# Laissé au Hasard[*]:

## A Study of Uses and Experiences of a Former Coal Mining Site in Wallonia

**Louise Massart**
**3818403**
**Master Thesis**
**Supervisor: Bas Spierings**
**University of Utrecht**

[*] "Left to Randomness" (where the words 'randomness' and 'Hasard' (name of the site) are interchangeable in French)

# Summary

This master thesis investigates the uses of and the emotions, and experiences attached to a former coal mining site located in the province of Liège, Wallonia. This site is located in a semi-urban environment experiencing rapid urban growth in the last few years. Formerly heavily industrialised, it has now become covered in vegetation and could be characterised as a wood setting. The site, commonly referred to as the Hasard, is still the private property of the former Colliery and is therefore officially closed to the public. However, this does not stop hundreds of people from using it weekly.

This thesis studies the user profile, the activities carried on site, and what the site represents to its users and the residents living next to it. It also investigates the different institutional actors and the past history of the place in order to contextualise and frame user and resident responses. The methods used are of qualitative nature, including semi-structured interviews and exploratory observation. Sixty hours of structured observations were also carried out on site in order to identify the diversity of uses and users.

Ultimately, the results of the fieldwork show that the Hasard site is a very dynamic space serving many uses such as cycling, dumping waste, strolling, sledging, playing, hanging out, and driving motorcycles. It brings in people a wide range of emotions and experiences, from fear and wonder to blissfulness and there were very few people wishing for it to disappear. The site serves a very important function in the area. It is a 'free' public space where there is no control and no exclusion. It answers a need for nature and is linked to a very strong place identity in the neighbourhood. However, the future of the Hasard is uncertain. Highway plans, as well as abusive users and institutional miscommunication, threaten its existence.

# Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I could not be more grateful that my subject was such an amazing and fascinating space. It definitely made the trouble worthwhile. Collecting all these uses, emotions, and experiences about the Hasard really has taught me a lot in terms of urban geography and convinced me of the importance of these particular spaces in growing urban environments.

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## Introduction

Urban wasteland, derelict land, abandoned industrial site, 'terrain vague,' loose space, non-places, empty urban plots, ruins…There is a multitude of names to describe spaces that seem unused, or even useless. Mirroring the versatile nature of these spaces, the names to describe them are numerous and add to their fascinating vibe.

This thesis investigates the topic of derelict coal mining sites in Wallonia, Belgium. These sites are no longer used by the coal mining industry and are generally forbidden to the public due to safety or property issues. However, this does not stop people from using them daily for many different purposes. These uses and the experiences that result from them are for the most part illegal but not much seems to be done in order to stop them. In my research, I intend to research the different uses and experiences people make/have out of such a space. I am interested in what these uses and experiences are as framed within the official and institutional discourse of the moment and the past history of the place.

Due to their specificities and the current urban context—such as increased competition among cities, desire for more greenspaces, rise of land prices, shortage of housing and commercial space in urban centres, social, cultural and economic issues and tensions among others—derelict urban lands have risen in importance. As large and 'unused' spaces in urban environments, they hold much potential and are increasingly popular among citizens, private companies, and public authorities alike (Kanvasinou, 2006; Groth & Corijn, 2005). As a result, their versatility and opportunities are more and more worth investigating. As the literature review demonstrates (Chapter I), these spaces yield important clues and options that could address current urban issues. They are important pieces of the urban fabric and seem to fulfill roles that few other urban spaces can. Nevertheless, most are disappearing and few are given the opportunity to excel in their specific role. Accurate solutions and ideas can only be found through careful investigation of these spaces, with a special focus on their users. In addition to their societal relevance, the complexity and richness of these spaces offer great potential for more in-depth and innovative research. Urban geography has seen a rise in attempts to capture and analyse people's experiences and emotions of urban spaces (Hubbard, 2005; Smith, Davidson, & Henderson, 2012). These attempts have been grouped under the so-called 'emotional geographies'. Wood and Smith (2004) define emotional geographies as "the spatiality of the feelings around being and doing (in) the world" (p. 534). Feelings and emotions are key to understanding "how lives are lived, histories experienced, geographies made and futures shaped" (Wood and Smith, 2004, p. 533; Anderson and Smith, 2001; Hubbard, 2005; Davidson and Milligan, 2007; Smith, Davidson & Henderson, 2012). Although the field of emotional and experience geography is starting to be well-developed by now, much controversy stays in how to do it best. The main issues concern how to collect these emotions and experiences and what to do with them, once collected (Anderson & Smith, 2001). This thesis attempts to be an example on how emotions and experiences can be used to add to our understanding of a particular space.

This topic of derelict industrial spaces is of special interest to me for several reasons. First of all, as a Walloon, I have seen these places for as long as I remember and I have always been fascinated by them. This fascination comes from the many games and adventures that could be lived there, as wild spaces in a quite monotonous urban landscape, as well as for the danger they evoked with their old, majestic buildings and all the stories that were told. As I grew older, I saw beauty in the architecture and the nature surrounding it and today, as an urban geography student, the seemingly endless opportunities and possibilities they evoke has sparkled my interest. Although some of their physical features may seem timeless and unchanging for those who have seen them their entire life, these spaces have shifting identities and nothing about them is static or fixed. I hope to convey this feeling throughout the present thesis.

The central research question of this thesis is:
Although this space is officially unused, empty, and restricted, what, if any, are the present uses of the former coal mining site of Hasard (Micheroux-Retinne) and what does the site represent, if anything, to the main actors in terms of experiences and emotions as framed within the site's past history and surrounding official/institutional discourse?

