side and fragmented (or directly experienced) space to the other. . . . For space ‘is’ whole and broken, global and fractured, at one and the same time. Just as it is at once conceived, perceived, and directly lived.”

Neither these three moments necessarily constitute a coherent whole: at different times in history these relationships have different dynamics. For example, Lefebvre notes, in Europe during the Middle Ages, the representational spaces of the everyday derived their power and shape as interpretations of a cosmological representation of space: “The road to Santiago de Compostela was the equivalent, on the earth’s surface, of the way that led from Cancer to Capricorn.”

Central to Lefebvre’s theory of production of space is elaboration on the interdependency and interactivity of space and social relations; space is not a physical arena, but emerges from a complex dialectics of the social relations of production.

Often, as Lefebvre observes, representational spaces are studied separately from representations or spatial practices by anthropologists or psychoanalysts, who often single out certain aspects of interest (childhood memories, dreams, labyrinths, passages). The history of the production of space, therefore, must not only take into account the development of these three “moments,” but also highlight “their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions.” In Lefebvre’s words, “a perceived-conceived-lived triad,” cannot be treated as an “abstract model”: “Spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes,
according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to the historical period." 

In other words, each historical period is characterized by a peculiar mode of production of space. When approaching one of my primary case studies, the Berlin housing development Horseshoe Estate (Hufeisensiedlung), I am indebted to Lefebvre’s commitment to looking into how these three moments contribute to production of space. This narrative, however, singles out the representational and the spectacular as the defining characteristics of modernity’s topography and production of space. In so doing, Lefebvre’s conception tends to leave little room for theorizing the radical reimagining of the home spaces that some modernist architects and planners anticipated. In what follows, therefore, I do not discuss distinct aspects separately. Rather they are implicit in approaching the estate as a coproduction of visual, textual representations, political symbolic values, architects’ investments, and the practices of tenants and competing directives over their behaviour. Where I part with Lefebvre is in his insistence that these three moments are predominantly shaped by the mode of production. Preferring the concept of “coproduction” to “production” is not to exaggerate the difference between Marxist or assemblage-minded approaches but rather to emphasize my own focus in the argument.

Incorporating an understanding of modern urban space as a vehicle and contested site of social transformation, I pay close attention not only to how the buildings constituted a manifestation of political ideas and capital investments—the view that architecture is a reflection of progressive or totalitarian politics commonly taken by researchers—but also to what Lefebvre terms “spatial practice,” a combination of daily routine and urban realities. A central question is whether the ways in which centralized planning intervened in the design and functioning of modernist housing estates and how such spaces were lived might be theorized in terms other than
accustoming or resisting directives, or in general, in terms of confronting fragmentations of space imposed by capitalist urban planning.

During the period under discussion, constructing and inhabiting buildings was perceived to be a radically transformative set of acts: it involved not simply improving living conditions, but was considered a key to social transformation. Home enters the terrain of modernity as a place where the transformation of practices of everyday living and working, shaping and shaped by modern discourses (planning, scientific, sociological, cultural) takes place. When we speak of the production of modern urban housing, therefore, we also necessarily refer to the production of a modern subjectivity lived through housing. As Jennifer Jenkins has commented, observing the allegiances between social reformers and modern housing movement in Germany, “in a search for mass solutions to social issues, design began to be integrated into state social policy as a way of making domestic environments into pedagogical and transformative spaces, a linkage which found its clearest articulation in the public housing settlements of the Weimar Republic.”

Along these lines, Michel Foucault’s theoretical efforts to disengage the formations and practices of power from the state and the economy, and his thinking about how power is diffused or concentrated in different places proves exceedingly useful. I survey how modern housing acquires instructive quality via a range of directives and guidelines, from building societies’ publications, educational films, home manuals to spatial arrangements of flats and introduction of standardized furniture. Foucault’s emphasis not simply on the “assignment” of places to social groups but on organization and dispersion of technologies—procedures that control and standardize actions and movements—in space is important when I approach rationalization of kitchens or apartments in modern Siedlungen as particular spaces in which such technologies operate. For this, Gilles Deleuze called Foucault “a new cartographer,” pointing out that
Foucault’s conceptualization of power as technology which is not associated with any institution in particular allows for “a new topology which no longer locates the origin of power in a privileged place.”

Sites in such a topology themselves are not containers for human activities, but constitute complex networks of social practices and are defined by relations of “proximity between points or elements” that change over time: “Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites.”

“Panopticism,” for Foucault, designates varied mechanisms by which power operates. What Foucault calls the Panopticon is not so much an architectural construction as it is “the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form . . . . It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons.”

Adopting Foucault’s focus on mechanisms of dispersion of concepts as they migrate throughout several discourses, I trace the “drift” of rationalization as a complex of ideas about redefinition of housekeeping practices, from the Congress of Modern Architecture through kitchens, apartments and outdoor spaces in modern housing estates, in order to recenter home as a site of various productions. While Foucault’s emphasis on the spatial mechanisms that simultaneously constitute and restrain subjects is important for me, I aim also in what follows to query the ways in which spaces and subjects engage themselves in interaction, adjustment, and appropriation.

The emphasis on enactment is particularly important for my work. My conceptions of the various discourses, representations, and lived practices in Hufeisensiedlung should not be taken to describe Hufeisensiedlung as a settled site or object that has been framed in various ways, but rather as a space that happening and in the process of being composed (and de-
composed) by these various efforts. In libraries and archives in Berlin I looked for sources that would help me to clarify these relationships. I relied on building society GEHAG publication, bulletins and the unpublished memoirs of Bruno Taut, Martin Wagner’s texts and memoirs of one of the residents, Sophia Marchlewska, and, finally, residents’ interviews collected in Thilo Hilpert’s book on Hufeisensiedlung. These interviews offer merely a glimpse into tenants’ habits and homemaking practices. Such sources lead us not so much to truth to be uncovered, but they illustrate the ways in which residents filtered their experiences through the lens of gender, class and so on. Analyses of Hufeisensiedlung throughout the dissertation as a kind of “urban assemblage” endeavour to capture the processuality of this site as a place being coproduced, not only by architects and planners, but also by political allegiances, by financial mechanisms and bodies, by inhabitants, as a kind of event, extensively mediatized in the 1920s as well as today (albeit in a neoliberal context). Speaking to how assemblages are constituted as “composition of forces” rather than “forms,” Sue Ruddick argues that “it is not simply the relationship between things that is called into question, it is the ways in which this relationship engages the ‘things’ themselves – what is brought into play in each multiplicity.”\(^{22}\) The last chapter most explicitly engages the framework of “urban assemblage” when considering the construction projects of “foreign” architects in the Soviet Union in the early 1930’s.

I hope as well that my work contributes to current discussions about “material” geographies and, particularly in urban geography, on the materialities of cities and on coproduction. Sarah Whatmore theorizes the attention paid to materialities in the discipline in terms of what she calls the “return”:

I want to emphasize that this recuperation manifests a rich variety of analytical impulses; philosophical resources and political projects that don’t ‘add up’ to a
singular ‘new’ approach, let alone one that has a monopoly of insight or value. To this end, I use the language of returns to suggest that what is new (as in different) about the something/happening in cultural geography is a product of repetition turning seemingly familiar matters over and over, like the pebbles on a beach rather than a product of sudden encounter or violent rupture.\(^{23}\)

By the reconsideration of “familiar matters,” Whatmore refers to a vast body of scholarship produced since the “cultural turn” in geography in the 1990s, which ushered into the discipline a focus on the production of discourse and on symbolic meanings.\(^{24}\) With such “traditional” geographic concept as landscape, for example, a body of scholarship has been produced interrogating the cultural codes, gender ideologies, and beliefs that landscapes (painted, filmed or built) reproduced and represented. For critics of such a “cultural studies” approach, however, the very materiality of the landscape becomes obscured in the analytic process. Demonstrating the importance of the physical experience the landscape to the establishment of colonial power in the 17\(^{th}\) century Peru, Heidi Scott, to cite one important example, showsthat landscapes represent a formalization of networks consisting of complex social meanings, which are mediated by corporeal encounters.\(^{25}\)

In urban theory, by extension, “rematerialization” does not imply an entirely novel approach. Rather, the emphasis is placed on addressing aspects of the cities that have customarily been studied apart from one another. Such work, as recently presented in *A New Blackwell Companion to the City* (2012), for example, brings into focus such previously understudied problems as the very material substance of the city, its urban infrastructures and technologies, along with movements of all sorts: of people, but also of finance, of migrant labour forces, of diseases, and so on, all working in the coproduction in the city. Such a focus on
intertwined materialities lends itself to a vision of the city as assemblage. In contradistinction to an understanding of cities as spatially bounded centres of economic and cultural activity, as Ignacio Farias argues, to approach a city as an assemblage means to acknowledge that the city is “relentlessly being assembled at concrete sites of urban practice . . . as a multiplicity of processes of becoming.” Such a multiplicity is “discontinuous, even contradictory and mutually exclusive” and should be understood neither as coherent nor simply fluid. Considering the city as a multiplicity “involves thus a major challenge for urban research: identifying, describing and analysing these multiple enactments of the city and understanding how they are articulated, concealed, exposed, and made present or absent.” Yet, to summarize the critique of Michelle Gabriel and Keith Jacobs, in the field of housing studies the relevance of such approaches is often questioned, notably for equating human and non-human agency and, consequently, for what “a decentering of human subject” might bring into a field concerned with the politics of allocation, distribution and inhabiting of dwellings. There is an emerging body of scholarly work that productively engages assemblage-minded thinking and a focus on concerns of critical geography, that of the politics and power relations in urban space. For example, Colin McFarlane and Jonathan Rutherford question the political neutrality of urban infrastructures by analyzing how infrastructure is embedded in diverse networks: “The ways in which infrastructures matter vary a great deal, from issues of privatization, maintenance and breakdown to conflict over access and distribution. Frequently, these issues cojoin or collide such that urban infrastructure in many contexts cannot be fully understood without evoking reforms, crises and accessibilities in parallel.” Perhaps its weakest point, as Sue Ruddick points out, is that “different proponents of assemblage thinking mobilize very different if not antagonistic or mutually exclusive concepts of power.”
“Rematerialization,” to use Jane M. Jacobs and Susan J. Smith’s term, involves bringing together conversations around symbolic meanings and representations of home and the realm of housing policies. To bridge the divide between home as “an affective concept” (the way in which home space is experienced in various practices of homemaking) and housing as a realm of policies and economy in general, Jacobs and Smith introduce the useful notion of “coproduction.” Coproduction implies that the “agents that make the modern interior” are not essentially divided into those who impose and intervene into the domestic sphere and those who live under such directives and regulations. The effort, rather, is to trace complicated relationships—what Jacobs and Stephen Cairns term an assemblage—among policies (which are only one “media”), institutions, discourses, built form, advertising and everyday practices. In their most recent work, Jacobs and Cairns add another layer to their extensive consideration of housing as “a site of ongoing and active building work.” Switching focus from interior decoration to the maintenance of the high rise housing in Singapore, they continue to elaborate on the ways in which the housing assemblage is never static, yet constantly “kept in place” by both emergency and preventative maintenance, implemented as a policy and carried out, by mechanized but also specifically educated human “resources,” property officers.

Their approach emphasizes various ways in which home space can be produced and can itself produce various discourses and practices. Although I am working in deep sympathy with Jacobs and Cairns, I borrow more from their insistence on refusing a singular concept of power when emphasizing “a sense of distributed agency” and less from their “attention to the socio-technical.” I mention, for example, the ways that the new housing relies on the network of public transportation, without extensively describing the precise materials and technologies involved in the co-production of modern Siedlungen. This is a historical survey, in large part, so
I will inevitably depart from the largely contemporary focus of such important theoretical work. I am interested in what conceptualizing housing as “a site of ongoing and active building work,” “housing as housing-in-action” might add to our understanding of housing as coproduction in different locations and at distinct historical periods.

What I find most compelling and productive about this approach is that it allows me to look at housing not only as representative of political ideologies, nor simply as a kind of a “lens” through which the relations among discourses, their logics and various actors could be elucidated. A notion of “coproduction” allows me to focus on housing itself, on what housing does, as a diverse set of practices. Modern housing is seen not merely as corresponding to the new modern subject; nor, to borrow Hake’s term, does it function simply as a tool or a “container” for the “articulation” of modern identity. Housing is a mechanism that was both a product of and simultaneously engaged in producing a new modern subject. As I engage material histories, I am also sympathetic to Jacobs and Cairns’ focus on considering home decorating practices via a textual archive. In this respect, I rely on tenants’ interviews in a detailed study of Hufeisensiedlung, a collection of essays edited by Thilo Hilpert from 1980, to clarify the relations among tenants’ home decorating practices, financing mechanisms, the varyingly influential mandates, and coercions by the politicians, planners, architects. What I also find appealing in approaches influenced by assemblage theory is that they permit the introduction of viewpoints and architectural designs that are at odds with one another, as in the case of Martin Wagner and Bruno Taut’s conflicting visions for Hufeisensiedlung. My analysis of their relationship hopes to avoid reducing these to simply contradictory viewpoints (technocrat vs visionary), but rather to highlight via their clashing and collaborations how the materialities of the modern urban home were coproduced.
Archives: Putting the Story Together. Overview of Chapters.

In Berlin, I consulted the Bauhaus archive, the National library, Art Academy archives, German Cinematheque and the Werkbund archives at the Museum of Things. I have looked through a number of planning and architectural periodicals and magazines such as Wohnungswirtschaft, Soziale Bauwirtschaft, Das Neue Frankfurt, Bauwelt, Die Baugilde and the Russian periodical Sovremennaia Arkhitektura from 1926 to 1930, as well as several primary sources on the housing reform of the 1920’s in Germany such as the texts of architects and planners Martin Wagner and Bruno Taut’s, the social democratic mayor of Berlin, Gustav Böss and others. I have also looked at films, photographs, architectural drawings, plans of the Neues Bauen housing settlements (including Hufeisensiedlung).

Existing secondary studies of housing policies in Weimar Germany present the reform narrative largely as defined by the newly elected social democratic (SPD) government and on the role of the Weimar state (or a version of “welfare” capitalism that the state promoted) in housing supply, distribution and policies (such theorists include Manfredo Tafuri, Adelheid von Saldern and Ronald Wiedenhoefst among others). I refer to this helpful literature when I consider the ways in which local housing policies in Berlin became informed by national laws and regulations.

Instead of interrogating the reasons for the housing reform, I ask in which particular ways did social democratic welfare state shape municipal housing programme in Berlin? I want to distance myself from an approach that considers how state ideology simply becomes “reflected” in housing policies. In Chapter One, I look in particular at the precise mechanisms by which an emerging Weimar welfare state aimed to shape municipal housing programmes, mechanisms that
include zoning regulations as well as legal and financial initiatives (creating welfare offices, supporting non-profit building societies, introducing new taxes, directing financing towards specific category of housing, low rise suburban and often modernist by design housing estate).

For example, I incorporate discussion of primary sources such as official accounts published by the building society GEHAG in *Wohnungswirtschaft*, a magazine founded by Martin Wagner to promote construction of new housing in Berlin. While acknowledging that the state was one among other forces shaping modern housing, I am interested in particular how the construction of suburban Siedlungen was accompanied by endorsements in the magazines, pamphlets and films by the Social Democrats. To analyze the political role of *Hufeisensiedlung* housing settlement, I consider such visual sources as SPD electoral brochures as well as photographs of Arthur Köster.

As I tried to make sense of the variety of materials under examination, it became clear to me that the history of housing reform highlights the complex interactions among various actors, rather than simply reflecting economic processes in the built form. What was missing from (or too briefly addressed in) studies of Weimar urban housing policies was a detailed discussion of home, of how, that is, housing is lived. Informed by Foucault’s writings and a conceptual model of “coproduction,” I aim to redress this oversight and to articulate how both domesticity and public housing figured in the production of modern subjects and sensibilities; at the same time, I aim to re-connect discussions of policy to understandings of the sphere of the home as a site of everyday life, paying close attention to spaces that shape and produce—and are produced by—complex networks of social practices in the modern city. Taking as a starting point the claim that home was central to the production of modern subjectivity, Hake’s idea that suburban public
housing was instrumental in the production of Weimar modernity allowed me to think about production of the urban geography that these modern settlements signalled.

Housing reform was not simply about providing homes and improving living conditions, but also about envisioning and producing of norms and directives of how the homes were to be inhabited. Correspondingly, it became methodologically requisite to connect discussions of policies (largely presented in Chapter One) to the locus of home, to the strikingly modernist design of the settlements and role of the modernist architects in the process. To do so, I focus on the ways in which not only the Social Democratic government, but also city planners, municipal authorities, building societies, housewife associations and residents involved themselves in the construction, legitimation and provision of emerging modern organizations of space. In Chapter Two, juxtaposing the texts of Weimar housing reformers to the earlier studies of tenements, I consider how proponents of Siedlungen critiqued tenements and highlighted benefits of Siedlungen in terms of cleanliness, air, light and sun, supply by transportation and conveniences, whereby Siedlungen are presented as a new modern space precisely because they are rationally planned and built. In Chapter Three, I incorporate discussion of the visual “apparatus” that emerged in media and film promoting lowering the cost of living via construction methods and use of standardized materials while transforming “culture of living.” I argue that the tenant of the new housing estates is simultaneously positioned as an object and the product of New Building, someone who will have to learn through inhabiting the new flats how to be modern.

The tenants of the new housing estates were primarily defined through allocation of minimal living space. Following Foucault, I highlight the mechanisms of formation of the concept of minimal existence at home as a kind of a “system of dispersion.” My case studies target specific and resonant sites of coproduction of the modern home: Martin Wagner’s and
Bruno Taut’s housing estate *Hufeisensiedlung* in Berlin; the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) in Frankfurt, which introduced the notion of “minimal dwelling” and such minimalist innovations as Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky’s “Frankfurt kitchen.” Across these sites, production of mechanisms took place that was to secure new ways of living in the modern housing settlements. I build on a range of primary sources such as texts by Ernst May, Walter Gropius, Karel Teige and publications of CIAM Congress on minimal living. I focus on how rationalization, associated, on the one hand, with mass production and standardization of materials and construction technologies, and, on the other hand, with proliferation of directives and recommendations about housekeeping practices, “drifted” into home while informing several discourses about efficiency, space, systems of class and gender.

The ideas, professionals and currency circulated across national borders. Western European architectural magazines reached the USSR in the mid 1920’s. At the same time, these were influenced by the principles of constructivism “exported” to the “West.” Bruno Taut’s *Dissolution of Cities* and “disurbanist” discussions about housing combines became a part of what Jean Louis Cohen calls “a new theoretical distribution.” Soviet architects of the communal dwellings were familiar with similar European experiments: “The Stroikom’s studies of kitchens were based on flow diagrams used in German research, whereas the proposed amenities were taken from US manufacturers’ catalogues.”

In the 1930’s, the conditions of the “theoretical distribution” were largely dictated by the state. The “western” architects became a part of the Soviet state sponsored effort to research the methods of standardization of the workers’ housing. For the last chapter of my dissertation, I focus particularly on the ways in which “Western” modernist ideas and projects, such as minimal living or *Zeilenbau* were both adapted into a different geographical and cultural arena, as well as
selectively incorporated and modified, continuously resituated by the Soviet effort to abolish private property, by new Party directives in the USSR, and via negotiations among complex local bureaucracies.

I did not have an opportunity to go to Russia to do research there; accessing local archives such as the city of Kusnetsk or Orsk archives would have benefitted the project considerably. To compensate for this limitation, I rely on the Russian language scholars that made extensive use of such archives. To complement official documentation, the other types of documents used included accounts from the Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaia Pravda* and the illustrated magazine *USSR in Construction*, which I located with assistance from the head librarian at the Petro Jacyk Central and East European Resource Centre at the University of Toronto. I have also located first-hand accounts of the architects and memoirs of the planners, workers and international tourists to the new industrial cities. For official documentation about special settlers, I made use of the Slavic Division at the Widener library at Harvard. There, I accessed the Archives of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State Microfilm Collection located at the State Archives of the Russian Federation (*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, GARF) at the Lamont library at Harvard University, where some materials of the collections are on microfilm. The complete original archives are in Moscow. Finally, I visited with the archives of German Architecture Museum (DAM) in Frankfurt, which held an exhibition of May’s work in the USSR in July 2011 which contained photographs and personal documentation of some of the western architects (Mart Stam, Hannes Meyer) and spent time at Margarete Schütte Lihotsky’s archives at the Academy of Applied Arts, Vienna, which contained her articles for the Soviet architectural magazines and blue prints of her kindergarten projects in the Soviet Union. Some of the original material, such as the Pierre Dominique travelogue, Frankfurt’s memoirs or David
Arkin’s book on western architecture, has not to the best of my knowledge previously been written about by scholars.
CHAPTER 1. The Reform of Public Housing in Weimar Berlin during the late 1920’s.

In 1928, Werner Hegemann, an urban planner and the editor of the critical architectural magazine, *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst*, wrote admiringly of a recent series of satirical sketches performed at *Komödie* on Kurfürstendamm in Berlin. The show was called “Something is in the air” (“Es liegt in der Luft”), and written by Marcellus Schiffer. As Hegemann noticed, the performance was a critique of the building programme of Berlin’s chief building officer, Martin Wagner, and it read:

*Ich weiß, daß wohnungslos ich bin,*
*Doch steh’ ich in der Liste drin.*
*Ich weiß auch ganz genau Bescheid,*
*Mit Energie und mit Gewalt*
*Steh’ ich jetzt in der Dringlichkeit*
*Und kriege eine Wohnung bald.*

***

*Fort mit Schnörkel, Stuck und Schaden!*  
*Glatt baut man die Hausfassaden!*  
*Nächstens baut man Häuser bloß,*  
*Ganz und gar fassadenlos.*  
*Krempel sind wir überdrüssig,*  
*Viel zu viel ist überflüssig!*  
*Fort die Möbel aus der Wohnung!*  
*Fort mit, was nicht hingehört!*  
*Ich behaupte ohne Schonung:*  
*Jeder Mensch, der da ist, stört!*  

I know that I don’t have a home,  
Yet, I am still standing in the queue.  
I also know quite precisely,  
With energy and force,  
That by now I am in priority  
And soon will get my flat.  

***

Away with embellishments, plastering and detriment,  
Now the facades are built in the plain manner,  
Next, the houses will be built bare and even without facades at all.  
We are disgusted with junk,  
Much too much is superfluous!
Away with furniture,
And with it, with everything that does not belong.
I proclaim without fear:
Every man, who is there, is in the way.

As this song suggests, new ways of living were much on the mind of inhabitants of the city. How can we describe the historical context in which Berlin housing reform unfolded? In this chapter I look into the mechanisms by which government at various levels involved itself in the provision and distribution of construction funds and housing. How did modernist architects figure in the housing policies of the newly created Weimar Republic? As the sketch promptly hinted, there was more at stake than simply supplying masses with housing. By moving my focus beyond the ways in which local housing politics in Berlin became informed by national strategies, I hope to contribute to what Jane Jacobs and Susan Smith call a “rematerialization” of the home.41 In order conceptually to bridge the divide between an understanding of home as “an affective concept” (the way in which home space is experienced in various practices of homemaking) and housing as a realm of policy and economy in general, Jacobs and Smith introduce the idea of “coproduction”: “The acts of ‘housing’ and ‘dwelling’ are a coproduction between those who are housed and the variant technologies that do the work of housing: ornaments and decorations, yes, architecture and bricks and mortar, sanitation and communication technologies, too, but also housing policies and practices, mortgage lending and insurance, credit scores, and all the other lively ‘things’ of finance.”42

This useful notion of “coproduction” implies that the “agents that make the modern interior” thus are not essentially divided into those who impose and intervene into the domestic sphere and those who live under such directives and regulations. The effort, rather, is to trace complicated relationships—what Jacobs and Smith term an assemblage —among policies (which
are only one “media”), everyday practices, advertising, housing shows, pamphlets, and so forth. To do so, this chapter will focus on the housing strategies of Weimar state and of municipal powers in Berlin, the role of building societies, planning regulations and practices that made construction of large suburban settlements possible, and situate production of “representational” spaces of Berlin’s Hufeisensiedlung within such developments.

**Federal Legal and Financial Mechanisms and Local Municipal Housing Programmes**

The architecture of cities—no less than other cultural practices—is not simply “reflective” of broader historical contours. To begin, I want to focus on specific housing practices, rather than understanding architecture and planning as a symptomatic outcome of a generalized Weimar historical development. Most of the Weimar housing estates were built between 1924 and 1929, in the “middle period,” or what Weimar historians conventionally call the period of “relative” stabilization that followed the period of post-war inflation (1919-1923), and which in turn was succeeded by the period of economic crisis (1930-1932). Economic stabilization generated increased building activity until the economic crisis of 1929. As historian Ben Lieberman has argued, such periodization is conveniently inscribed into the common historical narrative of the Weimar Republic’s failures, by which the events are analyzed consequently as a “sequence of disasters”: “From the 1960s through the 1980s, political, cultural and economic historians placed the Weimar period of stabilization back into a narrative of Weimar disasters by stressing the Republic’s underlying frailty even during its middle years.” More recent studies, however, aim to revise such an approach by emphasizing the achievements of Weimar social policies that emerged from the period of stabilization. When considering housing policies, “a municipal
narrative of Weimar history”—an approach that shifts attention from national to local politics—
could help to outline Weimar political developments outside of the narrative of pre-disposition to
disaster by emphasizing the policies of recovery and stabilization that were formulated and
initiated, however briefly, in municipal politics.46

Many studies of housing reform fold into this same narrative of Weimar as a sequence of
failures, whereby the city planning policies and building of housing are viewed simply as
extensions of broader political processes. Various studies attempted to address how the Weimar
welfare state participated in housing reform from this theoretical position. Ronald Wiedenhoeft,
for example, in his expansive sociological study, *Berlin’s Housing Revolution: German Reform in the 1920s*,
 traced the history of housing reform in Germany back to the mid-19th century
(when the first reports detailing living conditions among workers started to appear), through to
the influence of the Garden City movement and pre-WWI legislation supporting non-profit
building cooperatives.47 The Social Democratic leader for the German Association for Land
Reform, Adolf Damaschke, in his major work *Land Reform: A Fundamental and Historical
Approach toward Recognition and Relief of the Social Crisis* (1902), lobbied for a concentrated
effort to formulate legislation to reform working class quarters. After the war, Damaschke
organized a Veterans’ homestead movement aimed at the returning veterans, making proposals
“to provide 500,000 returning soldiers with their own homes” and a piece of land.48 By the end
of the 19th century, several organizations had been created, which collected data and reported on
the housing conditions for the poor, such as the influential Association for Social Politics and the
German Association for the Advancement of Health.49 In 1881, the *Mieterverein* (“tenant
organization”) was founded in Berlin. However, it mainly participated in campaigns for
improving housing conditions and had little legal power to fight for tenants’ interests.50
Nevertheless, we can say that the various interest groups that were established in the late 19th century, although lacking considerable political power, combined to help formulate “the housing question” as a pressing concern in the numerous discussions that emerged in the twentieth century concentrated around hygiene, housing sanitary inspections, the introduction of density controls, tenant protection and so on.  

During WWI there was virtually no housing construction in Germany. By 1924, according to Lieberman, the consequences of hyperinflation and the war resulted in unemployment and housing shortages and placed strains on municipal finances and the capacity for cities to redress damaged and under-modernized infrastructure (public gas, water and electrical utilities), and such cultural institutions as theatres, parks and zoos. Poverty was widespread, not only among the traditionally urban poor and the working classes. The middle classes were also living on the fringe. Pressing political and social factors contributed to the housing reform (Wohnreform), among them a postwar housing crisis, influx of women into the urban labour force, lack of housing construction during the war inspite of the government’s promise to build “homes for heroes.” Housing reform, which combined the promotion of new modernist designs, the creation of cooperative building organizations, and accompanying legal initiatives, could be seen as a “logical” outcome of the new political climate, when the socialist government of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) singled out housing reform as a matter of government policy. A critique that was widely popular among SPD circles emphasized that the market-based system was unable to provide for unprofitable low-cost housing, and that, consequently, a number of laws were introduced in the Weimar Constitution granting municipalities more control over zoning and leasing: “Housing construction came to be considered an essential public service and was therefore subjected to public scrutiny, planning and control.”
In Germany, between 1919 and 1932, 2.5 million flats were built, mostly after 1924 when the rate of construction sped up; as a result, “by 1930, 14 percent of Germans (9 million) lived in new flats.” In Berlin, the rate of new housing construction was equally remarkable. According to Gustav Böss, the Social Democratic mayor of Berlin, the number of newly built flats rose from 10,050 in 1924 to 24,000 in 1928. In 1928, in Berlin 189,000 families were registered at the housing office. The municipality supplied 433 million Reichsmark, of which 395 million were from taxes and 38 million from bond money. Writing in 1929, Böss proclaimed house-building in the city to be “one of the most important public responsibilities.” Contemporary scholars, as discussed above, likewise adopt the rhetoric of the housing reformers by contextualizing Weimar social housing policy as a reaction to those processes in favourable political conditions (a government response necessitated by housing shortages and the lack of construction during the war, unhealthy living conditions, etc.). Economic stabilization, according to such interpretations, produced an increase in building activity until the economic crisis of 1929. Housing became a useful “lens” to approach national policies. Simultaneously, these studies usefully suggest that the formulation of solutions to the “housing problem” was no longer the domain of progressive housing and hygiene reformers, but rather that the Weimar state became instrumental in housing supply and policies. That is, the welfare state assumed responsibility for urban reform and became instrumental in the provision of housing.

The primary focus on how state ideology becomes reflected in housing policies can underemphasize the mechanisms by which an emerging welfare state aims to define local municipal housing programmes. While the expansion of housing was in part a consequence of the economic boom, we want to look more attentively at the precise ways in which finances were socially and politically channelled into the new modern housing estates.
Unlike in the USSR, housing was not nationalized, however, and the Weimar state was only one among a number of investors helping to shape modern housing. Moreover, the extent of state involvement varied considerably from city to city. It is important to point out that not all the new housing built in the 1920’s in Germany consisted of large suburban housing estates (Siedlungen) financed through public building corporations. Although I will focus on such developments here, among other newly built forms of housing, there were also many single cottages (Kleinhäuser), as evidenced by the countless debates about merits of these two forms of housing found in the magazines of the time. Single cottages were financed privately as well as publicly. Private companies also sponsored the building of housing for their employees. In Berlin between 1924 and 1930, 20% of the new housing construction was financed through building societies, whereas in Frankfurt from 1919 to 1929 it was 56%. And as Anthony McElligott clarifies, the 2.5 million newly built dwellings mentioned above were not all part of Weimar social housing initiatives. Private interests were responsible for subsidies to over half of all housing. According to McElligott, in Berlin the annual total of the housing subsidized by public housing utility was 13.4, that built by public corporations was 0.6, and privately built housing comprised 21.9 percent, while other forms of subsidies accounted for 64.0 percent.

With these differing views, we can conclude that housing was not entirely a state product, and not all publicly funded housing was modernist by design. Along with other cities where a modern building style either was not fully supported by city parliaments or did not become a dominant building style, Weimar Berlin did not become the centre of modern public housing planning on the same scale as Frankfurt am Main or Vienna. I am, however, interested in the large scale settlements on the periphery, Siedlungen, as they became supported financially and endorsed ideologically by the SPD. These developments, named “das Neue Berlin,” became
envisioned as a radically new form of living space and as a primary means of improving the living conditions of the working classes in Berlin. This and my next chapter will trace how a concentration on housing the working classes emerged as an issue and how it became framed in particular ways by Social Democrats, solidifying the interventionist role of the state in housing policies, as well as by architects, planners, doctors, social reformers, in opposition to the rental barracks, *Mietskaserne.*

As Barbara Miller-Lane’s study has postulated, the SPD influenced much of the new modern building in Berlin, since its members included such influential city planners as Martin Wagner in Berlin. The municipal government became involved in the provision and distribution of funds and the provision of housing through new institutions that were created to oversee and support the housing market. Until 1918 housing policies were not conceived on the national level: the Reich Constitution of 1871 did not address these issues.*65* Municipalities had very limited influence on city planning, largely only in relation to some zoning regulations, street layout and sewage systems. The Weimar Constitution elevated housing policy to the national level. Article 155 of the Constitution read: “The allocation and use of land is being overseen by the state in a way as to prevent abuse and to strive to secure for every German and all German families, especially those with many children, a healthy dwelling, corresponding to their economic and living needs. War veterans have to be given special consideration, as the homestead law is being developed.”*66* This article was a reformulation of the 1918 Prussian housing law that had set up a federal program of loans for cooperative building societies and postulated the creation of municipal agencies (*Wohnungsfürsorgegesellschaften*).*67*

Weimar non-profit building organizations (company building societies, cooperatives, public building societies) thus were given priority in the allocation of construction loans. It is
through these measures that municipalities were legally given broader powers to determine land
and housing politics. The major means of financing the new building construction became a
new federal tax introduced by SPD in 1924, a 15 percent tax on rent (Hauszinssteuer) imposed
on landlords of already built dwellings. The building societies that were overseen by municipal
authorities of Wohnungsfürsorgegesellschaften, borrowed this tax revenue for buying the land
and for the actual construction.

Hartmut Häusermann and Dieter Läpple usefully explain what “social housing” therefore
meant in the context of the Weimar Republic: “housing no longer would represent a commodity.
But housing was not defined as a public good, that is, guaranteed for everyone regardless of their
spending capacity, which became later the case in the GDR. Weimar politic searched for the
middle ground between capitalism and socialism: through partial government financing, a
segment, remote from the market, should have developed, where affordable housing was
provided in accordance with normative standards of humane living conditions. Cooperatives and
municipal housing societies became such agents—what we now call public-private
partnerships.” Or, as Max Jahn summed up in 1926, “although neither socialism nor
architecture has achieved its final goal, a major victory has been won. Capital is serving the
cause of socialism in that it is facilitating the most social function of architecture, i.e., creating
small apartments and Siedlungen.”

What the Constitution postulated was the necessity of government intervention in
housing politics. Weimar cities were granted the relative freedom to determine their own
housing politics, since there was no national urban development policy; the national government
called on the cities to accomplish different tasks, such as providing welfare. Municipalities
therefore obtained considerable influence over the construction and provision of housing. In
1918, one of the more important federal laws to be introduced placed the right to control the loans to cooperatives in the hands of regional municipal agencies. Although municipal governments were similar in structure and function to those during the prewar administration—consisting of a city parliament that also elected a *Magistrat* (administrative board) or a mayor—in Weimar a wider array of political interest groups obtained the opportunity to elect their representatives to city parliaments. One of the mechanisms by which municipal governments could directly influence housing design was through the non-profit building societies that cities indirectly funded to do the construction. We will look below, for example, into how GEHAG, a Berlin building society, was overseen by the municipality. Most new construction was built by the cooperatives and various types of building organizations, financed by trade unions and banks, and politically allied with the Social Democrats. The state, although indirectly, began to carve out a segment of the market that could be regulated. Thus, municipal building societies, non-profit organizations created through federal measures, legally were given powers to purchase and develop land for housing. As Manfredo Tafuri writes, “the attempt to control the housing market through a program of state loans to building companies and cooperatives is one of the cornerstones of the Weimar Sozialpolitik.” Another way in which municipalities increased their role in housing construction was through control of the distribution of state (public) funding: “municipal housing programs typically set targets for the number and type of apartments to be constructed with public financial assistance. Attaching conditions for the use of low-interest mortgages and other loans, municipal authorities steered public funds towards the construction of particular categories of housing such as small apartments or housing earmarked for those of modest means.”
Mechanisms of Government Involvement: GEHAG. Role of Hufeisensiedlung for SPD

The building society GEHAG (an acronym for Gemeinnützige Heimstätten Spar-und Bau-AG), was organized in 1924 under the directorship of Martin Wagner, out of a previous Allgemeine Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (“federation of trade unions”) and became responsible for over 70 percent of the modernist housing built in Berlin. Most of its financing came from the socialist trade unions and Wagner’s socialized building trades movement. Although not intended by Wagner, an SPD member, to have a political orientation, GEHAG was nevertheless staffed primarily with left-leaning officials. Using rationalised methods of construction, GEHAG’s aim was to develop low rent standardised housing. With Bruno Taut as a master architect, GEHAG became associated with modernist design. The technical director of GEHAG, Richard Linneke, promoted the modernist orientation of GEHAG: “[At GEHAG] we are working with these strong modern architects . . . Because we are the movement of tomorrow, we cannot build the architecture of yesterday.”

In the same year, Martin Wagner founded Wohnungswirtschaft, the magazine of the Housing Welfare Office (Wohnungsfürsorgegesellschaft), a new administrative structure that was created to enforce new building codes and to oversee housing financing and construction in Berlin. The magazine became a centralized voice serving as a medium for various building societies and tenants’ organizations and a strong editorial advocate for socialized modernism. Those who published there stressed over and over again the socialist nature of such building societies as GEHAG. In an article entitled “On the Road to Public Enterprise in Building and Housing” (1929), Linneke wrote that DEWOG (GEHAG was its subsidiary society in Berlin) was an “economic enterprise of the German workers’ movement.” Since the privatized building industry had failed, it was a socialized building enterprise that “provided solution to the life
question of the German people, the provision of functional and cheaper dwellings." According to Linneke, the goals of the new building societies were “first, to represent the social economic goals and interests of blue and white collar workers vis-à-vis public organs and private capitalist economic organizations, and secondly, to deepen the idea of public enterprise in housing matters.”

GEHAG partly financed the building of the *Hufeisensiedlung*, a horseshoe shaped large scale estate which became its first large scale project, and which will be one of my primary case studies in this dissertation. Between 1925 and 1926, 1480 dwellings were built with support from GEHAG, while 1329 were put up by other building societies,\(^{82}\) and the settlement was further expanded in the early 1930’s. The estate had a political role to play and a considerable amount of propaganda celebrated its opening. *Hufeisensiedlung* was promoted from the beginning as exemplary for the SPD and socialist housing reformers in its financing, architecture, and tenant structure, which comprised blue and white collar workers. It was widely emphasized that in the building of *Hufeisensiedlung* only the most “modern” and rational methods were used. [Illustration 1].

*Hufeisensiedlung* was listed (along with other five modernist housing estates in Berlin) as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2008, and such celebratory rhetoric has been incorporated into the recent UNESCO listing as well. “The exemplary character” of the housing reform movement, when housing construction became a matter of public policy, is emphasized in the UNESCO nomination report. Modern amenities and communal facilities distinguished these developments from the overcrowded tenements of earlier years. Several times in the report the estates, which were built to provide flats for workers and the lower middle class, are praised for their “healthy, hygienic and humane living conditions.”\(^{83}\) Contemporary academic discussions
often borrow such descriptions: for example, Willett assumed that it was built largely with equipment for lifting and earth-moving, employing standardized forms and a rationalized division of labour.\textsuperscript{84} However, as Ludovica Scarpa argued, in spite of the exaggerated promotion of industrialized building methods by Martin Wagner and others, manual labour continued to be largely used.\textsuperscript{85} Nevertheless, \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} was very often depicted in the SPD electoral pamphlets in 1929, linking the new architecture to the politics of the SPD. The particular political role of modernist housing (as a showcase of social democratic policies) was reinforced by images circulated during election campaigns and through performances in yearly “Work celebrations” (\textit{Fest der Arbeit}). Such brochures alluded to the peculiar spatiality of the housing estate, which was presented as a site of everyday living within a national political context. \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} had a special symbolic significance for the SPD. One electoral pamphlet depicted a plane dropping SPD brochures over the \textit{Hufeisensiedlung}. The text read: “Happy tenants in Britz elect Social Democrats, of course, whom they thank for their splendid homes. And you too elect SPD!” Another pamphlet that pictures the streets and buildings of \textit{Hufeisensiedlung}, reads: “If you choose action—elect Social Democrats!”\textsuperscript{86} Of course, the reactions (and voting patterns) of residents to such directives from on high remains an open question. Martin Wagner famously called \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} “the most beautiful workers’ settlement in Berlin” and in the paper edited by Wagner (\textit{Wohnungswirtschaft}) we read a laudatory piece on the occasion: “It’s not a coincidence that work celebration in Gehag-Siedlung Britz this year, too, represented unity in idea and in process, whose clear, convincing language itself must have captured those indifferent. This clarity and tidiness of accomplishment, beyond all the square and thoughtless (\textit{spiessig-gedankenleer}) “pleasures” of the petty bourgeoisie, is unthinkable in the slums of the big city. . . . United in common political and trade union interests,
for the residents it is their good living conditions that is a basis for collective culture.” The Communist Party challenged such laudatory descriptions, by pointing that rent was beyond the means of the workers. In the 1929 elections, the communist press widely criticised *Hufeisensiedlung* for its rental policies, which prompted GEHAG to release statistics about the professional status of tenants. Within *Hufeisensiedlung*, the SPD won the absolute majority of votes in 1929, while communists won only 16 %.  

The SPD’s employment of media technologies to promote new housing estates as the expression of their politics speaks to the creation of “representational” spaces of *Hufeisensiedlung*. In the production of “representational” spaces, politics merged with visualization as symbolic meanings around the estate were disseminated by the media. As a new social project was taking hold in the imagination and in the actual city space, images of Berlin began proliferating, and not only as political pamphlets. The publication of an array of Berlin photobooks in the late 1920’s coincided with Martin Wagner’s highest point of *Neues Berlin* project. *Hufeisensiedlung* had been widely photographed and images disseminated through professional and popular magazines, architectural guides and various photobooks. In the “representational spaces” of *Hufeisensiedlung* that photographs contributed to producing, the social change that new arrangements of living space was to initiate became visually associated with the panoramic shots emphasizing the seriality of facades, geometric shapes and bold colors, as well as with a bird’s eye view of the space, made possible by aerial photography; the effect of the horseshoe shape of the estate depends on seeing it from above. Because of their panoramic quality, aerial photographs of *Hufeisensiedlung* were able to convey the architectural shape of the circle, which was symbolically associated with collectivity, and which became widely employed by the SPD in their electoral brochures, using montage to combine images with
political messages. As Hake write, “this pervasive medialization of urban life played a key part in aligning modern architecture and city planning with the urban imaginary of the Weimar Republic as the first German experiment in democracy.”  

Hake distinguishes, however, between various visual archives of urban architecture that were created by press photographers in newspapers and illustrated magazines and architectural photographers in Berlin photobooks.

While the mainstream press portrayed public city spaces as “a consumable image of the metropolis,” the left-oriented press used depictions of architecture to expose social issues, such as in photographing life in the tenements. Weimar architectural photography, while propagating the New Building “as an artistically important, socially significant, and politically relevant practice,” simultaneously turned architecture into merely “works of art,” “allegories of collective agency.” In other words, with such an emphasis on the “representational” aspect of the production of space, the radical potential of architecture as a social practice remained partially unfulfilled.

Early pictures of Hufeisensiedlung seem to confirm Hake’s thesis. Various architectural photographers worked in Berlin at the time; what makes it difficult to determine authorship is that the photographers in these photobooks are often not identified. We do know that many of the more famous and most often reproduced photographs of Hufeisensiedlung were made by Arthur Köster. For example, his photographs of Hufeisensiedlung appeared in both the architectural guide Neues Bauen in Berlin by Heinz Johannes (1931) and in E. M. Hajos and L. Zahn’s Berliner Architektur der Nachkriegzeit (1928). Köster’s photo studio, Fotowerkstatt für Arkhitektur, founded in 1926, became well-known for disseminating images of modern architecture in Berlin. According to Michael Stöneberg, who has researched Köster’s work extensively, it produced the largest photographic archive of Neues Bauen that appeared in
various architectural guides and magazines at the time. Joined by his brother in the mid-1930s, Köster’s business thrived under the Nazis, as the Kösters photographed many of the major architectural sites for Nazi propaganda, as well as less famous private residences and public buildings. This points to the alliance that was forming between architectural photography and the regime in power. In the mid-1920s, Köster had been a staff photographer for GEHAG. Stöneberg speculates that it might have been Bruno Taut himself who fostered this connection, as Köster collaborated with him documenting Taut’s own house on Wiesenstrasse in the southern Berlin suburb of Dahlewitz for Taut’s book *Ein Wohnhaus*. Although Köster did not have a direct connection to the SPD, working for progressive modernist architects in the mid-1920s and for GEHAG, his images of *Hufeisensiedlung* blend political imaginary as a showcase of SPD and of everyday routines (children playing, people in backyards, people in cafes).

Köster’s captures of the everyday were, however, interestingly devoid of the instructional or educational quality that Hake has found in many of Weimar illustrated magazines. Many of the images of *Hufeisensiedlung* in circulation were largely devoid of human activities. Köster’s photographs, however, contain a fair number of onlookers: we can witness the everyday activities of residents walking in the streets, children playing and communicating, people just standing on corners and watching the photographer. However, unlike his photographs for Bruno Taut’s *Ein Wohnhaus*, where the (mostly) female inhabitants were depicted going around their everyday tasks (preparing, serving and having meals, ironing, cleaning, having rest in the garden), these *Hufeisensiedlung* pictures seldom present what Roland Jaeger termed the “illustration of living practices” (*Wohnpraxis*). Occasionally, figures are shown, but the depth of field and the scale (the buildings obviously dominate the pictures) and wide angle shots of street facades make them appear small and insignificant. By contrast, photos of
*Hufeisensiedlung* taken by a different photographer, Otto Hagemann, present more idyllic scenes of visitors at the outdoor café, of children playing in the sandbox, and of ducks in the pond. While it is not clear whether people were captured intentionally, in both cases they are most probably not “the subjects” of representation. Köster’s photograph of the horseshoe–shaped pond in *Hufeisensiedlung* during construction appeared differently in an illustrated architectural magazine, where the evidence of the construction is erased by what looks like grass lawn and saplings, along with two human figures on the foreground.97 In architectural photography, techniques of cropping and re-touching, Hake observes, had been widely used to “aestheticize” buildings by portraying them out of context and removing traces of human presence. While more research needs to be done on how and where these images were disseminated, some were definitely included in the brochures that were published for tenants by GEHAG. We might suggest that by appearing not only in architectural publications, these images did not imply an audience of visitors to Berlin or even a general public, educating themselves about matters of modern architecture. Rather, they contributed for the tenants a reflection of what it meant to live in the modern estates. In Bruno Taut’s vision, not only the horseshoe-shaped centre of the settlements, but the streets themselves were places of community and meaningful exchanges: “The streets and passages comprised a living, constantly unfolding theater in which impressions, sensibilities, convictions were formed as residents pass through their everyday life.”98 In visualizing spaces of *Hufeisensiedlung* as a showcase for SPD housing reform, the photographic archive, however selective and incomplete, connected architectural form to modernity (as in discourse reiterated today by the UNESCO report, which assigns *Hufeisensiedlung* to the modernist architectural canon). Photographs with “accidental” people also participated in the “theatre” by visualizing and reflecting back on the tenants of modernist estates.
**Housing Reform as Urban Spatial Reorganization**

Who were these residents? To answer this question, we will consider how newly modern urban subjectivities were produced amid evolving class formations, and consider the role housing played in this process. While it can be argued that the housing reform was an SPD initiative, and we have seen how the state sustained a segment of the market through private-public financing, SPD’s endorsement of capitalism was later famously criticized by Tafuri, who points out that few workers could afford to move into the new estates, a criticism echoed by a number of Marxist critics after. For example, Adelheid von Saldern, employing Gramsci, argues that the workers’ housing reform was carried out mainly to ensure “the adequate reproduction of the labour force,” and, consequently, the continuation of the cultural domination of the ruling class.  

I will further address the argument that Weimar housing reformers aimed to change the social conditions of the working classes through housing without changes within the capitalist order. Housing reform, however, exposed intricate connections and complexities among various levels of municipal politics, committees, and coalitions. Weimar municipal politics is better described not in terms of alliances or coalitions, but in terms of “political complexity.” Along with the SPD and bourgeois parties of the right, such groups as property owners exerted considerable influence. Additionally, an examination of the everyday life at the estates complicates such top-down approaches. The discussion here does not pretend to somehow generalize Weimar housing efforts. Rather, my aim is to emphasize various site-specificities. Municipalities involved themselves variously in the housing policies. In Berlin, the SPD exerted considerable influence, as Lane and others argued, and the large suburban settlement became the form that they supported. But as McElligott points out, in Weimar Germany over a half of new housing was built and subsidized by private interests. Parallel discussions on the most
appropriate form of housing were carried out along with the SPD. Right-wing commentators widely criticized the modern estates for their “un-German” flat roofs. Communists were very suspicious of the SPD’s social housing programme and criticized it for turning the proletarian into the middle class and as a distraction from class struggle. In Slatan Dudow’s film, *Zeitprobleme: Wie der Arbeiter wohnt*, the sequence of *Hufeisensiedlung* is thematically secured in the “middle” position between shots of impoverished Berlin *Mietskaserne* and views of affluent suburban villas. For the film critic Thomas Elsaesser, this juxtaposition implied that the architecture of *Neues Bauen* appealed to “snobs and intellectuals” and had little genuine interest in housing for the working classes.

The creation of Greater Berlin signalled new possibilities for what Hake termed “the spatial articulation of new class identities.” Becoming an object and the product of studies and works by social scientists, planners and filmmakers, “white collar workers” as a new social group posed a challenge to the category of class itself: “In some contemporary studies, white collar workers were regarded as an extension of the middle classes and clear proof of a continued process of social differentiation. Others focused on the shared economic conditions of wage laborers and salaried employees to describe white-collar workers as part of the working class, separated from their comrades only through their false consciousness.”

In 1929, the psychoanalyst and social critic Erich Fromm, who was associated with the Frankfurt School for Social Research, surveyed the political, cultural and social attitudes of the working classes in Weimar Germany, and analyzed tastes and preferences and pre-disposition to authoritarian political ideologies. The group of questions and evaluation of responses about furnishing of interior spaces, for example, not only offered a glimpse into the everyday interiors that the modernist architects were set to reform, but also pointed to the discursive production of
the category of a “white collar worker” as linked to the consumption of interior. Among the 584 questionnaires that were distributed, only 47 of the respondents were women.\textsuperscript{105} People’s taste, for Fromm, was determined foremost by economic status and political orientation. To the question “How do you decorate your home?” 33% of the respondents did not provide a reply, while 40% of those who did responded “flowers and pictures.”\textsuperscript{106} 72% of the National Socialists replied “flowers and pictures,” 10% of Social Democrats and 4% of Communists replied “bric-a-brac.” A “significantly larger proportion” of Communists answered “no particular decoration.” Noticing that white-collar workers tended to reply “more frequently than skilled and non-skilled workers” and list bric-a-brac as preferred home decorations, Fromm assigns to them a “middle-class character-type”: “After all, the tendency to collect decorative objects is often based more on the joy of possession than on the beauty of the objects themselves.”\textsuperscript{107} To the more specific question, “What pictures and photographs have you hung up?” white collar workers responded more often than other groups that they had “a personal connection with the pictures,” thus expressing for Fromm their middle class ideology: “in comparison with manual workers, expenditure on rent and cultural needs played a relatively large role among white-collar workers. . . . More than the (non-existing) higher income, a secondary education (middle and grammar school), as well as the Bildung thereby acquired, offered the white collar worker a basic criterion for deeming himself to belong to the ‘better’ sort of people.”\textsuperscript{108} In Fromm’s case, the white collar workers are thought of merely as an “extension” of the middle classes, imitating the middle classes in their tastes. True, interiors are reflections of the class tastes, yet, they are instrumental in establishing and perpetuating tastes.

Similar to Fromm, Sigfried Kracauer’s inquiry into the everyday life of white collar workers anticipated the concerns of critical geographers, emphasizing how spaces shape the
social. A white collar worker, simultaneously an object of investigation and a social category very much in the process of formulation, manifested itself in urban space. Kracauer, however, focused largely on public spaces and largely disregarded the home as just another sphere of distraction: “‘Home,’ by the way, should be taken to mean not just a lodging, but an everyday existence outlined by the advertisements in magazines for employees. These mainly concern: pens; Kohinoor pencils; haemorrhoids; hair loss; beds; crepe soles; white teeth; rejuvenation elixirs; selling coffee to friends; Dictaphones; writer’s cramp; trembling, especially in the presence of others; quality pianos on weekly instalments; and so on.” \(^{109}\) A modern city had been profoundly shaped by this class. As Kracauer writes: “Sombart once observed that our big German cities today are not industrial cities, but cities of salaried employees and civil servants. . . Berlin today is a city with a pronounced employee culture: i.e., a culture made by employees for employees as seen by most employees as a culture.” \(^{110}\) Yet, present everywhere in the everyday city life, they exist in a kind of different register. Kracauer calls his investigation an “expedition” into an “unknown territory.” The spaces they occupy, where they work and consume, are the objects of investigation. Employing spatial metaphors further, Kracauer describes white collar workers’ existential condition in terms of spiritual “homelessness.” Not tied to an ideology like the working classes, but being paid similar wages and living in conditions of economic crisis, the white collar worker seeks out distractions and “spends more on cultural requirements than on lodging (inclusive of heating and lighting), clothes and laundry combines.” \(^{111}\) The “unknown territory” of the salaried masses encompassed places of work and discipline. Kracauer wandered into job advice centres where the prospective employees underwent aptitude tests and toured factories to observe rationalization procedures. “Jobs are precisely not vocations tailored to so-called personalities, but jobs in the enterprise, created
according to the needs of the production and distribution process. Only in the upper layers of the social hierarchy does the true personality begin; this, however, is no longer subject to the pressure of testing.”

Processes of economic rationalization permeated “distraction” industries as well, and produced a “geography of the shelters.” Such a topography of distractions included shop windows, Luna parks, cinemas and hotel lobbies. A special place in this topography was occupied by what Kracauer termed the “pleasure barracks” of Haus Vaterland, an establishment comprised of cinema and various themed restaurants. Their emergence in the stabilization years signalled new ways to participate in mass culture: “at the same moment at which firms are rationalized, these establishments rationalize the pleasures of the salary-earning armies.”

The return of the “new vintage” nineteenth century panoramas in the kaleidoscopic and transnational displays of Bavarian and Wild West themed bars, dioramas of Vienna, Rhein and southern Spain, for Kracauer, emerged to stave off the monotony of everyday labour: “The more monotony holds sway over the working day, the further away you must be transported once work ends-assuming that attention is to be diverted from the process of production in the background. This “geography of shelters” is not a factual representation of locations, but is largely a simulation, a dream scape. Kracauer is also sensitive to the increasingly female composition of this new class, while in Fromm’s study gender figures rarely and does not form a category of analysis.

Although the typical tenants of Siedlungen were not envisioned by proponents of Neues Bauen as necessarily white collar in the sense of their material conditions and professional occupations, they are often framed as such in their tastes and aspirations. Yet neither were they politically and socially disengaged “dupes.” As if to question Kracauer’s critique of “spiritual homelessness,” the ideological distance between workers and white collar employees, Otto
Steinicke, in “A Visit to a New Apartment” (1929), described inhabitants as negotiating between their roles as consumers of interior decorations and their distinct claims to political awareness. The tenants he visited are described as a workers’ family, where both parents work at the factory and railroad. They appreciate the “bourgeois” conveniences of the apartment: bathroom, kitchen, iron, and a relatively low rent, which they see as a consequence of the publicly funded construction. They are not alien to the culture industries. Yet, they are portrayed as politically educated and engaged: their bookshelves contain various SPD literature and the husband is active in the union.117

The housing estates provided one setting among others (such as public places of consumption and leisure) in which this new identity could be performed and “articulated.” But precisely how did the creation of Greater Berlin—which meant the incorporation of the outskirts—provide possibilities for the emergence of new social class-white collar workers, many of whom became tenants of large housing estates?

At this point, it is important to explore how the idea of municipally built mass housing, endorsed and promoted in numerous discussions as a better alternative to workers’ tenements (which will be the subject of the next chapter), emerged alongside new rules to regulate density in the outer areas as a consequence of creation of Greater Berlin in the early 1920’s. Centralization became necessary to secure the state’s provision and distribution of funds for housing. City planning became centralized in 1920 with the formation of Greater Berlin and the introduction of the new building code. The new building code introduced new zoning laws by defining five classes of land that could be utilized for the building of new housing and contributed to the efforts for comprehensive city planning to differentiate among urban areas: “all new land that could be used for housing development in Greater Berlin was automatically
placed under Class I of the building code. This required that new housing on such land would be
low-density, i.e., two-story buildings with a minimum of 500 square meters of site for each
dwelling unit. No more than ten percent of the site could be covered by building in this class.”

Such regulations secured low-density construction on the newly added land. The formation of
Greater Berlin involved merging previous city areas with the outer suburbs and former
agricultural land and changed the contours of Berlin spatially and socially.

Zoning became one of the tools employed in the construction boom. The change of land
use, by rezoning agricultural land as land suitable for housing development, was one of the
mechanisms employed by Weimar planners. Often it meant the removal of already existing poor
people’s settlements in these areas. Among the consequences of expansion were numerous
discussions about the practical aspects and about how the city is understood in general. The
space came to be understood primarily in terms of its productive capacities (places of living,
places of work, places of leisure, etc.). For example, Leberecht Migge, a landscape architect and
planner (among whose projects are the tenants allotment gardens in Hufeisensiedlung), in his
article “Weltstadt Grün” (1930) spoke of the politics of green spaces (Grünpolitik) as a way of
organizing and managing the green spaces of the city. The issues and questions to be addressed
were “What does the city do with its massive outskirts? How many square meters of the city
greenery (Stadtgrün) should every citizen have? How should it be arranged? And first of all, how
much does it cost?” For Migge, the city’s green areas would no longer be understood as
decorative or simply places for leisurely strolls. Rather “the new green is of a different kind, of
new men, of the sportsmen of our time.” What Migge meant here was that the green areas can
be put to all sorts of practical use and thus be made cost-effective. Influenced by the ideas of the
American Parks Movement, he praised parks in the United States that included open air sport and
swimming pools and golf courses, as well as their “playlands,” entertainment parks and camps.\textsuperscript{120} These “new forms of land technique” (\textit{Bodentechnik}) point to the idea that the green spaces are productive (of leisure), and are not merely objects of consumption. In Migge’s interpretation, this productivity is understood in terms of efficiency and the generation of wealth. As this example suggests, the discourse around the centralization of planning revolved around reformulating relationships between the areas of the city described in terms of its productive functions. This text is one of many that promotes the rationalization of space while serving the public good.

According to the 1925 census, 41% of the 4 million people in Berlin were manual workers.\textsuperscript{121} In the late 19th century, the location of one’s housing told a good deal about the social geography of Berlin: “At one end of the scale there were the lavish apartments in the new Mietshäuser being built in the south-west where there might be no more than two dwellings to a floor, with elaborate internal planning to ensure an appropriate division between family and servants. At the bottom end of the market there were the tenements of working class areas, referred to pejoratively as \textit{Mietskaseren}, or ‘rent barracks,’ with 50 to 80 two- or three-room dwellings packed on to a site, offering little more than minimal shelter and a view on to a court the dimensions of which made it little more than a light-well.”\textsuperscript{122} Consequently, the rents of the apartments overlooking the street were higher and suggested a higher social class.\textsuperscript{123} The tenement houses built in the late 19th century to accommodate workers around the “old city” of Berlin-Mitte, in the areas of Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain, Neukoelln, Kreuzberg, parts of Schoeneberg (north and east) as well as western Moabit and a corner of Charlottenburg, held a large number of unskilled and skilled labour, solid supporters of the communist party (KPD).\textsuperscript{124} These neighbourhoods, referred to as “Red Berlin,” were centered around the
mechanical, electric and food manufacturing industries, with more “specialized mechanical, optical and electric firms” as well as clothing manufacture in southern district of Kreuzberg and Mitte. 125

The tenement blocks were partly a consequence of unregulated development, which in itself resulted from an exploitation of the 1887 building regulations at the time of the rapid growth of Berlin population (1860s-1870s). These regulations, according to Bullock and Read, along with the newly introduced water supply system, permitted the extension of this form of building, high density, five-story housing, in the suburban districts of Schoeneberg, Charlottenburg, Rixdorf and Wilmersdorf. The land became an object of speculation for developers, who squeezed as many dwellings into the space as possible, resulting in overcrowding and poor living conditions. In 1892, more regulations were issued by the Prussian government that limited the height of buildings to four stories. However, these new rules served to regulate density in the outer suburban areas, but “did little to restrict the density of housing within the city and in suburban areas within the Ringbahn and Charlottenburg, all of which now fell under the control of the Berliner Hochbauordnung.”126 In spite of the establishment of the Gross-Berlin, created largely as an “advisory body” in 1912, it was not until the Weimar period that city buying and regulating powers were considerably extended: “by 1900, the city owned 34.8 % of the area within its boundaries, even the municipalities surrounding the city proper owned more. . . . Caught from the turn of the century onwards in an increasingly complex debate over the relationship of the city proper to its hinterland and the adjacent communities, Berlin . . . was unable to follow the example of Ulm or Frankfurt,” where the city owned more than half of the land.127 In such cities, it was obviously easier to mount large-scale housing developments during the Weimar Republic.
The housing estates that were built in the modern style became located on the outskirts. Decentralization, the segregation of industrial and commercial areas that had previously been concentrated in the city, and the concentration of residential areas to the outskirts as a result of planning efforts that culminated in the late 1920’s, had all been made possible by the expansion of mass transit since before WWI, as Bullock has shown. Beginning in the late 19th century, prompted by the completion of the construction of the circular railway in 1877, many Berlin industries moved their factories to the outer suburbs. Given new employment possibilities and the mobility provided by public transport, workers consequently increasingly settled in the districts of Wedding, Moabit, Mariendorf, and Lichterfelde. The creation of such grids for the standardised suburban housing estates became central to the vision of the rationalized metropolis: centralized transportation became recognized as a necessity.

**Hufeisensiedlung as New Suburban Form of Settlement**

Writing for the 10 year anniversary of Bruno Taut’s garden city settlement, Falkenberg, in Berlin, in the article “Von Meinem Fenster aus,” Eugen Lewin-Dorfch mixes pastoralism with a celebration of community: “I have a view from my window of changing days and seasons. This view belongs to my little rooms as soul to the body, like blossoms to flowers. Like a guardian in a watchtower I sit here and let my eyes wander. . . . I control the whole Akazienhof, its houses and its residents, its life in the light as well as darkness, in harsh rain and blinding sunlight. Nothing escapes my window. I see the men going to work by the crack of dawn. I open shutters later and see the women coming out to gossip. . . . Each thing has its time. . . . The houses stand together, yellow and blue, red and grey, looking like a community itself-hand in hand, like one happy brotherhood. So is Nature itself involved in this space design (**Raumgestaltung**),
permanently tied into man’s activities.” The village idyll of cycles of time is enmeshed with the Garden City ideals of fusion of nature and human settlements, as well as with this Panopticon-like point of view. In a piece entitled in a similar manner “Aus dem Fenster gesehen,” almost ten years later, in 1931, Siegfried Kracauer observes a starkly different scenery: “In front of my window the city thickens into a picture that is as marvellous as a natural spectacle…. In the evening the whole picture of the city is illuminated. The tracks, masts, houses disappear—the field of lights is shining in the darkness, giving consolation to the night traveller whom they promise a soon arrival. The lights are split in the space, they wait silently or move themselves as if they were on springs. . . . Amidst all the turmoil that does not have any depth, rises a luminous tree: the radio tower, that sends around from its tip a lightcone. . . . This landscape is a natural Berlin (ungestelltes Berlin). Without intention, its opposites, its harshness, its openness, its coexistence, its gloss, speak for themselves. The awareness of the city is tied to decipherment of its dreamlike self-referential (hingesagten) pictures.”

It seems that these two texts described two opposing visions of the city: one nostalgic for a communal agrarian form of life, the other celebrating the experience of the phantasmagoric spaces of urban Berlin. Both these texts are highly cinematic, dynamic, or what Lewis Mumford referred to as a “theatre of social action.” Both allude to the distinct spatiality of urban Berlin, made possible, among other things, by an expanding transportation network served by buses, trams and cars. According to the map included in Heinz Johannes’s Berlin tour guide, Neues Bauen in Berlin (1931), we can see that the scale of the new construction of Neues Bauen on the outskirts was substantially larger than in the inner city. In Hufeisensiedlung, “streetcars go on both sides of Ausfallstrasse and Chausseestrasse and provide a fast connection to the subway stations in Hermannstrasse and Bergstrasse. This convenient location on Berlin’s periphery is
much more pleasant in that the city centre is easily accessible by transportation from these dwellings." It is the streetcar that Franz Hessel, friend of both Sigfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, employed to travel to Hufeisensiedlung. What Hessel sees is a dramatic population growth in the periphery of Neukölln, from about ten thousand residents in 1870’s to between two and three hundred residents in the late 1920’s. Wandering in Hufeisensiedlung, Hessel notices that “its colours shine, gold, white and red and in between blue of framing and balconies. From one of the streets, we are entering into the round complex, along the open side of the quadrangle, on whose other three sides small houses enclose a large garden. Nowhere here you’ll find rare buildings. . . . Everyone has their piece of garden like a garden allotment. Only much more cared for and inside one common whole. We are entering the inner circle and finally see the centre, the pond, where the waterside joins the circle of housing in the shape of the horseshoe. In beautiful symmetry, the houses have a row of dorm windows, big and small windows and (recessed, sunken) balconies. On the side where the horseshoe becomes small, this lucky town has its own marketplace. . . . We are entering a house. On the inside it is also colourful, but no superfluous ornament, everything decoration free yet decorated. It is one of many settlements, which mean the most prominent advance in the chaos of the middle-world, which separates city and country. . . . Housing crisis, longing for beauty, the direction of our times to the common and enthusiasm of the young generation of architects was here as in Lichtenberg, Zehlendorf and other developing areas of the city, to create humane dwellings. . . . This new, becoming Berlin I cannot yet begin to describe, but can only praise.”

In its architectural shape and social ideas, Hufeisensiedlung certainly filtered Garden City principles. Its spatial arrangement echoes Ceciliengärten in the Schöneberg district of Berlin, designed in 1910-1914 and built in 1924-1928, which incorporated green courtyards and parks.
Hufeisensiedlung is reminiscent too of the brightly coloured houses and allotment gardens in Falkenberg, built from 1913 to 1916. [Illustrations 2,3,4, and 5]. Just like Ernst May’s settlements in Frankfurt and other Neues Bauen settlements in Berlin, Hufeisensiedlung was re-configuring urban geography by challenging the relations of the city and its outskirts. Centralizing tendencies (the incorporation of areas into Greater Berlin and the formation of corresponding municipal agencies, concentrations of industry and transportation) made possible the creation of decentralized settlements. Simultaneously, a critique of centralization was at the core of discussions of progressive architects who assigned to this spatial form of decentralization the transformative role of changing everyday life of the working classes. Rather than approaching the new form of settlement (Siedlung) in anti-urban terms, I argue that it presented a new modern form of urbanity, one that did not merely rely on or reproduce distinctions between the “city” and country, of the outskirts and centre. A new spatial organization of the city, certainly, provoked conservative and reactionary sentiments. Even in progressive architects and politicians’ discourses, “Siedlung” became discursively produced as an area adjacent to the “city,” yet, a separate part, with the aim to distinguish the impoverished proletarian city (associated with inner-city Berlin) and the outskirts envisioned as safe, healthy and affordable for workers. We will see several examples of mobilization of such discourses in the next section. The blurring of distinctions between the centre and the periphery, of the city and the outskirts (countryside), was accompanied by a newly emerging urban form that might foster new living conditions and social relations (as in the works by Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner discussed below). This is not to say that the decentralized organization of space that emerged was devoid of hierarchies. The horseshoe shape of the central part of Hufeisensiedlung envisioned by the architects as a centre for communication and interactions of the tenants, provided a convenient
enclosure, where people could be observed during the 1930s. It is this understanding of places as processes that I aim to capture here. I am interested in how *Hufeisensiedlung* “happened,” architecturally and socially, combining various styles and ideologies and lived practices in the late 1920’s in Berlin.

Next, I will consider how the emerging modern organization of space (suburban, large scale) was viewed as desirable in numerous discussions, as an alternative to workers’ tenements, or “Mietskaserne” (literally translated as “rental barracks”). To do this, we will look next at the texts that promoted the modernist tenement block as a new form of suburban mass housing. What interests me are the efforts of the health reformers, planners, architects, politicians, to normalize Weimar Gross-siedlungen by juxtaposing them to the inner-city, Wilhelmine era tenement block. In Chapter 3, I continue to trace how, for Weimar planners and architects, housing assumes the function of constructing a new modern subject (in a Foucauldian sense) through the rationalization of the domestic sphere.
CHAPTER 2. “The Dissolution of Cities”: Mass Housing in Weimar Germany, from “The Largest Tenement City in the World” to Suburban Settlements

In the previous chapter, we have seen the mechanisms by which the provision and distribution of housing became the domain of state economic and political interests. In planning policies, the construction of large-scale housing estates also marked a shift during the mid-1920s towards mass housing. The move to large scale settlements in planning practice and architectural discourse became increasingly associated with such rationalized technological approaches to planning and building methods as the industrialized mass production of building materials, layouts and designs. What interests me are less the reasons why these shifts occurred (a worsening economy and the housing crisis are usually invoked). Rather, the task is to trace how the idea of municipally built mass housing is articulated across discourses of various groups of housing reformers. Such housing comes to be viewed not simply as a means of improving living conditions for the workers, but as integral to the construction of the new social order at large.

In part, the discourse of the Weimar housing reformers became centered on high density large settlements on the outskirts as a preferential form of housing. I will look at how this emerging modern organization of space (suburban, large scale, and state funded) was endorsed and promoted in numerous discussions as a better alternative to workers’ tenements, or Mietskaserne (literally translated as “rental barracks” to describe inner city workers’ tenements, usually situated behind middle class apartments in the Berlin inner courtyards). The project of cleaning up and rebuilding the existing inner city Mietskaserne was largely abandoned under the SPD government. Interestingly, mentions of the redevelopment of the inner city appeared in
Martin Wagner’s writings only in the mid 1930’s. Instead of following the trajectory of legally enforcing inner-city slum regulation and removal while still maintaining private ownership of these existing buildings (as was the case in the United States, as M. Christine Boyer has shown in *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*), in Weimar, the creative energies of architects and planners and government financial support began to be channelled into the new housing in the suburbs for low and middle income earners.

**Weimar Housing Reformers’ Critique of Mietskaserne: Siedlung as a Solution to the Housing Crisis**

Berlin was famously described as “the largest tenement city in the world” (*Mietskasernenstadt*) by Werner Hegemann in *Das Steinerne Berlin* (1930). An expanded version of his earlier (1911) book, its object of critique was pre-Weimar city planning under the Kaiser. The critique of the tenements was summarized and made popular not only by housing reformers, but by sociologists, journalists, and historians. Since the 1890s, such pressing social issues as alcoholism, prostitution, disease, and sexual abuse, including child abuse, were considered in reformist discourse as problems to be solved according to approaches that were essentially spatial. One such example from the 1920s is a study by Victor Noack, *Kulturschande. Die Wohnungsnot als Sexualproblem*, presented at the Berlin Sexual Reform Society. In 1921 the author photographed 60 flats in the working class industrial district of Moabit in Berlin, in order to document everyday life in “proletarian rental barracks,” where the unemployed parents from the early morning winter turn to alcohol. Noack shows how this reflected on proletarian children, who had to sleep in the same bed as grown-ups. He describes one such *Mietskaserne*“flat: children sleep with each other or parents or night lodgers, a practice
that leads to the “darkest problem:” sexual diseases in children. In one Berlin hospital, in 1921, 133 children with sexual diseases were examined; this figure rose to 250 in 1924.\(^{140}\) The remedy proposed by Noack involves quarantines. Along with the standard land reformers’ propositions for increased taxation of the private land owners and public financing of the dwellings for workers, Noack proposes the necessity of a spatial segregation of the infected children in centralized, publicly funded hospices that would provide “systematically managed care for those with sexual diseases.”\(^{141}\)

A larger study, undertaken by Bruno Schwan and published by the German Society for Housing Reform (overviewed in \textit{Baugilde} in 1932), focused on the district of old Berlin, where 9883 people in 3506 dwellings housing were investigated. The study describes the demographics of old people, beggars, and welfare renters. Like Noack’s study, \textit{Die Wohnungverhältnisse der Berliner Altstadt} describes the living conditions in gruesome detail, highlighting decay and disease, moisture, rotten floors, mouse and rat infestations, mold and so on. Because half of the tenants were single or married without children, it would be feasible to create alternative living spaces for them, such as single dormitories or nursing homes. Based on their findings, the authors conclude that slum clearance (\textit{Sanierung}), although impossible to implement because of the economic crisis, would be the most appropriate measure, since the buildings themselves were not seen to possess architectural merit or historical value.\(^{142}\)

Bourgeois reformers saw the tenements not only as sites of poverty and poor health, but also as places where dissatisfied workers could congregate in large numbers [Illustration 6]. The menace of worker unrest motivated both conservative and progressive discussions from the mid to late 19\textsuperscript{th} century: “While often promoted with reference to scientific studies about the benefits to public health, these new planning initiatives also responded to persistent fears, fuelled by mass
demonstrations, antiwar rallies, and the Russian Revolution, that the problems of the tenements could, literally and figuratively, spill into the streets and bring a city economy to a standstill.\textsuperscript{143}

It was through the correct organization of space that social issues could best be dealt with. The discourses around the urban poor and their everyday spaces, rental barracks, from the mid-19th century on, and housing reform in general formulated a “paradigm of social control.”\textsuperscript{144}

Slums as a form of housing for the urban poor threatened middle class conceptions of the stable home. Because of their transient populations, these slums were not fully public spaces, nor were they exclusively private, Niethammer notes. The practice of night lodging (\textit{Schlafgängertum}) was wide-spread in Berlin and challenged the idea of the bourgeois familial home, since a circulating population flowed through these places. Slums, rather than being stable and secure, appeared temporary, open to transients and strangers. Thus, housing policies were introduced to manage and control the threatening accumulations of the urban poor and to secure the capitalist system: “physical deterioration and social unrest were dysfunctional to a system centered on two constants: the progress of science and the progress of capital as the promoter of the market economy, of growth, and of welfare.”\textsuperscript{145} Sanitary reforms and plans for garden suburbs as an alternative to low income housing can be contextualized within such discussions as a response to the anxieties and fears of erupting violence and revolt, fears that eventually led to visions of abandoning the urban centres.\textsuperscript{146} The critiques and discussions surrounding \textit{Mietskaserne} of mid to late 19\textsuperscript{th} century Imperial Germany continued into the Weimar years. The task is then to trace how in various ways these discussions, which often employed the polarizing rhetoric of the political right and appeals to emancipation at the same time, negotiate the emergence of the new form of housing and mass settlement, while the popularity of a single cottage as a way to house urban workers declined. Weimar housing reformers switched their attention to the outskirts and
became less inclined to consider inner city workers’ tenements as viable alternatives for working class housing.

It is important to notice, however, that the late 19th century discourse of critique, popularised and given an exemplary interpretational framework by Werner Hegemann, was not the only conversation taking place about the tenements. Tenements as a way to efficiently house the working classes began to figure in debates among architects and planners in the early 1900s, and were viewed as a desirable form of housing for urban workers. Waged against the proponents of the cottage, advocates of tenements pointed to the unaffordability of the cottage on the outskirts for workers and argued on behalf of building planned tenements in the urban centre. The architect Theodor Goecke wrote in 1890: “No, the worker prefers to be surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the city; he enjoys the excitements of the streets; he takes fullest advantage of the size of the community in satisfying his needs; and it is here that he finds his pleasures.”

In the writings of James Hobrecht, author of the famous 1862 expansion plan of Berlin, which included vast green spaces and broad boulevards, high density multi-story Mietskasernen were presented as beneficial. They offered the possibility to improve sanitary conditions by introducing sewers, for example, and represented a “constructive social environment” allowing the social mix of upper and lower classes. According to Hobrecht, a social mix of the poor with the more affluent would foster interdependency and collectivity among the inhabitants: the more well off would help the poorer neighbours by distributing of small jobs and clothing donations while exerting a “moral influence on the poor.” For Niethammer and other critics, Hobrecht’s thought belongs to the body of literature that is merely suspicious of poverty as “a state of deficiency.” In the more contemporary, primarily sociological, literature overviewed by Claus Bernet, however, a critical approach bypassing the almost automatic equation of Mietskasernen
with impoverishment emerges. A number of studies, aiming to avoid customary descriptions of “horrendous living conditions,” focus on the archival materials that documented everyday life in Mietskaserne. What becomes clear from such work is that working class people themselves often defended their way of living, on the grounds of social networks and interactions that the tenements provided. These insights will be useful in thinking about Hufeisensiedlung as simultaneously a site of disciplinary control and everyday practices that related variously to control mechanisms.

Unlike during the 19th century, when workers’ housing had been largely the concern of various groups such as health and hygiene specialists, economists, and land reformers, during the Weimar years working class housing entered the realm of comprehensive city planning. Such comprehensive centralization, as Christine Boyer has shown, is defined by a yearning for rational planning schemes to tame chaotic uncontrolled development by advancing a vision of a city as a “perfectly organized spatial order.” What we see, in comparison to earlier discussions, is that such depictions provide legitimization for the new form of settlement, mass housing (Siedlung). It is customary for the Weimar reformers to frame their arguments in terms of opposition of the planned and orderly development to chaotic and unregulated growth of Mietskaserne. In such interpretations, rental barracks present the threat of the constantly moving masses to the orderly development of the cities. What becomes increasingly emphasized and singled out, especially by members of the SPD, is that the formation of Mietskaserne had represented the direct result of private capital and un-managed market forces. New developments, Siedlungen, were distinct from the older Mietskaserne precisely because they would be overseen and regulated by the state. The new focus of housing policies would become suburban building rather than the clearance (Sanierung) of inner city slums.
Speaking in favour of tenement high-density living meant positioning the new housing settlements in direct opposition to Mietskaserne. It was common for arguments for Neues Bauen planners and architects to emphasize the benefits of decentralized settlements by distinguishing them from Mietskaserne. The way Weimar housing reformers did this was to repeatedly accentuate the link between poverty and Mietskaserne. The arguments made in the systematic inquiries, studies, and campaigns of the mid 19th century health reformers were mobilized in order to re-produce the stereotype of the Mietskaserne as unhealthy. As Wilhelm Lübbert wrote in 1926, “The over-filled dwellings are not only harmful for children, they are harmful to people, they destroy health and morality; it is better thus to build many small dwellings than fewer large ones.”

In Margarete Bressem’s “Der Mensch und die Wohnung,” written for Martin Wagner’s magazine Wohnungswirtschaft, for example, the concern with clean air re-emerges. Tuberculosis, she argues, is a condition caused by the deprivation of the light and air in rental barracks. Directly employing “Licht und Luft” slogan of the pre-war health and hygiene reformers, and referring explicitly to a statistical study from 1886 of child mortality in Dresden that connected the figures with the floors of the flats where the children lived, Bressem concludes that the rooms in the Mietskaserne situated under the roofs (the so-called Dachwohnungen) were particularly dangerous for children’s health because of overheating in summer. Cellars too were unhealthy because of moisture and the lack of light. Whereas before WWI such texts as Bressem’s had been aimed at introducing sanitary regulations and advocated putting breaks on urban growth, in a different political situation such texts serve a different function: to legitimize decentralization and to advocate the building of Siedlungen. Bressem argues not only for the decentralization of housing but also of industry, supporting her argument with contemporaneous studies that establish connections between the time of transportation to
work (which requires many people to take long walks to the train station) and the health of workers. The focus becomes the relations between “the location of the housing development to the workplaces of the tenants,” described in terms of efficiency and productivity of the labour force. Decentralization of the industry will shorten the commute, which will result in fewer missed workdays as a cause of sicknesses.

Thus, Weimar housing reformers’ presented on one hand a harsh critique of Mietskaserne. On the other hand, Weimar arguments against Mietskaserne were highly selective and often singled out certain positive relations and characteristics, such as those associated with Mietskaserne by Hobrecht, (for example, its mixed social structure and the functional arrangement of living spaces), and transplant these positive aspects to the modern form of Gross-Siedlung. The new Siedlungen are presented as a radically new modern space precisely because they are planned, rational, and supplied by centralized conveniences and transportation. In contrast to the tenements that had emerged from an atmosphere of chaotic development, speculation, and so on, the benefits of the Gross-Siedlungen were described in terms of the cleanliness of their facades, the spaciousness of the streets, and the “air, light and sun” in the flats and in children’s playgrounds. Only through the creation of “large, light and friendly dwellings,” argued municipal building officer Johannes Grobler, could the social conditions of the workers be improved: “If we create healthy dwellings, dwellings where people feel good, so they will live longer and will save the state not only hospital costs. . . but also the alcoholism will decline . . . as people will feel less inclined to leave the house. So will the productivity rise for people who wake up in the morning newly refreshed.” The author concludes by explicitly tying provision of better housing to governing strategies of the state of managing its underclasses: “And isn't it in the interests of the state to train its citizens in order and cleanliness?” But how
will the workers be able to afford these new apartments? It was through new rational building methods that the building costs and rents could be lowered, argued Gustav Böss, Berlin mayor and supporter of Martin Wagner: “The form of the single-family house was no longer adequate: only *Gross-Siedlung* makes possible central warm water, laundry, a kindergarten and playground with a sunbath, rooms for bicycles, motorbikes and automobiles.”

Therefore, the “new” working classes also needed to be instructed in ways to live and inhabit the new spaces. Böss followed his discussion of the new form of workers’ housing with an appeal for reforming the everyday practices of tenants: “It is not enough to satisfy the need for housing; the culture of living (*Wohnkultur*) should be raised. The lower classes want to be led through out of the bottom. This is not simply ethical, but a national task . . . . The private capitalist would like to have housing with the high rents. To raise the ‘*Wohnkultur*’ is not in his interests, but in the interests of the community . . . . The building is no longer the case for private capital only. It is not enough for the municipality to carry out land and transport policies, but it also has to maintain its own building policy.” One obstacle to the reform of working class tastes, a project that is not understood as involving a top-down approach but as emerging from workers’ desire, is that the interiors of modern, spacious apartments could turn out to look just as crammed and cramped as *Mietskaserne*, because of tenants’ habit of bringing their old furniture and other objects with them. As Adolf Behne wrote, “they put their knick knacks on the shelves and cabinet surfaces, they hang their loved ones’ pictures in golden frames on the wall, and most of all, they make their windows darker by putting up all these curtains, gardines, shawls and other thick drapes.” The tenant, envisioned as a worker, is in such interpretations simultaneously an object and the product of *Neues Bauen*, someone who will need to learn
through the practices of inhabiting the new flats how to be modern (I will address such recommendations in the next chapter).

Along with various propaganda pieces in the print and broadcast media, film too became a medium for transmitting such ideas and directives in modern living. Documentary films that depict and juxtapose the everyday spaces of “old” Berlin and new architecture, such as Zeitprobleme: Wie der Berliner Arbeiter wohnt (1930) by Slatan Dudow, the films of Ella Bergmann-Michel (Wo wohnen Alte Leute (1931), Fliegende Händler in Frankfurt am Main (1932), Erwerbslose kochen für Erwerbslose(1932) and others), Ernst Jahn’s Wie wohnen wir gesund und wirtschaftlich (1926), to mention some examples, depict the daily lives of the urban poor and dramatize how domestic space was involved in broader social conflicts in Weimar Germany. What is emphasized throughout these films is not simply that the new socialist domesticity will improve the material conditions of life, but that new housing acquires the added function of socially transforming humans. In this sense, housing is understood as what Russian constructivists termed a “social condenser.”