In order to structure and ensure that the entirety of the research question is addressed in this paper, the main research question is divided into five sub-questions. If these sub-questions are answered, then it will be possible to answer the central research question. These sub-questions are:
a. Who are the major actors involved in these sites?
b. What is the former coal mining site used for today and what about it is specific to the site?
c. What experiences and emotions do the main actors have of this former industrial site?
d. What is the Hasard's past history?
e. What is the official/institutional discourse regarding the site?

Before moving into the rest of the thesis, it is useful and necessary to clarify some terms and expressions. The terms "main actors" do not refer only to those who have the power to decide on the future of the site or use it but rather to all the actors who have a strong implication in the daily and future state of the site. This includes the illegal users, the residents living in the middle of it, and the institutional and legal actors. Therefore, when designing the methodology, three interview groups were chosen, namely the users, the residents, and the institutional actors (see Chapter II for more details on the methodology). Different visions, uses, and experiences may create tension between actors in their actions and discourse. The question of ownership status—or lack thereof—as will be shown later in Chapters I and IV, is also crucial in understanding how the site is used.

It is also important to define what is meant by 'derelict industrial sites.' Derelict industrial sites are a specific type of urban wastelands. According to Kanvasinou (2006), an urban wasteland is "a place in the city that is empty and unoccupied, vague or uncertain, imprecise or unbounded" (p. 255). Derelict industrial sites that are located in urban or semi-urban environments follow this definition. Their specificity, namely that they were once used for industrial purposes, only adds upon this basic definition. Kamvasinou (2006) adds that such places "exist within the physical context of the city yet 'outside the city's effective circuits and productivity structures" (p. 255).

Interestingly, derelict industrial sites 'count' as green spaces if they are covered with vegetation, despite their industrial characteristics and past (Groth and Corijn, 2005).

The research question and sub-questions include the terms 'uses,' 'experiences,' and 'emotions.' These terms are difficult to fully define but this is necessary for the rest of the thesis. Here, 'uses' refer to the specific activities that are carried out on site. For example, going on site for a picnic or to dump trash are considered as 'uses' of the space. Defining 'experiences' is a little trickier. Here, 'experiences' refer to the feelings, emotions and meanings the spaces evoke to the residents and users (Hull et al., 1994). 'Emotions,' while extremely difficult to grasp by the researcher, are crucial. Emotions are not at the same level as experiences. They are different from experiences but experiences are made of emotions. It is therefore a necessary step to investigate emotions if one desires to collect experiences. As Davidson and Milligan (2007) state "emotions *matter*…They have tangible effects on our surroundings and can shape the very nature and experience of our being in the world" (p. 524). Hubbard (2005) defines them as "effects of transactions between people, places and things" (p.132). They play an active role in shaping experiences of space (Smith, Davidson & Henderson, 2012). In concrete terms, actors may refer to, for example, experiencing the space as dangerous, or dirty, or as a reminder of the lives of their parents as miners and the place might bring them strong emotions of fear or nostalgia. This category is much more subjective than 'uses' and allows for more interpretation. Although they are strongly connected, and even complementary, uses, emotions, and experiences are not merged concepts and can be rather distinct from each other (Augé, 1994).

Last but not least, the phrase "as framed within the site's past history and surrounding official/institutional discourse" requires clarifications. The official, or institutional, discourse refers to the perceptions, ideas, visions, and representations of the actors who are most powerful, and/or active, in shaping and influencing the management and future of the site. Although there are most probably differences in opinions and representations within this very group, it is useful to investigate it as a whole in order to situate the full context in which uses take place.

It will, in addition, bring answers, or beginnings of explanations, to the origins of some of the experiences and emotions of users and residents. Exploring the site's past history serves a similar motive; that is, to situate and contextualise user actions and responses on and to the site investigated (Low, 2000). The aim is not to literally "compare" institutional visions and user feelings but to use the knowledge of the institutional context to better understand what is happening on site. As Henri Lefebvre has shown with his dialectical spatial triad, different representations of space and spaces of representations are not separate, complete opposites but rather, they form, together, a *layered* space with multiple interpretations and interactions, often overlapping and sometimes conflicting (Lefebvre, 1991; Leary, 2009).

The coal mining site used for this research is located in a semi-urban setting where the boundaries between urban centre, countryside, and suburbs are blurred and form an 'in-between space" (Young & Keil, 2010). Such in-between spaces are more chaotic and unregulated than well-thought urban or suburban spaces. As a result, they are well-suited for the emergence of diverse activities by a varied population (Young & Keil, 2010).

This thesis is divided into four chapters, followed by a conclusion. The first chapter concerns the theories, perspectives, and literature on which the rest of the thesis is based. The second chapter outlines the methodology and methods used. The third chapter gives an overview of the historical development of the area, and the site in particular, as well as the general and current context in which the site is located. The fourth chapter discusses the results of the data collection and research as well as their analysis. The final concluding chapter draws from the four previous chapters in order to answer the central research question.

## Chapter I: Literature Review

Introduction

In this literature review, my aim is to explore space, and particularly the former Hasard industrial site, using a two-scaled relational perspective. These scales, when connected together, provide a strong theoretical overview of the issues concerning the site under investigation. First, on the level of individuals and their interactions; second, on the level of the space itself. The second level, that of the space taken as relational and connected, encompasses the first level but casts upon it a wider overview.