The film scholar Thomas Elsaesser argues that Wohnen und Bauen constituted a separate category of Weimar documentary film. They were made to promote the new forms of settlement, building materials and so on. To give just a few examples, the film Wie wohnen wir gesund und wirtschaftlich (“How We Live in a Healthy and Economic Way”), screened during the opening festivities for the Bauhaus Building in Dessau in 1928, cinematically juxtaposed these residential types. Part 1, “Housing Shortage” (Wohnungsnott), depicts the dirty, small and bleak yards of the rental barracks. Along with shots of kids playing with rats, the text describes the consequences of overcrowding: gossip, alcoholism, prostitution, crime. By perpetuating the link between disease and rental barracks, such images discursively construct the everyday of the
working classes and the poor in the tenements as the cause of these natural and social diseases. Disease, as well as health and order, are figured as emanating from spatial arrangements and the everyday practices of living. The second part of the film, “The New House” (Neues Haus), shows the clean bright streets of Siedlungen, with individual gardens, and emphasizes that the building block, the street and the whole Siedlung become an object of “artistic creation” in the place of a “single house.” Similarly, the film Wie wohnen Alte Leute (1931) by Ella Bergmann-Michele portrays a newly built modernist nursing home in the suburbs of Frankfurt. It employs the structure of juxtaposition that many other Weimar documentary films about housing employ, as Elsaesser emphasizes. The film about the Henry and Emma Budge retirement residence in Frankfurt begins with opening shots of dirty, dark Mietskaserne in the inner city, where elderly people are seen to be socially isolated in their dark rooms. These views are juxtaposed with bright, wide angle shots of the nursing home, where the “heroine” arrives in the taxi and is immediately greeted by friendly personnel and new neighbours. The film demonstrates modern design, with folding doors and modern furniture, but also emphasizes communal spaces (music, reading and dining halls) that are connected to the living quarters, along with apartments with balconies. By cinematically combining various activities and communal spaces, the film’s message, like the one discussed above, focuses on propagating new building types and new technologies, as well as the possibility for living with dignity in the “minimal existence” type flats (one of the architects of the project was Ferdinand Kramer, who wrote extensively on “Dwelling for Minimal Existence.”)\(^\text{163}\)

Various new urban social groups emerged, who were associated with appropriate sites, and rationality and efficiency were emphasized as the core basis for the spatial arrangement of social groups. Böss, for example, distinguishes between various categories of population by the
kinds of housing they were expected to inhabit: Siedlungen for families and married couples, dormitories for singles, and nursing homes for the elderly. A particular task of “das Neue Berlin” was the building of nursing homes to secure “a better use of available living space.” The building of dormitories for singles was expected to serve these social goals as well: for Böss, they were an efficient way to “control ‘night lodgers,’” of whom there were 47,000 in 1925. Through the designation of appropriate city spaces, housing became a mechanism (or social technology) to integrate these various groups into a whole effectively, and various groups became in turn identified as such through their relation to space.

Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner: Efficient and Communal Living

We will trace further how, in the writings of Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner, Siedlung became theorized as the most “appropriate” form to house working classes. Although both formulated the idea of Siedlung very differently, Hufeisensiedlung, a product of their cooperation, is best considered as something more than as a site of contradictory modern transformations. I am interested in tracing how the ideas about effective housing and the idea of the community and “living as a community” (Gemeinschaftsleben) is articulated in the built form and, in the next chapter, in the everyday practices of appropriation of space in Hufeisensiedlung. While architectural policies cannot be viewed apart from political developments in Weimar, the complex social, economic, and political dynamics among public building corporations, the municipal and state government, labor, planners and architects, remain largely unexamined in the studies I have found. A project of approaching the housing reform not as an (partly successful) actualization of social democratic policies, but as a field of competing interests, is worth pursuing. However, at this point I would like to see how the idea of the decentralized
settlement—Siedlung—is formulated differently by Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner and subsequently applied in Hufeisensiedlung.

Bruno Taut, a consulting architect overseeing the housing program at GEHAG, and Martin Wagner, a municipal building inspector in Berlin, as proponents of the decentralization of housing, both viewed dispersed suburban settlements as a preferential form of housing for low and middle income classes. For Wagner, as Hake’s analysis has shown, the dissolution of the city became a necessary condition for its further rational re-organization. Taut’s writings at first sight might seem simply nostalgic for small town life and the form of collectivity that was threatened by the city, while Wagner’s works can be folded in this discourse of “rationalizing” space, as he argued for Gross-Siedlungen on the grounds of economy, efficiency and austerity. As Henri Lefebvre has argued, the production of space in capitalism culminated in “abstract” space (banks, business centres, highways, airports) and urban space becomes the expression of exchange value (it is commoditized through advertising and planning). Modernist planners and architects were complicit in “abstracting” space, presenting it as neutral and apolitical, as an object, or an empty container, where diverse things and people could be placed and arranged under “the illusion of coherence.” Avant-garde painters and architects were actively participating in the production of the abstract space: “the architects and city planners offered . . . an empty space, a container ready to receive fragmentary contents, a neutral medium into which disjointed things, people and habitats might be introduced.”

As Hake asserts, however, the limitation of approaches that constantly point to the “discrepancy of urban theory and practice,” that reiterate how utopian visions usually end up as visions of managed, rationalized space, is that such approaches do not account for various radical openings that Weimar architecture and city building provided. To develop this argument
further, I would like to compare Wagner’s and Taut’s versions of the “dissolution of cities.” The only theorization of this collaboration I found is in Hake’s book. Hake describes their collaboration in terms of counterpoints and supplementary qualities and productive differences: Taut’s bold use of colour supplemented the “ascetism of Wagner’s technocratic vision”; Taut’s pacifist rhetoric complemented Wagner’s use of the language of “modern warfare” and so on.168 While we should beware of over-schematizing their differences, we can observe that Taut’s vision was in many ways radically distinct from Wagner’s rationalized city and closer to the ideas of Russian constructivist architects. Unlike Wagner, Taut did not consider dissolution to be a necessary pre-condition for a rationalized metropolis. More importantly, neither of their visions achieved dominance nor remained uncompromised in the housing estate that was actually built. As we will see in Chapter 3, in *Hufeisensiedlung* neither rationalist visions nor communal ideas were neatly translated into the built form.

Taut’s interest in modernist efficiency was everywhere subordinated to his vision of architecture as socially transformative. However, his ideas evolved over the course of his career. Taut’s thoughts on decentralization are most comprehensively presented in *Dissolution of Cities* (*Auflösung der Städte*), published in the same year as the creation of Greater Berlin (1920).169 [Illustration 7] With the city boundary expanded, the city now included former agricultural land; such incorporation required a new spatial organization. A new kind of landscape emerged, one of dispersed settlements, where the boundaries between town and country side were not defined. Taut’s argument in the book was directed against urban *Mietskaserne*: “Let them collapse, the vulgarities that were built! Stone houses create hearts of stone.”170 Like other reformers who advocated decentralization and efficient building as a means for improving social conditions for the working classes, Taut envisioned decentralized, dispersed self-sufficient communes, with
industry limited only to heavy manufacturing. His argument is an attempt to discover a form of settlement most appropriate to his vision of an anarchic classless society: “Taut's interest in decentralization is not merely founded on aesthetic and hygienic notions but is rooted in the belief that cities are by nature hieratic, that they are centers of political and economic power which draw the poor resulting in extremely stratified class system. Decentralization becomes then a requisite for creation of classless society.”

Taut, addressing the threat to communal experience of place in the modern city, is not being nostalgic for a pre-modern form of agrarian organization. He is fully aware that the communality of the rural life could not be sustained in the transfer to mass housing. Rather, his theorizations of Siedlung are attempts to formulate the idea of mass housing that would spring from communal social organization and simultaneously would foster this way of living.

Siedlung, for Taut, was a socio-political concept. As a notion, commonly translated from German as “settlement,” Siedlung means “community” for Taut, as he clarifies in his memoirs, “in the sense that the garden city movement used the term,” where the building’s function is to re-establish contact with nature through dispersion of collective settlements. For Taut, architecture enables the creation of such settlements. The model of Hufeisensiedlung echoed Taut’s earlier plans for cooperative workers’ settlements, which included central headquarters, adjacent barns, workshops and yards: “100 houses. 500 to 600 people. All work in gardens as well as in various crafts. Unity in multiplicity. A communal hall for work and community activities. Five workshops with connected areas for recreation. Work here is pleasure. Paths link the houses. . . . In mutual help and cooperation, everyone lives from the total production of the group.”

Taut’s notion of community is based on the idea of “joyous cooperative work.” Siedlung, however, in Taut’s later writings, signified a communal mode of living and not of
communal production. However, the idea of production and work is nevertheless articulated here, what is put to work here, is the space itself.\(^\text{174}\)

We can look at \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} as an attempt to give architectural shape to the idea of community. The architectural shape of \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} comes out of its social structure. As Taut reflects on \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} in 1931, the estates were originally built in a way “to correspond to various relations of community of residents “ (\textit{Bewohnerschaft}), employing the architectural form of the horse shoe (\textit{Hufeisen}), a symbol of community, to arrange the housing, around the pond of the same shape, as the visual centre of the settlement.\(^\text{175}\) The shape of the \textit{Volkshaus} (“the people’s house”), a large-scale structure suitable for stateless society, by its social functions and spatial structure, resonates here: the visual centre of the settlement, the pond and trees, is a site for social gatherings and community festivals, which centralizes communal functions in otherwise de-centralized form of settlement.\(^\text{176}\) The shape of the building reinforces its social uses. As a self-sustainable cooperative enterprise, it includes areas for leisure, agriculture, transportation: laboratories, areas for crafts and trade, bridges for transportation of grain, amusement park. In Taut’s narrative, this decentralized non-hierarchical space implicitly becomes a vehicle for societal transformation. New social relations demand new space, just as new space demands new social relations.

The horseshoe itself is integrated into the architecture of the settlement. Each flat has a balcony and each single house-family house has a garden. The dwelling is to be understood not simply as a “grouping and arrangement of rooms, but as an organism with its inner functions and outside vibrancies.”\(^\text{177}\) Employing the discourse of the “organic city,” Taut writes “especially if the house is situated in the open space there should be no sharp distinctions between inside and outside; the body of the house arises from its inner functions, not in the least, it is also
determined by the relations with building conditions of the place, with its location in relation to
the sun, garden, landscape and also neighbourhood (vicinity.)”

Behind concepts of the “outdoor space” (Aussenwohnraum) or bright colours is the idea
of productive space, not of space to be filled with objects, or passive space. The outdoor space,
for example, is seen in its productive capacities: its aim is to act against isolation and boundaries
of individual houses. The natural environment is understood not simply as gardens, loggias or
terraces, but “in city building sense of the space, as essentially the space that the house walls of
the Siedlungen close in themselves.” How the outer space is situated in relation to sun, wind, “is
not only of hygienic meaning, but also influences greatly the feelings of comfort (coziness),
tranquility, calm, harmonious peace.” Through the organization of the Aussenwohnraum, as
for example, in parks, collectivity is enabled and architecture is understood not as built structures
in space, but as producing space: “The task of architecture is the creation of the beautiful use. . . .
Architecture becomes a creator of new social forms.” The colours of which Taut was
enamored point to and call forth the visual organization and order and different colouring of
groups of houses can emphasize elements in the natural surroundings. Taut wrote: “we do not
want to build anymore any colourless houses. . . . Colour is not expensive compared to
decoration with cornices and plastics, but colour is joie de vivre (vitality). . . in the place of dirty
gray houses let’s see endlessly blue, red, yellow, green, black, white house in unbound bright
toning.”

As Taut writes in his unpublished memoirs, when Martin Wagner and he were building a
part of the Hufeisensiedlung in 1925-1926, the Berlin city office (magistrate), headed by Gustav
Böss wanted to “coerce” them to big changes, “because the opposite part built by a different
building society and architect, with its romantic sentimentalities, pointed gables, gazebos and
steep roofs, although more expensive, was more beautiful.” Taut referred to the part of Hufeisensiedlung to the east, designed by a more conservative team of architects, the parts he crossed out from the aerial shot in his book Bauen: Der Neue Wohnbau. Taut often wrote about communities employing such ambiguous terms as “community spirit,” for example. In her later work, Haag Bletter questions the dichotomy popularized by Sigfried Giedion between Expressionism, which is equated with “irrational” tendencies in art, and Neue Saklichkeit, functionalism, technology as metaphors for modernity that exclude Expressionism as “Mannerist interruption of rationalist tendencies.” Using Taut’s early theoretical works, which customarily are assigned by art critics (at least in the 1980’s) to expressionist visionary utopias and fantasies, along with his later housing estates projects that are usually described in the language of functionalism, she argues that the continuities between expressionism and new objectivity are found not so much on “a stylistic, formal level,” but in “underlying social convictions.” Often, the studies of modern architecture tend to focus on the Bauhaus and most prominent architects and not on housing, “which was one of Germany’s greatest social contributions” and such discourse for Bletter stems exactly from Giedion’s model. What is useful in Haag Bletter’s argument is that Taut’s ideas of community and Siedlung need to be contextualized within continuities of expressionist themes and discourses.

In his 1924 article, tellingly entitled “How the community spirit embodies itself in the building,” Taut argues that the practical aim to create healthy and liveable dwellings is dependent upon social practices of community. Siedlung Falkenberg is for Taut an example of the “community spirit” (Genossenschaftsgeist), because the space is arranged in a way to invite social interactions. Realized in its yearly festivals, which engage, from the one side, the tenants who organize them (children and women, notices Taut) and from the other side, the guests from
Berlin. Such celebrations take place in the courtyard, which for Taut is a “building form” of this “lively spirit.” In “Genossenschaftsarchitektur” (1926) Taut speaks of the nature of architect’s work: “the basis of the cooperative system and the spiritual content of the collective is the communal spirit. Here is one of the most beautiful tasks of the architect, because here, accordingly, something over-individual and therefore completely spiritual must be embodied. I have repeated many times, that the spiritual content of every artwork is established through actual (intrinsic) spiritual driving powers (impetuses), that is, through producing the new and therefore constructive ideas of the time.” For Taut, it should be clear that “today the spirit producing the new lives in the workers’ movement and its yet to be produced cultural ideals.”

By employing expressionist rhetoric to describe how Siedlungen embody and express communal spirit, Taut walks the line between aestheticism and a commitment to social ideas, and carves out space outside of the discourse of rationalization so prevalent in Martin Wagner’s and others’ writings. Taut is not opposed at all to rationalized methods in building construction. As we will see further, he developed ideas about female rationalized labour in the kitchen and widely celebrated them in Bauen der Neue Wohnbau and Frau als Schöpferin. But what emerges in his writings on Siedlungen is the idea of productive space, but not in the same way that Wagner envisions it, by “squeezing” the most use value out of it. Shape, arrangements of indoor and outdoor spaces, colours of the exteriors and interiors all actively produce new everyday spaces and new social relations (constructivism).

In his later writings of the 1930’s Taut re-interprets the idea of Siedlung, emphasizing the way of living based on the use of collective facilities (in 1932, once the burgeoning political influence of the Nazi party was taking hold in Germany, Taut would go to work in Soviet Russia). In a publication of the Garden City Society (Gartenstadtbewegung) in 1931, Taut spoke
of how the lives of tenants are strongly influenced by the conveniences of Siedlung, in its combination of the “practical nature” of laundries, centralized water and heating, etc., and of new social relations prompted by “still embryonic beginnings of cultural communal facilities” that for Taut signal the new meaning of the Siedlung.\textsuperscript{190} Regarding the size of a large settlement, Taut stresses that the size is “not an act of rational construction and administration, but more so as an imperative to organize the relations between the community and individual. Under organization” we understand the condition of the society, where all similar needs are fulfilled communally, centrally, collectively, in a way that a separate individual need will achieve a bigger scope . . . . In this definition of the large settlement not only central laundries, nurseries, kindergartens and others are contained, but above all the provision and nourishment should be arranged communally. . . . Above all the functions that are traditionally assigned to one’s own habitation could be substituted with common libraries, exercise-and presentations-rooms, with peoples’ houses. . . . The problem should be stated not as ‘how can we make smaller dwellings?’ but rather ‘How can the life of the community and an individual become richer (more fertile) and more productive?’\textsuperscript{191} Unlike Wagner’s theorizations, Taut’s ideas can not be neatly folded into the discourse of “abstracting space.”

Whether in his earlier expressionistic writings on de-centralized cities or in his later ones, Taut’s understanding of the Siedlung rests on a view of the interdependency of space and social relations. In Auflösung der Städte, city spaces, which for Taut reproduced hierarchies and inequalities, needed to be deliberately rethought. Taut goes on to formulate that using and inhabiting buildings themselves become practices of social transformation. In this way, he participates from afar in the constructivist discussions unfolding in the USSR, and not so much in the efficient building discussions.\textsuperscript{192}
To approach Martin Wagner’s ideas of city planning, scholars such as Sabine Hake, David Frisby, and Ludovica Scarpa employ Manfredo Tafuri’s argument. Tafuri extensively researched Wagner’s housing policies during his tenure as the director of the Berlin city planning office and, for him, Wagner represented a kind of technocratic city planner, a social engineer, who advocated ideas of technological rationalization in city planning and housing construction. Wagner widely promoted new rationalized methods of building construction. As Barbara Miller Lane writes, Bruno Taut called him for this reason “just an engineer.”

In his numerous writings, Wagner presented his urban vision, wherein the construction of the new housing would be sped up by rationalized building methods. As a solution to the housing problem, a rationalized building enterprise emerges in Wagner’s writings. The centralization of the public transit system, “with the city taking over all bus and rail systems, except for the S-Bahn, in 1920,” as well as the political climate of stabilization (1924-1929) formed the conditions under which Wagner developed his visions and projects of international functionalist New Berlin, which were to be achieved by rationalized and centralized planning and building; this signalled management of social issues through space. Rationalized (mechanized) production in building, as well as the shrinking of the bureaucratic apparatus of planning (fewer people to deal with issues more effectively), was, for Wagner, the way to attack the housing problem.

As Tafuri first argued, what is emphasized in Wagner’s writings on socialization of the building industries (Sozialisierung), is that “the free market in no way conflicts with the socialization of individual enterprises.” In “The Socialization of Building Activity” (1919) Wagner explicitly argues against nationalization and the municipal control of the construction industries and trades. Instead, he advocates that rationalized methods be applied in socialized enterprises. The socialized construction industry is envisioned by Wagner in organizational
terms, as a combination of administrative management, the governing body of the industry, and the building union. Modeled after the management of stock companies, the industry should include artistic, technical, and business management (Wagner clearly identifies the functions of each branch), a governing body that included representatives of the union and the workers, and the construction union. Wagner clearly distinguishes between permanent workers and temporary labourers whose interests will be represented indirectly through elected members of the union, in order to ward off “exaggerated demands of the temporary labourers, who do not have continuing interest in the operation of the enterprise.”

For Wagner, there is no contradiction in employing unionized labour along with temporary less skilled workers or using machines instead of manual labourers to increase productivity. Thus, for Tafuri, Wagner’s work was symptomatic of the whole project of Weimar urban planning, where rationalization became a substitute for socialization, as socialist aims became subsumed by the belief in rationalized methods. What both Tafuri and Hake point to is that Wagner’s project was rather about “socialization through rationalization, with the original dream of socialism now translated into reformist strategies and administrative solutions.”

As Tafuri explains, Wagner’s proposals for socialized building enterprises in no way questioned the capitalist system of production: “The socialization advocated by Wagner is in reality an instrument, entrusted to a large degree to union management, for the control of the labour force, more than for the control of productive objectives on the part of the working class.” For Tafuri, therefore, there is nothing radical about Wagner—or, by extension, Weimar planning. We should not forget, however, that for Wagner and other advocates of rationalization, rationalized methods of production applied to the building methods were meant not simply effectiveness, but were necessary to achieve social change: the housing of low-income populations.
In “Wohnungsbau im Grossbetrieb” (1924) Wagner compares the building industry to the auto industry: just as the auto industry is a “montage,” a mechanized assembly of standardised parts, so does the building production involve the fabrication and assembly of standardised units, relying on specialized calculable labour. For Wagner and other advocates of rationalization, the process of constructing buildings became increasingly the assembly of pre-fabricated parts, or building in the “age of mechanical reproduction.” Wagner connects this role to the socialized building societies and their trusts as the only agents “to provide means by which a construction site of 500 or 100 flats can generate practical economic evidence of cheaper building through the use of new technical devices.

Hufeisensiedlung thus presented itself to Wagner largely as an experimental building site, where his preferred methods of rationalization could be applied: “The reduction of costs of Ford’s autos is not reached by the creation of some particular cheap model, but only through the most possible effective fabrication process.” It is exactly for this reason—to test out the “possibilities of cost reduction of housing construction”—that GEHAG was organized, and the first 500 apartments of Hufeisensiedlung Britz were envisioned by Wagner as a testing ground for rationalization. In “Rationalisierter Wohnungsbau” (1924), Wagner compares housing construction to Ford’s model of the assembly line in an automobile factory, and to the automobile industry as a whole. Just as an automobile model will not be put into serial production before the pro and cons of the price reduction are tested, writes Wagner, so in the construction of housing, cost and expense assessments must be made and tested. In “Gross-Siedlungen” (1926) Wagner describes the advantages of serial building (Serienbau) in terms of economic cost-efficiency as measured most of all by a concentration of labour and utilities on one site. Only a large scale settlement, Gross-siedlung, writes Wagner, allows for
“concentration of building on fewer large-scale building sites,” as well as the use of centralized utilities of gas, canalisation, water, electricity and transportation. In sum, it is more efficient to build in one place than in several. Using *Hufeisensiedlung* as an example of “serial building,” Wagner calculates the costs of the “average” dwelling of 63 square meters of living space by naming categories involved: net building costs, land value, administrative costs, and so on. Not only could the building process itself be rationalized, but rationalization would extend into the administration of the building activity (what Wagner calls “Regiekosten,” using a cinematic metaphor of “directing”) which he further divides into categories of the technical, economic and artistic construction management.

In spite of Wagner and Taut’s different conceptions of *Siedlung*, for both architects the housing estate exemplified a radical break with older building methods and signalled an application of socialist policies and socialized building methods. *Hufeisensiedlung* was seen by Wagner as application and manifestation of the rationalized building technologies and for Taut as an expression of the communal way of life. Materialities of the modern urban home were coproduced in the clash and collaboration of social visionary and social engineer. In the chapters that follow, I will continue to look at how the suburban *Gross-Siedlungen* became a site not only of “articulation” of an emergent class of white collar workers, but a place of clashing class positions and tastes, of visions of community and of rationalization of construction, of directives over home decorating, itself implicated in production of the modern subjectivity.

Next, I would like to trace how, for Weimar planners and architects, housing assumes a function of constructing a new modern subject (in Foucauldian sense) through the rationalization of the domestic sphere. We have seen so far how various interventions (such as the financing and policy mechanisms of the welfare state and expert groups of modernist planners and
architects) positioned housing as a sphere of state interest and contributed to modernist production of living space. Housing reformers’ project of (heteronormative) social and spatial ordering signalled that the everyday living spaces and practices became professionalized; planners and architects could define what the everyday life would look like. This was not a top down imposition, however. Some regulations were more strictly defined while some recommendations, especially about the interiors of domestic spaces, had a prescriptive character, taking the form of advice and encouragement, rather than mandates. How did these recommendations aim to reorganize everyday practices, when entering the sphere of the everyday life? Finally, I will look at Hufeisensiedlung to emphasize socio-spatial practices not from the point of view of resistance to authoritative dictates, but from the point of view of negotiation, emphasizing improvisational moments, people reacting to new conditions by re-fashioning their “old” ways.
CHAPTER 3. The Reform of Domestic Space and the Rationalization of Everyday Life:

“Wohnung für Existenzminimum”

“Living functions that correspond to the human organism are not clearly divided in the living arrangements: housework, living and sleeping, these three functions intersect and cross one another today . . . Show me how you live, and I will tell you who you are!”

Bruno Taut, “Die Jugend muss bauen” (1927)

Influential city planners in Weimar Germany were often members of the Social Democratic party (SPD) and the large building programmes that they initiated inscribed housing reform into government policies and regulations. The construction and provision of standardised flats for lower income earners became one of the most important tasks of the Weimar welfare state. For many Weimar architects, rationalized building methods, which involved mass-produced building materials and designs, were seen as the solution to the housing crisis. 207

I have already addressed briefly how Weimar planners inaugurated material forms of social control through the rationalization of space. By opposing the socially undesirable Mietskaserne with the new, bright, airy, and rationalized large settlements (Großsiedlungen), planners emphasized the modernity of Großsiedlungen. In this chapter I will further explore the rationalization of the household and address the widespread shift in planning practices towards centralized large-scale Großsiedlungen, underlining the disciplinary functions of such shifts. I will trace how housing participates in the construction of a new modern subject (in the Foucaultian sense) through the rationalization of the domestic sphere. In sum, a discourse that
relied on “analytical studies of people’s basic needs” worked to define the tenants of the new housing estates through the allocation of “minimal living space.”

Rationalization discourses conflated the planning practices usually associated with the sphere of “housing” with the everyday practices of home-making. The factory “entered” the home via new construction methods, materials, and the disciplined organization of labour as well as through a bevy of recommendations and instructions disseminated in pamphlets, household manuals, and consumer magazines. Housewives’ homemaking practices became an object of scrutiny by proponents of the new “science” of home management, by planners and architects interested in the prospects of modernization. In this chapter, we will look at the ways in which the transformation of domestic space and of housekeeping practices entered into the complex constellations of modern discourses about the welfare state, nationalism, hygiene, and consumerism, as the politics of design intersected with national economy. Typical of these tendencies are Bruno Taut’s inquiries in “Die Jugend muss bauen!” (1927) about the choices that Germans would be compelled to confront in the interests of efficiency: “should the German people haul forward all the trash of a ‘plush sofa’ kind of coziness, a ‘nice sitting room’ (Gute Stube) used only on birthdays . . . or should the newly built dwelling in its maximum purposeful use fulfill all important human needs?” Taut’s emphasis on purpose and efficiency is similar to the critiques of other housing reformers, who targeted the living arrangements of poorer populations, and aimed to change the “habits of the masses.” Often, working class dwellings had been arranged in such a way as to include underused “cold grandeur” living rooms (kalte Pracht) with plush furniture and heavy curtains, in an attempt to imitate bourgeois tastes. Taut frames his call for functional living arrangements in terms of national urgency, encouraging Germany to catch up with the rest of the world (“what in other countries have already been
overcome”). His article asks young people, precisely because they have not yet been able to accumulate much “furniture or knick-knacks,” to assume the role of “pioneers” in order to change “the ideas of living of the German people” (die Begriffe des Deutschen Volkes im Wohnen): “These young people once they settle must create new dwellings . . . which are usable at best, that is, created for actual uses . . . The beginning and the end of every culture lies in the everyday life of the individual and those affiliated with him.”

The new housing became an “instrument for instruction of modern lifestyle.” Consequently, by tracing the ways in which the home became a site of intervention (through the more or less straightforward directives and recommendations issued by Taut and other architects, planners and housing reformers via publications and films), I will emphasize in what follows the particularities of the models of rationalization. Such an approach necessitates attention to the multiple trajectories formulated by various groups of housing reformers. My aim, in part, is to re-focus discussions of modernization away from the “diagnostic” concerns of whether modernist architecture failed to fulfill the radical promise of social transformation.

In the following two chapters we will see how the idea of “minimal existence” (borrowed from nutrition science) figured in the discourses of city planners and architects and in actually built housing estates. Following Foucault’s lead, what interests me throughout are continuities—elements that persist throughout several discourses—and tracing how “elements organized in one discursive formation . . . figure in another.” For Foucault, to talk about continuities and repetitions means that what becomes important is not “the form or content of a concept, but the principle of their multiplicity and dispersion.”

Consequently, we will see examples of how the idea of the rationalization of labour, developed in the factory, became applied to the domestic sphere, and how the German
appropriation of Fordism called into question the emerging discourse of home as primarily a site of consumption. Such a re-application of concepts from one sphere to another is not a unidirectional process, of course. Once put into practice, ideas and norms are constantly being modified, and so are the practices in a constant process of mutual and reciprocal redefinition. Accounting for the ways in which disciplinary techniques and norms operate on the ground, for example, Jacobs and Cairns argue that home itself needs to be looked at as “a process of mediation whereby a household encounters wider society.” Thus, while the content of the concept has not changed that much, a Foucaultian approach will highlight the mechanisms of formation of this concept in a different “system of dispersion”—the home.

What happens during such traffic of ideas when the language of rationalization and production is applied to domestic realm? Home economy courses advocated the application of the categories of “scientific management” in the kitchen (at the expense of centralized housekeeping facilities such as communal kitchens, for example). Such a professionalization of housework signalled that the kitchen emerged as a site of female unpaid efficient work. The measurement of human worth (in so many cubic feet, so much light, etc.) became inevitably embedded within the gendered spatialities of housekeeping. Additionally, situating “minimal living” at various locations (CIAM in Frankfurt, kitchens, Hufeisensiedlung in Berlin) allows me to approach rationalization as a process that produces its own spatialities. In summary, rather than simply emphasising the way in which the “factory” infiltrated the domestic via application of the management methods and labour practices, I would like to re-center home as a site of these various productions.
**Theorizing the Rationalization of Home**

As discussion of Martin Wagner’s writings on “serial building” has shown, SPD vision of efficiency and rationalization of construction as a way to address and solve housing crisis was very much shaped by Ford’s introduction of the assembly line as a method of efficient production. Taylorism, with its emphasis on the expert figure and control of worker’s movements and performance at least provoked suspicion and often signalled exploitation within the SPD circles.²¹⁶ As Mary Nolan emphasizes, “one of the most striking characteristics of the new discourse on the home and consumption was its wholesale adoption of the language of production . . . Proponents of household rationalization saw the home as an integral part of the national economy, and precisely because of this, argued that rationalization was both desirable and possible.”²¹⁷

“Opening up” the sphere of the private home for these interventions and for public enquiry re-positioned the home as a sphere of production (as in the application of the management strategies in the factories and offices), and of consumption. In the SPD vision, the modernization of domestic space became viewed and implemented as a strategy for the German welfare state to meld together the home and the national economy. But what did modernization/rationalization actually mean in terms of everyday activities and actual living spaces? In what particular ways did the German project of rationalization link the private household to the national economy?

In her study of the influence of American model of industrialization on Germany, Nolan demonstrates how Weimar Social Democrats adopted the Fordist doctrine (increased production will lead to increased consumption and vice versa), but in a particular way: “consumption and household technology had merely a ‘subordinate role’ to play in the German vision of
In large part, this was because living conditions in Germany were at the time rather sparse. In contrast to the US, in 1928 only 45 percent of Berlin homes had electricity. 44 percent had lights, 56 percent had electric irons, 28 percent had vacuum. In the early 1930’s, Erich Fromm surveyed the living conditions of the working classes and described the domestic spaces that the modernist architects aimed to reform. As Fromm writes, “Living conditions can basically be described as poor. Only a third of the respondents had a room with a bed for each family member, while 28 percent of households did not even possess a bed for each of its members. Furnishings, however, were more luxurious than living conditions would have led one to expect. . . Only 9 percent of respondents did not own more than basic furnishing necessities such as chairs, table, washstand, cupboard and occasionally a sewing machine or a clock. The great majority, however, also possessed bookcases, shelves and sometimes even a desk.”

Rationalization in the absence of technological aid to the housewife was made into a virtue by such publications as The Handbook of Rationalization: “One often encounters the view that . . . household rationalization is only possible with the help of technical appliances. . . A household that is technically equipped in the most complete way is worthless if the spirit (Geist) that rules it fails.” Thus, Nolan summarizes, the Social Democratic vision of household reform remained “abstract,” devoid of recommendations or demands for modern appliances and focused more on applying of rationalized techniques to housework. Rationalization was not considered to be a key to class mobility, nor simply a means to a better life. The German version of household rationalization had very little to do with the consumption of new household appliances. Rather, the understanding of rationalization as a duty and necessity stemmed from the idea that the home was an integral part of national economy, and that increased productivity (in the place of increased consumption) should be promoted in order to restore the German
In short, the home as a site of rationalized production becomes a tool for the state to manage capitalist development. Yet, framing the project of rationalization as a largely SPD initiative underemphasizes competing claims over the production (and constraining) of an object (and subject) of household reforms—the housewife, and, crucially, the spaces she occupied.

How exactly was rationalized housekeeping to restore German economy? Dolores Hayden points to the contradictions embedded in the project of rationalization. The very idea of applying concepts of scientific management to the housework (such as Christine Frederick’s interpretation of Taylor’s ideas in *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home*, 1920) was a “logical impossibility:” the production work at the factory involved division and specialization of labour while the housewife’s work involved “multitasking”, performing a variety of activities at once, “serving as executive and worker simultaneously” Perhaps because of this, household rationalization as a concept was “highly ambiguous, at once progressive and reactionary, empowering and controlling, modern and traditional. The discourse of rationalization of the home sphere in Germany distinguished itself by an “unquestioning endorsement of economic efficiency as the highest goal.” Among various interest groups (housewives’ associations, SPD reformers), rationalization had an almost sacrificial character; it was not about consumption, but was conceived of as a duty, essential for improve national economy. Nolan’s framework is useful for situating some modernist architects’ and planners’ versions of rationalization within the “austere” model of rationalization. When rationalization becomes tied to a national project of restoring the economy, the working class household becomes framed as “inefficient.” Consequently, the older moralizing language of social reform is replaced by the jargon of scientific management: “Disorder, dirt, and
inefficiency were no longer insults to middle-class values but objectively measurable dangers to the national economy and polity.”

The working class household was not the exclusive object of household reform, however. Martina Hessler, for example, questions Nolan’s claim about the “subordinate” status of consumerism and technology within rationalization initiatives in German households. In contrast to the SPD, the Imperial Federation of Housewives’ Associations (RDH) organized during WWI by middle-class housewives did not advocate for rationalization instead of household appliances. Rather, along with other groups, they actively promoted the use of electrical appliances in the kitchen, emphasizing “electrical appliances as an emblem of modernity.” As various political and industrial interests and experts became involved in efforts to rationalize home spaces, the promotion of consumer goods and appliances depended in no small part on the audience being solicited, on whether it was working class or white collar and middle class families that were targeted.

Such “opening up” of the home to public attention began to occur increasingly after 1914, when the German home became a site of intervention by “women’s organizations, industry, and the state, in the form of home economics education or attempts to change consumers’ preferences.” Moreover, these various groups of experts interacted among each other. “Housewives’ groups worked together with architects, government officials, city planners and interior decorators to design new public housing and promote ‘reformed’ home décor for the middle and working classes.” Such alliances were sometimes constituted among members with different political views and approaches to housework. Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky and other modern architects collaborated with the Imperial Federation of Housewives’ Association, for example, a group that promoted the role of the good housekeeper for women, even though
Schütte-Lihotsky disagreed with such middle-class views of gender. As Nancy Reagin shows, housewives’ associations, among the more conservative organizations within the Weimar women’s movement (which emerged as the largest force of the women’s movement by the end of the war of 1918), advocated for rationalization “fused with economic nationalism.” The efforts of the housewives’ associations made daily tasks of housekeeping inseparable from right wing nationalism and conservative social policies. These housewives groups were skeptical of mass production, as small retailers and artisans constituted the support base for conservative parties, and many of these women were married to small businessmen. Endorsing the consumption of the local produce, housewives established a firm link between the individual out shopping and the national economy, and promoted as well as the ideal of thrift.

Thus, though they tended to have very different social and economic aims than the SPD, housewives accordingly were likewise instrumental in re-scaling the private household as part of the national economy through rationalized housekeeping. The ideal of domesticity propagated by the housewives’ associations, however, was distinctly bourgeois and the achievement of this ideal was well beyond the means of rural housewives or even the lower middle class. This does not mean, however, that working class quarters somehow became exempt from various consumer and governmental directives. Moreover, it was the working class household that was most often framed as an object of housing reform and often as a target of attacks. In the beginning of the twentieth century, domestic science courses were introduced for bourgeois as well as for working class girls and women: “Domestic science for the lower classes recognized that working-class housewives could not afford all the accoutrements of a bourgeois household, certainly, but still attempted to instill the norms of domestic cleanliness, order, and thrift across class lines using courses, advice literature, the work of housewives’ organizations, and the more
informal mechanisms of peer pressure and social control.” For middle and upper class women, modernization was taken to be a voluntary enterprise; they were subjects of modernity. The working class was to be enlisted; they were understood in these discourses to be its objects. With the increasing feminization of the workplace and leisure, the rationalization of domestic work was used as a tool to instruct and at the same time, to empower women, and not always necessarily through consumption of household appliances. The kitchens, in particular, arranged in a “rational” manner, elicited distinct forms of conduct.

**The Rationalization of Home: the Second International Congress of Modern Architecture, Frankfurt am Main**

Approaching German modernist architects’ and planners’ projects of household rationalization, most historians, questioning the potential of architecture to enact social change in general, indict it for its failure to provide genuine possibilities of social transformation, lamenting the innate conservatism of such directives. Many researchers point to the fact that it was bourgeois living ideals that were being established, formulated, and then imposed by architects on those people living in the new buildings. Numerous home shows and exhibitions designed spaces that would appeal to the emergent affluent middle class consumer and, unlike housewife associations or SPD reformers, modernist architects pitched the reforms of the domestic space not in terms of necessity, but as a matter of choice. For example, the 1927 Werkbund exhibition “The Dwelling” (“Die Wohnung”) in Stuttgart and a 1930 exhibit in Paris exposed the contradiction between the desire for social reform and the obviously bourgeois taste and material culture of the propagated “new living:” although organized with the low and middle class in mind, the architects’ visions were more targeted toward the white collar workers and
Modernist housing “reflected a reformist attempt to displace bourgeois domestic culture (and its emulation by working-class aspirants) with an invented realm of distinction that was iconoclastic in design and egalitarian in character.” Home shows propagated an idea of austerity and simplicity, but as Castillo’s study convincingly shows, this minimalist décor and design was presented as a compelling aesthetic choice.

Along with classed and gendered attempts by various interest groups on the left and on the right alike to “rationalize”—regulate and redefine—housekeeping practices, the discourses around efficient use, the studies of the working class living conditions, and so on all aimed to formulate the precise kind of living space that most adequately corresponded to the current conditions of material scarcity. How much light, air, furniture, decorations and, foremost, space was necessary to lead a dignified everyday existence? Discussions of standardized spaces emphasized the formulation of a living “minimum.” Into the highly contested terrain of the home space, thus, “austerity” came to the forefront of the discussion, via conferences, home shows, the architectural press, home manuals, and the discourses of politicians and architects. The public housing estate was of particular importance as it became both the site of and the means by which this category was reconfigured (reproduced) in a very particular way, as a category of “minimal existence.” The rationalization of design (better sunlight, better ventilation, etc.) and the resulting variations in the built form came to be promoted as a more desirable way of living. Various magazines, books design shows and films provided recommendations for ways to decorate the house according to an “appropriate” domestic material culture, in the disciplinary sense of instruction of modernist lifestyle. These texts carefully and variously promoted the purchase of modernist furniture and objects and the
orchestration of domestic space, trying to formulate what a stylish “minimal living” might look like, as the residents of the new housing estates were allocated “minimal living space”.

In this section, my focus will be on the multifold ways in which the sometimes contradictory and sometimes complementary visions discussed above, folded and generally found (“worked”) their way into the home space, via the formulation of guidelines and norms. Proponents of the application of rationalized building methods, drawing on the model of standardized production, focused on the economic aspects of the household, viewing standardization foremost as a source of savings. The formulation of guidelines and types for standardized furniture and fixtures and floor plans for the smallest possible dwelling (Kleinstwohnung) were assumed to be the goal of rationalization.

Savings in building construction could also be achieved through the standardization of the seemingly “unproductive” intellectual work of architects, construction workers and managers, legal and insurance parties. Technical and business costs might be reduced by introducing industry-wide building norms, by the expansion of machine production of parts and a consequent reduction in handwork, and by the standardization of building materials and parts.240 These savings can then be channelled into the expanded production of standardized building materials such as doors or windows. Although “minimal living” might not always be explicitly mentioned in such texts, the formulation of standards is envisioned implicitly as a way to realize inexpensive as well as better, more humane ways to house. The Siedlung form with small row houses attached to one another became to be understood as not only the best but in fact the only possible way to overcome “housing problem.” Not only did such housing allow tenants to save on utility costs (water, gas, electricity) and allow builders to keep costs down by avoiding building “costly outer walls,” but it was seen as the key to providing better living condition,
making sun and greenery accessible. In the house with the living space contained into “the size of one room in pre-war villas, everything for comfortable living of a family can be set up, in a better and more purposeful manner than with old, customary furniture.”  

“Furniture in new forms” designed by Frank Schuster and Ferdinand Kramer of the firm “Hausrat, Gmbh” created by municipal centre for the unemployed in Frankfurt. How did these industrial approaches (among architecture and planning practitioners) to the formulation of norms as the main way to satisfy the housing need of emergent urban populations find their way into actual housing designs? To answer this, we will look in more detail how these norms were formulated and how they became physically expressed in housing designs of Hufeisensiedlung in the next chapter.

Minimal dwelling, as Ingeborg Beer argues, was a “creation of the crisis,” a direct consequence of worsening economic conditions during the early 1930’s. In this interpretation, architects, by appealing to sociological and biological justifications for reduction of living space argued for this measure as a “remedy” to social conditions while it was created by these very social conditions.  

In other words, by perpetuating a “biological” rhetoric, architects became implicit in rhetorically obscuring concepts, as the economic conditions that necessitated smaller living spaces were shunted to the background and minimal living framed as a solution and not as a consequence. While this vision underlay most of the talks and panel at the CIAM Congress, we might consider how exactly the economic situation figured in the discussions surrounding production of minimal space.

The city of Frankfurt occupies a special place in the geography of minimal living and of Neues Bauen more broadly. The architect Ernst May, the head of the city planning department, was politically backed by the SPD mayor Ludwig Landmann. The extent of May’s power was considerable: his office was responsible for the consideration of municipal and federal building
loans’ applications and had “full authority over the building code officials (Baupolizei),” as well for the design and supervision of the municipal housing. His contemporary, architect Ferdinand Kramer recollects this centralization of power: “In Frankfurt, in 1925, as head of the City Council, Ernst May took over all the departments that dealt with construction, real estate, estimates, building supervision, parks and verdant areas, in order to implement his idea of a new city, of a ‘new kind of residential life.’ This was a one-time opportunity, a propitious confluence of circumstances, publicized under the rubric ‘The New Frankfurt’ by the eponymous periodical. . . Not by accident were the offices of Adolf Meyer (construction estimates), Hans Leistikow (typography), and Kramer (typology) located next to one another in Frankfurt’s City Hall.”

In 1929, minimal dwelling was announced as the theme of the second International Congress of Modern Architecture, to be held in Frankfurt. The resulting publication, Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum, encompassed various papers given and reproduced the ground floor plans presented at the exhibition at the conference. Mapping a genealogy of minimal living by focusing mainly on CIAM Congress, however, is inevitably incomplete because as an international project, its genealogy was complex.

The formula “minimal dwelling,” while emerging at this particular economic moment, arose not merely as its product or a consequence. Neither was it an exclusively “German” phenomenon. Karel Teige, for example, credits Belgium, a “country of early industrial development” with developing minimal workers’ settlements: “The first such settlement is Bois du Luc (Hainaut), built in 1838, whereas the first English settlements came later, in 1840. An apartment in this colony consisted of two rooms and a garret, and a worker, earning at that time 1.09 francs per day, paid rent of 60 francs rent per year—that is, about 20 percent of his total wage.” Dana Simmons traces the emergence of architectural norms and standards alongside
other “minimum” categories: of wage, caloric intake in nutrition, requirements for air and light and so on, to mid-19th century France. The attempts to legally reinforce a minimum standard for living space were not successful. In workers housing, mostly concern of hygienists and philanthropists, the norm has not been enforced. However, the 14 square meter minimum of living space re-emerges in modernist architects’ writings: “They soon formed the basis for a new kind of state regulation.

Minimum architecture reached its summit in the twentieth century with the rise of the modern movement and vast state-sponsored programs for housing construction.” The genealogy of the “workers’ apartment” can be traced back to the mid-19th century hospital building studied in detail by Foucault, with its “discrete and repeated” divisions of space. These earlier experiments in minimal living, however, were not addressed at the Congress. Instead, the specifically contemporary nature of the minimal apartment was emphasized.

The apparatus of minimal living that was mobilized at CIAM’s Congress (the questionnaire to the participants, papers presented at the conference, floor plans presented at the exhibit and the resulting book publication) foreclosed the possibility of acknowledging its complex genealogy, emphasizing instead that minimal living was a uniquely modern, albeit international, phenomenon. The conference opened on “Black Thursday,” the day that the US stock market crashed, in October 1929. As a result, the formulation of minimal standards was viewed according to a spectrum of understandings. Some saw minimal living as a solution to the economic crisis, others stressed the ways in which it accommodated the unfolding economic processes. In distinct ways, Walter Gropius’s and Ernst May’s visions of minimal living prioritized the economy as the primary underlying cause for such buildings. While thinking about how the domestic sphere became a site of intervention of centralized planning and various
directives, I want as well to emphasize the particularities of the models of rationalization as new minimal housing became an “instrument for instruction of modern lifestyle,” and at the same time, de-emphasize perhaps the doctrinal influence by pointing to the inconsistencies in formulating such norms. As with various and often contradictory projects of household rationalization reviewed above, discussions among architects and planners, in spite of their programmatic aspects, point to different variations, rather than to a grand univocal formulation of the normative ideal of “Existenzminimum.” The final part of this chapter will approach Hufeisensiedlung by the way of considering how the space was lived in practical ways by inhabitants, and not simply as a reaction to various directives.

At CIAM, Walter Gropius, a former director of the Bauhaus school, presented the keynote address, underscoring the sociological basis for the minimal living. Advocating limiting domestic living space, Gropius writes: “Just as it was formerly customary to overestimate the value of food calories in comparison with that of vitamins, many people nowadays erroneously regard larger rooms and larger apartments as the desirable aim in dwelling design.” Certainly, there is an intention in the writings to provide subsistence wage earners with an efficient and healthy dwelling. But what we will see is that the calculated needs and requirements also referred to an average or regular person. Such a “minimal” subject (and her or his needs) was produced.

Gropius’ ideas for minimal dwelling were grounded in the Darwinist theory of the German sociologist Franz Müller-Lyer. As Gropius summarized, Müller-Lyer’s “The Main Stages of the Development of Mankind” argued that human society evolves in stages: from tribalism, to the family, to the individual. Ultimately, human social organization will further develop into “the future era of co-operatives and communal law.” Accepting Müller-Lyer’s
proposition about the dissolution of the family, Gropius combines on the one hand enthusiasm about the welfare’s state ability to manage capitalism while at the same time rejecting the family as no longer a relevant socio-economic unit. Gropius defines a “minimal dwelling” as the smallest possible dwelling based upon “the elementary minimum of space, air, light and heat required by man in order that he be able to fully develop his life functions without fully experiencing restrictions due to his dwelling, i.e., a minimum modus vivendi in place of a modus non moriendi.”

Such a dwelling represents for him foremost a historical necessity, a form of habitation corresponding to the trends in society towards the dissolution of families. Engaging a model of periodization allowed Gropius to link the economy to the emergence of new forms of habitation.

With the increased rates of industrialization and as populations were moving into cities, the family, “losing its importance as an economic unit of production,” splits into “smaller units” of individuals. The state assumes many formerly familial functions such as children’s education and care for the elderly. Corresponding to the “new era of nomad individuals” is a new kind of dwelling, a “rented apartment” for increasingly mobile populations. The biological and physiological needs are what determine the “standard person” of the minimal dwelling: “establishing an elementary minimum of space, air, light and heat.” For Gropius, the role of CIAM is to determine and establish these norms. It is a task for architects and planners and not for bureaucrats: “We must attempt to establish minimum standards for all countries, based on biological facts and geographic and climatic conditions. However, present-day minimum requirements of apartment hunters, which are a result of impoverishment, should not serve as a criterion for establishing the minimum dwelling if an absolute, biologically motivated result is to
be achieved; it would therefore be incorrect to base the program on the present income of the
average family.”

While emphasizing “scientifically” formulated physiological “rations” (of light, air and
so on) over improving conditions of living for average income earners, Gropius nevertheless
endorses his belief in welfare state’s capacity to manage capitalist development. Since “it is not
possible to satisfy the housing requirements of the masses within the framework of a free
economy,” Gropius emphasizes the need of government intervention in the form of subsidies for
private industry in order to maintain interest in “the dwelling construction by increased welfare
measures” and in order to keep rents at affordable levels. While employing Engels’ critique of
the dissolution of the family (channelled through more radical colleagues, perhaps), Gropius is
not, however, arguing for the nationalization of the building industry nor for the abolition of
private property. It is in the provision of “a rationed dwelling” for “every gainfully employed
person” where government intervention is needed. At the same time, Gropius does not deny
local variations of such minimums: buildings will be different in a “narrow city street and in a
sparsely settled suburb.” While emphasizing social trends towards women’s greater economic
independence, Gropius merely identifies collective living arrangements or what he calls a
“centralized master household” as a possibility which a “minimal” or “standard” dwelling in the
high rise apartment building would pre-figure. He writes: “It thus appears necessary to develop
the well-organized high-rise apartment building technically, incorporating in its design the ideas
of the centralized master household, i.e., to develop gradually the centralization and
specialization of the domestic work associated with the small family. Such a large apartment
house does not represent a necessary evil accompanying a period of regressive decay, but a
biologically motivated, genuine residential building type of the future for urban industrial
populations.” Thus, the initial premise and the concern stated in Gropius’ report was simultaneously to improve conditions of living for average income earners (Gropius salutes the involvement of the state in providing subsidies and other “welfare measures”), and to formulate requirements of space, air, light as “biologically” necessary: “We must attempt to establish minimum standards for all countries, based on biological facts and geographic and climatic conditions.”

One of the mechanisms used to formulate minimum standards during the Congress was a questionnaire about hygienic and economic foundations of minimal dwelling, which had been put together by Hans Schmidt and which included questions about the economic conditions of potential tenants, such as their wages and employment, requirements for light, air and space and the arrangement of rooms. It also included questions about the political views of the participants, which touched upon their assumptions about the family, economic conditions, and urban versus rural forms of settlements. The questionnaire’s aim was twofold: to establish commonalities among the living conditions of the lower income earners and to formulate standard solutions and suggestions to improve them. It also included questions about living circumstances of the potential tenants: “How many people form a household? Does the woman work in the family? Is there a centralized washing facility outside of the house?”

Questions about various rooms were arranged in categories according to activity: cooking, sleeping and washing. The questionnaire started with the questions about “the notion of the minimal dwelling.” It included such questions as: “Do you agree that the present economic model (the individual household) is acceptable as the basis for the minimal living? Which other form of economic organization would you accept? Could you demonstrate if there exist other living models? Will the new dwellings be supplied by the market or will they be built with
“What kinds of requirement should the living space have? Average size? What should the functions be? Is the living room used as a bedroom? What minimum of space and air do you believe is healthy for 1 bed (1 adult), 2 beds (2 adults), 2 ½ beds (2 adults and one child)?

This group of questions most directly was aimed at teasing out ideological and political views, but other categories also contained questions that would make political preferences explicit.

This questionnaire was an attempt to establish norms and at the same time to articulate a standardized subject of minimal dwellings. The questions about everyday activities in the kitchen were framed around modernist architects’ concerns about the role of the housewife and separation of cooking and eating areas. For example, “How many and which meals will be taken daily? Are continuous (English) or intermittent (continental) working hours common? How many meals are prepared and consumed at home? How big is the number (in percentage) of married working women? Would you like to make suggestions about consolidated cooking for many households? Is the kitchen at the same time a dining/living room?”

The questionnaire was intended to be circulated in advance to various CIAM’s groups and analyzed prior to Congress. This, however, did not happen; “in the end agreement that the minimum dwelling was in fact the correct solution to the housing problems was assumed by the Congress.”

The very formulation of everyday living conditions and activities was to be standardized as well and presented a difficulty for the Congress participants. Dana Simmons complicates such conclusions about the poor organization of CIAM. Although the questionnaire was indeed circulated in advance, the Congress faced the impossibility of providing unified answers to the questions: “CIAM Existenzminimum Congress stimulated and clarified opposing visions of minimum standards of living.”

What aligns the positions of May and Gropius with
the questionnaire is that they all addressed minimal living as representative of broader processes, of historic and economic developments.

Hans Schmidt, who compiled the questionnaire, summarizes the blue prints presented at the conference: “Economic reasons clearly confirm that a family remains a most important household entity … 14-16 square meters living room should be used primarily for family activities and for sleeping only in emergency. The kitchen area should be diminished by installing a kitchen-niche. The bedrooms could be made smaller through diminishing the size of furniture or installation of built-in furniture. As a result, the whole of “usable area” could be no more than 45-50 square meters.” Indeed, it looked like most ground plans selected for the exhibit and subsequent publication reinstated the ideal of a family. Each blueprint contained measurements of habitable space, a number of beds and a type (one-family or multiple-family house). Out of more than 100 ground plans, the majority presented a two-bedroom apartment in 1 or 2-family home, with a parents’ bedroom of 12-15 square meters and a small bedroom for children (8-8.6 square meters). Although the questionnaire inquired about the possibility of communal facilities, very few examples of “communal” (Moscow) or apartment housing (2 plans from USA and 1 from Sweden) were represented.

The creation of the standardized subject, defined by so many cubic meters of space, air or light, accompanied discussions about the minimal dwelling as a means of providing decent and habitable housing for low income earners. Ernst May, the organizer of the conference, in the publication Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum (1930) addresses more directly the minimal dwelling as a preferential form of housing for the low income earners. Not only will minimal dwelling provide housing, but it will also function as “shelter to become human beings.” If we were to ask the homeless, writes May, attic or basements lodgers, whether they would like to live
in a “minimal dwelling,” they would surely answer: “Give us dwellings, however small, but healthy and habitable, and, before all, make the rent bearable.”264 This is why, continues May, “we do indeed want dwellings sufficient in number and quality, which are in line with the needs of the great mass of dwelling-seekers of limited means; we want dwellings for the subsistence wage earner.”265 Included in the resulting publication, for example, was a table that listed weekly wages for various categories of skilled and non-skilled urban workers, which proclaimed that “The monthly rent should not exceed weekly wages.” How was the “subsistence minimum earner” envisioned? The table compared weekly wages of both skilled and non-skilled workers in “average” (engineering for skilled and manual labour for non-skilled), “highly skilled” (furniture and carpentry), and “seasonal” (building trades, bricklayers, construction workers) trades in different European and American cities.

While it is not clear why the emphasis is on construction workers mainly, the same table (that also greeted visitors to CIAM) emphasized the connection of minimal income and provision of housing. As Ernst May explains in the Das Neue Frankfurt’s article that appeared one month after the conference, the rent of a worker’s dwelling of 50 square metres “which was about 30 marks before 1914, is now 118 reichmarks” as a consequence of rising mortgage interest rates from 4.51% before 1914 to 11.50% in 1929.267 Rationalization alone could not solve the problem of high rents, unless the rate of interest was to come down too. Therefore, May concludes, increased government involvement in housing construction is necessary, mainly to secure the public funds directed into housing construction for lower income earners and not into speculation.268 Rationalization as the major way to achieve lowered rents by lowering the costs of housing construction would also ensure that dwellings will “correspond to human
psychological demands.” Responding to such demands would allow fixing a dwelling “minimum” and consequently provide everyone with their “ration” dwelling.269

What the positions of May and Gropius share with the questionnaire’s approach is that they all addressed minimal living as representative of broader processes, of historic and economic developments. Parallel discussions were carried out and were less concerned with the social history that made such new designs inevitable. What they emphasized was minimal living as practice, as intervention. As Ferdinand Kramer, one of the planners of das Neue Frankfurt, declares in Die Wohnung fur das Existenzminimum, the building of mass housing was to be suited to the new needs of the people (Bevölkerung) for light, air and hygiene; it needed to incorporate (along with a standardization of the construction and materials) the “centralization of the most important household functions” such as cooking, laundry and children rearing. 270 The CIAM publication, however, did not depict the collective social space envisioned by Karel Teige or Kramer, and nowhere addressed the question of common-use facilities.

“Minimal living” was discussed as well in leftist circles, where it tended to designate a more radical project, one which might undergird a new form of social organization, influenced by Russian constructivist architects, who considered using and inhabiting buildings to be revolutionary practices of social transformation. Radical constructivists wanted to take a deliberate step away from the pre-revolutionary organization of space, which reproduced inequality and exploitation. Constructivist architects used the notion of “social condenser” to describe their urban projects: like an electrical condenser that changes the nature of a current, such avant-garde projects as housing and workers clubs were supposed to socially transform men, as the city ideally came to function as the “general condenser.” 271 Consequently, housing was perceived to be the most important domain of social reform and was understood to be
integral to the construction of the new socialist citizen. Communal housing was supposed to represent an essential element of the new everyday life. Like their Western colleagues, Moscow architects of the communal dwellings were familiar with similar European experiments: Frankfurt kitchen, mechanization of construction, advantages and disadvantages of flat roofs and so on were discussed on the pages of *Sovremennia Arkhitektura*. Stroikom, a construction committee of RSFSR, headed by Moses Ginsburg since 1928, had been involved in formulating guidelines and constructing dwellings where the use of collective facilities and common spaces were central to design. Stroikom units introduced the split-level system (very tall “nested” apartments with second half-stories), and reduced service areas (halls, bathrooms, and kitchens). For example, the Narkomfin apartment building in Moscow designed by Ginzburg and Milinis was comprised of private apartments along with the collective facilities of kitchen, library, day nursery, roof garden etc. 

As with rationalization, leftists and communists contended that minimal living could only be an effective solution to the housing problem if a radical change of the economic order occurred first. The critique of the capitalist system itself was at the core of these discussions. Karel Teige’s book, *The Minimum Dwelling*, condensed many of the sentiments rooted into constructivist arguments. Teige’s position on minimal living drastically questioned the position of many participants in the CIAM Congress. Teige warns against “minimum living” becoming a “catch-phrase” of the bourgeois interpreters, who equate it simply with a smaller version of bourgeois apartment. For Teige, the question is not simply how to house the working classes, thereby modifying existing forms of housing to the current economic conditions, but more pointedly, how to develop truly novel dwelling forms that will correspond to “proletarian lifestyle” of the inevitable socialist society: “‘The minimum dwelling’ should be seen as a new
dwelling type, with its social content to be determined by its being designed for people living on the level of the subsistence minimum, people who are represented mainly by the proletariat and the working intelligentsia. As it is clear for Teige that socialism would form the next stage of historic development, the future dwellings would necessarily become collective. Teige’s line of argument corresponds in many ways to that of Gropius, with its references to sociological studies that aim to document “the decline of the family” as a social institution. Under conditions of capitalist proliferation, such services as cooking, laundry, sewing, and so on move outside of the home and, paradoxically, undermines its very own institution, the traditional family, as a “unit of production and consumption.” Where Gropius merely gestures towards collective living, however, Teige develops the implications further and, quoting Lenin, assigns the working classes an anti-monogamous quality as a consequence of the dissolution of patriarchy and the inclusion of women into productive workforce. In Teige’s dialectical thinking, the old settlement forms have been inherited (the village and the city), but it is these forms that are being re-made by the emergent new class-the proletariat:

“Avant-garde architects ought to feel duty-bound to cooperate with the working class in solving their housing problems by developing designs for new types of dwellings that are appropriate for their actual needs.” The domestic functions of cooking, cleaning, child rearing are to become centralized:

One of the foremost tasks of the architectural avant-garde is to pay attention to the precursors of new, proletarian forms of dwelling, which are dedicated to a more cooperative and human communal life and more congenial erotic relations between men and women, and apply their creative powers to fully explore the technical preconditions for a superior category of housing, unencumbered by private domestic household functions. The proper response to the
The problem of the minimum dwelling is best characterized by the notion of the collective house or dom-komuna (dwelling commune): it is an apartment without private housekeeping functions, a beehive of dwelling cells intended for working individuals; it provides the same housing conditions for everybody, and it depends on the centralization of housekeeping services, as well as serving the cultural needs of collective dwelling.\(^\text{277}\)

As a critique of CIAM’s position,\(^\text{278}\) Teige’s version of minimal living implied the eventual overthrow of the extant economic order and proposed a radical vision of workers’ housing. But even in capitalist countries, according to Teige, already “the proletariat has created its own, new cultural forms that serve its own goals and interests even today.”\(^\text{279}\)

Illustrations from the exhibition held during the Congress and Congress speeches were included, along with the texts of the presentations, in the book entitled *Wohnung für das Existenzminimum*. The organization of the exhibit was notable: it consisted of graphic material, large scale ground plans, in rows. There were no photographs or models and the plans themselves were not signed.\(^\text{280}\) Writing about the exhibition in *das Neue Frankfurt*, a contemporary E. Kaufmann notes the commonality of the ground plans from Germany with those of France, Holland and England (anonymously exhibited).\(^\text{281}\) With its calls for universal standards, the project of minimal dwelling remained largely European. There were 2000 copies of the first and second editions; in 1933, the book was re-issued in a print run of 1500 copies.\(^\text{282}\) The book contained numerous illustrations of more than 100 hundred ground plans of single family homes and small apartment buildings in various European cities.

What the exhibition accomplished, beyond simply pointing out pre-existing commonalities in the designs of the layouts (ground plans), was the formulation of a standard (number and layout of rooms) solution for the most efficient use of space defined, in majority, by
the principles of individual apartments. All the space is here to utilize. For example, an
apartment with a floor area of 41.3 square meters includes a bedroom with folding beds and
fitted cupboards that are separated from the living room by sliding doors. Another example
includes built-in furniture and allows for direct communication between the living room and
kitchen. No interior decoration was depicted. Rather, the home spaces represented the sets of
relationships between the different biological functions of eating and sleeping.

The standardized regulations and guidelines widely realized in construction of housing in
Frankfurt came to be called “Frankfurt Norms and Types.” Ernst May summarizes such
guidelines in his article on five years of the socialized housing construction. May preferred the
two-family type dwelling, with a small garden and built in furniture. May’s theses make explicit
connections between the invention of new social norms, and the location, size, and functions of
rooms. The floor plans of all apartment buildings dictated that most bedrooms receive the
morning sunlight and the living room the afternoon sun. While May considered the three
bedroom apartment to be the main housing type for families, the two bedroom apartment was the
ideal for newlyweds and elderly couples. No apartments should be built without toilets;
bathroom should be located between bedrooms. Every apartment should have a cellar or an attic
for drying laundry; these should be prohibited to be used as rooms for living.283 In the “new”
kitchens and dwellings, “Simplicity and practicality mean not only labour saving, but also,
combined with quality materials and right form and colour, is clarity and beauty.”284 We will
look further into efforts to formulate the category of minimal living in relation to kitchens. At
CIAM, however, no consensus was reached in what a minimal apartment would look like.
Various designs presented at the CIAM’s Congress signalled the impossibility of settling upon a single design or vision. What they articulated, rather, was how the concept of minimal living was formed and established itself variously in different (mostly European) locations.

**The Frankfurt Kitchen**

The CIAM Congress aimed to present rationalization as a project which was not bounded by space or enclosed by national boundaries, yet it imagined and articulated the relations between the social trends and spaces that people inhabited and thus produced its own spatialities. Living space, counted and divided by functions into different areas on the floor plans, quite literally mapped for the reformers the strategy of intervention. The housewife, as the reformers understood, was not merely a producer in the home-space, but a producer of this space. As Bruno Taut wrote, “One cannot appreciate enough the meaningful influence the woman’s change of mind could exert on the way things are; then, to even begin building better dwellings, the woman should insistentely demand them.”

In the topography of the home as a site of domestic production, the kitchen occupied a privileged place. Not only did various forms of social reproduction take place there, but managing the household (as home economics books suggested) proceeded literally from the kitchen.

One of the goals of a Federal Society for Efficiency in Building and Housing (Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen), or RFG, created in 1927 to carry out studies of rationalized methods in housing design and construction, was to “make possible an inexpensive assembly of functionally furnished kitchens, which can be
manufactured in large quantities.”²⁸⁶ In 1928, RFG organized an exhibit in Berlin called *Die Ernährung* (“Nutrition”), where 6 models of the inexpensive, small kitchen with built-in features were shown.²⁸⁷ The next year, RFG printed an outline, composed by the Austrian architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky’s, of building specifications for these kitchens. Largely based on her work for Frankfurt building department under Ernst May, in the RFG report Schütte-Lihotzky focused on pricing and cataloguing the most inexpensive building materials (windows, ventilation, flooring) and fitted components of the kitchen (lamps, electrical switches, sinks and drains) and provided examples of industrially produced components such as doors, door handles and windows, according to Frankfurt building norms. The kitchen should be perceived as “the laboratory,” she wrote. Particular attention should be paid to its lighting, for example, with the working surfaces located under windows. All details are presented with utmost efficiency in mind. For example, the height of the working table needs to be determined by the ability to open the windows inwards.²⁸⁸ The stone tiles have to be of darker colour since the lighter ones get dirty and “therefore require too much care.” “There is a lack of ideal flooring for kitchens in small, inexpensive dwellings, namely, a jointless, warm ground floor, which does not require too much care for durability over time.”²⁸⁹ One of these compact efficient kitchen types, Schütte-Lihotzky’s famous “Frankfurt kitchen,” became most popular in Frankfurt, and was installed in 10,000 dwellings.²⁹⁰ [Illustration 8].

Rationalization covered not only the production of standardized furniture, appliances or kitchenware. The kitchens became a means to isolate, measure and standardise (manipulate) the very movements of a woman’s body. This happened in several ways—first, through appropriately collected and laid out kitchen equipment and utensils. The hood over the kitchen stove (not yet electric) was supposed to ventilate the kitchen odours and moisture to the outside
so that they could not “intrude (eindringen) into the living room.” The pantry was to be located under the window and to contain an opening to the outside to ensure fresh air circulation, while the garbage disposal drawer was to be located underneath the working table. Much of the advice was illustrated in a clear manner. Illustrations were developed by National Productivity Board (RKW) and were widely reproduced in popular pamphlets and more specialized trade magazines. In Baugilde, for example, Erna Meyer employed these illustrations for her articles. The stick figure drawings illustrated appropriate and inappropriate postures for washing dishes (95 cm is the optimal height for the sink; taller people should put a small footstool under the washing bowl) and advocated sitting to avoid wasting of work energy. [Illustrations 9 and 10]

The Federal Society for Efficiency in Building and Housing (RFG), for example, included suggestions on the way to standardize kitchen utensils for a small household by depicting them in drawings, in several categories such as “metal and stoneware cooking and baking utensils,” “utensils made of wood,” “eating devices,” “cleaning and washing devices.” Such gadgets as salt and pepper shakers, a lemon squeezer, shopping bags, and bottle and can openers were included in the category of “miscellaneous.” [Illustration 11]

Secondly, the narrow shape of the kitchen would ensure short distances between food preparation, cleaning, and serving, through a minimization of a woman’s movements. The reduction of steps was to be achieved by locating areas of food preparation and cleaning next to one another in the space of only approximately 1.90 by 3.40 meters. The way from the pantry to the working table to the stove and then, after arranging food for serving, to the dining table and then back with the dirty plates to the sink and then back to cupboards, in the old kitchen was 19 meters, while in the Frankfurt kitchen these same steps would only result in 8 meters of walking.
In her experiments to measure time for various tasks using the stop-watch, Schütte-Lihotsky “analyzed each single work step (such as dishwashing) to detect superfluous movements and to ensure that time and energy would be saved.”296 A drying rack was always to the left of the sink, the dried dishes would go to the hanging drying rack above and finally to the cupboard. A movable ceiling lamp was to ensure adequate lighting.297

The Frankfurt kitchen (or “work kitchen” as it became to be known, Arbeitküche) defined itself against the “traditional” live-in kitchen. The separation of food preparation from serving, dining or doing laundry was the main idea. Drawings of kitchen types, presenting a “development” of the Frankfurt double-cell (Doppelzelle, kitchen and living room) from the “live-in kitchen” by Schütte-Lihotsky, clearly visualized the distinct areas for kitchens and living spaces.298 Often, the Frankfurt kitchen and the kitchen reform in general is seen by critics as “an undisguised attack on traditional working class and lower middle-class domestic customs, considered by those who worked on the Neue Frankfurt project (and by many other radical architects and housing specialists) to be essentially petit-bourgeois, i.e., aspiring to unprogressive lower middle-class values: a kind of social unhygiene.”299 The recent feminist analysis rightly points to the fact that Frankfurt kitchen did little to question women’s traditional status as housekeepers. The new kitchen, through its elimination of the workers’ kitchens, was to secure the new idea of cleanliness by a series of actions. A building society EINFA recommended its tenants that “unnecessary dust-catchers were to be removed, the floor had to be easy to clean and the air to be pure, the food was to be covered in order to protect it against flies, the dishes had to be rinsed very well, the housewife’s hands had to be clean and she had to wear a smock (Kittel).”300 According to Schütte-Lihotsky, the kitchens were painted blue for a reason: “The scientists from Frankfurt University discovered that color blue does not attract flies.”301
location of the living room in relation to the kitchen instead is to better assist the mother in watching over her children while cooking. 302

As we have already seen and will see in our discussion of Bruno Taut’s work, the woman, although crucial for modernist domestic reforms, remained in these modernist conceptions primarily a home-maker. The new norms were not so much about reform as about establishing different and more “efficient” housekeeping practices, often governed by higher standards of the housework: “Along with the greater efficiency came greater demands. Rationalization only helped women meet the increasingly higher work quotas assigned to her by a rationalization-obsessed society.” 303 But as Paul Overy’s analysis shows, the modernist architects’ emphasis on efficient and quick food preparation could also be interpreted as “a deliberate onslaught on the traditional mores of working class domestic life in an attempt to radicalize the proletariat.” 304 There will be no need to spend long hours in the kitchen, and thus the woman will gain more time to enjoy the activities outside the home. The kitchen space carried out this double function of, on the one hand, emancipation (or at least lessening women’s work) and on the other hand, the production of the “New Housewife.” By “delegating” food preparation to housewives made “experts,” the kitchen was intended to become a laboratory for the application of rationalization techniques. Kitchen spaces also shaped the housework, normalizing certain practices.

The Frankfurt kitchen therefore is not merely representative or reflective of the economic circumstances of crisis. It is rather a technology, an active intervention into everyday practices whereby new practices are created, a “particular regime of everyday conduct.” 305 As Schütte-Lihotzky commented in an interview on this intervention into the everyday, she used to go to the outskirts of Vienna to see how the workers lived, and from this experience she formed her
understanding that architecture has a “social accountability,” “to make easier the life of women and men, to reduce stress of the everyday, for example, by creating rooms for neighbourly help, centralized services and so on.”

Schütte-Lihotsky recollects: “May has brought me to Frankfurt because I was investigating how architecture could rationalize housekeeping. Because it looked like if this century would see many women going out to work. The sink was situated so you pick up the dirty dishes on the left, rinse them right and put them again on the left. That’s why we chose the corner. We built the houses both ways round, but never swapped the kitchen round. More people are right handed than left.”

Christine Frederick’s German translation of Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home (1919) is often invoked as a strong influence on the kitchen reforms of Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky. For Frederick, an American conservative home economist and a promoter of “the patriotic duty of consumption,” rationalization (along with the various household products that she advertised in her books) was seen as a necessary measure to prevent women from leaving the bleakness of domestic chores and entering the labour force. In Frederick’s inspection of the domestic sphere, the home emerges as a commodity representing “endless possibilities for sales.” Frederick’s promotion of consumption constituted an attempt to involve housewives in the project of de-radicalizing workers in the early 1920’s in the United States. The absence of any explicit focus on consumption in the already fitted kitchens of Schütte-Lihotsky subscribes to the “austere” model of rationalization described by Mary Nolan. For Leif Jarram, both Ernst May and Schütte-Lihotsky “misread” Frederick by wilfully ignoring her emphasis on home foremost as a space for consumption and borrowing only her emphasis on productive and efficient labour-saving techniques in the kitchen. Perhaps, instead of taking
this as a sign of misreading, we need to think about deliberate selective reading and a genealogy of the Frankfurt kitchen going back to Imperial Germany.

In her first book, *The New Housekeeping: Efficiency Studies in Home Management*, originally published in 1912, Frederick promoted the separation of dining and cooking areas: “The first step toward the efficiency of any kitchen is to have the kitchen small, compact and without long narrow pantries and closets. Many women are under the impression that a ‘roomy’ kitchen is desirable. . . . Country kitchens are particularly apt to be large, and are often a combined sitting-room and kitchen. This plan seems cozy, but is inefficient because of the presence of lounges, flowers, and sewing—all unrelated to the true work of the kitchen, which is the preparing of food. It is much wiser to have the kitchen small, and make a separate sitting room that the tired cook may rest in a room other than the one in which she has worked.”

Certainly, Schütte-Lihotzky and other proponents of rationalization were largely influenced by Frederick’s ideas and plans for kitchen standardization. Schütte-Lihotzky, however, might have found herself in conversation not only with North American experiments but with earlier, Wilhelmine-era experiments: “The rationalization of domestic architecture, and of the kitchen in particular, had also long been promoted within the context of cooperative housing arrangements by socialist feminists (e. g., Lily Braun) and socialist architects.”

In what ways did Schütte-Lihotzky incorporate Frederick’s work on “labour saving home management?” First of all, her focus was on women employed outside of home. “In Europe in the first half of the twentieth century it was already anticipated that women’s employment would become widely spread. . . . For me, as an architect, who committed herself to public housing, the question was: How is it possible through correct home building (“richtige Wohnungsbau”) to alleviate house work?” While Frederick wanted to tie a woman to the kitchen in her role of
consumer, Schütte-Lihotsky saw her kitchen, if not as emancipatory, then as contributing to a “correct kind of building,” in order to respond to new social trends by making housework easier for employed women.\textsuperscript{315} The efficient kitchen, ensuring that less time would be spent on food preparation, would correspond better to the needs of the modern woman.\textsuperscript{316} Schütte-Lihotsky was a strong proponent of housing for single women mixed with family housing. She argued vociferously against construction of “homes for unmarried women,” which had been proposed by the city of Frankfurt for the large numbers of unmarried women in the aftermath of the First World War. Schütte-Lihotsky saw these houses, which were to be financed largely by private funds, making them unaffordable for “average” working women, as isolating women in ghetto-like settlements. In contrast, she proposed several types of dwellings, aiming “to keep building costs for dwellings for single women as low as the costs for family dwellings to ensure financing from public funds.”\textsuperscript{317} Some of her dwellings were intended to be situated on the upper floors of apartment houses and were to include common facilities. For example, type 1 (for female workers) and type 2 (for women students) dwellings were planned with collective kitchen, washrooms, and laundry facilities.\textsuperscript{318} However, the unavailability of funding left these projects unrealized: “With the exception of housing for poor women, women’s housing was ineligible for public monies, principally the House Equity Tax Fund. Without such subsidies, rents would rise far beyond the reach of most women.”\textsuperscript{319}

Unlike the Frankfurt kitchen, the “Berlin kitchen” had very few built-in components installed. In \textit{Hufeisensiedlung}, the kitchens followed the same model as the kitchens designed by Bruno Taut for Zehlendorf’s housing estate “Onkel- Toms- Hütte” in 1926/1927. These kitchens included a meat safe/larder (“Speiseschrank”) under the window, a sink with a drain, and a cooking stove.\textsuperscript{320} With the financial crisis of the 1930s, new building regulations for small
dwellings in Berlin proposed reducing the kitchen area to 6-8 square meters. “The GEHAG exhibit in February 1931 paid special attention to the problem of the small dwelling, and particularly brought forth the study of the question of the live-in kitchen.” According to their survey carried out during the exhibit, 90% of respondents spoke against live-in kitchen.” In spite of this, the newer part of Hufeisensiedlung, built in 1933, abandoned the Neues Bauen’s separation of living functions and included live-in kitchens.

The Frankfurt model was one prominent variation in a series of modernist kitchen designs, whose iconic status in design and architecture histories is no doubt explained by its importance for Social Democratic housing policies and, consequently, the fact that so many were installed in Frankfurt housing estates, as well as by its influence on post war kitchen designs in Europe and the US. However, along with the Frankfurt kitchen (or Berlin kitchen), there were other widely used designs. One such was the “Munich kitchen,” in which cooking niches occupied a place in the living room. One of the proponents, Franz Schuster, a designer working with the Neue Frankfurt, wrote that the combined-kitchen/living room had its advantages “since it makes it easier for the mother to supervise the children when she cooks,” and in this way the kitchen largely functioned as a living room, and a living room as a result was unused. However, writes Schuster, “A wish exists to have its own space where visitors could be handled and the family could gather in the evenings to read, to sew or to write, which is not in the kitchen.” These experiments were less intended to settle on a single most appropriate or efficient design then about directing how the housewife should go about her work; they constituted an intervention into the orchestration of housework by radically reorganizing the domestic space. Additionally, a smaller sized separate kitchen became the means by which to divide daily living functions among various rooms. The factory production of standardized
furniture would eliminate unnecessary costs, while “room set up will follow less requirements of representation and much more principles of practicality.” Such a living room should include: a dinner table, writing desk, side table, roundtable, sofa, armchair, chair, bookcase, and sewing machine.\textsuperscript{325}

All of this furniture has special functions: the sofa will provide some rest or a bed for a guest; next to a bookshelf, a small writing desk is equipped with paper, envelopes, pen and ink. Various activities are to be accommodated in such apartments. At the center, often, were folding, or built in bookcases. The arrangement of furniture within the rooms corresponded to gender functions. The object of such approaches was to install a semblance of the petit-bourgeois household within the living space and habits of more or less prosperous and skilled worker. For the working classes (and for working class women in particular), the proposed recommendations implied a different way of living in domestic space. For the more affluent, these recommendations attempted not only to prescribe consumer habits and tastes, but to cultivate the taste for consumption of modernist furniture and household objects to fill new apartments. “Happy is the housewife, for whom the architect has already largely solved the question of furnishing by installing built-in furniture.”\textsuperscript{326} For those less fortunate (and less well off), the reform of social practices would work to accomplish similar goals of efficiency: in SPD’s \textit{Metallarbeiter-Zeitung}, we find recommendations for the proper and efficient everyday conduct of a proletarian housewife: “Certainly, one should have good relations with one’s neighbors. One should be pleasant and helpful—but with moderation and purpose. . . . Above all, dear housewife, avoid those beloved little ‘chats,’ on the cellar stairs, in the front hall, before the apartment door, or out of the window, since they are true time-robbers!”\textsuperscript{327}
Housewives’ associations propagated the model of austerity as architects promoted rationalization for the upper and middle classes, but to different ends: the austere (cleansed) household was a necessary pre-condition of the “new household.” Schütte-Lihotzky famously referred to her kitchens as “laboratories.” Unlike laboratories, isolated and closed spaces for experiments conducted by a number of specialists, the kitchen (and home more broadly) opens up to a broader audience via various mass media (as we have seen in the extensive literature of home). But simultaneously, while these processes of representation are taking place, the kitchen (and home) space that is being produced, itself becomes a media.\footnote{328}

The cinematic production of kitchen space fuses with the modern housekeeping technologies; mediatisation and modernization of home became interwined.\footnote{329} Never screened publicly and, possibly, only screened twice, at the trade show \textit{Frankfurter Industriemesse} and at the CIAM Congress, an advertising film \textit{Die Frankfurter Küche} (1927), is not a propaganda or a documentary film, although it uses stylistic techniques and methods drawn from both these genres, such as juxtaposing “before” shots (images of the traditional kitchen) with “after” (depictions of the newly equipped Frankfurt kitchen).\footnote{330} Unlike Bruno Taut’s book, however, it did not directly address an audience of housewives.

The film begins with a depiction of traditional domestic work. In the old kitchen, the housewife is middle aged, traditionally dressed in an apron and wearing with a conservative haircut. First, the wood needed to be be chopped, then it is brought to the stove and the stove lit. All the spices and kitchen utensils are on the other side of the kitchen. The housewife is shown constantly traversing the kitchen back and forth, and the closing shot shows her demonstratively wiping her sweaty forehead. The editing mixes these shots with texts, which read, for example, “Cooking in the coal stove is unclean, unhygienic and too hot, the cleaning is exhausting. . . .
The old kitchen means skill and time squandering for the housewife. The new Frankfurt kitchen in municipal housing developments with built-in furniture means skill and time saving for the housewife.” Not only is it a time-saver, but the new kitchen is depicted as space saving too: not once does the modern housewife walk across the room. She is filmed performing a variety of tasks: first, she demonstrates that the pots and pans are conveniently located; she peels vegetables on a swivel chair next to a refuse drawer (also conveniently placed next to a garbage chute); the provisions are efficiently located close by in aluminum drawers; the dirty dishes are quickly washed and stacked away; then, an ironing board is usefully unfolded. The model housewife in these scenes is visibly younger, dressed in a modern fashion, with a bob haircut and, of course, no apron. In these ways, demonstrating “rationalized” housekeeping practices as distinctively modern, the film visualizes the practices of housework for a different audience of professionals, with the intention of advertising modern products and the modern life. In film or in actual kitchens, the housewife becomes de-individualized. She is transformed into a demonstrator and master of techniques, an instructor and an instructed simultaneously, in her movements declaring her allegiance to both a modernist aesthetic and “rationalized” ways by refusing the “old” housekeeping practices, just as Bruno Taut wants her to.

Bruno Taut’s book The New Dwelling: Housewife as a Creator (Die Neue Wohnung. Frau als Schöpferin), by contrast to the film, was widely distributed. Between 1924 and 1928, “it went through five printings, reaching a circulation of 26,000 copies.” While endorsing many traditional views on the role of women, the book can be viewed as aiming to forestall the adoption of bourgeois tendencies towards coziness and comfort in the new living spaces of the workers’ dwellings. By mobilizing the ideas of “cleansing” and cleanliness in the version of rationalization in The New Dwelling: Housewife as a Creator, Taut’s version of rationalization
provided recommendations for ways to decorate the house according to an “appropriate”
domestic material culture, in the disciplinary sense of instruction of modernist lifestyle, placing
the housewife as both an active participant and as the main object of modernist reforms.

As the title of the book suggests, the text addresses the everyday practices of
housekeeping: of cleaning, cooking, decorating; the mundane ways in which the dwelling is
inhabited and practiced. In Taut’s *Frau als Schöpferin* it is the housewife who becomes
responsible for the creation and maintenance of an appropriate modernist space, in her assigned
task of cleaning the modern apartment and stripping it of its superfluous coziness. *Das Überflüssige der Wohnung* (the “superficial”), for Taut, comprised kitschy as well as artistic
objects, with their emotional, “affective nature” (*Gefühlsmomente*). For example, one picture
in the book provides two contrasting rooms: the first shows heavy furnishings with drapery and a
“grandfather’s clock”; the one below depicts a worker’s apartment with practical furnishings.

The housewife’s task is to oversee and secure the transition to the new
domesticity, to reform working class tastes. In Taut’s understanding of working class women as
agents of rationalized techniques, it was neither the state nor the family that would benefit from
such changes in housekeeping, but apparently the housewife herself. Taut seldom speaks about
new social roles for women. Rather, women are presented—and asked to understand
themselves—as most suitable for carrying out the project that Peach nicely terms, “radical
housecleaning.” Taut calls the kitchen “the nerve of the home” and salutes Frederick’s
writings on rational organization. But Taut everywhere aims to show how the more rational
organization will produce less work for the housewife. What is behind rationalization is,
foremost, a redefinition of the everyday practices of housekeeping.
Taut reacts against the idea of home as a gathering of the superfluous, “the fetishism of objects” (*Fetishismus der Gegenstände*). He wants his readers to practice the home differently. Such an understanding of home does not assume that home is simply a site, a place where the objects are accumulated. What is targeted are the everyday practices—less the objects of the house per se than the ways in which house is practiced, lived. In this way, Taut’s directives participate in constructing a “particular regime of everyday conduct.”

The main strategy is cleaning (*Reinigung*), which assumes a sacrificial quality. Alongside decorative objects and objects of household, these include the children’s toys as well. Taut recommends throwing away half of them away every year. Such sacrifices, voluntary and forced simultaneously, and material and psychological losses as result of such cleaning require a sort of declaration. “Such a woman will say: my home is not, firstly, an attic; secondly, not a junk shop and thirdly, not a museum.”