The first level, focused on individuals and their interaction(s) with one another and with the space, explores the central issues of uses, emotions, and experiences, which, together, create different 'imagined' geographies for each person coming across the site. The literature and theories investigated in the first part of this literature review are more general. They are less concerned with the specifics of the site investigated but rather offer a strong theoretical background on uses, emotions, and experiences of spaces by people.

The second, more contextual, perspective considers the space as a whole in itself and relational, where meanings and interactions are context-dependent, and pinpoints analytical propositions taken from the literature reviewed that are relevant to the site investigated in this thesis (Harvey, 2006). By analytical propositions is meant the interpretations and proposals put forward by scholars and researchers who investigated areas and spaces similar to the present case study.

The five analytical propositions that struck out are free space and ownership, perceived emptiness, nature needs, place identity, and tensions. They were chosen after careful examination of the available literature because of their grounded interpretations of similar spaces and their potential to understand and analyse the uses, experiences, and emotions collected on the field of the former Colliery. When searching for literature relevant to my thesis, I tried to keep in mind the general characteristics of the Hasard site. I had noticed from my exploratory observation (see Chapter V) that it was located in a semi-urban environment, that it was a 'wasteland', that it had many different users, and that it was very green. It is based on these features that I looked for available literature. While there was no existing literature on the specific topic of the uses and experiences of former coal mining sites, the literature on public spaces, urban wastelands, emotional geography, and greenspaces provides a well-rounded perspective on the subject. The theories and concepts that emerged from these areas of research are highly applicable— with some contextual considerations—to my own investigation. It is important to note that these analytical propositions are not completely separated from each other; on the contrary, they are intimately connected and interrelated and in order to fully understand one, the others must be taken into account as well. In addition to being developed using the existing literature, each analytical proposition is linked to the main issue of uses, emotions, and experiences and the site itself. As a result, the literature presented in the second part of this review is more contextual.

I specifically chose to approach the issue of green former industrial sites and, if they interact, the associated uses, emotions, and experiences from two different levels on the relational scale, one focused on individuals interacting and one understanding space as a

structured whole (which includes interactions). These two levels are more than complementary as interactions are a large part of a contextualised space. Taken together, they offer full and rounded theoretical background and tools when articulated together. Indeed, these two standpoints, when brought together, allow for a deeper understanding of the issues governing the former Hasard Colliery and exemplify the relational quality of the space. .

Part I: Uses, Emotions, and Experiences of Space

1. Uses and Experiences

In the introduction of this thesis, it is stated that the term 'uses' refers to any activities carried out on the former site of the Hasard Colliery, such as trash dumping, cycling, interacting with others, playing and the like. Users, then, are those who interact with and within the space. Uses of spaces by specific groups of people, and in specific contexts, have been widely investigated in the literature. Studies on uses of space range from homeless women's use of public space in England, the restriction of space use by young people through curfews and other discriminatory practices, to smoking bans in outdoor public spaces (Casey, Goudie, & Reeve, 2007; Malone, 2002; Colgrove, Bayer, & Bachynski, 2011).
        Casey, Goudie and Reeve (2007), in their study of how homeless women use public spaces in England, argue that these women invest public spaces as a way of resistance. It is a resistance to their shifting identities as homeless and a resistance to the existing restrictions on their use of such spaces. For example, if they 'look' homeless they are not allowed to enter or use some spaces. Similarly, the young people researched by Malone (2002) are discriminated from using certain spaces—public or semi-private— based on their status within their society. For example, curfews are set and the move-on policy is applied among other actions; and regulation, surveillance, and exclusion increase (Malone, 2002). In another research, Morrow (2001) investigated how children regard their environment in an English setting. She found that children's views of their neighbourhood was greatly influenced by what they felt they were allowed to do and what was not permitted by adults—such as 'no ball games' signs and the like. Colgrove, Bayer and Bachynski (2011) question smoking bans in public spaces as effective methods to discourage smoking. They argue that, despite it being necessary to reduce smoker numbers, imposing smoking bans on outdoor public spaces, such as parks, raises ethical and pragmatic issues that relate more to individual freedoms and fairness than to simply improving population health, raising "questions about the acceptable limits for government to impose on conduct" as "smokers may soon have nowhere left to hide" (Colgrove et al., 2011, p. 2377).
        As is shown in the second part of this chapter, restrictions on who can use which space and when are a widespread phenomena in many contemporary cities, and not just on issues concerning more 'marginal' segments of the population. A possible answer to this problem is the presence of spaces that are less controlled and that allow for more indeterminate and spontaneous uses and exchanges (see Part II for more details) (Low, 2000; Young, Diep & Drabble, 2006).

In light of this review, uses are intimately connected to experiences (Elsley, 2004; Morrow, 2001). Indeed, any user of any space has a certain amount of constraints to deal with, with great variations depending on the specific context or status within society. Such constraints, or possibly encouragement to certain uses, affect one's perception and experience of the space as well as of themselves—such as in the case of homeless women experiencing public spaces as reinforcing their homeless status.

As stated in the introduction, 'experiences' can be described as the feelings, emotions and meanings the spaces evoke to the stakeholders (Hull et al., 1994). Experiences are therefore different from emotions, where emotions are part of, and can participate in shaping, an experience (Smith, Davidson & Henderson, 2012). When trying to understand such a tricky term, it is very helpful to look at Edward Bruner's (1986) "Experience and its expressions" in *The Anthropology of Experience*. In this article, Bruner (1986) identifies a key problematic in the study of experiences, namely that one can only experience one's own life. In addition, experiences reach us through words but also as feelings and images (Bruner, 1986). This makes it complicated to fully articulate our experiences to others or even know them completely ourselves. As every telling of an experience is arbitrary and has a temporal dimension, there is a tension arising from the unavoidable gaps between experience, expression, and reality (Bruner, 1986). However, according to Bruner, this is not the only problem. Indeed, he writes that, when conducting research, "the difficulty…is not in the fieldwork experience but in our conceptual apparatus for interpreting the field data, which tends to filter out experience" (Bruner, 1986, p. 9). This was reiterated by Wood and Smith (2004) who stated that emotions and experiences are more than often put aside when conducting research. Here, it is important to note that experiences are not the equivalent of behaviour; experience is, unlike behaviour, self-referential when communicated and includes "not only actions and feelings but also reflections about those actions and feelings" (Bruner, 1986, p. 5). 'Reflection' is central in the case of experiences. Experiences can only be relived or retold: they are always interpretive, only captured through narratives by the users experiencing the spaces and telling others about it (Bruner, 1986).

Often, scholars researching and theorising on experiences refer to the whole process in which experiences take place as a narrative or a performance (Sennett, 1990; Bruner, 1986; Simpson, 2000). But, as Bruner (1986) notes: "we know that participants in a performance do not necessarily share a common experience or meaning; what they share is only their common participation" (p. 11). Hence the creation of multiple, and often different, imagined and emotional geographies, in relation to one's individual uses and experiences. This can be especially interesting for the particular focus of this thesis. When interviewing the participants on their emotions and experiences of and on the space, different emotional geographies may come to light according to the type of person or the activities they carry on site.

2. Emotional Geographies

Urban geography has seen a rise in attempts to capture and analyse people's experiences and emotions of urban spaces (Hubbard, 2005; Smith, Davidson, & Henderson, 2012). These attempts have been grouped under the so-called 'emotional geographies,' meaning

"the spatiality of the feelings around being and doing (in) the world" (Wood & Smith, 2004, p. 534). These emotional geographies are 'imagined' differently depending on the person, their experiences, and many other individual factors. Nevertheless, space, as in physical environments and spatial features, as well as uses of space play an important role in the construction of these emotional geographies and vice versa (Davidson & Milligan, 2007). Today, the field of emotional geographies is well-developed and quite diverse although there is still much controversy on how to collect emotions and experiences and what to do with them once collected (Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999; Anderson & Smith, 2001; Wood & Smith, 2004). It is a conceptual and methodological challenge and different approaches have been devised on how to tackle the issue of emotions and space (Anderson & Smith, 2001). Some scholars are researching and experimenting with new ways of knowing since language—the traditional tool to communicate emotions and experiences—has its limitations (Wood & Smith, 2004). New ways of collecting these emotions include photography, dancing, music, gestures, and other bodily expressions. Other researchers attempt to *measure* emotions (Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999; Nold, 2009). According to Cacioppo and Gardner (1999), the different processes in emotion are more and more possible to track and understand using an interdisciplinary approach and emotion is actually "a short label for a very broad category of experiential, behavioural, sociodevelopmental, and biological phenomena" (Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999, p. 194). On the same line, Christian Nold has come up with a small device capable of recording people's emotions as they walk through a city or neighbourhood (Nold, 2009). He refers to this mapping of emotions as 'bio mapping.' The device he has created

> is a portable and wearable tool recording data from two technologies:
> a simple biometric sensor measuring Galvanic Skin Response and a
> Global Positioning System (GPS). The bio-sensor, which is based on
> a lie-detector, measures changes in the sweat level of the wearers'
> fingers. The assumption is that these changes are an indication of
> 'emotional' intensity (Nold, 2009, p. 3).

In other words, Nold (2009) believes he has found a way to record first hand emotions as people experience the world around them.

Despite this interesting development, there is much controversy on how easy and straightforward emotion mapping and understanding is, especially when considering that emotions are socially constructed, an intense political issue, and very much gendered (Anderson & Smith, 2001). For example, the data produced by so-called 'scientific' devices is always interpreted within a specific paradigm or social context (Chalmers, 2009). When analysing the data collected during fieldwork, I shall keep these theoretical considerations in mind; especially remembering that success in collecting emotions and experiences does not reside in scientific exactitude—which, as stressed by Smith, Davidson, and Henderson (2004) is impossible—but rather in being conscious of one's bias and expectations.

The collecting and studying of emotions is also contravened by our constant need to rationalise everything we do and research; indeed, we live in "a modern society that holds that everything, and especially everything in nature, *should* and *can* be subject to reflective human control" (Smith, Davidson, & Henderson, 2004, p. 70). This is an

extremely interesting notion for me personally. It reminds me that situations or statements that seem straightforward or 'common sense' at first might actually be anthropocentric bias. An example in which this could be relevant for this thesis is when participants say that 'something must be done with this place.'

This section focused on the interaction aspect happening on site and explored concepts such as uses, experiences, and emotions. The section that follows, Part II, is more contextual. Although interactions are extremely important in understanding a space, it is not enough. Spaces are more than just a network of interactions, emotions, experiences, and feelings; they are also grounded in a specific context with particular physical attributes, institutional constraints, legal status, a history, surrounding urban and geopolitical situation, and other diverse societal and environmental pressures, needs, and customs. When brought together, interaction and context supplement each other and allow for a deeper understanding of the 'relationality' of a space or place. The section below brings forward the second part of this tandem, the context, highlighting recurrent analytical issues and propositions offered by scholars investigating similar spaces. In other words, after reading literature relevant to the topic of this thesis, I identified five recurring answers scholars gave to the problems/issues facing officially unused green spaces. These five 'answers' are therefore analytical propositions put forward by others and that I intend on trying on the findings of my own fieldwork, hoping that they will contribute to the analysis and understanding of the data.