We see how the economic impoverishment (after all, this book was indeed directed to the working classes during a housing shortage in Berlin) is not mentioned as such, but is recoded in terms of simplicity, of a cleansing of the old, in positive ways. What this text does is to turn deprivation into a kind of power. It is being made desirable. The rationalization of housework and new arrangements of living space serve to mobilize this desire.

*Hufeisensiedlung: Rationalization as a “Cultural Model”*

Architecture as housing, as environment, as milieu, created by people, radiates artistic force and shapes the nature of people. The formed form. A human being and human work situate themselves in continuous reciprocity. To summarize: a new man demands new dwellings, but so do new dwellings demand new people.

Fritz Wichert, “*Die Neue Baukunst als Erzieher,*” *Das Neue Frankfurt*, 1928
How widely were those tips and discussions read by proletarian or white collar housewives? The literature on how these tips and recommendations were enforced or practiced by actual housewives is rather scarce. The 1928 collection My Workday, My Weekend: Female Workers Talk About their Everyday (Mein Arbeitstag, mein Wochenende : Arbeiterinnen berichten von ihrem Alltag), which assembled stories of the everyday by female textile workers, is one of the few that has been discussed by critics. Nolan, for example, notices ambivalent responses: some participants adopted the language of efficiency to describe very satisfying ways of dealing with housework. Others used the same rhetoric to complain.

Karen Hagemann’s research into everyday oral histories in the 1980’s used interviews with housewives in Hamburg to trace various ways in which the rationalization efforts of the late 1920’s became engaged in the everyday practices of housework of the working class housewives. Many of her interviewees adopted the bourgeois ideal of the “good housewife” from pre-Weimar imperial times, when the household would be the main sphere of women’s work and a source of pride. The reputation of the “good housewife” was earned by having “‘clean and proper’ clothing which the family members wore outside home, by keeping windows clean and curtains washed, as well as by maintaining ‘a nice living room’” (gute Stube) and a style of hospitality, whereby “at a moment’s notice a visit could happen,” as well as through largely symbolic actions, such as wearing an “occasion-specific apron” or carrying out “great cleanings” (Grossreinemachen). “A good housewife” would have a privileged standing and have greater influence in the social networks of housewives. Such a prestigious position was “more important for women than all the clever advice of the supporters of household rationalization.”
As Hagemann’s respondents clarified, rationalization remained unattainable for working class housewives, who did not respond to the modernist calls for “clearance of junk” (*Entrümpelung*) because, for many of them, the very little furniture they possessed symbolized aspiration to bourgeois ideals of coziness. The time-saving devices of rationalization, electrical appliances such as electric stoves, washing machines, and refrigerators were also highly desirable as status symbols. But these were unaffordable for the majority of the working housewives. Only the younger generation of mostly white collar women could afford this “modern urban consumer lifestyle.”³⁴⁰

To consider modernist housing estates mainly as a laboratory for the production of the white collar worker threatens to reduce the complexity of social practices to their disciplinary aspect and a heterogeneous and fluid social composition to a rather homogenous one. Such an approach plays into the narrative of the “suburbs” as reactionary, insular organizations of space and conformist social relations. While the modernist and rationalized directives were expressed in more or less obvious ways, they were simultaneously and variously engaged: accommodated, modified, accepted, or in some cases rejected in everyday practice.

Studies such as Hagemann’s point importantly to the complex ways in which tenants engaged with the spatial and textual directives expressed in pamphlets, home exhibits, in the regulations of the building societies, interior decoration advice, in the layout of apartments and so on. While the materiality of such practices was brought into focus, such studies have also contributed to a conceptual divorcing of the spheres of “housing” (as a sphere of public, discursive: seen foremost in financial and policy aspects) from home (private, real: practiced.)³⁴¹ This means, as Jacobs and Cairns show, that when analyzing “lived modernities,” everyday experiences and practices often become theoretically framed as “responses to” the modernist
impositions, and this conceptual framework locks the everyday within a realm of “internal reaction” (accommodation to, resistance to and so on, to “external” directives.) Consequently, largely figures as an appropriation of “housing.”

I wish to look at the disciplinary aspects of Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner’s *Hufeisensiedlung* in Britz district of Berlin while simultaneously analyzing it as a site of planning and focusing on how the architectural design imposes itself on the everyday life of the tenants, while avoiding interpretations that simply tells history in terms of the dialectic between accustoming and/or resisting supposedly authoritarian dictates.

My inquiry thus is not to reproduce a line of argument about the inevitable “fate” of radical experiments, nor to lament that low paid workers were not the majority inhabitants of the modernist estates. Neither do I aim simply to critique the normative aspects of life in *Hufeisensiedlung* (the kind of communal or collective culture that has or hasn’t developed on the estate). Adopting Jacobs and Cairns’ methodology of “entanglement” allows me to think about suburban mass housing by coupling the discussions in previous chapters with an elucidation of the material practices of tenants, to approach dwellings as the complex “coproduction” of designing efforts, which include the habits of tenants, media representations of the estates, housing policies, building societies’ regulations, architects’ and planners’ discourses and actual interiors and exteriors of the built spaces.

*Hufeisensiedlung*, from its design to regulations governing its occupation and recommendations about its everyday life, has both functioned and represented (and today, continues to represent socially progressive planning, albeit as a residual “legacy” within neoliberal housing policies) a product of SPD-supported vision for housing. This “exemplary” status was continuously reinforced, not in the least, by engaging an SPD vision of rationalization.
The extent of the industrialization of the building processes of modernist housing settlements was often exaggerated, and although pre-fabricated building panels were introduced, manual work, especially for assembly, continued to be used in construction. As Ludovica Scarpa argues, “although construction of Hufeisensiedlung was not rationalized, in the sense of using machines instead of manual labour, it made the impression that it was, largely promoted as such by Martin Wagner.” For Scarpa, “rationalization” in Britz became implemented more as a “cultural model” than an industrial mechanism: “through the sameness of flats and facades, the sameness of the residents was to be emphasized.”

Bruno Taut envisioned such sameness as an expression of collectivity, a new social order: “As the melody of the whole, the roofs pitched at the same angle and the use of color achieve endmost harmony. These are the unmistakable signs of truly collective building, building which captures the sense of collectivity and which is the most beautiful expression of a supra-personal perception.”

If we agree with Scarpa’s statement that rationalization manifested itself through unitary and, perhaps, monotonous design, how exactly were the principles of rationalized space applied to the arrangement of rooms and social life of Hufeisensiedlung? Or weren’t they? Previously, we addressed such descriptions by Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner. Neither Bruno Taut’s nor Martin Wagner’s visions achieved dominance in the actually built housing estate.

The most detailed study of Hufeisensiedlung, a collection of essays edited by Thilo Hilpert from 1980, points to just how much Hufeisensiedlung is not simply the object but the product of analysis. By incorporating discussions in architectural history, analysis of funding mechanisms and interviews about everyday life in Hufeisensiedlung, Hilpert’s study enlists the stories of community building in Hufeisensiedlung with the aim of delineating distinct narratives of communal life in various periods of estate’s history. Explicitly, the project places the
settlement into narratives of resistance to Nazism. The oral narratives themselves produce a “representational space” in which there is a complex mix of perceptions of satisfaction of living in Hufeisensiedlung the late 1920’s with nostalgia. Keeping in mind that the interviews collected in the book provide a highly selective account, I use them to further clarify relations among tenants’ home decorating practices, financing mechanisms, various degrees of influence, mandates, coercion by the politicians, planners, architects and the management of the estates. Looking into ways in which class and gender relations are negotiated and established spatially, we will trace how neither rationalist visions nor communal ideas were neatly translated into the built form.

The story of what rationalization “meant” in Hufeisensiedlung is complicated by the fact that Hufeisensiedlung was built in different stages. While modernist city planners and architects promoted new methods of building and architecture, they met with resistance from local politicians and, as a result, many housing projects employed “traditional” designs and methods of construction. Taut’s conception was never realized completely. The eastern part of Hufeisensiedlung was extended in 1925-1927 by DEGEWO, a conservative housing society. Günter de Bruyn, a writer and librarian, who lived in that part in the 1930s and 1940’s, describes it in his autobiography as follows: “Contrary to Bruno Taut’s Siedlung with its cubic forms and rich colours, ours perpetuated so called ‘Heimatstil’: gable roofs, bays, window shutters and balconies with pointed arches. Single family row houses formed partly curved streets and created the feeling of a small town.”345 As Taut writes in his unpublished memoirs, when Martin Wagner and he were building a part of the Hufeisensiedlung in 1925-1926, the Berlin city office (magistrate) headed by Gustav Böss wanted to “coerce” them into making big changes, “because the opposite part built by a different building society and architect, with its romantic
sentimentalities, pointed gables, gazebos and steep roofs, although more expensive, was more beautiful.” It took the interference of the former Berlin planning director (commissioner) Ludwig Hoffmann to push the project through. As Taut writes, Hoffmann “accompanied Böss to Britz and as a consequence, the city office approved the project. . . . A little under three years afterwards, Herr Böss, during our visit to our settlement [Britz], explained to me that he is satisfied not only with practical consistency, but also by the beauty, in other words: ‘you had me converted’ . . . The main part of my work was then built upon ‘conversion.’” In 1927, out of 1027 apartments, 472 were single family rowhouses with 3 1/2 or 4 ½ rooms, 555 were 1 1/2-4 1/2 bedroom flats in apartment blocks of 2-3 stories. Later, during the world economic crisis of 1931/32, larger one family houses were standing empty. In one of them a communal kitchen was organized by SPD women’s groups to cook for the unemployed. Once Nazis came to power and moved to the Siedlung, these houses became especially attractive for them and this is where they settled.

The fact that Hufeisensiedlung, an exemplary Social Democratic project, contained apartments of various sizes became underemphasized. Various floor-plans were to correspond to various classes of manual workers, white-collar workers, and those in more “authoritative” positions (Herrschaftswohnungen). However, because of the mass-produced materials and similarities in layout, the actual differences among these classes of housing units were not so starkly pronounced: “A dwelling today is assessed not so much by the degree of how it bestows on anyone an expression of the social standing, but whether it speaks to our today’s worldview.” This “worldview” is further described in terms of practicality and hygiene: the requirements of Licht, Luft und Sonne are satisfied through the construction of open playgrounds and squares, through central heating and water. In a two-bedroom, 48 square meter apartment in
Hufeisensiedlung, all space was utilized and such conveniences as washrooms and loggias “gave an unusual hygienic standard for these small quarters”: “An entrance led into the corridor with pace for storage. . . . Both living room and bedroom of about 18 and 12 Sq m were in west-east direction, optimal to sunlight.”

For a further extension of the Siedlung in 1930, Taut proposed several floor plans for a type of a “smallest dwelling” (Kleinstwohnung), as the economic situation worsened. The tenants were envisioned primarily as “small” (nuclear) families and the model of the family was further inscribed into the type of the buildings and into the floorplans. The separate rooms were organized around the distinct functions of “living, eating and sleeping.” For example, two bedroom apartment of 45 square meters consisted of a bedroom, living room and kitchen. A variation of the two bedroom apartment and of a one bedroom apartment of only 36 square meters contained a combined kitchen and dining room and bedroom and living room.353

[Illustration 14] The walls in the apartments were painted as instructed by Taut, in intense colours of yellow, blue and ochre, and many tenants, preferred to paint over these colours or, later, put wallpaper over them. As one of the residents reported, “After we moved in, Taut himself visited different apartments and explained how the flats’ interiors should be set up. I remember how he was against hanging pictures because they ruined the effect of the walls.”

Some, however, left the original colours in place. Frau L spoke directly to the connection of “modernist” taste and political investments: “We, in the younger circles, have gone to Taut’s lectures in the School of Applied Arts and have debated whether collective houses should be built, so that both husband and wife could have careers, with collective kitchens, so that one does not cook every evening their own little meal. Us women, we believed in this ideal. We have thought how men could get involved in the housework. Colourful rooms, no, many did not like
them, they have later covered them in wallpaper. The others found them rather neat . . . In 1928, I have my flat painted and decorated in Taut’s way. Yellow ceiling, orange walls. The painters thought we were nuts. It was customary then, to have brown floors, but I have painted mine in light grey. These suggestions I took partly from Taut’s lectures, some of this I have seen in Magdeburg. In those times, I was in the organization of young socialists, we were crazy about Bauhaus then.”

Even in such short time before the Nazi takeover in the late 1920’s one can speak of a developing political culture at Hufeisensiedlung. Increasing bureaucratization of the housing construction and distribution allowed for housing societies to claim that participation from tenants is largely unnecessary. Homeownership did not define, yet it was tied into processes of civil participation in the estate. GEHAG and EINFA, companies responsible for housing construction and management for the trade unions, did not encourage tenants’ participation and justified this because they were for non-profit: “The administration argued that ‘every tenant was protected by the founder of the GEHAG and the EINFA,’ and as these companies were not private companies any participation by the tenants was considered unnecessary.” What does it mean, exactly? While the tenants were not owners, the property was not at the core of the tenants’ participation and the tenant council should not have become the mechanism of exclusion. Questions of ownership and exclusivity, however, figured as key forms of self-organization in the estate. From the interviews collected in Hilpert’s book, we see that the tenants’ council (Mieterrat) did exist briefly in the late 1920’s and became a place for voicing alternative views on the estate’s regulations. Unsurprisingly, initiatives came from the more radical tenants of the estates. Herr Goetsch, describing the role of the anarchist poet Erich Mühsam in the tenant council, recollects that “in the tenant council, he always fought for us to be
able to hang laundry out in the garden.” As von Saldern suggests, however, in spite of the communist party calling for tenants to participate in the administration of the estate, unlike in the settlements in Vienna, often tenants’ initiatives usually took form of the depoliticized “neighbors’ help” organizations.

The goal of GEHAG, created in 1924, proclaimed the “creation of healthy dwellings for appropriate (fair) prices for less well-off social classes, especially for families and single people affiliated with cooperatives.” The questionnaire that the potential renters were asked to fill out asked whether they would be able to pay fees (an einer Baugenossenschaft zu beteiligen) for the building society and whether they belong to the listed manual or white-collar workers’ trade unions (Ortskartelle). As Adelheid von Saldern explains about the housing allocation policies, the housing office had the authority to assign a so called “right to lease” or “dwelling authorization” (Wohnungsberechtigung). The candidates had also to fit certain criteria such as citizenship, residency in the city, age, marital status (such criteria varied from city to city and could even change within a year). This way the building societies had a pool of potential renters. Von Saldern importantly observes that such “authorizations” were used by building societies to their own advantage: they could choose members into the organization who had some equity in property development firms (such was the case with trade union members in Gehag Siedlungen) and this resulted in “relative political and cultural homogeneity of the tenant structure.” Along with securing trade union members as tenants, another way to ensure the kind of tenancy was the rent. Frau S says: “the rent, 63 M for 2.5 bedroom apartment in 1927, was too expensive for workers, that’s why many bankers, insurance people, teachers and artists lived here.”

In the 1929 election campaign, the KPD–oriented press criticized Hufeisensiedlung for its rents, which only the middle classes were able to afford. In response, GEHAG emphasized
various groups of tenants in the published statistics in *Wohnungswirtschaft* 5/8 (15.4.28) and proclaimed that “GEHAG houses are clearly tenanted by civil and clerical employees and by workers.” From the statistics, we see that the largest categories of tenants were indeed middle class occupations, out of 1500 (including civil and clerical employees 800, teachers, architects, engineers, pharmacists, musicians 149, metal, wood workers and building trades and non-skilled workers 243).362

While certain mechanisms were in place to secure the occupation of *Hufeisensiedlung* by members of relatively similar social classes, the settlement appealed to such radical characters as artist and architect Heinrich Vogeler and anarchist poet and playwright Erich Mühsam, which this quantitative emphasis tends to overlook. For example, one of the prominent residents’ group was the artists. Many tenants thought of themselves as a part of the artistic environment, using modernist terms to describe their lives. As Frau L responds, “The artists came to live in the *Siedlung* to be together and have a piece of “culture of living” (*Ein Stückchen Wohnkultur*). Another respondent says, “The artists come here because of their political activities.”363 Equipped with public facilities of school (progressive), grocery shop, libraries to be shared by residents and because of good transport connection to the city, the settlement resisted a transformation into a self-contained, “ghetto-like” enclave, but rather represented what today would be called “mixed use” and to some degree, “mixed income” development. The management’s vision of the estate sometimes coincided with, sometimes differed from the visions of the tenants.

“Community” is not only a class but also a gendered concept. It is no surprise that, in Hilpert’s interviews, it is mostly women who mention the term “community.” Inspite of the intentions incorporated into efficient kitchens to release women into the workforce, some women
remained unemployed. It was their children that brought them together, and they participated in many common activities: “we baked together at Christmas, in summer we went to the country on bicycles,” etc. \(^{364}\)

In a 1930 EINFA bulletin, rules were outlined that defined the conditions of eligibility for settlement renters. The families with children were given a priority, since they only had to have lived in Berlin for half a year (German citizens without children had to live in Berlin for at least two years and had to have been registered with the housing office for at least one year.) \(^{365}\)

It was not only the overt rules that prioritized families and married couples over singles. So did the very design of the apartments. Floor-plans for townhouses and smaller apartments show larger areas devoted to the living room, bedrooms to accommodate parents and children, a balcony, and a separate kitchen. The kitchen, separated from the living room by a door, was not thought of as a *Wohnküche*, but as a functional separate domain, designated exclusively for activities connected to preparation of food.

While some tenants perhaps did not like the new architecture or the small rooms, it seems that especially for those residents whose living conditions had been worse in the past, they particularly appreciated the garden, the bathroom, and the kitchen. A former tenant of *Hufeisensiedlung* contrasted his apartment there to his subsequent one in the Römerstadt in Frankfurt concluding that “it cannot even compare.” In Römerstadt, “the architect did not give much thought to practical matters.” There was no gas in the (electrical) kitchen, the cabinets were too small and there were radiators where a cold room should be.\(^{366}\) Household rationalization received mixed responses. Some tenants may have felt alienated by the modernist aesthetic, while others may have appreciated the functional kitchens (rather than
seeing them as confining), as the rationalized designs might have boosted housewives’ confidence in their capacity to manage their domestic environments.

Often, the tenants’ imaginative ways of furnishing their home spaces clashed with the plans of neighbors. In her memoirs of life with Heinrich Vogeler, his then-partner Sofia Marchlewska describes the political bases of some such conflicts. As soon as the couple moved into the *Siedlung*, according to Marchlewska, their “petit-bourgeois” neighbors started bothering them, disturbed by the fact that they were communists: “Bruno Taut, the talented builder has everything planned: spotlessly clean houses surrounded by gardens, newly planted trees along street edges. . . –a pure paradise. The only thing [he] has not factored in was the attitude of German ‘squares.’”

The garden became another place of conflict: according to Marchlewska, the appearance of their lawn outraged their neighbors, because, instead of planting flowerbeds, they left the ground bare for their little son to play in. Certainly, the recreational use of the garden contravened not only the petit-bourgeois sensibilities of their fellow-tenants, but, as we shall see, also the intentions of the landscape architect for *Hufeisensiedlung*, Leberecht Migge, who planned the gardens to be “productive.”

The petit-bourgeois sentiments that Marchlewska laments became a target for critique by the communists as well as by conservative proponents of household rationalization. Upon her visit to *Hufeisensiedlung*, Erna Meyer, an advocate for household rationalization and the author of the best-selling book *Der Neue Haushalt* (1926), complained how difficult it was for “all who work on the housing problem” to “instill in tenants that they in these new housing finally need to get rid of all that nonsense of their non-hygienic and useless habits.” For example, she was scandalized to observe in Britz the “collection of stuff” that tenants accumulated, and bemoaned “windows which are impossible to open because of three or four curtains.”
Rationalization as a “cultural model” becomes evident in the designs the outdoor spaces as well as in the apartment interiors. However, as we have seen with the designs of buildings, “rationalization” became a term used to designate a variety of often conflicting approaches and practices and interventions that social thinkers, architects, and planners were making into urban spatial organization during the late 1920’s.

In *Hufeisensiedlung*, many of the row houses and ground floors of the central apartment buildings included small allotment gardens designed by landscape architect Leberecht Migge. Migge’s vision of rationalized outdoor spaces, with his emphasis on functional arrangements and the use of technology, was intrinsically tied into his revolutionary social ideas, as David H. Haney argues. Migge’s involvement in designing gardens for numerous Siedlungen in Berlin with modernist planners and architects such as Martin Wagner and Bruno Taut was conditioned by a sustained theoretical interest and practice of the ideas of the garden city movement, his commitments to Peter Kropotkin’s anarchist politics, and by the influence of Arts and Crafts conceptions of self-sufficient gardens for small communities. Migge’s vision of gardening as a socially progressive practice both formed and became expressed in his designs as well as in his own personal living arrangements. In the early 1920’s Migge resided in Worspede, a far-left artists’ colony, whose residents practiced the ideas of self-sufficient agriculture, and where he befriended the painter Heinrich Vogeler (who himself later resided in *Hufeisensiedlung*). At the same time, Migge was actively publishing in such conservative magazines as *Bebauet die Erde!*; in the early 1930’s Migge went so far as to express his support for the Nazi Party and the “turn to the Right.” Haney, who has traced the various influences on his practice, is careful not to position Migge as a devotee of any of the particular “camps,” but presents him as a contradictory and ideologically inconsistent thinker, whose emphases change at various periods of his career.
It might, therefore, be overly simplistic to consider Migge’s *Hufeisensiedlung* gardens as a direct application of earlier “garden city” ideas to the overly technological, functionalist, and modernist planning of the late 1920’s.

Just as we have witnessed during this period the adaptation of standardization of labour practices into the home via the efficient Frankfurt kitchen, we can discern a similar fascination with the possibilities of outdoor spaces and designs brought on by the standardization of processes of production, evident in Migge’s *Siedlungen* projects of the late 1920’s. For Migge, the garden is envisioned as a productive whole and implicated in creation of “humane dwellings.” Garden plots, sustained by and sustaining humans, are organized with a concern for complete utilization.370 “The Green Manifesto,” originally published in 1919, established the garden as the core of Migge’s vision of national social and economic reform. Against the “old idea, the city” of the 19th century, of “trade, factories and finance” and of the “production of power and civilization of force,” he proclaims in this manifesto the new social vision of urban space as a series of decentralized settlements, proposing a “general idea of the twentieth century: Land . . . Create City-land!” Migge’s is not a call to ruralize the city by returning to an older agricultural form of settlement. His manifesto rather argues for a new urban form wherein German cities might “embrace their own land” through the creation of settlements with gardens.371 This insistence on politicizing active cultivation of land distinguished Migge from many of his colleagues among the modern garden architects who designed garden arrangements according to “natural associations, such as on beaches or prairies.”372 By contrast, Migge proposed a strategy for the radical reorganization of urban space, which he referred to as “inner colonization,” or the agricultural cultivation of the land within the city boundaries. Like the kitchen, a highly gendered site of labour which was designed around the labour of the
housewife, the garden too was as constructed a gendered arrangement as the feminized kitchen. Migge’s language of inner colonization designated primarily German “immigration into its own land” (*Einwanderung*), thus de-emphasizing the imperialist connotations of this term.

Nevertheless, the highly nationalistic tenor of the language merged with anarchist sensibilities of self-governing agricultural communes. For example, the active participatory role required for garden cultivation and upkeep was framed in the nationalist rhetoric of “struggle”: “The common gardens (6 square meters per person) should be not romantic decayed and idle worn-out green. The fruit and vegetable gardens should be . . . self-sufficient gardens (80 square meters per person) . . . . The dwelling wanders out . . . . Every single individual must build their own future. Every single individual must help their neighbour. Help, save, build, struggle!”

To assist the settlers in the task of nurturing productive land “the mechanization of the German soil” is necessary: the automated irrigation technologies using mountain water should be installed, fertilization materials such as peat and loam that come from earth, should be made available.

In the mid 1920’s through the early 1930’s, Migge’s idea of an “inner colonization” of the areas of Greater Berlin was key to a “new urbanized form of life” that made *Neues Bauen Siedlung* central to the social transformations attendant upon urban renewal. Alongside new *Siedlungen* made possible by publicly funded loans, small gardens were to be set up as “productive land” to be cultivated and providing for the city of Berlin by blue and white collar workers as well as the unemployed. While emulating the discourse of Weimar housing reformers, Migge, however, departs from the conventional critique of *Mietskaserne*. Too often, writes Migge, “typical” dwelling means in building practice “miserable:” “Appalling, subhuman, these monotonous facades of our row houses: premorse (*abgebissene*) tenements, the wound plastered with a little roof.” And so the type of modern dwelling “will be born not from
confinement (in cubes), but more so from expansion (into air and gardenspace).”

Simultaneously critiquing *Neues Bauen* for advocating smaller spaces, he supports its focus on resettlement of urban dwellers from congested *Mietskaserne* into the apartment blocks dispersed in the outer low-density areas: “instead of banal settlement, better-radical resettlement” (*radikal umzusiedeln*). 379

In his later writings, Migge talked about how this “Gardenization” (*Gaertnerisierung*) could be achieved given the size limitations of urban *Siedlungen*. “Even the flat roof of *Siedlung* can be utilized for the garden. Under conditions of “lack of space” (*Raumnot*) for urban dwellers the roofs as spaces of “the hottest sun and freshest wind” could be utilized to create an outdoor space for “exercising, having breakfast, dancing and gardening.”380 The residents were supposed to ensure, among other things, the smooth utilization of household waste. In the *Ziebigk Siedlung* in Dessau, for example, which Migge designed in 1926, the garden was to be fertilized with waste from a mechanical toilet, stored and then transported to the garden plot, which was irrigated with water from the bathroom and kitchen. Needless to say, Migge’s labour intensive design did not prove particularly popular among the residents, who shortly replaced their mechanical with flush toilets.381

*Hufeisensiedlung* gardens were planned with these largely subsistence gardens in mind, as they included fruit trees and vegetables where tenants could grow food to support themselves, by consuming and selling surplus produce.382 The planned gardens of the row houses on Parchimer Allee, for example, included fruit trees (apple, pear and sour cherry), vegetables and fruit (currants, strawberries, espalier fruit) and flower gardens (perennial and summer flowers). 383 The “ideal of the modern housing,” for Migge, combined private gardens with common use areas, such as communal subsistence gardens, areas for carpet beating, for trash disposal, for
leisure and for children’s play. Private gardens, in Migge’s plans, were to be included only if there was enough space. In accordance to Migge’s “productive” idea of space (addressed in Chapter Two), his garden was supposed to embody self-sufficiency for city dwellers. Similar to the gardens that Migge designed for Taut’s private residence in Dahlewitz, south of Berlin, which included both ornamental flowers as well as vegetables and fruit trees and bushes, the Hufeisensiedlung “small gardens” could be thought of as extensions of indoor living space into the outdoors. As Taut writes, “With the garden and its unassuming plants close to the house, the house, in a way, spreads itself into the periphery.”

It is not clear whether Migge’s visions were in any way enforced by GEHAG. To what extent were the gardens used according to such plans? It was not until after the Second World War that the gardens were used in self-sustaining way. Until then, the experiment depended largely on the initiative of the tenants. As photographs from the period show, some of the gardens had vegetables while others looked largely decorative.

The most often reproduced image of the settlement, an open area with a pond in the centre of the horseshoe shaped apartment block, shows clearly that the layout was not built according to Migge’s initial design for shared uses. Migge’s plan for the lawn surrounding the horseshoe shaped pond was very much in sync with Bruno Taut’s ideas of “city crown.” Taut’s “city crown” (Stadtkrone) was envisioned as a common area which would include access to water from the tenants’ gardens, with the pond functioning as a wading pool for children. The public space around the Hufeisen pond ended up not being designed by Migge: as he bitterly complains, since planning of this iconic part of the green areas being under the jurisdiction of the district of Neukolln, the design that has been followed instead were merely “the compromised originals” resulting in “green overorganization” while some small gardens remained “unadvised”
which resulted in “green underorganization” of over-planted and overly decorated cramped gardens. \textsuperscript{387} Instead, the lawn became a “park land” in a more conventional sense, where the common uses were discouraged and residents prevented from walking across the grass. In this case, the design of the pond as merely a decorative feature not intended for public use stemmed from the fact that GEHAG that had no power over the design of the public spaces, \textsuperscript{388} and therefore did not have enough influence to “push” Migge’s social design of the pond as a shared space, integrated with residents’ gardens. The garden at the centre of the exemplary modernist settlement, as critique by Migge implied, was constructed according to the nineteenth century idea of gardens as beautiful reproductions of nature. Available photographs of \textit{Hufeisensiedlung} largely reinforce Social Democratic ideals of cleanliness, orderliness, and gardening more as a hobby and not means of self-sustainability. For example, the 1930 EINFA newsletter made it clear that the concerns of the housing cooperative were not so much on utilitarian spatial practices (of growing vegetables per se) as on the representational aspect of these spaces, that is, on decoration and ornamentation. “Here individualist zest for action (\textit{Tatendrang}) must in the interests of other residents step back a little, because it will certainly be not in the interest of the individual, to destroy a thoroughly thought–out architecture with inconsistent floral ornaments or installation of balcony trellises.”\textsuperscript{389}

Migge’s anarchic and communal visions were modified in \textit{Hufeisensiedlung}, resulting, rather paradoxically, in individualist and bourgeois \textit{Kleingarten}, built for leisure purposes rather than as self-sustaining sites of production. Such an implementation was illustrative of a “shift in rhetoric.” To make space for housing developments, \textit{Neues Bauen} programme necessitated replacing workers’ and poor peoples’ garden colonies (\textit{Laubenkolonien}) with parks and “official” garden colonies. The \textit{Neues Bauen} programme of building settlements for populations
that might otherwise find themselves in inner-city tenements necessitated redeveloping land on
the outskirts. Sometimes indeed these spaces were undeveloped. Often, however, the outlying
spaces were already inhabited by the poor living in makeshift homes.\textsuperscript{390} Redevelopment
proceeded through demolition and the building of new housing blocks, as well as through
establishing “permanent colonies” (\textit{Dauerkolonien}). In one of the most detailed journalistic
pieces of the early 1930’s, Alexander Graf Stenbock-Fermor observes living conditions on the
“social fringes” in Germany, writing about one of the \textit{Laubenkolonien} in Berlin’s Wedding
district. Every “small primitive wooden hut” was somehow individualized: some had signposts
identifying themselves as “Villa Marie” or “Villa Luise,” and some were decorated with plaster
angel figurines and colourful crystal balls in their gardens. Stenbok-Fermer writes: “Next to the
\textit{Laubenkolonie} there is a gypsy camp. Caravan (trailer) next to caravan. . . Between colonists
and gypsies there are no relations. These two social groups live completely separately right next
to each other. The colonists nearly all are workers, class-conscious proletarians, politically
grounded (\textit{politisch geschult}), and farmers at the same time. . . . But the farmer-countryside
culture that is tediously being established in the city is an illusory world. The workers are
farmers on notice. The land is only leased. Any day a notice can be received. The city needs
this area for new housing. The colonists will be relocated (\textit{ausquartiert}) into the tenements.”\textsuperscript{391}

The “inner colonization” rhetoric which, in Leberecht Migge’s writing, denoted social
reform, by re-settling urban tenement populations to the outskirts, nevertheless presupposed a
view of the land as yet untouched by development, as a vacant space. Just as recommendations
for the ways in which to inhabit the new spaces clashed with established practices of
homemaking, construction of the new developments often involved the removal of existing
settlements. As critics argued, in spite of its egalitarian impulses, most designs and discussions
around rationalization simply re-affirmed bourgeois investments in cleanliness, comfort, and hygiene, while doing very little to challenge, for example, gender inequality, as witnessed in the “efficient” Frankfurt kitchens, which are seen to have simply made woman’s drudgery more “rational.” Yet, my aim was to re-focus discussions away from conceptualizing rationalization as a consequence of broader economic processes and as a substitute for social transformation. In this chapter we saw how the idea of “minimal existence” (borrowed from nutrition science) figured in the discourses of city planners and architects and in actually built housing estates. Using *Hufeisensiedlung* as a case study, I interrogated how the new emergent urban form of mass housing, *Siedlung*, was understood to foster new social relations. Early twentieth century interior designs were exhibited in design shows and the images disseminated through mass media. In spite of the various material circumstances of the tenants of *Hufeisensiedlung*, the inner spaces of the apartments and living practices were “in conversation with,” to use Lefebvre’s term, the “representational spaces” of these home shows, of pictures in magazines, of political ideologies, and so on. Accounting for the various media representations surrounding and shaping the modern home, Jacobs and Cairns emphasize that the “house itself is part of a process of mediation whereby a household encounters wider society, including ideas about how a home interior should look, how one can be modern.” Interiors are too, as well as *Siedlungen*, as we have seen, the places where the shaping and cultivation of particularly classed and gendered tastes and behaviors occurred. Charting the various degrees by which the residents’ efforts became governed by directives (defined broadly here as a variety of media, starting from floor plans and specific policies to visual representations and home advice manuals), I traced how tenants simultaneously became constituted as consumers of interiors and as producers of new social forms.
CHAPTER 4. Modernity and "Uneven Development": German Modernist Architects and Planners in the USSR

“A city without markets and churches.”
--on the socialist city of Magnitogorsk, USSR in Construction 1, 1932.

The production of housing according to modernist standards in both Weimar Germany and the USSR involved similar reactions to overcrowding and poor living conditions in 19th century workers’ tenements. Since the October revolution in 1917, Russia remained one of the most economically and industrially underdeveloped countries in Europe. 392 On November 19, 1928, in a speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Josef Stalin proclaimed the launch of First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932), a course of rapid industrialization:
“We have assumed power in a country whose technical equipment is terribly backward . . . . At the same time we have around us a number of capitalist countries whose industrial technique is far more developed and up-to-date than that of our country.” The beginning of the first Five Year Plan was accompanied by a programme of collectivization, which involved, in the words of Stalin himself, “eliminating the kulaks as a class.”393 Accordingly, new cities were planned around new industrial enterprises in the territories of the Russian Far East, North, Siberia, and Kazakhstan. These industrial enterprises were envisioned to be “city-producing” (gradoobrazuyuschee), and were designated a main factor and source of financing for “socialist settlement” (sotsrasselenie).394

In this chapter, I explore the theoretical and professional exchanges between Germany and the USSR by focusing on a little known episode in the early 1930s, when a group of German and
other foreign architects (Ernst May, Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky, Hannes Meyer, Bruno Taut and others) were employed by the Soviet state. Among the more famous groups of architects invited were Hannes Meyer (after he was dismissed as the director of the Bauhaus in 1930) and his team, called the Rotfront Brigade, and the Ernst May Brigade.  

Approaching the intersection of the modernization and modernity in Russia, Marshall Berman argues that because there was almost no (or very slow) modernization in Russia, the meaning of modernity had to be “more complex, elusive and paradoxical.” The most “western” city in Russia, St. Petersburg, for example, produced a distinctive literary and political culture, “a marvelous array of experiments in modernization from below,” in response to “more than a century of brutal but abortive modernization from above.” Unlike Moscow or St. Petersburg, however, the new Soviet industrial cities which are in focus in this chapter presented a different physical and cultural terrain than imperial cities with medieval histories. They have been often framed as “tabula rasa,” as terrains for the dramatic remaking of landscape and of what was seen as “backwards” ways of life. Foreign architects’ work in these cities proceeded in a context marked by a slower pace or a lack of modernization. Yet we should be wary of framing the ideas of the Western planners and architects as either naïve or fantastic as we approach their work in the USSR’s attempt to overcome its industrial “underdevelopment.” Rather than invoking a normative ideal of modernization, we might trace the borrowings more precisely: how was the design and construction of dwellings envisioned and carried out in a “non-Western” location?

The focus of this chapter therefore shifts from the disciplinary logic of modernist architects’ housing projects and appropriation of such housing by residents to the transnational mobility of expertise and knowledge. My analysis of the ways in which “western” modernist
ideas and projects were selectively incorporated and modified according to new Party directives in the USSR should help us to an awareness that the German modernist architects working in the Soviet Union neither simply “applied” nor “adapted” the principles developed in a different geographical and cultural area; the result was never a simple transfer of “capitalist” planning into the Soviet environment (a critique which dominated Soviet scholarship on the Western architects’ work in the USSR). Neither is it satisfactory to interpret their projects in terms of a dialectic between accustoming and/or resisting the authoritarian dictates of an emergent socialist realism. As we will see, “the barrack” became a typically widespread Soviet response to minimal living. I argue that while “western” architects and planners operated within the broader institutionalization of the imprecise doctrine of socialist realism, their practical work was equally caught up in local constellations of the administrative apparatus and changing political directives, and interwined with the power dynamics among architects (local and “western”). Building under such conditions involved the constant renegotiations of various designs that were filtered through complex local bureaucracies, with fluctuating attitudes towards “western” expertise, with the demanding geography and weather conditions, and with the aesthetic and ideological arguments published in the pages of a waning constructivist press.

Foreign Architects’ Work in Soviet Industrial Cities: Context

Ernst May’s designs had become known to the Soviet administration for their egalitarianism and affordability. His buildings provided residents access to sun and light, and integrated conveniences and services into sites; his work was marked by the standardization of building methods and furniture; finally, of course, May championed housing for low-income
earners. As Mark Meerovich has suggested, May’s successful housing settlements in Frankfurt were no doubt one main reason that the Soviet government sent a delegation of architects, housing and building administrators to Germany to study modern German housing. In 1927, as the industrialization campaign was yet to begin, the Soviet delegation, composed of members of building organizations under the authority of Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) visited Berlin, Stuttgart and Frankfurt am Main. As a result, Ernst May was invited to work in the USSR. It remains unclear, however, as to who exactly initiated the plan to invite May (and other planners and architects) to build in the Soviet Union. The decision may have been made at the level of the state committee, which was designated responsibility for ensuring methods of “standardization and rationalization in industry and management.” This is the same committee, as Meerovich noted, that was also, and notoriously, responsible for purging of the party members and the state apparatus. 399

The (impossible) task facing international architects was to assist in the industrialization effort in the absence of appropriate equipment and under conditions of extreme material scarcity. As Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky put it, “There was no modern construction industry. Not at all. How can you build modern houses without modern techniques? They couldn’t make big window panes. There was no iron. We weren’t allowed to use iron for house building. That was all used to build up industry . . . . Modern architecture had shipwrecked. The climate was not suitable, it just didn’t work. As a reaction, they built fancy towers.”400 Yet, at the start, this situation of economic “underdevelopment” was hardly seen as a hindrance by the intrigued western architects. Ernst May excitedly responded to the Soviet international initiative in an interview with Frankfurter Zeitung on August 1, 1930: “until now, my activities, like those of almost all town planners in western countries, have consisted largely of urban expansion, albeit
on the new basis of satellite theory; but now I am to develop plans for new towns which are to be created from nothing as independent organisms.”

Indeed, foreign architects were invited to assist in this task by designing plans for industrial cities as “tabula rasa,” exactly because the planned industrialization projects were located in barely populated, remote areas, with minimal infrastructure or no conveniences. [Illustration 15] The profession of “urban planner” did not really exist in the Soviet Union, as academic courses in “town building” had been introduced only after the revolution; more specialized occupations in public utilities dealt with blagoustroistvo (“beautification” of the city).

While traditional building methods based on wood and brick predominated, there were some experiments with iron, glass, cement and steel; yet the state of these techniques was poor.

What kinds of dwellings did foreign architects help to produce? It would be helpful to begin by considering just how “rationalization” entered the discussions happening around new Soviet housing in the late 1920’s. The introduction of efficient building techniques and the use of standardised materials aimed to secure a smooth transition to the “socialist city,” and to prevent the problems of overcrowding and pollution that had been detrimental in Western industrial cities. At the same time, rationalization was perceived as a remedy to the situation of industrial “underdevelopment.” In the USSR, May was expected to adapt his ideas about standardization, rationalization and minimal dwelling to Soviet conditions, through “the most possible savings in construction, via a re-orientation to possible lightening and simplification of construction, the use of the standard parts and local building materials, as well as through the most rationalized planning of the inside of dwellings.”

Understood in this way, rationalization can be considered an integral part of a whole constellation of ideas about the social management of the factory production process, which had been introduced by Frederick Taylor and Henry
Ford. It was synonymous with “Americanization,” (Amerikanizatsiya), a term which in Russia since 1870 had served as “a metaphor of the time for speedy industrial tempo, high growth, productivity and efficiency.” In pre-revolutionary mid-nineteenth century Russia, debates in architecture were not exempt from a fascination with Western technology. As Catherine Cooke argues, such debates centered on the role of technology as either “the generator” (a position to which constructivists would adhere) or a “facilitator” of architectural production. The term Constructivism, as Khan Magomedov stated in his classic work on Soviet architecture, does refer to both “technological constructions,” “engineering work in the construction process,” and simultaneously, and even more so, to constructing a new social environment. To emphasize the fundamentally spatial nature of social change, constructivist architects employed the metaphor of “social condenser.” In their urban vision, such avant-garde projects as housing and workers clubs were supposed to socially transform men (and women), just as an electrical condenser changes the nature of a current. The city, ideally, came to function as the “general condenser.”

Communal housing was intended to both represent an essential element of the new everyday life and be practiced as such. A communal way of life relied on buildings that would include communal space and facilities: canteens, clubs, and kindergartens. It follows that the re-organization of family relationships and the collectivization of domestic life became the focus of diverse debates and experiments in the planning of new dwellings. Moses Ginzburg, the designer of the Narkomfin apartment building in Moscow, stressed the role of the living environment in the transformation of life, promoting an increased use of collective facilities and common spaces while at the same time trying to provide spaces that preserved individual privacy and maintained a family’s independence from neighbours. For Ginzburg, even corridors were
envisioned as a “sort of forum, a setting for the development of purely collective functions and social exchanges.”