Part II: Contextual Theories and Analytical Propositions

1. Free Space and Ownership

It seems, when reading the literature and observing cities around oneself, that today's contemporary cities, or Post-Fordist cities, often experience problems with designing and maintaining successful public spaces where everyone can interact and be without any discrimination (Young, Diep, and Drabble, 2006; Groth and Corijn, 2005; Low, 2000). Setha Low (2000) writes that

> By reconsidering a designed public space as a commodity, its planning, design, construction, or refurbishing takes on new economic meaning. A public space that is valued ostensibly as a place for people to sit, read, and gather becomes a way to maintain real estate values, a financial strategy for revitalising a declining city centre, and a means of attracting new investments and venture capital. (Low, 2000, p. 180)

But, as Jane Jacobs often stressed in her books, spaces for public relationships and exchanges are crucial for the livelihood of cities (Jacobs, 1961). When viable and diverse public spaces are missing, "indeterminate spaces," such as empty plots of land, abandoned buildings, and even random greenspaces, can fill in and act as lively and free public spaces by being appropriated or re-appropriated temporarily by a group of people or a community (Kamvasinou, 2006; Groth and Corijn, 2005, p. 503). As is the case

investigated in this thesis, these indeterminate spaces are characterised by being "left out of time and place due to rampant deindustrialisation processes and the shrinking city" and their status is "unclear and undetermined" (Groth and Corijn, 2005, p. 503).

Ownership status of the site can play an important role in contributing to the types and forms of uses and how people experience it. Indeed, when a site has an ambiguous status, few truly know who it belongs to and what the future of it will be. This ambiguity contributes to the mystery of the place and allows for uncontrolled uses. However, nothing has been found in the literature around the issue of ownership vagueness in abandoned or public spaces. On the contrary, many authors stress the continued and increased control and surveillance of such spaces, often leading to the surrender of illegal or unwanted users (Low, 2000; Groth and Corijn, 2005). The case investigated in this thesis seems, in these terms, quite different from those described in the literature, as there is no, or very little, obvious control or security measures deployed on site. However, as attested by the picture below, there seems to be a vague—and failed—attempt at restricting uses of the space (Figure 1).

The status of these spaces offers opportunities for something spontaneous and collective to emerge and flourish (Groth and Corijn, 2005).

**Figure 1: Example of an attempt to control uses**



Source: Author's

An important question to ask one's self is why would indeterminate or unused spaces ever be needed to fill in for official public spaces? According to Kamvasinou (2006), urban public spaces are heavily commercialised and controlled. This reduces the potential activities that are allowed to take place in these spaces (Low, 2000). It also excludes individuals or groups of people whom do not fit in the planned vision for the space—such as, for example, when homeless people are excluded from streets neighbouring retail centres as they might "scare off" the consumer (Young, Diep, and Drabble, 2006; Groth

and Corijn, 2005; Lieshout, 2001). Recent economic demise and an increase in competition among cities to attract mobile capital have led cities to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to their development, planning, and rehabilitation (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Young, Diep, and Drabble, 2006; Leitner and Garner, 1993; Macleod, 2002; Wilson and Wouters, 2003). This often means a consumerist approach to city planning, where retail and other commercial ventures are at the centre of policies and therefore flourish to attract those with spending power. Public spaces are commodified, and with that commodification, the diversity and capacity of these spaces to accommodate social reproduction and exchange becomes limited (Low, 2000). There are, of course, different degrees of tightness when it comes to public spaces, and it should be noted that every public space has its own degree of looseness (Franck and Stevens, 2007). Jane Jacobs (1961), in her book *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, argues that cities are in need for spaces where people can interact away from the private sphere but that too much control and a tendency for bad designs from city planners and officials is killing public spaces and as a result, harming the liveability of cities. Even the so-called greenspaces in cities—which includes any 'green' urban area—are designed to be clean and orderly and the needs and requests of the urban inhabitants are not taken sufficiently into account (Pauleit, 2003). As a result, there is a need for "free zones" or spaces, where opportunities are provided for "new, transitional re-appropriations that are assumed by civil or 'informal' actors coming from outside the official, institutionalised domain of urban planning and urban politics" (Groth and Corijn, 2005, p. 506). Because abandoned and unused spaces "exist within the physical context of the city yet 'outside the city's effective circuits and productivity structures,'" they have no fixed identity or function and can be used by anyone or any group for any sort of activity, ranging from the temporal to the more permanent (Kamvasinou, 2006, p. 255; De Solà-Morales, 1995 quoted in Kamvasinou, 2006). Their involvement with and within the space is not regulated and does not have to be along the lines of commercialisation.

Any urban space that is reasonably easy to access can be re-appropriated and serve as an alternative 'public' space for "indeterminate and collective occupation" (Kamvasinou, 2006, p. 261). The 'indeterminate' aspect of such spaces opens the way for a wide range of emotions and experiences. In our western society, keeping one's emotions in check is important as rationality and objectivity are perceived as extremely precious qualities, unlike the display of strong emotions (Anderson & Smith, 2001). Based on this, it is my understanding that the hidden and empty (see next analytical proposition) feel of such informal free spaces may allow for suppressed feelings and emotions to be expressed freely. I expect that, in the case of the Hasard site, they may literally act as an escape from everyday life and its strict codification. For example, when feeling unseen, people could scream, run, or dance on the site.

In the more extreme cases of city entrepreneurialism, mono-functional planning, and exclusion of the marginal, these free, unregulated—and often green—spaces are crucial and can contribute to the solving of many urban problems inadequately tackled by current urban policies (Matsuoka and Kaplan, 2008; Groth and Corijn, 2005). People can use these spaces to fulfill their needs that cannot be answered by other, more official, spaces.

In addition to being unregulated spaces that serve as alternative public spaces, unused spaces and other greenspaces are also a source of diversity in the city (Jacobs, 1961). My understanding of these unusual public spaces, based on the literature reviewed in this section, is that they allow urban dwellers to carry out activities, projects, and collective endeavours in ways which traditional public spaces do not. Diversity here refers to heterogeneity in the range of users but also in terms of activities undertaken and physical characteristics (Jacobs, 1961). By being accessible by all, the 'free' spaces are socially more sustainable and open the horizon of opportunities and potentialities (Groth and Corijn, 2005). Indeed, because they have no inherent function or 'goal', they can be anything. The diversity available and sustained through these spaces is closely connected with their unregulated and un-commodified status (as was discussed in the previous section). This diversity, although valuable in itself, is also extremely useful to generate tools, by bringing different people to interact with one another, which will renew and bring solutions to problems in cities, such as spatial segregation, death of the public space, and other socio-economic issues (Sennett, 1977; Jacobs, 1961; Groth and Corijn, 2005; Kamvasinou, 2006; Low, 2000). The question is whether the Hasard acts as a free, public and diverse space as expressed in the literature.

2. Perceived Emptiness

Indeterminate, abandoned, or unused spaces are often perceived as empty by the city, local authorities, and planners. Because these spaces do not have a specific function or purpose (often in terms of economic gain), they are the target of urban renewal policies and other regeneration projects (Rérat, Söderström, Piguet and Besson, 2010; Cahantimur, Öztürk and Öztürk, 2010). In other words, they "are often the focus of architecture's and urban design's desire for productivity, control and order" (Kamvasinou, 2006, p. 255). It is part of the policies of the entrepreneurial city to give the image of a clean, rich, and attractive urban space and atmosphere (Rérat et al., 2010). Free spaces are seen as both a stain on the general harmony of the city and a 'mine of gold' as land is expensive and scarce, especially in urban centres. According to Groth and Corijn (2005), the loss of these free spaces to entrepreneurial projects is a problem because of the current trend among cities to "homogenise space on consumerist and aestheticised grounds," which increases cultural and social exclusion (p. 505). The urban derelict plots and buildings are one of the last grounds on which collective and innovative grass root activities and solutions can come to light, fostering the diversity and viability of cities (Pauleit, 2003; Kamvasinou, 2006; Jacobs, 1961; Jenks, 2008). Though they seem empty to outsiders and officials, they actually often host a vast array of uses and can become central elements to communities, or groups. Often such uses create a bond between the people and the space and it can be difficult for local authorities and other property developers to implement successful projects on these derelict spaces (Groth & Corijn, 2005; Pierlot, 2012). Applying the literature to the case of the Hasard Colliery, it seems that such a bond between people and a specific space may be even stronger when adults have spent their childhood using the space for games, discovery, and adventure (Hull et al., 1994). If such people are using and/or living on the Hasard site, I expect that, by being in daily contact with it, they would have developed meaning and emotions towards the site and may consequently resist 're-purposification' of these 'empty' spaces.

Such long-term uses incorporate the space within people's personal histories and what seems empty to some is a world of memories and experiences to others.

3. Nature Needs

Nature that has been left alone for a long time is scarce in urban environments. The few places in cities where it still can be found, such as wastelands, are often under pressure by growing urbanisation and lack of urban space despite the often rich biodiversity that they maintain (Kattwinkel, Bierdermann, & Kleyer, 2011). Natural landscapes, especially in cities, have been found to serve many uses, such as teaching children about nature, and bring added health benefits to urban dwellers (Fjørtoft & Sageie, 2000; Bowler, Buyung-Ali, Knight, & Pullin, 2010). In their article "People's needs in the urban landscape: Analysis of *Landscape and Urban Planning* contributions," Matsuoka and Kaplan (2008) analyses 16 articles collected on the theme of how people interact with their environments in urban contexts. They identified two main groups of themes under which all the articles fell. The first group is 'nature needs' and will be discussed here. The second group is called 'human interaction' and will be discussed in the next section. The group of nature needs identified by the authors includes contact with nature, aesthetic preference, and recreation and play (Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008). They found that the desire of people to be in contact with nature, and having a green environment, was equally strong throughout the articles, which were very internationally distributed. Worldwide, urban dwellers valued attractive green environments and enough space and places to spend time and play (Damigos & Kaliampakos, 2003; Gobster, 1995). The universality of a need for nature is extremely interesting. Indeed, it offers a clear guideline for planners as they design new neighbourhoods or urban recreation areas. They also mention that unused or abandoned land covered with plants, trees, and other vegetations counted for the urban inhabitants as contact with nature. Although they identified unvarying desire for a large amount of natural features in cities, they noticed that "people of different ages, gender, and socio-economic status can differ greatly in how they use and perceive both built and more natural urban landscapes" (Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008, p. 14). The findings of this analysis will be very useful for this particular thesis as they stress the universal demands of urban citizens for more 'nature' in their environments but also in their connection with derelict lands, participation in design, and the different uses and experiences of natural and build features. Urban environments are often planned to the point that little 'original' nature is left. 'Empty' spaces, such as derelict industrial sites, can be used by urban residents to carry out some activities. Potential experiences by users could range from experiencing nature and wildlife to some special moments and events that happened on site—a romantic date or an afternoon with family, for example.