The transition to the new society did not have to be rapid: Ginzburg suggested that a mobile “kitchen element” might be built to accommodate those who felt uncomfortable with the idea of eating in a communal kitchen. This would provide a soft landing: once a person had been trained to use collective facilities, the “kitchen element” could be transferred to another apartment. Ginzburg was no advocate of compulsory collectivization. Rather, he emphasized the gradual transition to a “variety of communal services.”

Others, however, advocated the complete and rapid collectivization of domestic life. Nikolai Kuz’min, for example, argued that residents should be divided into age groups, that family flats be entirely discarded, that children were to be raised collectively, and that all meals be taken communally. In the pages of the newspaper Komsomol’skaia Pravda, Kuz’min calls for a “dom-kommuna” for 1000 to 2000 people. For singles, there should be bright warm rooms accommodating 6-10 people each. Novyi byt was to be based on the “scientific organization of labour and leisure time.” The furniture that corresponded to the new way of living was designed to be convertible and folding, such as, for example, Petr Galaktionov’s bed that folded into a table or Nikolai Sobolev’s “bed-armchair”: “in keeping with the avant garde conceptualization of the new Soviet man as machine, material objects that were functional, not merely decorative, assumed a prominence that was new for Russian culture.” A workers’ club “as an entire urban zone reserved for cultural activities,” would include sports, lectures, scientific and artistic exhibitions, children’s playgrounds, planetarium, and so on. The club was to be managed by trade unions or local groups, and centered around the idea of member participation. Only a few of them, such as the Zuyev club, were actually built, along with the Vesnin brothers clubs for film actors and the Likhachev automobile plant in Moscow.
The financial aid from the Party was withdrawn in 1929 and the Party began to restructure the architectural programmes to address the emerging needs of industrialization.\textsuperscript{417} Even in those districts that included communal facilities, such as the Sokol and Dukstroï garden cities and Usachevka district in Moscow, as late as the 1920’s a substantial amount of housing was still built as copies of bourgeois housing. The result was often that a single apartment was allocated to numerous families. Often domestic communes were organized in unsuitable buildings: factory barracks and the rooms of communal apartments.\textsuperscript{418} Usually composed of young students, “\textit{kommuny}” were intended to form a kind of economic co-operative where the living expenses would be shared and domestic tasks organized and divided. Housing co-operatives represented more conservative arrangements.\textsuperscript{419} Some 	extit{kommuny} would be organized for ideological reasons, usually by intelligentsia as, for example, a “\textit{dom-kommuna}” of engineers and writers in Leningrad. Most often, however, they were formed because of material shortages and other practical difficulties. Former village networks established domestic communes on their own initiative, as a result of the inability of the state to provide minimal food and housing: “while newcomers accepted the minimal rations and housing guaranteed to them by the government, they also built their own shanties, cultivated their own gardens, and formed self-help organizations and barter circles.”\textsuperscript{420} The “conspicuous hoarding of goods” was unavoidable for lower class families occupying rooms in a communal apartment, families who had to get goods and furniture anytime they had a chance. People who were not employed by the government did not have access to special food shops or furniture purchases. Thus in elite domestic realms habits of austerity and scarcity could be cultivated, while in lower class households there emerged a tendency towards display, through drapery, flooring, and embroidery. \textsuperscript{421}
In the popular press, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* embarked on a campaign to promote the new socialist domesticity, which would not simply improve material conditions, but socially transform humans. Launched by *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* in 1928-1929, the campaign created “a kind of interactive Soviet public sphere where readers would join in trashing old-style domesticity and report to the paper their own feats of burning “little idols of things.” The campaign was directed against petit bourgeois tastes in decorations and undertook to offer appropriate substitutions.

In 1927, as the Soviet delegation traveled to Germany, the magazine *Contemporary Architecture (Sovremennaia Arkhitektura)* dedicated its issues to questions of Western experiments in the rationalization of construction. A June 25, 1927, editorial in *Pravda* proclaimed rationalization to be “the most important task of the architect designing a factory, public building, dwelling.” While the pictures accompanying this slogan depict cranes and metal construction, the article that follows avoids any mention of a mechanized building process, and the relation of rationalization to technology is left ambiguous. Rather, rationalization, although repeatedly mentioned, is never clearly defined. The vague message postulated that rationalization be integrated into the “whole process and apparatus” of production. Worker expertise was to be involved but in a way that connected their everyday labour as “soldier[s] on the front of socialist construction” to accomplishing the major historic goal.

Although many Western architects had participated in constructivist discussions and shared the constructivist approach to housing, the Stalinist production of space was governed neither by creative interventions into the everyday nor even by using standardization procedures to improve the living conditions of workers, as many Western architects hoped. In Stalin’s Soviet Union, the domestic sphere and designs for private households were no longer targets of
rationalization. More precisely, “rationalization” started to mean something different as it was absorbed into Soviet Stalinist discourse. In the words of Victor Buchli, “the new sphere of performance focused instead on the physical bodies of Soviet citizens in the public realm; on those constituted as ‘kulaks,’ ‘Trotskyites,’ ‘class aliens’ and ‘wreckers.’ The language of hygiene used to eradicate petit-bourgeois consciousness (as embodied by ‘dirt’ and ‘vermin’ in relation to furniture, design and domestic life) shifted with devastating results for human beings themselves.”

Rationalization, in the Stalinist context, rather than referring to developing technologies, came to designate a manner of exploiting labour. In place of mechanized work, under conditions marked by an extreme deficit of construction materials and available industry, the Stalinist project of rationalization emphasized “shock work.” The character of such work “was precisely not Taylorist. Rather than standardizing rhythms based on scientific calculation of individual body performance, it was executed in rushes, or ‘storms,’ by teams of workers . . . . Whereas Taylorist rhythms set ‘norms’ of labour, the purpose of shock work was to break them.” In this sense, as Heather Dehaan points out, Fordist tendencies of consolidation of managerial power was appealing to the Soviet authorities more so than the Taylorist theories of scientific management favoured by avant garde planners and architects.

As a consequence, the Western architects who arrived to work in the Soviet Union not only faced the logistical challenges of building modern factories and housing for workers in under-developed areas, they also had to contend with an increasing hostility toward avant-garde aesthetics coupled with the expanding dominance of the doctrine of socialist realism (which I will address in some detail below). The Stalinist version of Soviet urban modernity no longer envisioned constructivist experimentation with architectural forms and planning methods guided by the search for the “socialist city.” Instead, the doctrine of “socialist realism” solidified
around the message of irrelevance and even harmfulness of avant-garde discourse and building practices.

“Western” Architects’ Expectations and Practices within an Emergent Doctrine of Socialist Realism

As foreign architects were arriving in the USSR in the early 1930s, the “official” architectural discussion had already started targeting Soviet avant-garde architects. In 1930, the June Plenum of the Central Committee issued a famous resolution titled “Against Losing Touch with Life.” This resolution denounced those endorsing communalization and the “rebuilding of everyday life” (perestroika byta). It read:

The Central Committee notes that along with the movement toward a socialist way of life (byt), highly groundless, semi-fantastic, and hence extremely harmful attempts are being made by certain comrades (Sabsovich, Larin and others) to jump over the obstacles that lie along the path to a socialist transformation of the way of life, which originate, on the one hand, in the economic and cultural backwardness of the country and, on the other hand, in the necessity in this particular moment to concentrate all the resources for the fastest industrialization of the country . . . . To these attempts of certain professionals, who conceal behind their leftism their truly opportunistic essence, one can name some published plans of re-planning of existing cities and building of new ones using exclusively state resources, with complete collectivization of life. . . . The implementation of these harmful and utopian proposals, which disregard both the material resources of the
country and the degree of preparation of the population, would lead to large unwarranted spending.\textsuperscript{431}

Accordingly, there seemed no need to deliberate about the nature of socialist cities, as cities in the USSR “were socialist by virtue of their takeover by the Communist Party.”\textsuperscript{432} In April 1932, the Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party called for the centralization of all artistic organizations and the Union of Soviet Architects was created.\textsuperscript{433} Finally, there came the notorious result of the competition to design the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, which was announced in 1933 and solidified the official course taken to socialist realism.\textsuperscript{434}

In spite of these developments and other attacks on constructivist principles, many European architects still viewed the USSR as a land of artistic possibilities. Schütte-Lihotsky recollected in an interview with Anatole Kopp, that, at their departure in 1930, the architects in May’s Brigade considered the USSR to be “the birthplace of modern architecture.”\textsuperscript{435} These foreign architects were, perhaps, neither ignorant nor naïve about the political processes. Rather, many subscribed to the position articulated by El Lissitsky in the early 1930s: “Modern architecture in Russia? There is no such thing. What there is, is a struggle over modern architecture.” At a meeting of the Marxist workers’ school in Berlin in October in 1931, Hannes Meyer, for example, who was more outspoken about his leftist political ideology than May, emphasized the unique position of architects in the Soviet Union. No longer compelled to negotiate with building organizations, land speculators, banks, and planning officials, the architect in the USSR was “the technical officer of the Five Year plan.” Planning and actual building, according to Meyer, are separate from each other: unlike his “western colleagues, an architect, by belonging to the labour union, works on his own special tasks, as part of the brigade (\textit{brigadenmassig})”: “The architect in the Soviet Union is neither an artist, nor a ‘know-it-all,’ but
a building specialist, who is educated in a narrow specialized manner and deploys his skills exclusively for the goals of Five Year plan.”

Hannes Meyer went to work to Soviet Russia after he was dismissed as director of the Bauhaus. He had presented papers in Moscow and was widely published in Russian. He also edited a professional architectural magazine, *Arkhitektura za Rubezhom*, which published writings by Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky. Yet even these outspoken Western promoters of the Soviet way of life and architecture were in a curious ideological position. Perhaps, as a result, Schütte-Lihotsky’s articles, for instance, focus strictly on the “technical” aspects of various “western” projects, presenting them as examples for the Soviet architects and not acknowledging the irony of such a presentation. For example, in her overview of kindergarten projects, she wrote: “The construction of our country and a new socialist society, the re-planning of the old and the creation of new cities, woman’s engagement in the social and professional sphere—all these factors determine the development of the kindergartens in the near future. It would be useful to use the best experience and achievements of foreign architects.” In another article, devoted to small efficient kitchens, Schütte-Lihotsky rehearses the already familiar traits of the efficient kitchen—light, distances, equipment—with an obvious focus on individual apartments, thereby curtailing discussions of collective living or *novyi byt*. Yet, as one scholar of the foreign architects’ work in the Soviet Union, Milka Bliznakov, argues, the Western architects largely dedicated themselves to design and construction, rather than becoming publicly involved in theoretical discussions with their Russian counterparts about the future of the socialist city. The highly uneven power dynamic of the situation caused El Lissitsky to notice that “even today the foreigners treat us as residents of the western part of Asia, rather than the
eastern part of Europe.” The vision of architecture as an open-ended experiment became increasingly attacked in the USSR, shutting down debates about the nature of socialist cities. However, the increasing hegemony of socialist realism doctrine did not put an abrupt end to avant-garde experiments. As Greg Castillo argues, “for its reputation as the antithesis of Stalinist architecture, constructivism’s timing is problematic. The movement’s apogee of popularity, among both architects and the state’s enterprises that constituted their client base, crested during the First Five-Year Plan (1928-32). That historic juncture witnessed the rise of the cult of personality and campaigns to collectivize agriculture and industry at breakneck speed—phenomena heralding the emergence of the Stalinist state. It was also the period during which most of constructivism’s canonic monuments were built or commissioned.” Since 1928, Moses Ginzburg had headed a newly established Section for Standardization within the Construction Committee (Stroikom); his constructivist team designed standardized units for communal houses. During the 1930s, a colourful, visually striking magazine, USSR in Construction (SSSR na stroike), appeared, which consisted primarily of photographs, printed pictures of Russian experimental photographers and artists (El Lissitzky, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova and others). This journal’s interesting combination of explicitly avant-garde layouts and compositions and the propagandistic nature of its contents illustrates that, although constructivist architects were by 1932 falling out of favour with the regime, some avant-garde experiments continued. Castillo charges Russian avant-garde architects with “ultimate complicity in the Stalinization of Soviet society,” and other scholars that study Western modernists’ architects project in the USSR often interpret their work within the inevitable defeat of constructivist architecture in the transition to socialist realism. However, the emerging doctrine of socialist realism, while providing us with the contours and historical
backdrop to approach the work of “western” architects and planners in the USSR, cannot be understood to fully define the construction at the “great” industrial building sites. As Thomas Lahusen argues, in the literature of 1930s and 1940s, “just at the moment when the socialist realist canon reached its highest degree of unification and standardization . . . it became maximally fragmented and ‘open-ended’." Heather deHaan puts it well when she points to the “shiftiness” that defined urban planning at the time: “The lines of the Soviet conceptual edifice were never sufficiently clear and stable. Identities and meanings were too pliable to form a bounded civilization. Even the mechanisms for building such a world-science, planning, policing, and ideology- were repeatedly shuffled, reorganized, and then restructured yet again. The very definition of such key concepts as kulak, worker, friend or enemy, ethnicity, and citizenship changed repeatedly . . . . The process of building socialism, not a finished conceptual edifice, defined city planning and city life from the start.” Consequently, in order to assess where building practices folded into socialist realist mandates and where they diverged, we need to be wary of understanding such projects to be driven or shaped entirely by ideology, which was messily intertwined with the many other contingent discursive and practical mechanisms by which processes aggregate.

A major point of contention in the crystallizing Stalinist architectural politics of socialist realism was strochnaia zastroika, urban design according to which housing in parallel rows are situated perpendicular to the street, a plan that had been developed by Ernst May in Frankfurt. [Illustration 16] When the First Five Year Plan proclaiming the construction of new industrial cities was adopted in 1929, debates had revolved around socialist planning and what the “socialist city” should be like. While the so-called “urbanists,” whose positions were articulated by Lev Sabsovich, defended the resettlement of people into compact collectivized
settlements (*sotsgorod*) consisting of communal houses clustered around a factory, such “disurbanists” as Mikhail Okhitovich argued instead for decentralized forms of settlement, made up of individual “prefabricated” houses surrounded by “nature.”

In the USSR, the decentralized method of urban planning was most fully theorized by Nikolai Miliutin, of the “disurbanist” school. His concept of *sotsgorod* relied upon working out the shortest distances possible between the plants and the housing communes, on the basis of “a flowing functional-assembly-line system.” For Miliutin, the “linear” development would help to secure an efficient trip to work while allowing the worker “all the advantages of village life”: “The residential sector (zone) of the settlement (the communal, residential, children’s, and similar buildings or institutions) must be set up parallel to the productive zone and must be separated from it by a greenbelt (buffer zone).”

Both camps shared a suspicion of large congested cities, and are often called “anti-urban.” Yet, unlike Ebenezer Howard’s “garden cities,” urbanist “house combines” and “disurbanist” linear cities aimed to integrate spaces of industrial production with everyday domestic spaces. Between 1928 and 1930, the Party strongly supported these “radical planners,” and over 60 cities were built.

A 1932 *USSR in Construction* report on the construction of the socialist city of Magnitogorsk described the urban vision this way: “A city without markets and churches. A city consisting of 17 blocks of buildings which occupy an enormous territory. A city for a population of 200,000. Every block will have its own department store, its own school, its own group of buildings, and its own restaurants and crèches. Every apartment will have a bath, and every room will have running water, electric light, gas and central heating. Theatres, clubs, houses of soviets, and a parading square will be located in the center of the city, where the tramcar and bus lines cross. Bread factories, hospitals, a stadium and two parks of culture and rest, twenty five hectares each, will surround the city.”
description, we can see echoes of both “urbanists” and “disurbanists” preoccupation with decentralized forms of settlement, as well as the Stalinist vision of the city as a centralized “ensemble.” As Frederick Starr has convincingly argued, these urbanist/disurbanist debates, although brought to a halt and deemed “utopian” in 1931, were never extraneous, but “corresponded with the utopian vision implicit in the Party’s First Five-Year Plan.”

For a brief time between 1928 and 1930, “antiurbanism was able to flourish” as it developed out of the First Five Year plan’s national policies of industrialization and collectivization and nurtured by state financial and institutional support: “The antiurbanists’ doctrines on the decentralization of economic life, on the diffusion of population into areas that were presently uninhabited, and on the impact of electrification on collective and individual life were safely within the bounds of what was widely accepted as reasonable discourse.”

“Strochnaia zastroika” (Zeilenbau) was singled out for particular derision in the attacks on the work of western architects. In Sotzgorod, a Dutch documentary film by Anna Abrahams, architect Philipp Tolziner recalls the task facing the Hans Schmidt Brigade, who were charged with creating the residential district of the city of Orsk, in the Southern Urals, one of the primary districts for new socialist cities. Tolziner was among the remaining members of the combined Ernst May and Hannes Meyer brigades, which had been newly placed under leadership of Schmidt. Work on this district started after the infamous competition for the Palace of Soviets. Under conditions of increasing hostility toward the foreign specialists during the second half of the 1930s, their task was to make changes to the previous plan of Mart Stam, a Dutch architect. Stam’s original plan called for “linear development,” where the compact residential area of the socialist city would run parallel to an industrial zone, separated from living spaces by a green belt. Behind the greenbelt, the rows of housing were designed to be grouped in blocks,
de-emphasizing the central streets. Stam’s plan, however, was criticized by the Orsk planning committee (Orsk raiplan), especially for its “decentralized” logic, with an “eccentric situating of the city centre . . . between the residential and industrial zones.” The Schmidt Brigade, which took over planning once Stam left in 1934, had to revise its own plan, which envisioned two centres with public buildings scattered in the parkland. The final 1935 plan called for relocating and expanding the city centre, accommodating representative buildings along broad boulevards that would connect the industrial zone and the centre of the city, along with large green areas.

[ Illustration 17] As Konrad Püschel, a former member of Schmidt’s brigade recollects, for everyone involved, it was an unforgettable experience to engage in constructing housing, schools, kindergartens, bathhouses, restaurants, hotel and so on in what was then largely a steppe terrain. The inhabitants of the temporary wooden houses cultivated their own flower and vegetable gardens, “however, the camels roaming and grazing over the steppe ate the garden produce and destroyed the work of many weeks.”

In Contemporary Western Architecture (Arkhitektura sovremennogo Zapada) published in 1932, David Arkin had denigrated this building method as little more than “barracks.” The assumed equation of strochnaia zastroika with barracks would later be appropriated by the defenders of socialist realism and critics of Ernst May’s work in the USSR. Arkin, from a Marxist standpoint, condemned Western experiments with minimal living as a “would-be workers’ housing.” He foresees a “foul infinity” (durnaia beskonechnost’) of isolated units as the only possible form of mass housing in a capitalist society. “Infinity” is foul because it constitutes “mechanical-like infinity, devoid of organizing centres.

It is this “absence of architectural complex” that would be taken up by the defenders of socialist realism later on. A Marxist argument about the impossibility of developing true
housing for the masses under capitalist conditions became folded into a larger attack on functionalist architecture in general. The article “The Ugly Heritage of the Architect May” (1937) solidified the socialist realist critique of the “Western” projects in the USSR and for many years defined research of this topic in the USSR by condemning May’s work precisely from the point of view of his planning method. Written by Alexander Mostakov, a Soviet former member of May’s brigade, the piece attacked May’s housing blocks for their “vulgar and purely mechanical approach . . . that reduce the complex notion of housing (zhilishche) to the primitive concept of ‘function.’” There lies the reason for his ‘boxlike’ primitivism that May passes off as ‘contemporary housing.’” What emerges in the new Soviet architectural aesthetic was the increasing importance of the city’s centre and its administrative buildings. The critic of the functionalist “barrack-like style” became a cliché of Stalinist discourse—so much so that, by the mid-1930s, after May and many others had already left the USSR, constructivist architects were accused in reproducing bourgeois architectural forms. What Mostakov claims to be the “deindividualized” subject of May’s architecture, “exactly responds to the condition awaiting many citizens in the Soviet totalitarian state. Ernst May, unsuspecting, creates ‘a mirror,’ which reflects the demands of the main client—Soviet power.”

The extent to which housing built according to May’s designs played into the wishes of the Soviet power to reproduce complicit subjects through architectural design, however, remains a topic to investigate.

The manner in which the actual construction in Orsk proceeded, however, followed neither of the plans precisely. In spite of the ideologically driven changing of plans, the actual building of the socialist city proceeded slowly and was finished just before the Second World War and incorporated only a few of the planned administrative buildings. Although Schmidt’s plan was eventually adopted, even before its official approval, the construction of the first housing block
began according to Stam’s sketches, and was simultaneously criticized for “monotony of strochnaia zastroika.” In the meantime, temporary workers’ settlements continued to be built right next to the industrial area, a development encouraged by a plant administration that had little interests in the debates about the “socialist city.” These temporary barracks eventually became an inseparable part of the new city. Indeed, temporary barracks became a common kind of housing of the Soviet industrial city. As if to emphasize their chaotic nature and to condemn them as a kind of expression of unauthorized agency, as a kind of grassroots housing, in the official discourse they were often labeled nachalovki (from the word nachal’ni, meaning “obnoxious”). Yet, while officially non-existent and entirely unmentioned in USSR in Construction and official planning documents, the construction of these barracks was largely tolerated and even encouraged, and in the next part of the chapter, we will see how this form of housing constituted a highly hierarchical space of Stalinist industrial city.

Magnitogorsk, for example, was largely comprised of barracks and mud huts: as of January 1935, more than 84 percent of population lived in temporary structures. In spite of official denunciations and even campaigns to destroy such informal and improvised housing, this kind of housing continued to be built until Nikita Khruschev’s housing reforms of the 1950s. Because these huts were so obvious and widespread, foreign architects often proposed solutions to alleviate what they saw as a poor housing. The architect of the May Brigade, Walter Schwagenscheidt, for example, taking notice of the scale of construction of such structures in Magnitogorsk, planned to transform such settlements from barracks to single-family dwellings: “Coming from the real life in the newly built districts, I say, for long time the Soviet Union will only be able to build primitive barracks. They must use materials and labour for building their industry. People who inhabit the socialist cities, stand on a very low step in regards to cultural
development, they do not understand (although we assume, they will build storied buildings).”
Schwagensscheidt’s plan sketches proposed “the growing city” (die wachsende Stadt), conceiving a metamorphosis of the city from several barrack buildings on unadorned empty ground, with horse carts, into dom-kommuny, which were visually the same buildings, but with modern windows and doors, trees, paved road and automobiles. For Schwagensscheidt, this was a rational way of dealing with the overwhelming presence of barracks: a one-story barrack, as more materials, money and labour power become available, over time could be turned into new and improved housing.469

What the Orsk example suggests is that barracks were not necessarily maintained in defiance of the postulates of Stalinist realism. Rather, they were integral to socialist realism. Barracks were not simply an unwanted by-product of architecture and planning. To consider socialist realism not merely in terms of its rigidity, structure, surveillance and so on, means to highlight its porous qualities, its openings, and the inconsistencies. What was considered to be an undesirable and short-term living space (a kind of detritus) is key to our assessment of the social dimensions of Soviet architecture. The spaces produced under socialist realism were segregated and included barracks and temporary housing to the same degree as the representative buildings, monuments, and wide boulevards that famously marked Stalinist town planning.

**Working Conditions: Industrialization and Forced Labour in the “New Cities”**

Historians who study work of German planners, architects, engineers and other technical specialists in the USSR tend to agree that the main reason for hiring foreign specialists was that there were no qualified professionals in Russia with comparable experience.470 While it is somewhat unclear who or which agency initiated the invitations to foreign construction
specialists, it is certain that, beginning in the mid 1920’s, a number of (largely secret) decrees designed to attract foreign specialists and technologies were introduced.\textsuperscript{471} For example, a decree of the Council of People’s Commissars (\textit{Sovnarkom}) “On Attracting Specialists from Abroad,” dated 15 February, 1927,\textsuperscript{472} postulated that only “highly qualified specialists are allowed to be invited for setting up new methods of production and for the improvement of existing ones . . . . The utmost carefulness should be used to learn in advance which concrete results any invitation could bring forth.” The emphasis here is on workers with higher qualifications. The decree mentions that workers should only be allowed in as “instructors into more difficult industries, where the education of instructors is most complex and expensive,” while the “insufficiency of qualified workers should be mitigated by their education within the country, using for this the unemployed.”\textsuperscript{473} The decree names the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) as the central organ charged with “set[ting] up an exact order of addressing questions of how to attract foreign specialists” (the formulation in Russian is rather confusing: “\textit{tochnii poriadok prohozdenia voprosov privlechenia}”). The VSNKh was also required to “work out a list of positions, define qualifications” and to create a list of “appropriate” foreign workers in heavy industry and to create favourable conditions for their labour (wages, living conditions, instruction by “our” specialists).\textsuperscript{474} In 1928, the list was expanded to include other categories of workers. A Politburo decree of August 2, 1928, bemoaning the unsatisfactory pace of development and the shortage of foreign specialists, consequently recommended including “not only renowned specialists but specialists of the middle range who have enough knowledge and experience with European technical equipment.” As a result, within two years, the amount of foreign specialists increased from 1000 to 3000.\textsuperscript{475} While more research is needed on the institutional frameworks and media channels that were
created in the USSR to carry out such international transfers as well as on the precise conditions of such invitations, we can confirm that a fairly complex bureaucratic network of agencies, institutions, and committees was created and mobilized to secure and monitor the exchanges.

Relations between foreign architects and the elaborate state and planning apparatus of the Soviet Union were governed by the constant fluctuations of the state apparatus and by the struggles among various agencies to manage large construction projects. By the early 1930s, city soviets no longer maintained influence over local developments, and planning became largely centralized and placed in the hands of two large state companies, Stroikom and Gosplan’s Institute for the Planning of Cities, Giprogor.\textsuperscript{476} In an extremely complex hierarchical Soviet administrative apparatus, the dynamic among various government agencies shaped the way the building projects were carried out. Several months before Ernst May’s arrival in Magnitogorsk, for example, the construction of the socialist town was already well underway.\textsuperscript{477} The approval of plans for the socialist city of Magnitogorsk had to be negotiated amid power struggles between Giprogor (an organization subordinate to NKVD, the secret police of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs) and Cekombank (the state organization responsible for long term credits for the construction of socialist cities, which had in fact hired May). Eventually Cekombank solidified its control over the foreign architects’ projects.\textsuperscript{478} After several committee meetings, during which May’s project was criticised, rejected, and then ultimately accepted, the planning of Magnitogorsk eventually was subordinated to the Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh), which was responsible for industrial construction and was the organization designated with overseeing Cekombank, with whom May had signed the contract. It remains an open question, however, why exactly, after his project had been severely criticized
and rejected, preference was given to May. Amid the proliferating bureaucracy, May’s opinion or response to criticisms did not define the outcome.\textsuperscript{479}

Corresponding to the tumultuous power dynamics of the administrative apparatus, Soviet attitudes to Western experts at that time can be hardly categorized as stable. Public opinion was never entirely positive, nor was it simply ambivalent; it was constantly fluctuating. Proclamations praising the work of the foreigners at the conferences were accompanied by displays of envy and the suspicion that “bourgeois specialists” were saboteurs, as David-Fox shows. In the conclusion to “A Year of Great Change. On the Occasion of the Twelfth Anniversary of the October Revolution” in 1929, for example, Stalin called for enlisting “tens of thousands of Soviet-minded technicians and experts for the work of socialist construction.”\textsuperscript{480} The phrase “Soviet-minded” points to a larger historical context that defined a highly unstable relation of the regime to its own intelligentsia. As Sheila Fitzpatrick argues, the early summer of the year 1928 became “a turning point in Soviet policy toward the bourgeois specialist,” as the beginning of forced collectivization coincided with the widely publicized “Shakhtii” trial of engineering specialists accused in sabotage at the coal mines of Donets Basin (\textit{Donbass}).\textsuperscript{481} No longer valued for contributing their expertise and education to the drive for industrialization, the “old” intelligentsia were increasingly eyed with suspicion and deemed “bourgeois.” In the meantime an emphasis was placed on securing “large-scale upward mobility of industrial workers and working-class Party members into higher education and administrative and managerial jobs.”\textsuperscript{482} Stalin’s speech of June 23, 1931, centered exactly around the restructuring of the educational apparatus to allow for working classes to join professional occupations and enter into higher education. “New Conditions—New Tasks of Economic Construction” identified the new goal of industrialization as one of creating “a new coal and metallurgical base
in the East: the Urals-Kusnetsk Basin” along with developing the iron and steel industry in Siberia and the metals industry in Kazakhstan. The problem that emerged, according to Stalin, was that “the old centres for training engineering and the technical forces are no longer adequate, that we must create a whole network of new centres—in the Urals, in Siberia and in Central Asia.”

But where would the new engineering and administrative professionals come from? The answer, for Stalin, was this: “Our country has entered a phase of development in which the working class must create its own industrial and technical intelligentsia.” This project was to unfold in two ways: first, through educating the working class and peasant youth at the Universities. Second, this new “industrial and technical intelligentsia” was to be recruited from the industries themselves. “The leaders of shock brigades, those who in practice inspire labour enthusiasm, the organizers of operations in the various sectors of our work of construction—such is the new stratum of the working class that, together with the comrades who have had higher education, must form the core of the intelligentsia of the working class, the core of the administrative staff of or industry.”

Not a word was said about international specialists.

Yet, foreign workers in industries were employed under temporary and conditional contracts, and even as policies around citizenship were “severely restricted” between 1926 and 1930, their numbers were climbing. However valuable to the regime, foreign expertise was never overtly celebrated and often went unmentioned. Stalin dismissively proclaimed in 1929 that “the past year has shown that, in spite of the overt and covert financial blockade of the USSR, we did not sell ourselves into bondage to the capitalists, that by our own efforts we have successfully solved the problem of accumulation and laid the foundation for heavy industry.” The rapidly increasing number of invitations to the foreign specialists—10,000 in 1931—
coincided with yet another change—the effort to apply “bourgeois” specialists to socialist production.\textsuperscript{489} According to official statistics in the bulletin of People’s Commisariat of Heavy Industry (\textit{Narkomtiazhprom}), between 1930 and 1933, at the enterprises of heavy industry, the number of foreign specialists (engineers and manual workers) rose from 1112 to 6550. In 1933 most of them worked at the plants and construction (81.7 \%) and the rest in planning and research organizations.\textsuperscript{490}

As the official message solidified around the “creation of the working class’ own industrial and technical intelligentsia,” the role of western professionals in this process went officially unmentioned. Yet, some of the tasks put to Ernst May by the Soviet government and stated in his contract were exactly about sharing his professional knowledge by participating in the education of Soviet cadres. In particular, May was expected to “cooperate in the training of Soviet specialists through practicums of students of higher technical educational establishments and those Soviet specialists who had graduated. Dr. May agrees to accept for practicums and for permanent commitment not fewer than 50 students and young Soviet professionals; if circumstances permit, this number can be expanded.”\textsuperscript{491} In general, May’s role in Soviet planning, judging from the scope of tasks identified in his work contract, was fairly considerable. A 5-year work contract with Cekombank from July 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1930, named May “Chief Engineer for City and Settlement planning office.” His responsibilities included the “development of plans for new cities and settlements,” as well as the “re-planning of older settlements,” “measures of rationalization and standardization of building of housing and other buildings,” “development of drafts and plans for production of standardized dwellings for factories,” “publication of the office’s work in professional paper, production of books and albums,” and “lectures for engineers and the general public about the bureau’s work.”\textsuperscript{492}
The Western architects became a part of the labour force, the diverse mass of workers most of whom were brought there by force. Foreign architects, engineers, workers arrived to such places with various degrees of conviction, of ideological beliefs, of circumstances (the rise of Nazism in Germany) or opportunism. They joined a highly stratified “mass,” uprooted and forced into a collective. In 1930 and 1931 about two million people were sent to “internal exile” as “special settlers” (spetspereselentsy). In 1930, most of these settlers were sent to the North and Ural mountains from Northern Caucasus, Crimea and Byelorussia. Employed primarily in forestry, kulak laborers were also sent to work in “agriculture, coal and peat production, and mining for nonferrous metals and gold.” The Politburo decree of 10 August, 1931, approved the use of spetspereselentsy (deportees, special settlers) in the industrial building sites. It postulated the “complete utilization of the special settlers’ workforce and their attachment to places of settlement, especially for the purposes of creating permanent worker cadres in the timber industry of Siberia, the Urals, the Northern Region, and other areas.” The kulaks were to be settled in “special settlements” of 30-50 households, which numbered more than 2000 between 1930 and 1931. These were to be located “in isolated areas,” and “each house was to be separated from the next by not less than 30 meters, allowing for the clear observation by local commandant.”

In spite of the infusion of foreign expertise, the situation at the great construction sites was such that predominantly low or non-skilled mass labourers often contributed to accidents and slowed progress. According to the trade union survey of 1932/33, “more than 23 % of workers at the Kusnetsk combinat were illiterate and more than 13% were semi-illiterate.” Largely, the Stalinist project of industrialization was attained by substituting technical professional expertise, a deficit of materials, and poorly developed technologies, with
compulsory mass labour. The project of industrial modernization involved the exploration and extraction of resources and the resettlement of populations. As recent historical studies show, the extraction and exploitation of resources and the development of industry in the “under-populated” areas of the Russian Far East, North, Siberia, and Kazakhstan relied heavily on the labour of “kulaks” forcibly transported from geographically remote areas. Starting in the early thirties (during the second and third Five Year plans), the GULAG labour camps prisoners began to be increasingly used as new labour. The use of prisoners’ labour in remote areas was the policy adopted by the Soviet state from the Tzarist regime.\textsuperscript{500} Fearing the insufficiency of a kulak labour force, the commissar of heavy industry, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, reported to Stalin (in a letter further addressed to Kaganovich and Molotov) on July 14, 1932, complaining about labour deficits: “Insufficient workforce, possible “desertion” for work in the fields could damage projects of building Magnitogorsk. The prisoners could be dispersed in separate locations of the vast construction site of Magnitogorsk so they will be ‘out of sight.’ I am therefore asking to revise the Politburo resolution and to allow to use in the construction of Magnitogorsk about 15-20 thousand prisoners.” Stalin’s agreement was followed up with the transfer of 15,000 prisoners to the site.\textsuperscript{501}

For Lynne Viola, the special settlements represent the initial stages of the Stalinist penal system of forced labour, or the “other archipelago”: “The special settlements laid the foundation of Stalin’s Gulag. . . . And although the labour or concentration camp has long served as the defining institution of the Gulag, it is now clear that it was the special settlement that was first intended to house Stalin’s battalions of forced laborers.”\textsuperscript{502} For example, in the Kuzbass region (Kuzbass: from “Kuznetsk Basin”) where the Kuznetsk Metallurgical Combine was located, in 1930-31 the construction workers consisted largely of local peasants (kulaks) who were forcibly
dislocated. Starting in 1932, these demographics were amended by peasants from the neighbouring areas, as well as those forced out of East Siberia and Russian Far East. According to Viola’s pioneering study, collectivization, the dispossession of peasants (who were loosely defined as “kulaks”) of means and products of their labour (tools, livestock, land, grains), was one of the tools for supplying the industrial building sites with cheap labour:

“Collectivization transformed the countryside into an internal colony from which tribute—in the form of grain, taxes, labor, and soldiers—could be extracted to finance the industrialization, modernization, and defense of the country.” Or, as Stephen Kotkin put it, “Soviet industrialization, carried out under the banner of social justice, was not simple ‘development,’ but class war. Moving populations from one geographical region to another was one of the means of exploitation of the “internal colony.” “Colonization” was invoked by the Party officials themselves: in the words of the head of OGPU, Genrikh Iagoda, “we need to colonize the North in the fastest of tempos.” The peasants were to be turned into new industrial workers, over-producing “Stakhanovites.” Not surprisingly, some construction workers building new socialist cities wore “Bastshoes and galoshes, laced up to the knee with straw, with tucked in pants, and a short shirt (rubashka).”

Because of its shortage, and because of the relatively unprivileged position it occupied within the Stalinist plan for the expansion of industrial space, housing became a means of segregation, of securing the containment of groups of population in similar surroundings with similar people. Yet, the same strategy of the state to secure the homogeneity of spaces (as in the official policies of tying nomadic people to land, or “settling” (pridanie oselosti) was dependent upon ensuring that populations remained on the move. In addition, hunger, poor living conditions in the barracks, cold, and diseases prevented special settlers from becoming
embedded in landscape. “Turnover” (tekuchka) was the term used to characterize the undesired mobility of both manual and skilled labour.

The project of industrialization relied on the exploitation of populations as well as territories. A politics of mobility which defined “peopling” of the territories was at the core of the Stalin project of industrialization. As Pavel Polian argues, this type of mobility did not depend on such economic factors as the job market or housing availability. Rather it was forced: planned, regulated and carried out by the state. The project of modernization and industrialization was built upon on the exploitation and coercion of the low-skilled workers, as well as on variously constraining the mobility of diverse groups of construction workers such as kulaks, prisoners and foreign professionals. Workers were not supposed to leave the building site. Despite such regulations and the introduction of a system of “propiska” (registration with local police of the place of permanent residency), and because of poor working conditions at the construction sites, the workers did move around. At the same time, foreigners were accorded somewhat more freedom in their movements. Some channels of mobility became opened while others constrained. Different applications of the disciplinary mechanisms were reflected in everyday mobility, which was embedded in the topography of settlements.

Were the foreign specialists really somewhat “freer” in their movements? Or were they subjected to the similar kinds of surveillance that the foreign journalists, politicians, travel writers? While more research needs to be done on different degrees of surveillance, we know that the special settlers were not allowed to change their living place and could not leave the special settlement without permission from OGPU. Kusnetsk, for example, came to be termed a “trap of a construction site” (stroika-lovushka): the deportees were obliged by courts to stay, and communist volunteers could not leave without the official permission of their “cells.” The
foreign workers had the luxury to leave their place of work, which was impossible for special settlers. A note issued by the central committee of the Union of Stone and Coal Industry on November 17, 1932, stated: “On November 5 at 9 p.m. a group of 30 foreign workers arrived from Kuzbass. All worked in the Prokopyevsk district for 14 days. Their main reason for leaving the Soviet Union was unsatisfactory food; for two days they did not receive bread, and only 500 grams of sugar per month. . . . The canteen refused to give them food according to enhanced diet (usilennoe pitanie).”

In 1933, the Bulletin of the Foreign sector of People’s Commissariat of Heavy Industry reported that, since 1931, “all contracts with foreign specialists were reconsidered.” As a result, the industry was “purged of fake specialists and opportunistic elements” and more importantly, pay in foreign currency was “limited or eliminated.” This probably contributed to more and more foreign workers leaving the country. As Ernst May commented in a German language weekly, Moscauer Rundschau, “only those can be employed who have no families to maintain at home. This is because salaries can only be paid in Russian currency.”

Turnover rates were climbing, especially at the strategic enterprises of Kuzbassugol and Magnitostroï: during the entirety of 1932, only 978 foreign specialists had left, while more than 700 left during the first four months of 1933. On May 23, 1933, in the “Decree for the People’s Commissariat of Heavy Industry concerning the work and conditions of labour of foreign specialists in its enterprises,” Kaganovich blamed the managers for their unwillingness and for ignoring the “material and everyday service of foreign cadres.”

In this context, as Stephen Kotkin rightly notices, “city building played a crucial role in the geopolitical processes of internal territorial colonization, demographic transformation, and the expansion of industrial and military capacity.” Nonetheless, the building of new housing occupied a relatively under-privileged place in the Soviet drive for industrialization. Financial
and material resources were limited, as they were directed primarily to the construction of heavy industry. In such conditions of scarcity, housing, as Meerovich notices, became an instrument for the Soviet state apparatus to punish or reward. It is important to refocus attention on housing, its marginal status notwithstanding, in thinking about what spatialities were produced in the Soviet projects of industrialization.

Many of the peasants whom the architects or journalists spotted at the construction site were, most likely, not local. Their work and living conditions (as well as that of their guards) never became a topic discussed in the press. There is little clarity about what agency was responsible for the construction and provision of housing for special settlers. Lynne Viola writes that this was the responsibility of the “economic enterprises,” the industries and factories where special settlers were transferred. The 1928 decree “About Housing Policy” granted rights of ownership and management of buildings to the administration of factories, institutions or agencies. The administration could fully regulate the tenancy and management of the buildings. At the same time, individual construction of workers’ settlements was not prohibited, especially at the sites of industrial building. However, the official designation of responsibility had only heightened “bureaucratic confusion, conflict and sheer overload,” with industrial enterprises refusing to engage and finance the construction of special settlements. What complicates research more is that, quite possibly, there was a transfer of responsibility from enterprises into the penal agency of the secret police. In 1935, according to Stephen Kotkin, housing for special settlers, often omitted from the official statistics, was placed under the authority of NKVD. Housing for so called “drifter” (samotiok) groups, people who went to work there more or less wilfully, remained under the control of the factory administration.
One of the rare “official” accounts is that of Sergei Frankfurt, the director of construction for the Kuznetsk metallurgical plant, who described the living conditions of special settlers at Kuznetskstroi in 1931 in his 1935 memoirs. Frankfurt, criticizing the 1931 June directives that sent more special settlers to Kuznetskstroi, nevertheless constructs a narrative highlighting the heroic and collective overcoming of difficulties. Frankfurt creates the impression that the arrival and organization of the everyday life for special settlers was very orderly and rational: “From talking to them [special settlers] it became apparent that many of them had an unfriendly attitude. . . . I told them something like this: ‘You were sent here by the Soviet government as people who fought against Soviet power. You are not used to work. You need to change, re-educate yourselves. You can do this by honest labour.’”

Frankfurt further instructed the new arrivals that they would have to build their own housing while we provided the infrastructure: hospital, bakery, bathhouse. The next day, the work started to boil. . . . Already by the end of August the question of housing for the special settlers has been partially solved. Truth is, the housing was still primitive, but good enough for overwintering. . . . In winter, especially close to spring 1932, we started to build permanent housing for the dekulakized. We gave land for gardens to special settlers, and livestock. They started organizing households (obzavoditsya khoziaystvom) and became more interested in work. . . . Now the majority of the arrived dekulakized are completely settled, learned the new craft and work quite well.

If we supplement this obviously carefully constructed narrative with other reading documents, we get the sense that the conditions of everyday life were more desperate than what Frankfurt permitted himself to describe. However, the documents in no way represent a “truer” or a more
complete picture. On the contrary, official formulations often seem to contain contradictory statements. A note from March 26, 1930, addressed to the OGPU of Northern territory, gave the following instructions about the housing for special settlers: “With the calculation [of construction materials], one should take dug outs as a base (iskhodit’ iz ustroistva primitivnykh stroenii). To build well-equipped buildings with considerable spending on construction materials for kulaks is unacceptable.” This directive reflected the state of housing in most special settlements, not least, perhaps, as a consequence of such deliberate neglect. Yet we see at the same time a proliferation of decrees and committees that record and sharply criticize the dire state of housing conditions. The position of Soviet authorities to this group of labourers had been shifting towards “securing the special settlers as a permanent workforce.” In 1931, as a new wave of deportations has started, OGPU centralized power over resettlement and use of kulak labour. A note signed by Genrikh Iagoda and sent to the regional offices of OGPU of Kazakstan, Ural, Northern territory, and Western Siberia, described the living conditions of the special settlers relocated in 1930-1931 as “very dire and unsatisfactory,” sanitary conditions as poor: “Barracks are used as permanent dwellings, where families live in extraordinary density (there is a case in the Urals where 400 people live in dwelling of the size 100 square m), live with children in huts and other primitive constructions without windows, woodstoves.” In October 1931, Iagoda reported that the special settlers still lived in the temporary barracks as the fall was approaching: in the Urals, 10 000 families would remain in tents for winter; most of the special settlers transferred to Kuznetskstroi (4,671 families) would remain in dugouts and barracks. Monthly death rates were high, especially among children younger than 3 years old, foremost because of the poor living conditions and the absence of food. In Magnitogorsk, 15 % of children of this age group that died monthly. “Unacceptable” living conditions were
increasingly blamed upon the administration of industrial enterprises. In spite of Frankfurt’s claims of success, The Council of People’s Commissars (SNK) Decree of April 4, 1932, described the “complete unfulfillment of plans of housing, cultural, everyday, and hospital construction.” To follow up, the decree “About housing construction for special settlers in Kuznetskstroi” notices that in spite of a specially allocated 3 million roubles, “Comrade Frankfurt has not done anything . . . which resulted in special settlers’ flight and to an intensification of mortality.” The housing situation for the special settlers was desperate and largely unorganized elsewhere as well. As Viola summarizes, “there had been almost no concrete planning for what would happen to the kulaks after they were banished from their villages. Plans for the massive resettlement of the kulaks arose . . . na khodu, or on the fly, at the very time as tens of thousands of peasant families were already in transit.”

Perhaps because of the segregated nature of the special settlements and because they were spread over such vast territories, it is equally rare to find any particular recollections of this group of construction workers in the writings of Western architects. Conrad Püschel, who worked with the Hans Schmidt brigade in Orsk, recalled in his memoirs that “the construction workers were almost all unskilled labourers, peasants from the remote villages in the steppes, bound and commanded over (verpflichtet und kommandiert), many prisoners, among them many women. If they owned or brought hand tools with them, it was a stroke of luck; the site manager did not have any. . . . Building technology is primitive. But there is enough human, as well as animal workforce.”

According to Zara Witkin, an American engineer who was employed by the Soviet state, Ernst May himself was nowhere impartial to social conditions and in fact was deeply troubled by the political atmosphere: “Extreme poverty, which he witnessed all over the Soviet Union, made
an ineradicable impression upon him, as did the brutality of the government to the peasants and the terrorization of the workers. He had seen masses of kulaks and their children, who had been driven from their farms in the south of Russia, working in forced-labour camps in the frozen North in the steel, coal, and lumber industries, under conditions unfit for animals. . . . Instead of well-designed accommodations for 160,000 people, proper housing had actually been built for about 12,000. The mass of the workers were still in temporary barracks. . . . A terrible fact revealed in the official investigation was that most of these barracks were in areas covered by the blast-furnace fumes. The workers lived in a poisonous atmosphere. This, in the Soviet Union, with the services of the greatest city planner in the world at hand!”

In Magnitogorsk, according to the American worker, John Scott, in 1932-1933 four thousand out of five thousand workers died during the winter famine, and the population of the “colony” of thirty to forty thousand was replenished promptly by the “new comers.”

In 1930, although the “official” norm for living space had been established as 9 square meters per person, because of the extreme shortages what was practiced in Magnitogorsk and many other towns was only 1.5-2 square meters per person.”

May tried to prevent overcrowding of the apartments by planning rooms similar in size to German “minimal apartments,” designing dwellings so small that it would be “impossible to settle more than two people. . . . Narrow and long, 7.1 square meters. . . . Such measurements of a ‘bedroom-sleeping car’ would not allow more than two beds. Such a solution, as he sees it, has to make the authorities to supply a family of 5-7 people with a whole flat.”

As May explained in 1932, “to avoid undesirable cohabitation of two families in one flat in our typical individual apartments, in principle, we do not assign large space units. Whereby, in the transition to assigned norm of 9 square meters per person one individual apartment with the kitchen really will be settled by only one family.”

Ironically, aspiring to sanitary
regulations that were established by the Soviet state and applying “minimal living” norms, May created dwellings that under conditions of “minimal” space complied with the overwhelming tendency of any living space at the time, that is, of becoming communal apartments.

Construction workers, however, never became the occupants of these buildings, not even of these communal apartments. A French journalist, Pierre Dominique, who traveled around Siberia in the early 1930s, described the rigid hierarchy of the everyday living spaces: “the workman’s ordinary lodging is a hut, a place in a barrack’s dormitory, or a corner of a room in a house. Or it may be a room shared with somebody else. . . . When you rise as high as two rooms or more, in a house built of stone or brick, you must be an engineer, an official, an officer or a member of the Ogpu.” Nevertheless, many pictures in the magazine USSR in Construction represented comfortable modernist housing as housing for workers. For example, new workers’ dwellings at a factory in Ivanovo-Vosnesiensk were said to have “electricity and gas.” This, surprisingly, was partly true, but referred to the homes of only the very privileged category of workers, specialists and foreign specialists. It was perhaps about such elite housing that May’s Brigade member, Walter Schwagenscheidt wrote, describing the brigade’s living conditions in Moscow: “We all live together . . . in real petit bourgeois apartments. . . . Our dwelling is more comfortable and cozy than those in Römerstadt. In this bourgeois dwelling, we passionately discuss the form of future communist collective dwellings, whereupon most of us are more communist than the Russians themselves.” Living conditions varied greatly, however, among specialists and the highly diverse labour force. USSR in Construction’s homogenous representation of strikingly modernist looking housing omitted a whole range of other types of housing present at construction sites: dugouts, yurts, tents and barracks. As Mark Meerovich argues, the varied distribution of housing became a mechanism for social control and
stratification. The SNK decree on March 25, 1932, titled “On Construction of Housing for Specialists” adopted a course to “speed up improvement of housing situation of specialists and scientists, engineers and technicians.” These dwellings were envisioned as individual, not communal, apartments, with modern conveniences of kitchens and washrooms. The creation of elite housing in particular under general conditions of an extreme housing shortage was a strategy of ideology: “Power creates ‘housing for specialists’ for the goals of propaganda, to emphasize one can have a career not only in politics, but in science, arts, technologies, culture or social work.”

The spatial organization of foreign settlements at industrial construction sites suggested containment. The foreigners lived in a relatively self-sufficient manner and were segregated from other groups. The food supply of the foreigners, for example, was similarly organized in an enclave-like fashion. Foreign architects received food and everyday items through the state organization named “Insnab,” in accordance with the hierarchical Soviet system of distribution of commodities and food. The German architect Rudolf Wolters emphasized the privilege of his own position in his description of one such Insnab in Novosibirsk:

I receive a food ratio book (*produktyovaya knizhka*), so that I can shop at the foreigner’s shop. It is situated on Krasny Avenue. At the entrance, there is an armed guard, the same way as in front of many other houses. Here I can buy everything and nothing: footwear and clothing, but, unfortunately, of a limited number of sizes, gramophone, but without records or needles, food according to my norms, milk and eggs, if they are accidentally there. . . . In spite of scarcity, we could get along. Compared to the Russians, we were supplied in a princely manner. Our Russian colleagues did not see anything upsetting, that we were
supplied much better than them. On the contrary, thanks to our famous ratio books we acquired too many friends who wanted to share our rations. Russian engineers did not get white bread, milk, eggs, butter at all, and all their food ratios were much lower than those of foreigners.\textsuperscript{546}

The French journalist, Pierre Dominique, writing about Magnitogorsk in his travelogue \textit{Secrets of Siberia} (1933), offered a contrast to the living conditions of the privileged:

> Tucked away in a corner, more or less by itself, is the American village. Little houses with red slates; big windows; everything spick and span; gardens in front, with a few flowers fighting for life in them. A very bright, white-painted dining room. . . . In short, a corner of the West transplanted. Otherwise the engineers would not stay long. This is where foreigners go to take their meals. . . . The rest is less resplendent. . . . What has been built here, above all, is barrack-dormitories; and, as there was a shortage of timber, many of them were constructed of lath and plaster. In addition, migrants have been encouraged to build huts for themselves. They have done so. This system has given rise to something like Tartar villages, much more poverty-stricken than the most poverty-stricken Russian villages, which sometimes smack of the horse-box or the cattle-shed. But if you say so to local people in authority, they will tell you: ‘Within the next year, there won’t be a single hut left. . . . Nothing will be left but the socialist town, standing four-square, clear–cut on the plateau.’ meanwhile, they go on building huts by the hundred.\textsuperscript{547}

The American village, Berezki, was an elite cottage settlement in Magnitogorsk, occupied by foreign specialists and, after their departure in late 1930s, by party functionaries. In
Magnitogorsk, there were also such distinct foreign settlements. John Scott, an American working in construction in Magnitogorsk in the 1930s, emphasized the elitism of Berezki compared to other well-off areas:

While the Kirov district was inhabited principally by foremen, brigadiers, and skilled workers, as well as a scattering of teachers, doctors, and various city employees, the high administrative technical and political personnel for the most part inhabited the quarters of the departed foreign specialists in Berezki. Here, in addition to the houses which had been built for the foreigners, and which were well made and equipped, Zavenyagin [the Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Plant manager] had constructed a dozen large houses for himself and his most valuable assistants. . . . These were copied almost exactly from American architectural catalogues. The result was something very much approaching Mount Vernon, New York. . . . The houses were situated on a hill. Each had a large garden.

Zaveniagin’s house included “a billiard room,” “a music room,” and “a small deer park at the back of the house.” In contrast, another part of Magnitogorsk, called “Shanghai,” consisted of “a collection of improvised mud huts. . . . The inhabitants were largely Bashkirs, Tartars and Kirghizi. . . . The roofs were usually made of old scrap metal, sometimes covered by sod or by thatch. The dwellers in these ‘zemlianki’ were laborers and semi-skilled workers and their families.” In 1938, according to John Scott’s “friend in the city planning commission,” out of 220,000 inhabitants 75% still lived in barracks and mud huts (zemlianki).

Who were the occupants of the Ernst May’s “socialist city,” a district in Magnitogorsk? When May left Magnitogorsk in 1933, construction had commenced on only one of his proposed “superblocks,” rows of five-story apartment buildings with some public facilities. May’s
“socialist city” in Magnitogorsk was far from the ideal: “The seventy-odd houses were monotonously uniform and resembled match boxes on edge, laid out in long rows. Moreover, construction was always behind schedule. . . . The quality of work was very bad. The roofs leaked, as did the water pipes. Foundations sank, walls cracked.”552 The occupants were “German-speaking skilled workers, who had come to the Soviet Union on contract, but received Soviet currency for wages. They were sympathetic to the Soviet regime and had come motivated . . . by ideological enthusiasm and the desire to give their all to help in the construction of socialism. They were treated well, having a branch of Insnab at their disposal and fairly good living quarters.”553

By 1937, as the construction was completed, the “socialist city,” renamed the Kirov district, “was composed of some fifty large apartment houses, three, four, and five stories high, containing seventy five to two hundred rooms each. The houses were of brick and stone, stuccoed and painted various colors, which looked very well against the white background in winter. They were arranged in long rows, like military barracks, and were all of the same matchbox-on-edge shape. The metal roofs were painted red and blue. There were balconies on all the houses. Between the rows of houses there were wide streets, with sidewalks, along which many trees had been planted. In the centre of the development there were two open squares, with fountains, benches, children’s playground apparatus, flower gardens.”554 In a summer evening, fountains played, children splattered about, benches and walks crowded with workers, young and old, men and women.555 Such a socialist realist idyll was not quite complete: although the houses became equipped with such modern amenities as electricity and running water, the cooking was still done on the coal stoves. Consequently, the bathtubs were used for
storing of coals, and people used communal bathhouses instead. However it illustrated what might be called a disciplinary shift that occurred in the mid-1930s.

The course taken to restructuring of the managerial apparatus in the early 1930s was to include and promote the working class into administrative “establishment.” The year 1928, which Sheila Fitzpatrick has traced as the “turning point” in shifting policies towards professionals, had also been a year when Komsomol’skaia Pravda embarked on its “anti-coziness” campaign. Battles over the emergent professional class’ taste that targeted domestic space have shifted in the mid-1930s, to embrace taste that byt reformers would consider appallingly “bourgeois.” Scott’s vision of a clean, orderly and beautiful city corresponded to the image promoted by the Soviet urban planners by the mid-1930s. By that time, as socialist realism became a dominant doctrine, the battle over the tastes of new managerial elites had reversed from critique of petit-bourgeois coziness. As Dehaan pointed out, upward social mobility of the new professional class was conditioned upon a system of taste and consumer practices, of “social distinctions once identified as ‘bourgeois,’ so called ‘culturedness.’” (kulturnost) As material goods, furniture or electrical appliances were scarcely available, “culturedness” was often dependent not on cultivation of taste, but on “awards” from the state to particularly “exemplary” workers of these desirable commodities, and in most “deserving” cases, of apartments. Imperatives to decorate and to create comfort extended into the public urban space as campaigns for “beautification” (blagoustroistvo) such as mobilizing community garbage removal, tree planting and so on; city streets provided the set for kulturnost’ as “the spatialized performance of the disciplined self.” The vision of constructing new people through housing still held strong. However, no longer “social condensers,” dwellings became “containers” for “disciplined selves” and their material possessions.
This chapter has attempted to trace how the production of housing became entangled with the fabrication of a constantly evolving and re-organizing bureaucratic apparatus, by means of purges and the formation of new proletarian elites, amid the widespread proliferation of largely confusing and often contrary directives and decrees. Stalinist “cities without markets and churches” inherited urban terrains already shaped by imperialist projects of modernization. Nizhnii Novgorod, for example, had been dramatically changed under its imperial rulers, who physically reshaped the winding streets to accommodate the flows of traffic, separating them from pedestrian streets, and administrative, religious, and military centres replaced the old medieval centres. The new Soviet industrial cities which are in focus in this chapter presented a different physical and cultural terrain than cities with medieval histories, redesigned under imperial rule. They have been often seen as “tabula rasa,” as terrains for the dramatic remaking of landscape and of what was seen as “backwards” ways of life.

“Culturedness” became associated with both a desirable way of life and a mechanism to enter Stalinist modernity. It is in fusing the language of the remaking of the physical landscape and the remaking of the way of life that USSR in Construction 11 (1933) described development in the Buriat-Mongolian Republic: “Soviet Buriatia is at the threshold of a new creative life. Its people are changing. Its entire mode of existence is being re-made. Coal, tin, tungsten, gold, are being extracted in increasing quantities from its depths. Geologists and surveyors are measuring and testing its rivers to build mighty hydro-electric stations. It is being covered by a network of roads.” The text proclaiming that “nomad cattlemen led an ignorant and hopeless life” is accompanied by photographs depicting people in the yurts. Following this image of the confined and somewhat crowded space of the yurt, in which an elderly couple is sitting around a fire, the next photograph is a panoramic air shot of individual wooden houses scattered in the landscape.
No longer envisioned as communal “social condensers,” these dwellings nevertheless would transform “backward” populations into modern Soviet people: “the collective farmers are building cultured dwellings for themselves, with real stoves, wooden floors, glazed windows. They are filling them with real furniture. With the coming of the house, nomad life disappears. The people settle down permanently on the land.”

The vision for the new dwellings of “the city of blocks,” designed from standardized blue prints, using prefabricated materials, a plan that the Western architects were initially commended—and then increasingly attacked for—became available sparsely to privileged groups. As a planning policy, it would re-emerge again in the housing program of Nikita Khrushchev during the 1950s. At that time, reinforced concrete panel construction became widely used, prompting research into prefabricated window frames, plumbing, standardized floor plans and mass produced furniture.\footnote{561} During the 1930s, however, the rationalization of construction functioned by employing forced labour in order to achieve efficiency.

Scholars who study Western modernists’ architects project in the USSR often contextualize their work within the inevitable defeat of Russian modernist (constructivist) architecture in the transition to the doctrine of socialist realism. Pioneered, most likely, by Anatole Kopp in the English language scholarship on the subject, “western” architects’ disagreement and departure or adoption, provide the contours for the narrative of their work in the USSR. However, the emerging doctrine of socialist realism, while providing us with the contours and historical backdrop to approach the work of “western” architects and planners in the USSR, cannot be understood to fully define the construction at the “great” industrial building sites. Moreover, as Thomas Lahusen argues, in the literature of 1930s and 1940s, “just at the moment when the socialist realist canon reached its highest degree of unification and standardization . . . it became
maximally fragmented and ‘open-ended.’ Heather deHaan puts it well when she points to the “shiftiness” that defined urban planning at the time: “The lines of the Soviet conceptual edifice were never sufficiently clear and stable. Identities and meanings were too pliable to form a bounded civilization. Even the mechanisms for building such a world-science, planning, policing, and ideology- were repeatedly shuffled, reorganized, and then restructured yet again. The very definition of such key concepts as kulak, worker, friend or enemy, ethnicity, and citizenship changed repeatedly . . . . The process of building socialism, not a finished conceptual edifice, defined city planning and city life from the start.” Consequently, to analyze the intersections of the transfer of the “Western” ideas, attempts at modernization and subject production and in order to assess where building practices folded into socialist realist mandates and where they diverged, we need to be wary of understanding such projects to be driven or shaped entirely by ideology or by industrial “underdevelopment,” which was messily intertwined with the many other contingent discursive mechanisms and practices.

The expert Western knowledge, envisioned as a major tool to combat industrial underdevelopment, has not been neatly transplanted into the Soviet conditions. It is equally limiting to discuss foreign architects’ work in terms of a more conventional narrative—that of solitary figures of “great engineers” confronting the monolithic and unpredictable Soviet state apparatus. Western architects’ work of intellectual and material production in the industrial cities can most fruitfully, I hope, be approached through a consideration of the mechanisms that “plug” it into complex constellations that factor in the shifting and unstable ideological terrain, the chronic shortage of materials, attacks on functionalist architecture, the varied negotiations and compromises with Soviet power, and the disparities in food provision and housing for a
stratified labour force, with no single factor fully determining of how such work proceeded and its outcomes.
CONCLUSION. Preserving and Discarding the Architectural Modernist Legacy in Contemporary Germany and Russia.

In Weimar Germany, as housing construction became a matter of public policy, the move to large scale settlements in planning practice and architectural discourse became increasingly associated with rationalized technological approaches to planning and building methods, accompanied by the industrialized mass production of building materials, layouts, and designs. This dissertation opened by tracing how the idea of municipally built mass housing was endorsed and promoted as a better alternative to workers’ tenements. I subsequently considered the new rules that emerged to regulate density in the outer areas as a consequence of the creation of Greater Berlin in the early 1920’s. Finally, I have investigated the effects of centralized planning intervention into the design and functioning of the housing estates. In both Weimar Berlin and Frankfurt of the late 1920s as well as in USSR shortly after, governments involved themselves actively in the construction and provision of housing for low and middle income earners. Surveying the issues accompanying the emergence of this new type of property, large housing estates, financed primarily through non-profit building societies, I have considered as well the norms and regulations that supported the production of modern living space, from granting building societies control over leasing to classed and gendered attempts to regulate and redefine everyday practices of housekeeping. As I analyzed the constellation of forces through which modern housing was produced in both Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, I paid particular attention to the transfer and mobility of ideas, designs, and building practices. I noted, for example, how understandings of “rationalization” slipped away from the sphere of organization of labour and, consequently, how conceptions of “minimal living” emerged and were reshaped in distinctly different cultural and geographic arenas. As ideas and norms were
put into practice in these various contexts, they were subject to a constant process of adjustment and redefinition.

Chapter One and Chapter Two addressed the housing situation in Weimar Berlin, at a time when the Social Democratic government of Weimar Germany became involved in the construction and provision of housing for low and middle income earners. Once described as “the largest tenement city in the world,” Berlin expanded during the Weimar years to incorporate numerous suburban settlements. In planning policies, the construction of large-scale housing estates marked a shift towards mass housing during the mid1920’s. Instead of following the trajectory of legally enforcing inner-city slum regulation and removal while still maintaining private ownership of existing buildings (as was the case in the United States, as M. Christine Boyer has shown), in Weimar cities the creative energies of architects and planners and government financial support were channelled into the new housing in the suburbs for low and middle income earners. In Chapter One, I considered the mechanisms by which government at various levels involved itself in housing, through the provision and distribution of construction funds, by setting up non-profit building organizations, and by introducing legal measures to promote rationalized building methods and modernist designs. Modern urban housing became linked to a whole complex of modern social, economic and political concerns (workers’ living conditions, the shifting relations between the state and private enterprises, the role of government in housing provision and financing, issues of gender equality, and so on).

In Chapter Two, I looked further into how the idea behind Siedlungen, municipally built mass housing as an emerging modern organization of space (suburban, large scale, and state funded), was endorsed and promoted in numerous discussions as a better alternative to inner-city workers’ tenements. What interested me was the discursive production of Siedlung as a space
capable of remedying social issues, positioned as a critique of tenements. *Siedlungen* came to be viewed not simply as a means of improving living conditions for the workers, but as integral to production of the new social order. Overlapping groups of reformers with distinct interests formulated different variations of housing reforms. While these varying approaches can be historically contextualized, we want to be alert to how they also operated within changing political allegiances and complex dynamics of the Weimar Republic. The rapidly shifting political landscape became even more pronounced in the Soviet Union. Planners and architects (often members of SPD), while referencing late 19th century concerns, framed their critique of the housing conditions by depicting tenements to be a result of the uncontrolled development of private capital.

How was the modern emergent urban form of mass housing understood to foster new social relations? How was modern subject produced through housing? In Chapter Three, my focus shifted slightly from the politics of urban planning. This chapter touched upon how housing reform unfolded yet in a different locality (Frankfurt am Main), but the importance of this location for my argument was that it became a central site for the formulation and institutionalization of modern housing as “minimal dwelling.” Here I investigated household “rationalization,” associated with industrialized mass production of building materials, layouts, and designs, but also with directives disseminated through household manuals and consumer magazines, as a mechanism whereby housing participated in the construction of a modern subject. As a project of intervention into practices of housekeeping, I showed, following the work of Mary Nolan and Nancy Reagin, how household rationalization as a German project constituted a discursive terrain contested by various interest groups. In the “austere” vision of the Social Democratic Party, techniques of housework were emphasized at the expense of
consumption of technical appliances. Conservative housewives’ associations promoted “thrifty”
rationализация bounded with “economic nationalism.” Yet, re-scaling rationalization from the
national level compels us to address the distinct spatialities wherein the active redefining and
regulating of housekeeping practices were carried out. Rationalization entered homes under
conditions of economic scarcity; public housing estates became a site of “minimal existence.” I
addressed modernist architects’ and planners’ visions of household rationalization via situating
“minimal living” at various locations such as the CIAM Congress in Frankfurt, as well as the
kitchens and living spaces of Hufeisensiedlung. Simultaneously, urban dwellers became
constituted both as subjects and agents of modern spatial practices by planners, politicians,
sociologists, reformers. I analyzed Hufeisensiedlung at more length, considering the
“coproduction” of disciplinary technologies, planning and architectural interventions, social
directives, and the everyday life of the tenants simultaneously, by paying attention to
overlapping and folding of discourses of lived modernities. I charted various degrees in which
the residents’ efforts became governed by directives (defined broadly here as a variety of media,
starting from floor plans and specific policies to visual representations and home advice manuals
promoting rationalized housekeeping) about how to inhabit these new spaces.

The final chapter traced the work of German and other foreign modern architects who
went to work in the Soviet Union in the early 1930’s. Some, more outspoken than others about
their socialist allegiances, hoped to participate in creation of “new cities.” By the time they were
leaving the Soviet Union around 1934, they were no longer welcome in Hitler’s Germany.
Without forming a comprehensive comparison between German and Russian housing reforms
and approaches to housing in different political regimes, the last chapter of my dissertation
addressed housing designed and built by German modernist architects in the early 1930’s in the
Soviet Union. I focused particularly on the ways in which “Western” modernist ideas and projects, such as minimal living or Zeilenbau were both adapted into a different geographical and cultural arena, as well as selectively incorporated and modified, continuously resituated by the Soviet effort to abolish private property, by new Party directives in the USSR, and via negotiations among complex local bureaucracies. While early constructivist experiments had emphasized the potentially revolutionary nature of architectural design, the modern belief that modern architecture would radically transform people was no longer at the core of Stalinist vision of housing for the masses. Although emphasizing the differences in government involvement in construction and distribution of housing by a different socialist regime, this chapter provided a cursory discussion of housing politics more broadly in the USSR. The larger aim was to engage a theory of “coproduction” in an analysis of the emergence of particular variation of “minimal living” in a different location.

The last chapter also reframed the issue of housing and modernity within a different cultural context. It asked: how do we theorize modernities in entirely “new” cities in a context marked by a slower pace or a lack of modernization, while being aware that invoking some kind of normative ideal (what “rationalization” meant) might be unproductive? To answer this, I set aside the conventional notion that the Western planners and architects were somehow “naïve” about the Soviet Union. Rather, I underscored the participation of Western architects and planners in the USSR’s attempt to overcome its relative industrial “underdevelopment,” by tracing the borrowings and exchanges more precisely. How was the rationalization of dwellings envisioned and carried out in a different “non-Western” locale? What kinds of dwellings did foreign architects help to produce? By switching my focus from the sites of such distinctly “modern” locations as Berlin and Frankfurt to the somewhat more “peripheral” cities and the
very different histories of the USSR, I aimed to enrich our understanding of urban and architectural modernities. Jennifer Robinson has rightly questioned the presumed and unquestioned identification of modernity with a handful of Western cities. A future project might demand a fuller reconsideration of “second world” modernities, via the consideration of circulation of styles, networks of concepts, flows of wealth and labor. In this way, Robinson’s argument that urban modernities are created “everywhere” could be extended, with a commitment to different contexts where various actors contribute differently and from distinct power positions.

Relatedly, we can ask which modernisms are valued, and how such values are secured. Implicit in contemporary heritage and preservation policies surrounding different structures and spaces of socialist planning, ranging from the 1920’s Weimar buildings that still stand to the post-war architecture in East Germany, or the crumbling avant-garde architecture in Russia, is the conceptual separation of “good” architecture, which merits national preservation and global recognition, from the sorts of buildings that can be allowed to quietly disappear. Certain histories are celebrated; others muted. *Hufeisensiedlung* was listed (along with other five modernist housing estates in Berlin) in 2008 as a UNESCO World Heritage site on the grounds of the “exemplary character” of the housing reform movement, which was recognized for its modern amenities and communal facilities and its “healthy, hygienic and humane living conditions.” However, we might compare another example of socialist planning, *Marzahn*, the last housing estate to be developed in the GDR in the 1980’s, which was built to be the best equipped district, and, because of its proximity to schools, subway, daycare, and restaurants, aimed at the time to represent the best of the East German urban planning. As Douglas Young argues, *Marzahn* was representative of a modernism particular to the state socialism of the GDR,
which focused on large scale, technologically rational, and efficient projects, and which were understood as “an extension of earlier twentieth century struggles to realize a modern urban vision.” Thirty years later, however, conventional wisdom considers the development to represent rather of the worst that GDR’s top-down planning produced, because of its perceived repetitiveness and bland uniformity. As a result of the leakage of population to the urban areas of the former West Berlin, many of the apartments in Marzahn and elsewhere in the eastern part of the city sit empty. Consequently, many of the buildings are today in the process of being demolished or radically renovated, with little outcry from preservationists or historians. One socialist past can and should be claimed and valorized, while the other needs to be repressed, disavowed, or discounted, or even forgotten entirely.

Unlike in Germany, in Russia, inquiry into urban and architectural history has begun in earnest only in very recent years. In an effort to catalogue the remaining buildings of the 1920s and 1930s, and prevent their further deterioration or demolition, a number of organizations were established in 2006-07, including the Expert Council for the Salvation of the Russian Architectural Avant-garde, a group working with the Russian president’s Council on Culture and Arts, as well as a non-profit foundation called the Russian Avant-garde; both are considered “non-active” at present time. The Moscow Architecture Preservation Society (MAPS) likewise used to document the crumbling state of the historical buildings on their website. These projects, as well as such photographic documentations of Soviet modernist architecture as Richard Pare’s book *The Lost Vanguard* (2007) and the very recent collection of the photographer Rebecca Litchfield, *Soviet Ghosts* (2014), as well as a recent photographic exhibit of contemporary state of housing designed by Ernst May in the USSR mounted at the Ernst May house in Frankfurt, all testify to the decaying state of the buildings considered relics of a
previous socialist age. Consequently, as Richard Anderson rightly points out, while non-
government efforts to uncover and register different modernist buildings often testify to the
extent of modern building across Russia (challenging the conventional assumption that Russian
modernism existed mostly as “paper architecture”), the question remains: what to do with the
inventory?569

The legal and financial issues brought up by the privatization of the formerly nationalized
land after the breakdown of the Soviet Union and ongoing (and often violent) struggles over
property redistribution form the context in which “heritage” is being defined in Russia today.
“The Heritage Alert” issued in April 2013 by the International Council on Monuments and
Sites570 warned of the dangerously decaying state of a central icon of the Russian Avant-garde,
Konstantin Melnikov’s house in Moscow. It is threatened by negligent conservation and an
impending development of a neighboring site. Currently occupied by Melnikov’s
granddaughter, the house, which is jointly owned by the state (which plans to turn the building
into a museum) and by Melnikov’s family, is at the centre of controversy between the two
parties.571 The granddaughter claims residency, while the Ministry of Culture plans to open a
museum, according to Melnikov’s will, and to protect the home as a historical object.

As with many conservation efforts, the effect of framing architectural modernism as
“heritage” de-emphasizes the radicalism of the designs. There is a paradox here, as Owen
Hatherley points out: “if we want to preserve what remains of modernism, then we are
necessarily conspiring with the very people that have always opposed it: the heritage
industries.”572 My aim, of course, is not to discredit the important efforts of preservationists,
especially in contemporary Russia, but to point to the fact that a rhetoric of monumentalization
that discursively frames modernist architecture within the realm of the past, supplemented by
appeals to the “continuity of civilization” or the “universal value” of buildings, is oblivious to the once pressing concerns of the avant-garde with rupturing a rigidified social order and with revolution as everyday practice.

The question that Henri Lefebvre asked in 1974—whether it is possible to produce truly new and transformative spaces—remains relevant today. For Lefebvre himself, modernist architects and city planners were nothing more than “techicist rationalists,” concealing operations of power and giving the impression of managing people in positive ways, practitioners of what he terms “urbanism,” “a superstructure of neocapitalist society, a form of ‘organizational capitalism’ . . . in other words, a bureaucratic society of controlled consumption.”573 In opposition to the rationalized and functional organization of space, the city needs to be revived as “oeuvre.” For Lefebvre, in the late 1960’s, the “right to the city” designated not passive acceptance of commercial production of culture and leisure, not “prettifying” public space with the works of art, but art as praxis, “living in the city as work of art.”574 What is implied in the “right to the city” is not the right to property but the right to “inhabit”, the right of “participation and appropriation,” to re-create “oeuvres” in conditions of over-rationalized modernist planning.

My aim was to re-focus discussions of modernization away from the “diagnostic” concerns of whether modernist experiments with housing failed to fulfill the promise of social transformation. I hope to have underscored that housing reform that unfolded in Berlin, Frankfurt and, to some extent, in the Stalinist USSR represented a radical vision of how to build cities and how to live in them. Whatever the varied successes or failures of these experiments,575 we should note that, today, the assertion of the right to a decent and livable home, which was at the core of these experiments, is largely absent from neoliberal planning discourses or policies.
Yet, alongside the preservationist rhetoric, on one hand, or the downright dismissal of modernist planning as a “failed” experiment, on the other, the concept of minimal living is re-emerging, perhaps ironically, in the form of “micro-housing.” Micro-housing refers to the design of very small apartments, which might provide affordable housing in such overburdened real estate markets as New York City. In a short article for The Nation, Michael Sorkin insightfully traces the “long history” of this idea back to conceptions of Existenzminimum in Weimar Germany. However, Sorkin notes, the way in which the concept has re-emerged in the contemporary North American context has less to do with an “aspirational minimum” (the idea that everyone should have a decent place to live) and comes more as a reflection and extension of the spatial inequalities of neoliberalism. Micro-apartments cater to the needs of a specific demographic: single and upwardly mobile Manhattanites. Under conditions of neoliberal planning, this early 20th century European concept, as Sorkin put it, is resurrected ironically: “This new iteration of micro-housing reverses more than a century’s effort to eliminate overcrowding and expand quality. The defenders of these initiatives may cite the pleasures of dorm life, but what underlies their arguments is the increasingly pervasive density absolutism—often masquerading as urbanity—that afflicts a large segment of the planning establishment, for whom the answer to the unforeseen consequences of development is always more development.”

While economic conditions today are radically different, the critiques that Sorkin invokes, such as that developed in Jacoba Urist’s “The Health Risks of Small Apartments,” are not dissimilar from those made in the 1920’s against the Berlin Mietskasernen. The factory of the 19th century created not only a new time discipline, but also ushered in what Michael Denning calls “a new climate discipline.” The “working conditions,” according to Denning served as a euphemism for air pollution or “bad air of the factory” and signalled the emergence
of climate into the sphere of political struggle. Following Denning’s insights, we can say that the factory, as it entered the home via its technologies, its labour and time disciplines, has also transformed its climate. More precisely, such a shift allowed the internal atmosphere to be moved from the background to the foreground of inquiry and concern for scientists, reformers and planners. Modernist attention to “Light, Air and Sun” could be further re-framed as concerned with the “micro-climate” of home. Today, under conditions of accelerating disparities of wealth, the diminishment of public space, unsustainable building practices, sprawl, brought about by the continued reliance on the individual car and the shortage of public investments in infrastructure, the housing question is linked in deep and complex ways to environmental issues. Here is Sorkin again: “The parlous state of the environment demands that we all dramatically reduce our ecological footprint, and building has a critical role to play here: the era of the McMansion must end.”

As the emerging welfare state in Weimar Germany financially supported and ideologically endorsed large scale settlements on the periphery, modern urban housing was produced (discursively and physically) and established if not as a “public good” then as corresponding to the right to decent and healthy dwelling. At this particular moment, the discourse of the right to livable home interrelated with discourses relying on modifications of the older language of “social problems,” identified with 19th century health reformers. As linking of modern design and social reform was unfolding in the early 20th century, the reform efforts of the late 1880’s provided a context in which modernist interventions in the home can be approached. Concerns with tenements were thus not necessarily specific to Weimar reformers; they evolved as a part of broader movements for housing reform that had been generated as a result of the poor living conditions in the industrial cities of the late 19th century.
Ernst May, for example, studied under Raymond Unwin, and May’s *Siedlungen* famously incorporated garden city principles. *Siedlungen*, although largely comprised of housing, were planned to include various amenities such as schools, kindergartens, laundries, shops, restaurants, echoing the ideas of proponents of collective living in the Soviet Russia. In Frankfurt, *Siedlungen* tended to include schools on their grounds, which incorporated new tendencies in education by “emphasizing manual labour, outdoor gymnastics, and training in horticulture as part of their curriculum.”

In spite of egalitarian impulses, designs of the minimal spaces and discussions around efficient kitchens and rationalization re-affirmed investments in cleanliness, traditional gender roles and the 19th century belief that the correct organization of space would eliminate social issues of poverty, alcoholism and sexual indiscretion. As Stephen Legg accounts for the heterogeneity of “discourses, institutions, forms, regulations, laws, statements or moral propositions” constituting what Foucault calls an “apparatus,” he argues that configurations that are “etymologically and genealogically indissociable from regulation and government” are at the same time open to “misunderstanding, resistance and flight.”

Housing reform in Berlin, Frankfurt and, to some extent, in the Soviet Union (considering the context in which ideas about *Siedlungen* and minimal living were “transported” there) provided paths for redirection of architectural thinking towards experimental possibilities of living.

The modernist experiments might help us to keep re-orienting discussion away from neoliberal spatial strategies of “more development” and turn our attention rather to the ways in which housing might be implicated in the reproduction and destruction of our living environments. Alongside ordering of the everyday living practices via designs, directives and recommendations, the assertion of the right to a decent and livable home was at the core of the
experiments in modern housing. By exploring historical narratives of the social housing, I aimed to provide an approach to answer Lefebvre’s question, whether it is possible to produce truly new and transformative spaces. As Owen Hatherley suggests, a century-long experience of socialist planning provided us not simply with “blueprints or paper utopias; they happened.” Whatever the varied successes or failures of these experiments, they suggested what Hatherley terms an “index of possibility.” Housing reform in Berlin, Frankfurt, and, to some extent, in the Soviet Union opened up paths for a redirection of architectural thinking towards the experimental possibilities of living.
Notes to Introduction

1. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 54.
2. Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany*, 41.
4. Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, 16.
10. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 308.
11. Ibid., 310.
12. Ibid., 320.
15. Ibid., 45.
16. Ibid., 42.
17. Ibid., 46.
25. Scott, “Rethinking Landscape and Colonialism,” 481-496. For overview of work centered around the term of materiality in geography see Cook and Tolia-Kelly, “Material Geographies.”
26. For the overview of ANT work currently shaping urban theory see Jacobs and Cairns, “Ecologies of Dwelling,” 81-82.
28. Ibid., 14.
29. Ibid., 14.
I know that I don’t have a home,
Yet, I am still standing in the queue.
I also know quite precisely,
With energy and force,
That by now I am in priority
And soon will get my flat.

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Away with embellishments, plastering and detriment,
Now the facades are built in the plain manner,
Next, the houses will be built bare and even without facades at all.
We are disgusted with junk,
Much too much is superfluous!
Away with furniture,
And with it, with everything that does not belong.
I proclaim without fear:
Every man, who is there, is in the way.

41 Jacobs and Smith, “Living Room: Rematerializing Home,” 518.
42 Ibid., 517.
43 It is common for researchers to periodize the history of urban planning according to these periods. See, for example, Günter Uhlig, “Stadtplanung in der Weimarer Republik,” 50-71 and Mechthild Stratmann, “Wohnungsbaupolitik in der Weimarer republic,” 40-49. Maiken Umbach surveys in detail the scholarship on periodization of the German history and delineates a trend that emerges: whereas earlier scholars emphasized continuities within imperialist, Weimar and Nazi periods as anti-modern and reactionary, more contemporary scholars approach “continuities in the modern, not the anti-modern aspects of German history” (197). See Maiken Umbach, _German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism, 1890-1924_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
44 Lieberman, _From Recovery to Catastrophe_, 5.
46 Ibid., 7.
47 Wiedenhoeft, _Berlin’s Housing Revolution_, 11.
48 Ibid., 9. Such efforts were a part of the “back-to the-soil” movement. Although not realized, this idea of the homestead movement “became basic to the new republic’s campaign against the housing crisis” (Wiedenhoeft, _Berlin’s Housing Revolution_, 9). As Elke Sohn argues, “Heimatshutzbewegung” had a reactionary side, which was its disdain for the large cities (growing immigrant population of cities prompted by industrialization) and embraced biological
theories which connected the class of farmers and land owners and rural areas to “Germanness” (“Deutschtum”). See Elke Sohn, “Hans Bernhard Reichow and the Concept of Stadtlandschaft in German Planning,” Planning Perspectives 18 (2003): 129.

49 Wiedenhoeft, Berlin’s Housing Revolution, 8.


51 On housing as part of larger “social question” (Sozialfrage), see Nicholas Bullock and James Read, The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France, 1840-1914 (New York, 1985).

52 Lieberman, From Recovery to Catastrophe, 7-9.


54 Wiedenhoeft, Berlin’s Housing Revolution, 29.

55 Ibid., 173-174.


57 Böss, Berlin von Heute, 124. Unless otherwise noticed, translations from German are my own.

58 See Wiedenhoeft, Berlin’s Housing Revolution, 11. On the history of the involvement of municipal government in the improvement of living conditions in cities of Imperial Germany, such as provision and public ownership of gas and electrical supplies, centralized water and sewage facilities, see, for example, Andrew Lees, Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002). Also see John V. Maciuika, Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics and the German State 1890-1920 (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).


60 The single family house will become the form of housing promoted by the Nazis. Thilo Hilpert points to the change of the building society EINFA’s emblem to the one depicting a family under the roof of a “Kleinhaus.” See Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung in Britz, 33.


62 The numbers are cited in von Saldern, Neubausiedlungen der zwanziger Jahre, 38.

63 McElligott, “Workers' Culture and Workers' Politics,” 103.
Data from *Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutscher Staedte* 25 (1930): 211-216 is cited by Mc Elligott on page 103.

Häussermann, Läpple and Siebel, *Stadtpolitik*, 55.


*Ibid.*, 88-89. Researchers argue that an introduction of such measure was means of taxing profits made on property speculation during the hyperinflation between 1922 and 1923. On Hauszinssteuer, see Häussermann, Läpple and Siebel, *Stadtpolitik*, 62, Stratmann, “Wohnungsbaupolitik in der Weimarer republik,” 43; Lieberman, *From Recovery to Catastrophe*, 39; Wiedenhöft, *Berlin’s Housing Revolution*, 174. See also Peter Christian Witt, “Inflation, Wohnungszwangswirtschaft und Hauszinssteuer,” in *Wohnen im Wandel: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, ed. Lutz Niethammer (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1979). On the municipal level, a number of building regulations, zoning laws, rules for high density etc were introduced: for a detailed review, see Rudolf Baade, *Kapital und Wohnungsbau in Berlin*. Question to investigate further: if the building societies borrowed this tax revenue from the state for construction, they had to pay it off. And once they did, did they become owners of the housing and could they sell it into private hands?