However, it is interesting to wonder if such as nature need does not go even further. What is 'nature' for users? In addition to the straightforward answer of 'greenery' such as trees, and birds, and grass, 'nature' might mean something more complex. Is it only controlled and maintained greenery (as is usually found in urban areas) or is it also a desire for something wild where people can let loose *their* nature? In such wild spaces, usual norms that govern society do not apply. There is no control, security, or surveillance. It is appealing and freeing to be somewhere where doing whatever one

desires is possible. And indeterminate, empty green spaces, especially the one investigated in this thesis, are perfect opportunities to let go. One can then scream, run, play, love, drive, destroy and enjoy without any consequences.

4. Place Identity

Often, urban wastelands and other unused or derelict city spaces contain some remains of past activities (Koch, 2006). Due to their urban locations, it is quite rare to encounter such spaces that have been left intact from any human interference. In fact, these spaces often carry with them a long history and the infrastructure—such as fences, walls, buildings, ruins and the like—as well as the general appearance of these spaces—including the type of vegetation, or its absence—are there to demonstrate it. For example, after the closing of Belgian coal and steel industries, cities decided to plant many trees, especially on the slag heaps, creating mini-forests in otherwise urban environments (Haagen, 1982). In the case of old coal mining sites in Belgium, slag heaps can be the most striking landscape feature, especially in semi-urban environments where buildings are quite low. The Hasard site, with its high altitude for the region and tall slagheap, is an especially salient example. Special landscape features as well as other urban icons—such as specific buildings—contribute to place identity by giving a sense of place and community (Hull et al., 1994; Low, 2000). Here, place identity is understood as the "contribution of place attributes to one's self-identity" (p. 109). According to Hull et al. (1994), urban symbols, or icons, can be categorised into six different headings. There are those that connect residents with their past; those that symbolise the groups inhabitants identify with or belong to; those that give a unique character to the community; those that fulfill necessary functions; those that bring back memories and emotions; and lastly, those that remind of personal concerns and achievements.

The symbols, or urban icons, identified by Hull et al. (1994), are given meaning through time. Special events, and continuous "association with group or community activities, attach meaning to these places, which then become symbols. In turn, memories and association with the environment—or specific parts of the environment—give the people a sense of place (Hull et al., 1994). In other words, urban icons help bind people to a specific space, whether it is their street, neighbourhood, or entire city. In the case of the Hasard site, the fieldwork will discover whether its features and history created special bonds with the main actors.

In addition to binding people to places, icons also encourage people to bind with each other. This means that the presence of urban symbols promotes a sense of community among those to whom they evoke something (Jenks, 2008; Hull et al., 1994). According to Jenks (2008), these places, by giving a template or a structure to the past, inform the present-day community of who they are. If there is no community left, they can only be reminders of what used to be, or help create and legitimise something to be. They are opportunities for self-reflection and, not unlike Nora's (1989) "lieux de mémoire[1]," say something to the community about its identity. The idea behind is that by confronting their past, individuals and groups learn something about their present (Jenks, 2008). Based on this, it is possible that the former Hasard Colliery, through its site, acts

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[1] Translates as "places of memory"

as a 'lieu de mémoire.' Derelict urban land, in some cases, can be such an example of urban symbols. In fact, as Kamvasinou (2006) aptly puts it abandoned spaces contain different "layers of memory of previous activities" and events (p. 257). Users come in contact with these 'layers' every time they are on site, creating additional and stronger emotions and experiences.

In the section on nature needs, the article by Matsuoka and Kaplan (2008) was mentioned. Through careful analysis, the authors identified two main themes that were quite the universal requirements for urban dwellers. These were 'nature needs', which has already been covered above, and the 'human-interaction' group. What was quite striking about this latter group was the finding that social interactions, privacy, citizen participation in decision-making, and a community sense were all extremely important to all the participants of the investigated articles (Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008). These features, especially social interaction and a sense of community, are fostered and reinforced by the presence of urban icons and symbols. The authors even mention that the loss of community identity, in many cities and neighbourhoods, results from several causes, including the way physical space is designed (Matsuoka & Kaplan, 2008). Citizen participation in planning decisions can also benefit from urban symbols and resulting place identity. According to Hull et al. (1994), existing or potential place identity should be exploited by planners and architects as it will motivate people to invest themselves in their physical and social communities. Place identity and current and potential activities are interwoven and mutually influential. If place identity is found to be strong on the Hasard site, this could lead to further research in order to establish which physical characteristics of the site encourage and ground citizen participation and satisfaction with their living environment.