Häussermann et al., 63.


Tafuri, *The Sphere and The Labyrinth*, 203.


Lieberman, *From Recovery to Catastrophe*, 42.

Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany*, 104; for Gehag’s history, see *75 Jahre GEHAG : 1924-1999*.

Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany*, 104.


Ibid., 203.


UNESCO Nomination Report, 32.


Lehnert, “Zwischen Hinterhof,” 82.

Hake, *Topographies of Class*, 192.

Ibid., 173.

Ibid., 195.

Both of these photobooks are analyzed by Hake; Köster is not someone she mentions in her analysis of Berlin urban photography.


Hake, *Topographies of Class*, 176.


The original depicts construction of the pond, several human figures are easily observed; the photo retouched by Langewiesche Verlag, instead of a pond, grass and trees has no human figures. See Stöneberg, *Arthur Köster: Architekturfotografie*, table 68 and Table 69.

Taut, "Neue und alte Form im Bebauungsplan," 198-199.


Max Stamm famously warned against conveniences of the *Bauhaus Siedlungen* as opium for the working classes. I have not yet discovered studies of the communist housing programme in Berlin.


Ibid., 70.

Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, 69-70. Perhaps, this absence of gender as a category led to the kind of replies that Fromm received in regards to homemaking.

Ibid., 127.

Ibid., 129.

Ibid., 132.


Ibid., 32.

Ibid., 89.

Ibid 35.

Ibid., 93.

Ibid., 91.

Ibid., 91-93.
Fromm notices variation in female responses only in relation to certain questions such as fashion. Women, according to Fromm, rejected contemporary fashion (bob haircuts, silk stockings, short skirts) more often, while men “who are generally more progressive than women,” accepted short skirts and hair more readily (159). As Ute Frevert points out, the change to parliamentary system of Weimar Republic signalled recognition of sexual equality as a right in Weimar Constitution; granting women the rights to vote mobilized women to participate in the political process, both by exercising this right and by being elected (169-170). According to the occupational census in 1925, compared to 1907, 1,700,000 more women became fully employed, especially in the areas of services and industry: “the modernity of the Weimar system appeared to acquire the shape of secretaries, short hand typists and shop assistants” (177). Increasing female employment, however, provoked very little change in gender attitudes and expectations, as Frevert’s study asserts. Traditional gender divides characterized this world of white collar labour and often, the office work, along with domestic science courses, was simply one of the stages a young single girl was expected to go through before marriage (179). In the field of white-collar work itself women often performed “the most routine and simple tasks, particularly the operation of new office machines, while mainly men were employed in qualified positions such as accounting, administration or management of departments”(178). What about the living conditions of these women? Many lived with their parents as they did not earn enough to afford not a place, but even a separate bed (183). See Ute Frevert, Women in German History: from Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation. Oxford: New York: Berg, 1989.


Wiedenhoeft, Berlin’s Housing Revolution, 25.

As Mark Hobbs in his article “Farmers on Notice” argued, such strategies caused displacement of colonies. I will address his argument in more detail in Chapter 3.


Ibid., 189.

Rosenhaft “Organizing the ‘Lumpenproletariat,’” 174-175. See also Hake, Topographies of Class, 67.

Hake, Topographies of Class, 67.

Bullock and Read, The Movement for Housing Reform, 166.

Ibid., 182.


Lewin-Dorfläche, “Von Meinem Fenster aus.”


In original it reads: “Das ist eine der vielen Siedlungen, die den staerksten Vorstoss in das Chaos der Zwischenwelt, die Stadt und Land trennt, bedeuten” (Hessel 1929, 1999, 135-136).

May, who in 1910-1912 was an apprentice of Raymond Unwin, one of the designers of the garden city Letchworth, is associated with developing “Trabantenstadt,” the “idea of a city divided into semiautonomous nuclei” (Tafuri, The Sphere and the Labyrinth, 206), peripheral cities that relied on public transportation for their connection to the central districts. On German garden city movement and its connection to the Siedlung as building form, see Jeannette Redensek, “Manufacturing Gemeinschaft: Architecture, Tradition, and the Sociology of Community in Germany, 1890-1920.” Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2007.

Notes to Chapter Two

134 Bodenschatz, Platz frei, 89-90. On the political fate of Weimar slum clearance and Martin Wagner’s arguments, see Harald Bodenschatz, Platz frei für das Neue Berlin! Geschichte der Stadterneuerung in der „größten Mietskasernenstadt der Welt seit 1871, (Berlin, 1987), a detailed historical study of various projects of re-building of the “old” Berlin dating back to Imperial Germany and of the tenement block and various aesthetic and social critiques.

137 Some of the new building (Neubau) happened in the inner city. More research needs to be done on comparing inner city construction as alternative to Mietskaserne in Wilhelmine and Weimar Berlin.

136 Bodenschatz, Platz frei für das Neue Berlin, 82.


140 Ibid., 16.

141 Ibid., 17. On municipal government’s role in employing medical personnel for city hospitals and on health reformers more broadly, see Paul Weindling, Health, Race, and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).


143 Hake, Topographies of Class, 33.

144 Niethammer, “Some Elements of the Housing Reform Debate,” 131. See also Maiken Umbach, German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism, 1890-1924 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Umbach argues that the Wilhelmine bourgeois reformers, whose efforts primarily in architecture and urban planning she conceptualizes as articulating the emergence of a “buergerlich lifestyle,” based on the “liberal mode of governance,” concentrated their efforts on “controlling the non-bourgeois Other,” the poor, by “surveillance” techniques of urban slum clearance and statistics (193). See also Andrew Lees, Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002) to trace discussions of the Weimar reformers to Wilhelmine city planning. As Lees shows, the emergence of “Sozialpolitik” and housing reform in particular was very much a concentrated effort of local municipal initiatives, from improvements in urban infrastructure to the backing of interventionist health policies.


146 On the history of bourgeois perceptions of the proletariat as pre-civilized, brutal, “the savage” etc. in the nineteenth century, see Lutz Niethammer, “Some Elements of the Housing Reform Debate,” 129-164.

147 Bullock, The Movement for Housing Reform, 83.

As cited in Niethammer, “Some Elements of the Housing Reform Debate,” 145-147. On the re-assessment of the Hobrecht’s plan, see Claus Bernet, “The ‘Hobrecht Plan’ (1862) and Berlin’s Urban Structure,” *Urban History* 31, no. 3 (2004): 400-419. He argues that Werner Hegemann’s interpretation of Hobrecht’s plan as a “mindless imitation of the redevelopment of Paris under Napoleon III” dominated the scholarship and undervalued other positive aspects of the plan, such as its vast green areas. Importantly, Bernet also points out that the realization of the plan introduced very limited regulations, rather than encompassing a comprehensive set of rules for the entire city: “The preparation of these regulations fell under the responsibility of the building police, a department of the Berlin police presidium which answered to the Prussian Interior Ministry, which in turn was under the influence of the king” (401).

Adelheid von Saldern’s pioneering work, beginning in the mid 1960’s, introduced the category of the everyday into the German cultural history. The discussion in my dissertation does not do full justice to the important body of criticism that she produced. In his foreword to *The Challenge of Modernity: German Social and Cultural Studies, 1890-1960*, Adelheid von Saldern’s collection of English translations of her work, Geof Eley, editor of the “Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany” series (which introduced a wide array of German scholarship to English speaking academic audience), points to the pivotal role that von Saldern’s work played in the studies of everyday life, by transferring the focus in historical studies from the large processes to the sphere of daily experiences. Such efforts subsequently contributed to the emergence of the academic studies of *Alltagsgeschichte* (History of everyday life) in the 1980’s (Eley, xiii). For a detailed bibliography of von Saldern’s and other studies of the working class everyday life and an in-depth critical discussion of history of this approach in Germany, see Geoff Eley’s “Foreword” and an excellent introduction of von Saldern herself in *The Challenge of Modernity*. See also Bernet 2004 for the list of contemporary studies. Some of the most comprehensive recent studies include Kristiana Hartmann, “Alltagskultur, Alltagsleben, Wohnkultur,” in *Geschichte des Wohnens 1918-1945: Reform, Reaktion, Zerstörung*, ed. Gert Kähler (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 183-302 and Johan Geist and Klaus Kürvers, *Das Berliner Miethaus*, vol. I (München : Prestel, 1980).

Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*, 60.

Lübbert, 31.

Bressem, “Dr Mensch und die Wohnung,” 67.

Ibid., 69-70.

ibid., 69.


Grobl, “ Die Rationierung der Wohnungsgröße,” 63-64.

A 1985 documentary, *Das Neue Frankfurt* by Jonas Geist and Joachim Krause, uses archival footage of such films as well as interviews with the tenants of the estates in Frankfurt.

Elässaesser, “Die Stadt von morgen,” 381.

The website of the home today emphasizes communication and common social activities as well: “Field trips to the countryside, cruises on the Rhine and Main rivers, shopping sprees to nearby malls, bus trips to museums and concerts, Nordic Walking in our colourful backyard park, swimming classes at nearby public pools, getting together for an evening at the opera or theatre. See Budge-Stiftung, Senioren-Wohnanlage und Pflegeheim, http://www.budge-stiftung.de/uploads/about_english.pdf.


Hake, *Topographies of Class*, 44.

Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 308.

Hake, *Topographies of Class*, 43).

Ibid., 46.


Ibid., 229.


Taut, *Auflösung*, trans. in Wiedenhöft, *Berlin’s Housing Revolution*, 16. According to Haag Bletter, Taut’s thinking at this juncture was influenced by the writings of the anarchist Piotr Kropotkin. On connection of Taut’s architecture and his political ideas and on theoretical influences on Taut, see Haag Bletter, “Bruno Taut,” 248-249.

As Tafuri writes, “this link between radical city planning and the historical avant-gardes imparts to the ‘rationalism’ evoked by the *Siedlungen* a character all their own: not the rationality ‘immanent’ to the restructuring of the capitalist cycle . . . but that of liberated work . . . The working-class and cooperative *Siedlung* as image of the city of work, then. That characteristic sinks again into the myth of the proletariat as standard-bearer of a ‘new world’ and of a socialism founded on a society of conscious producers” (*The Sphere and The Labyrinth*, 214).

See Bruno Taut, “Neue und Alte Form im Bebaungsplan,” *Wohnungswirtschaft* 3 (1926), 198-199. A picture of an American stadium with parking places that visually is strikingly similar to *Hufeisensiedlung* is included in Taut’s book *Die Neue Baukunst in Europa and Amerika*, Stuttgart: J.Hoffmann, 1929.

The drawing of the “Volkshaus” is reproduced in Hilpert, *Hufeisensiedlung in Britz*, 43.


ibid., 14.

Taut, “Der Aussenwohnraum,” 140.

Taut, *Die Neue Baukunst*, 7.

Taut, “Aufruf zum Farbigen Bauen,” 139. Martin Wagner, who preferred white, was able to endorse Taut’s colorful vision, but only grudgingly: “We will also have to become accustomed to maintaining the external wall of houses and their facades clean and pure and not to shy away . . .
from occasionally painting these facades with a new coat. In the colour-friendly form of our streets and city spaces is expressed the awakening to a new freedom and new life force (as cited and translated in Frisby, *Cityscapes of Modernity*, 276).

185 Ibid., 117.
186 Ibid, 110.
188 Taut, “Genossenschaftsarchitektur,” 118.
189 Ibid, 118.
190 Taut, “Was ist eine Gross-Siedlung,” 8.
191 Ibid, 9.
192 The resemblance between Taut’s views on de-centralization and the “urbanist-deurbanist” discussions in the USSR was an observation first made by Haag Bletter.
194 Hake, *Topographies of Class*, 42.
195 Wagner, ”Jedem Deutschen eine gesunde Wohnung,” 170. Wagner studied in the US and adopted Fordist ideas in his writings. As Mary Nolan’s work has asserted, for many in German politics and managerial industries, as well as in popular discourses, Taylorism and Fordism presented not simply an influence, but an “infatuation.”
203 Ibid., 161.
206 Ibid., 92.

Notes to Chapter Three
207 In Weimar Germany, the city to enact a large scale programme of public housing was not Berlin, but Frankfurt am Main. See Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany* and Bullock and Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France* on specific factors such as municipal land politics before the war and vast power given to the architect Ernst May, director of municipal construction in Frankfurt. As Barbara Miller Lane emphasizes, it was largely the building societies in Berlin and not the city administration (as it was the case in Frankfurt) that pushed for public housing developments in the modern style (104).
Taut, “Die Jugend muss bauen,” 163.

A position that Taut thoroughly articulated in his book *Die Neue Wohnung: Die Frau als Schöpferin* which I will discuss later in the chapter.

Taut, “Die Jugend muss bauen,” 163.

Ibid., 165.

Häussermann et al., *Stadtpolitik*, 63.


In the meantime, as Nolan argues, Fordism suggested increased productivity by “optimizing all factors of production” without workers’ exploitation and therefore, was “more appealing” according to Nolan. On particularities of appropriating Taylorism and Fordism in the German context, see Nolan, *Visions of Modernity*, 42-50. Both systems shaped visions of rationalization in Germany. Taylorist time and motion studies (via Christine Frederick’s work) have been very influential for Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky’s designs of the Frankfurt kitchen.

Nolan *Visions of Modernity*, 211.

Ibid., 216.


Nolan, *Visions of Modernity*, 211.


Ibid., 213.

Ibid., 221.

Ibid., 222.


Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation*, 9.

Ibid., 86.


Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation*, 83.

Ibid., 91.

Ibid., 99.

Ibid., 8. Power dynamics involved among various parties advocating rationalization of households needs to be examined further.

Ibid., 48.

See, for example, Sigfried Kracauer’s work on female spectatorship and Weimar cinema.

Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*, 11-12.

Ibid., 10.


In 1930, it constituted reduction to 32-45 square meters, according to “Reichsgrundsätzen für den Kleinwohnungsbau” and “Hauszinsteuern” mortgages were first diminished, then abolished in 1932. See Ingeborg Beer. Architektur für den Alltag. Berlin: Schelzky & Jeep, 1994, 92-93.

Lane, Architecture and Politics in Germany, 91.


Teige, Minimum Dwelling, 70.

Simmons, “Minimal Frenchmen,” 252-254.

Ibid., 230.


Häussermann et al., Stadtpolitik, 63.

Without going into the discussion about the politics and internal dynamics of the conference, it is important however to point to tensions between architects committed to the housing reform and others like LeCorbusier concerned with more aesthetic aspects. As Paul Overy shows, Gropius presented himself at the Congress as “the senior and most experienced modernist” while Le Corbusier was touring South America “no doubt glad of an excuse to avoid ‘clashing’ with the Germans again so soon, and on their home ground” (Overy 346, 356). However, readings that frame such events in terms of national confrontation as with the Werkbund Exhibition in Paris 1930, that was largely described by contemporaries and recent design and architecture historians as a confrontation between French model of luxury and German efficient and standardised design, often misses the way in which a highly “selective” design display becomes entangled in the cultural politics of architecture (Overy 344). See Paul Overy, Light, Air & Openness: Modern Architecture between the Wars (New York : Thames & Hudson, 2008). On LeCorbusier versus “the Germans” see Eric Mumford, The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1940 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). What interests me here, is not so much whether the exhibit perpetuated the split between more rational German model and French emphasis on luxury, but how the texts variously formulated the idea of the minimal living.


Ibid., 91.

Ibid., 98.

Ibid., 93-95.

Ibid., 98-101.

Ibid., 101-102.

Ibid., 98.

Ibid., 100.

Ibid., 98.

The questions (in German) are reprinted in Steinmann, Internationale Kongresse für Neues Bauen: Dokumente, 42-46.

Mumford, The CIAM Discourse, 31. Eric Mumford calls it for this reason simply “quasi-scientific.”
Simmons, “Minimal Frenchmen,” 269.

Schmidt, “Grundrisse für die billige Wohnung,” 20-23.

May, “Introduction” to Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum, 5.

Ibid., 6.

The table was reprinted in Ernst May, “Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum,” 207.

Ibid., 208.

May, “Introduction” to Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum, 6.


Kramer, “Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum.” Kramer participated in organizing of the Congress, his works in architecture and design are associated with Neue Frankfurt and Neues Bauen. For more on Kramer and his involvement with Bauhaus see Kramer, “The Bauhaus and the New Architecture,” 78-83.

Kopp, Town and Revolution, 116.

See Buchli’s study of Narkomfin apartment building in Archeology of Socialism.


Teige, The Minimum Dwelling, 324.

Ibid., 329.

Ibid., 333.

Ibid., 334.

Teige himself participated in CIAM’s meetings.


Mumford, The CIAM Discourse, 40.


May, “Fünf Jahre Wohnungsbautätigkeit in Frankfurt am Main,” 38.


Taut, Die Neue Wohnung: Die Frau als Schöpferin, 55, 58.


Ibid., 11.

Schütte-Lihotsky, “Bauliche Anlage,” 3. Paul Overy speculates that Schütte-Lihotzky’s on and off suffering from tuberculosis very much conditioned her approach to kitchens as clinically clean laboratories (Overy, Light, Air and Openness, 89).


On RKW, its funding and activities to popularize rationalization and on the proliferation of institutions devoted to rationalization in the mid 1920’s, see Nolan, Visions of Modernity, 133-137.


Illustration instead of this note. Lübbert, “Rationelle Küchengestaltung,” RFG 1928.


Overy, Light, Air and Openness, 97.


Sotzgorod, directed by Anna Abrahams.

See, for example, Jerram, “Kitchen Sink Dramas,” 545.


Ibid., 284-285.


Frederick, The New Housekeeping, 47.


Ibid., 14.

I am not sure whether Schütte-Lihotzky believed that her kitchens would prompt more women to enter occupations outside of the home sphere.

Ibid., 104.

Henderson “Housing the Single Woman,” 361. The politics of how these funds were made “unavailable” awaits more in-depth research. As Strattigakos in A Women’s Berlin identifies the shift that occurred between 1913 and 1932 in the relation of women and the city, the ways in which they “imagined their urban identities:” from “civic activism” of political rallies, women’s clubs, housing cooperatives, focused on “an urban female community” to “consumerism” of housewives and commercial exhibitions (175-176). Mass architecture participated in mediating this new relationship between the self and urban modernity, when the self is becoming viewed either as a part of the masses or singular experience as “one either rose above the crowd or melted into it” (177). Mass housing and mass architecture of the Weimar Republic was about standardizing the gender roles (woman within a family), and no longer radical as the collective experiments of the Wilhelmine era (targeted for single women): “Rather than express the New Woman’s modernity as an individual, the New Architecture symbolized her function as a highly efficient cog in a larger social and economic system geared to maintaining the gendered status quo” (174). For in depth discussion of housing for single women in Frankfurt and of Schütte-Lihotsky involvement designing such projects, see Henderson, “Housing the Single Woman,” 358-377.

Beer, Architektur für den Alltag, 127. In many of Frankfurt housing estates one could find such electric appliances as stoves, refrigerators, and irons. As Martina Hessler demonstrates, such electrification did not go uncontested. The tenants of the Römerstadt housing estates complained and protested high costs of electricity by organizing interest groups and demanding for the Frankfurt city council to “deinstall electricity” (“The Frankfurt Kitchen,” 176).


Beer, Architektur für den Alltag, 128-129.

Leif Jerram argues that the Munich kitchen by “extending” the kitchen into the living room “was predicated on a model of working-class womanhood which ascribed greater agency to women in the management of their lives” (“Kitchen Sink Dramas,” 549). Also see Kristiana Hartmann, “Alltagskultur, Alltagsleben, Wohnkultur,” in Geschichte des Wohnens. Band 4. 1918-1945. Reform, Reaktion, Zerstörung, ed. Gert Kähler (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1996), 282-286.


As cited in Nolan, Visions of Modernity, 224.

Here I am influenced again by Jacobs’ and Cairns’ approach to housing in which “the house itself is part of a process of mediation whereby a household encounters wider society” (“The Modern Touch,” 573).


Ibid., 43. Elsaesser approaches the film Die Frankfurter Küche, “neutral, sober, seemingly without flair or wit” within Ernst May’s wider media strategies to promote his planning projects,
making use of every available media at the time. See Elsaesser, “The Camera in the Kitchen,” 38-42.

331 van Herck, “‘Only where Comfort Ends,’” 142-143. Despite these numbers, I have not yet discovered analysis of its readership.

332 Taut, Die Neue Wohnung, 11.

333 Peach “‘Der Architekt Denkt, Die Hausfrau Lenkt,’” 451.

334 Taut, Die Neue Wohnung, 67.

335 Ibid., 74.


337 Taut, Die Neue Wohnung, 34.

338 Ibid., 60.


340 Ibid., 84.


342 Ibid., 576.


344 Taut, Bauen der Neue Wohnbau, 47.


346 Taut, Siedlungsmemoiren, 2-3.

347 Ibid., 8-9.


349 Such initiatives as “Britzer Küchenvereins für Erwerblosenspeisung” took place during the economic world crisis. See Lehnert, “Zwischen Hinterhof und Siedlungshaus,” 83. As a respondent (Frau L) remembered, once the SPD was prohibited by the Nazis in 1933, the kitchen became illegal and was shut down (Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 93).

350 Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 94.


352 Lehnert, “Zwischen Hinterhof und Siedlungshaus,” 82.


354 Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 88. Unfortunately, I do not know whether there were pamphlets instructing the residents on the interior decoration of their flats. Did Hufeisensiedlung tenants change layout of their standardized flats?

355 Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 88. Taut worked on housing projects in Magdeburg in the early 1920’s.


357 Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 86.

358 Von Saldern, Neubausiedlungen, 61.

359 As cited in “Kurzgefasste Firmengeschichte der GEHAG,” 206.


361 Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 86.

362 “Wer bewohnt die Gehag-Häuser?” 74.

363 Hilpert, Hufeisensiedlung, 86.

364 Ibid., 87.

365 “Wer kann bei uns mieten?” 3. Another category were citizens (“Reichsdeutsche,” or Germans from the German Empire prior to 1918, which in this context, probably means citizens born in
the German Reich), who were currently renting an “Altwohnung” through the housing office in “usable form,” built before July 1, 1918, with four rooms at most and at a rent of up to 1800 Marks.

369 The discussion in the above paragraph is based on Haney’s study. See Haney, *When Modern was Green*, 221, 252.
370 Migge, *Höfe und Gärten*, 166.
372 Haney, *When Modern was Green*, 2.
374 Ibid., 12.
376 Ibid., 55.
378 Ibid., 62.
379 Ibid., 86. As an example of “radical space utilization”, “green tenement block” Migge uses Le Corbusier’s designs in Bordeaux, with gardens on the balconies (84).
381 Haney, *When Modern was Green*, 169.
382 Ernst May house in Frankfurt, restored to its original condition, also includes a small allotment garden where the vegetables and fruits are “restored” as well.
384 Migge, *Höfe und Gärten*, 166.
388 According to Tomisch and Jaeggi’s unpublished study cited in Haney, *When Modern was Green*, 184.
389 “Erweiterung des Grossiedlung Britz.”
390 See Hobbs, “Farmers on Notice,” 273-275. As Hobbs suggests, *Neues Bauen* housing programme’s of redevelopment relied very much not simply on the inner city slum clearance, but also on “garden clearance”, on displacement of garden colonies of poor residents to make space for new developments.
Notes to Chapter Four

392 The October revolution, historically “the most modern, most vanguard of events,” had taken place in “one of the most economically backward countries in Europe,” a condition which prompted the “Bolshevik regime to endorse a policy of economic modernization as the very definition of revolution.” (Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 58). The Bolsheviks inherited conditions that were partly the result of unwillingness of the Tsarist authorities to modernize by including the peasants as industrial labour. See Hoffman, *Peasant Metropolis*, 8-11.

393 “Concerning Policy of Eliminating Kulaks as a Class,” 185.

394 Decree of TsK (Central Committee of the Communist Party) and SNK (Russian Council of People’s Commissars) of 23 November 1927, as cited in Konycheva and Meerovich, *Ernst Mai*, 8.

395 One of the excellent studies of foreign architects’ projects in the USSR is by Anatole Kopp (1988)

396 Berman, *All that is Solid*, 174.

397 Ibid., 285.

398 Theorizing the link between modernization and subject production in Soviet Russia, Laura Engelstein demonstrates that Michel Foucault’s transition from “old” monarchic regimes to the liberal capitalist systems, from “compulsion to discipline” (339) is not fully applicable in the case of Russia. While Foucault’s scheme might describe what happened in western European nations, the example of Russia, argues Engelstein, illustrates “combined underdevelopment:” the “superimposition of the three models of power, chronologically separated in Foucault’s scheme: the so-called juridical monarchy, the Polizeistaat, and the modern disciplinary regime” (343). In the successor to the Russian Empire, the Soviet state, a liberal regime based on individual rights secured legally, failed to emerge: “Whereas in Europe the preconditions for and continuing context of disciplinary authority were established by the law-abiding state (in however imperfect a guise), in Russia, both the reign of law and the ascendance of bourgeois discipline remained largely hypothetical” (348). Individual rights were subsumed under class and revolutionary goals. Engelstein’s argument that the concept of law and the rights of an individual never developed in Russia and therefore Foucault’s understanding of the modern logic of power and discourse is not a model that can be applied everywhere is convincing, as is her caution that we must be attentive to local historical specificities. Foucault’s focus on space and power is clearly suggestive and relevant for any analysis of the spatial organization of life in the new Soviet city as the vision of constructing new people through housing shifted from the constructivist vision of home as “social condenser” to the “container” of “disciplined selves.” This, however, is outside of the domain of this chapter and needs further elaboration.

399 Meerovich, “Ernst Mai: ratsional’noe zhilio dlia Rossii,” 134. In an email exchange with the author in April 2011, Michael David Fox advised that foreign architects and planners working in the USSR were considered “resident specialists,” and thus were the concern of the Vneshnaia Kommissiia VTsSPS. Their archives are in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), in Moscow.

400 *Sotzgorod*, directed by Anna Abrahams.

401 As cited in Flierl, “Possibly the Greatest Task,” 159.


410 Kopp, *Town and Revolution*, 141.

411 Ginzburg “Ratsionalizatsia.”


413 Kuz’min, “ Daesh’ Dom-Kommunu!”


416 Ibid., 126.


420 Hoffman, *Peasant Metropolis*, 157. Natalia Lebina describes a commune of female textile factory workers, organized in 1923: “Communars did not have any cutlery: they ate from a common pot. One pair of shoes was worn in rotation” (164). In the late 1920’s, the amount of new construction did not correspond to the massive influx of the workers into the cities. “Constructivist” houses, for example, were often built for intelligentsia and the middle class Party functionaries. In *Komsomolskaia Pravda* the readers complain that the way the “new buildings” are being built did not correspond to the promises of “the cultural revolution.” On the outskirts of Moscow, the letter writers reports, a hectic and uncoordinated development takes place, without communal kitchens, clubs, libraries, etc. A workers settlement of the plant “Bogatyri” was overcrowded, 60 flats are housing 450 people, they were damp, with no central heating and gas (“Doma”). Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow was built with changes to its original designs: the childcare centre and the sports facilities were never realized; instead of the communal centre, a printing shop was accommodated for the Council of ministries (Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, 102). As a result, self sufficient K-type units became occupied by families of more powerful bureaucrats, while those that relied on non-functioning communal facilities were for low- and middle class office workers and single professionals (Ibid., 115).

421 Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, 128.

I analyzed this campaign in detail in an unpublished paper “Domestic Reforms of the 1920’s and the Communalization of Private Life in Soviet Russia” (2010).


The editorial claim that the “whole productive process and apparatus ” should be the object of rationalization was to be reversed in 1933, in similarly obscure fashion, in the attempts to redeem “standardization, which makes the construction cheaper and faster, allows for maximum mechanization of construction materials’ and of the whole process of production. . .We need standardization only of elements, parts, not the whole.” See V. Grechuko, “Za chetkii arkhitekturii oblik,” (1933): 10, as cited in Konysheva and Meerovich, Ernst Mai, 206.

Functionalism becomes increasingly attacked in the emerging aesthetic of socialist realism which favoured decorative elements. As Dehaan suggested, Fordism and not Taylorism became an appealing doctrine in Stalinist Russia, for its emphasis on centralization of economic power and management. See Dehaan, Stalinist City Planning, 8.

Buchli, Archeology of Socialism, 112. This is not to say that domestic space became irrelevant under Stalin. Rather, different domestic strategies became employed as the communal apartment becomes increasingly a place of surveillance.

Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain, 203-204.

Buck-Morss, Dreamworld and Catastrophe, 111.

Dehaan, Stalinist City Planning, 43.

As Dehaan elaborates on the shift in architectural policies, Stalin’s 1930 “Dizzy with success” speech proclaimed a temporary halt to collectivization and its implication for planning was that the discussions of housing combines were to be halted, too (46). However, this provocative argument could be developed some more as the discussions did not re-emerge once collectivization was accelerated again in winter of 1931. On this, see Lynn Viola, The Unknown Gulag, 31-32.

reprinted from Pravda 29 May 1930, in Sovremennaia Arhitektura 1-2, 1930.

French, Plans, Pragmatism and People, 42.


Many researchers agree that it was the competition for the Palace of Soviets in 1931-1933 that marked a reorientation in Stalinist architectural policy. The Palace Construction committee declared the principle of the “critical assimilation of heritage”: “to draw on the heritage ‘critically’ meant to select those structures, paradigmatic features, symbolic elements . . . which embodied some ideal integral to the Party’s vision of socialism, and use it aspirationally” (Cooke, Russian Avant-Garde, 201). Critics variously theorize stylistic and discursive continuities and discontinuities between the Soviet avant garde and Stalinist architects. Cooke, Buck-Morss, Cohen, and Kopp all contest the claim that Stalinization was a logical culmination of the avant-garde experiments. All these authors aim to present Russian constructivism as a distinct body of ideas and building and architectural practices. The point of contention among them seems to be the degree to which these developments paralleled similar western developments in architecture and planning. On the opposite side, a number of studies emphasize continuities between the avant-garde and Stalinist planning and architecture, Kestutis Paul Zigas’s study, Form Follows Form, for instance, relates constructivist architecture of the 1920’s
to the neo-classical style of the 1930’s, arguing that both aimed to “glorify” communist ideology. Similarly, Boris Groys, in *The Total Art of Stalinism*, points to continuities between these two artistic currents (neo-classicism and constructivism) and argues that the socialist realism of the Stalinist period incorporated and modified avant-garde principles, thus placing them as nothing more than precursors of the Stalinist aesthetic. Vladimir Paperny considers the development of Russian architecture and culture as cyclical, developing through an alteration of two conflicting trends that he calls Culture One and Culture Two. The avant-garde, according to Paperny, contained both democratic and totalitarian tendencies and these totalitarian tendencies eventually prevailed and the Culture Two took over (107). While these studies attempt to theorize in varying ways the shifts from an avant-garde to a Stalinist aesthetic, they all testify to the eventual monolithic imposition of socialist realism (for example, Kopp refers to the re-emergence in the 1930’s of more traditional architects building in the neo-classical style before the revolution taking hold over the constructivists (225). Keeping up with the arguments in previous chapters, my interest is not so much about why the progressive ideas degenerated, or whether these ideas were totalitarian to begin with, but on interrogating the structures of power as “Western” modernist ideas and projects were incorporated and modified according to new Party directives in the USSR.

436 “Hannes Meyer über Soviethandel,” 1602.
438 Schütte-Lihotsky, “Mebel’ dlia detskix sadov v Aakhene, Germaniia, 1930 g.,” 20. More research is needed on the designs of these kindergartens and whether they were constructed. Kindergartens and especially schools were an important part of Soviet power’s mechanisms of constructing “new people” at the special settlements. See Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 170-178.
441 Castillo, “Stalinist Modern,” 135.
442 Bliznakov, “The Realization of Utopia,” 167-168. These Stroikom units that were realized famously in the Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow are discussed in Victor Buchli’s *Archeology of Socialism*.
443 This magazine was not used to convince peasants and workers to take part in the creation of the new people and cities, but, as Erika Wolf argues, its targeted audience was not the ordinary Soviet citizens nor even the foreign sympathizers, but the shaping Soviet elite. See Erika Wolf "When Photographs Speak, To Whom do They Talk? The Origins and Audience of SSSR na Stroike", *Left History* 6/2 (1999): 53-82.
This argument provided a narrative for scholars researching foreign architects. Pioneered, most likely, by Borngräber in 1976 in Germany, the change in doctrine to socialist realism and architects’ disagreement and departure or adoption, provide the contours for the narrative of their work.


Dehaan, *Stalinist City Planning*, 12.


See, for example, Kopp, *Town and Revolution*, 171-178.


This argument was developed in detail by Frederick Starr in “Visionary Town Planning,” 207-238. Also see Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 190-204.


Valliant-Couturier, “Magnetogorsk. The Giant Plant of the Second Metallurgical Base.”


Ibid., 229.

For the list of architects see Borngräber, “Foreign Architects in the USSR,” 59.

Nizhnik, “Genplan Orska,” 313.

Ibid., 313.

Ibid., 314.


Arkin, *Arkhitектуra sovremennogo zapada*, 139.


Ibid., 316-317.


See also Meerovich, “Ernst Mai: Ratsional’noe Zil’io,” 134. Alongside of attraction of the foreign specialists, other channels of international cooperation included foreign investments through renting of (arenda) enterprises and credits from foreign state and private companies. See “Introduction” in Khromov et al., 13.
Khromov suggests that the date is not 1927, but 1926.

GARF f. R-5446, op.3, d.73, l.2-3, as cited in Khromov et al., *Industrializatsia*, 224-225.

Ibid, 225.

RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3,d.698, l.3-4, as cited in Khromov et al., 233-234.

Castillo, “Stalinist Modern,” 142.


Konyshova and Meerovich, *Ernst Mai*, 57-58.


Ibid., 11.


Ibid., 69.

Ibid., 70.

David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 184-185.


David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, 185.

In the conditions of shortage of skilled labour, a number of initiatives in education and at the factory contributed to “rehabilitation” of bourgeois specialists. See Fitzpatrick, “Cultural Revolution as Class War,” 34-37.

RGAE f.7297,op. 38, d.289, l. 65-74, as cited in Khromov et al., 263-264.


Ibid., 418.


Polian, *Ne po svoei vole*, 68.


As cited in in Stalin i Kaganovich, *Perepiska*, 73.

Polian, *Ne po svoei vole*, 68.

Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 78.


This example is borrowed from the archival study of Gvozdkova of Kuzbass labour camps. See Gvozdkova, *Stalinskie lageria na territorii Kuzbassa*, 94-95.


Polian, *Ne po svoei vole*, 12.

Bedin et al., *Kemerovo i Stalinsk*, 134.

Khromov et al., *Industrializatsia*, 244-245.

GARF f.7416, op.1, d.151, l. 53, in Khromov et al., *Industrializatsia*, 266.

As cited and translated in Borngräber, “Foreign Architects in the USSR,” 58.

RGAE f.7297,op.38, d.37,l. 54-57 in Khromov et al., 246.
In 1931, the situation was that the local power tried to prevent further arrivals of the special settlers because there was no housing and too short a time to build housing for winter. I accessed the Archives of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State Microfilm Collection located at the State Archives of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, GARF) at the Lamont library at Harvard University, where some materials of the collections are on microfilm. The complete original archives are in Moscow. These Russian archival documents are cited according to the collection (fond), inventory (opis’), file (delo) and folio (list, l in singular, ll in the plural).


Püschel uses the Russian spelling for “prisoners”, “sakljutschonnye.” It is not clear whether he includes special settlers in this definition.

Püschel, *Wege eines Bauhäuslers*, 84-85. Here he refers to horses and camels that were used as means to transport building materials.


Konyshcheva, “Ya Planov Nashikh” in Konyshcheva and Meerovich, *Ernst Mai*, 175.

GARF, f. A-314, op. 1, d.7667, l.27-38, as cited in Konyshcheva, “Ya Planov Nashih,” 175.
Schwagenscheidt, letter to Ernst Hopmann, 1.1.1931, as cited in Preusler, Walter Schwagenscheidt 1886-1968, 96. Unlike the May’s brigade, Hannes Meyer and his specialists were more “integrated” into the Soviet “milieu” and were paid in roubles. See Borngräber, “Ausländische Architekten,” 118. As Philipp Tolziner recollects, Meyer’s specialists mingled with Soviet people because they lived in the same dormitories. See Tolziner, “Mit Hannes Meyer am Bauhaus und in der Sowjetunion,” 250.

Meerovich, Kvadratnye metry, 198-199.

Ibid., 203.

Konyshova and Meerovich, Ernst Mai, 196.

Wolters was a close friend of Albert Speer and held an important position in the Third Reich. Because of the controversial history, the book is still hardly known in Germany. See Introduction to his memoir Spezialist in Sibirien / Spetsialist v Sibiri (1932).

Wolters, Spetsialist v Sibiri, 73-75.

Dominique, Secrets of Siberia, 111-112. Another example of planning for Party elites, the tendency that became more evident during the late 1930’s, was a residential quarter in Chelyabinsk called Gorodok OGPU, well constructed 6-story housing blocks: “Each block boasted all the communal services that one could desire: nurseries, laundries, kindergartens, tailor shops, dining-rooms, and clubs. . . It seemed incredible to me that there should be enough GPU functionaries in Chelyabinsk to warrant the construction of such a monumental housing project just for these police officers. I found out, however, that party and Soviet officials also lived in these houses” (Scott, Behind the Urals, 110-111).

Scott, Behind the Urals, 231-232.

Ibid., 233.

Ibid., 234.

Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain, 120.

Scott, Behind the Urals, 90.

Ibid., 91.


Ibid., 210.

Ibid., 212.

Dehaan, Stalinist City Planning, 151.

On distribution of material goods as a strategy of “Stalinist enfranchisement” see Buchli, An Archeology of Socialism, 85-87.


Dehaan, Stalinist City Planning, 27-34. Heather DeHaan beautifully analyzes the attempts of various imperial rulers to “modernize” medieval layout of the city of Nizhnii Novgorod and the implications for both physical and representational spaces of the city. Foreign architects were involved in redesigning and planning of not only “new” cities but of imperial cities as well. See, for example, Bruno Taut. Moskauer Briefe 1932-1933 : Schönheit, Sachlichkeit und Sozialismus. Ed. Barbara Kreis. Berlin : Gebr. Mann, 2006 and Richardson, “Hannes Meyer and the General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow, 1931-5.”

On these aspects of Khrushchev reforms, see Blair A. Ruble, “From Khrushcheby to Korobki” in Russian Housing in the Modern Age. Design and Social History. Ed. William Craft
See Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*, 57-113. Departing from the early city improvers’ efforts, the discourse of planning shifts to support capital accumulation, in the early twentieth century a “reorientation of the discourse” proceeded from the focus on curing the city from the “ills” of crime and overcrowding and turned to disciplining, efficiency, regulating city growth, and the promotion of the rational plan: “The elements of the American city had to be functionally integrated into a whole: now what mattered was how one part related to another and how they cooperated in support and the maintenance and reproduction of capital accumulation within the city” (62).

Work in this direction is already being undertaken. Heather D. Dehaan in *Stalinist Planning* discusses Stalinist planning of Nizhni Novgorod and Kimberly Zarecor in *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* addresses panel apartment buildings in former Czechoslovakia after WW2. Both studies attempt to escape a schematic theoretical framework of “top-down” communist planning. Rather, they consider the complexity of built socialism and articulate how built socialism took shape in differing urban contexts, using the archive of architectural magazines as well as various government sources. In occupied Czechoslovakia, for example, the doctrine of socialist realism was not dominant and found support by the architects seeking personal advancement or, in the conditions of the purging of “class enemies” in the early 1950’s, in order to “please the regime” of the USSR (Zarecor, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity*, 114). Similarly, I will address housing reforms in Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia as much more than “top down” initiatives. I thereby want to complicate the studies that focus on the modern housing as sites of production of de-politicized consumer-oriented lifestyles/repressive social practices.

**Notes to Conclusion**

UNESCO Nomination Report, 32.


ICOMOS, a non-governmental global cultural heritage organization.


Lefebvre, “The Right to the City,” 173.
I have throughout this work attempted not to judge or evaluate or to assess projects by their subsequent histories, as if those were predetermined by beginnings.


Sorkin, “Little Boxes.”

Jenkins, “Introduction: Domesticity, Design and the Shaping of the Social,” 485

Lane, “Architects in Power,” 294. A fascinating topic for further theorizing could be the link between social reform and modern housing focusing on the disciplinary role of such educational institutions.

Illustration 1: aerial photograph of Hufeisensiedlung. The eastern section, designed by a different architect is crossed out by Bruno Taut.

Illustrations 2 and 3: Falkenberg, architect Bruno Taut, 1913-1916. Photographs by author.
Illustrations 4 and 5: colours in Hufeisensiedlung. Photographs by author.

Illustration 6: Housing shortage, reprinted from a satirical magazine *Simplizissimus* in *Wohnungswirtschaft* in 1926.
Illustration 7: Bruno Taut, *Auflösung der Städte*.

Illustrations 9 and 10: Erna Meyer, woman working “correctly” and figure stick drawings of “wrong” and “correct” working positions.

Illustration 11: recommended kitchen gadgets for small kitchens
Illustration 12: Bruno Taut’s *Die Frau als Schöpferin*.

Illustration 13: Comparison between “appropriate” and “inappropriate” workers’ living rooms.
Illustration 14: Suggested layout of the smallest apartments (Kleinstwohnungen). In Hufeisensiedlung, out of 4 types, 1 ½ and 2 ½ bedrooms were the smallest variations of these layouts.

Illustration 15: cover of “The New Frankfurt” (September 1930).
Illustration 16: “strochnaia zastroika”: Ernst May plan of Novokuznetsk, 1931.

Illustration 17: Mart Stam, general plan for Orsk (1934).
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