Due to their—potential—quality as meaningful icons for the physical and social communities surrounding them (both at the neighbourhood and city level), former coal mining sites are often far from being the "non-lieux[2]" described by Marc Augé (1994). At first glance, it may seem that unused, abandoned, mostly empty and purpose-less spaces in urban centres are 'non-places.' Augé (1994) defines these non-places as creating a contract with the individual rather than creating 'the social' (i.e. fostering exchange and interaction among people). He also stresses the importance mostly institutional text invasion, where something is communicated—often in authoritative terms and sentence structure—to the passer-by (such as 'do not trespass'). 'Non-lieux' or non-places are spaces that cannot be defined as relational, historical, or 'identitaires[3]' (Augé, 1994). Augé (1994) writes that these non-places are the product of a 'surmodernité[4]' that focuses on movement and individualisation. Whether urban wastelands or derelict sites are non-places strongly depends on the specific situation. By their nature, most of them hold characteristics relevant to non-places but, as was shown earlier, they can also be complex, relational entities, embedded in the history and identity of their communities (Kamvasinou, 2006; Hull et al., 1994; Groth and Corijn, 2005). Whether they are non-places for some and not others depends on each person's activities on site and their experience of the space. The meaning and emotions of the place can vary according to

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[2] Translates as "non-places"
[3] Translates as 'which affects/involves identity'
[4] Translates as 'over-modernity'

uses. It can also be that some parts of the Hasard site, at some specific times, become non-places or, alternatively, worlds of meanings and interactions.

In terms of uses and experiences by inhabitants, the presence of place identity and urban symbols is of great influence. By finding emotion and associations with these spaces, people will have a special connection, whether positive or negative, which will impact and shape their experiences of them and of others using them. These spaces or, maybe more accurately, places will mean something. Given meaning and value often leads personal and collective investment by the community, in terms of uses but also in terms of opinions and interests (Groth and Corijn, 2005; Hull et al., 1994). Depending on the context, meaning, emotions, and associations may or may not be present, or strong enough to encourage personal/collective investment. Either way, whether there is a sense of place identity or not around abandoned spaces, this will have a notable influence on uses and experiences and vice versa.

5. Tensions

The aim of this thesis is to frame the actions and experiences of stakeholders within the current official discourse. However, it would be a mistake to omit tensions. As was mentioned in the sections concerning the free spaces and their perceived emptiness, derelict land offers countless opportunities and potential uses. The space is of value to many—although in varying ways—and different stakeholders have different visions for it. Often, on the one hand, there are the planners, city officials, and owners who strive for order, attractiveness, and economic gain and, on the other hand, there are the collectivities, or individuals, looking for open spaces where they can carry out activities and exchanges (Groth & Corijn, 2005; Low, 2000). However, there are ways in which different interests can have a say in the planning of the future of these spaces. Matsuoka and Kaplan (2008), for example, stress the importance of locals participating in the decision-making process so that the result respects local history, beliefs, and demands. Pauleit (2003) goes even further and suggests that in addition to including local people in the decision-making process, these spaces—especially the greenspaces—should not be seen as isolated plots of land or areas but should be considered as networks that interact with each other and the rest of the urban environment. Young and Keil (2010) argue that a balance should be found and that the local authorities, the public, and the private sector should be involved in the planning process. Nevertheless, as was shown in the article by Groth and Corijn (2005)—on citizens trying to influence the urban agenda by temporarily occupying and 'lobbying' derelict spaces—it is generally the case that those who have a final say in the uses and functions of these spaces are the owners and the city authorities. Knowing this might explain some of the responses obtained from all the actors interviewed.

As shown, tensions among stakeholders are difficult to avoid because of differing interests. However, there is also another form of tension present in some of these spaces, in relation to the often ambiguous status of the space. Due to their abandoned status, these spaces often do not display very clear signs of ownership or maintenance. This makes it hard to clearly know who they belong to and what that person, or persons, plan to do with it. It is this very uncertainty that allows multiple and diverse activities to happen but it

also creates a form of fear and tension. For example, residents may be worried about the future—will they build housing; will they make a park, a highway, or maybe factories? Rumours might spread and misunderstandings may arise. Not knowing what the future, and such an immediate future too, will bring can give rise to high levels of stress and tension and deteriorate the quality of life within these spaces' surroundings (empty neighbourhoods, people selling out etc).

Conclusion

This literature review was structured into two parts, each featuring the relational perspective on two different levels to the topic of green derelict industrial spaces. The first part had a focus on individuals and their interactions and considered the three main concepts of this thesis, namely uses, experiences, and emotions. The second part was more contextual and contained an overview of five selected analytical propositions identified in the relevant literature. These are contextual theories and interpretations given by researchers who studied similar spaces to the one investigated here. These were chosen because they are relevant to the specifics of the case study and offer beginnings of explanations or interpretations for the design of the methodology and for the analysis of the data collected during fieldwork (see Chapter II for more details). Once all the data from the fieldwork is collected, these five analytical propositions will be kept in mind during analysis.

While the literature strongly suggests that derelict urban spaces—with emphasis on the green type—are crucial to the well-functioning of contemporary cities—especially those following an aggressive entrepreneurial approach or suffering from deindustrialisation—it seems that the current policies of cities continue to view these spaces as empty and a waste of land that must be put to use. Although these spaces answer the demands of a need for nature, give a sense of place, support place identity through symbols and experiences, improve sense of community, and act as 'truly public' spaces for users, city planners and officials seem to pay little attention to their importance in their current state. As a result, there are often tensions and even conflict when the different parties, with different levels of power in the decision-making process, try to pursue their interests and visions. It is in this context, and within this theoretical framework, that the site of the former Hasard Colliery of Micheroux is dissected in this thesis to reveal its history, who its users are, what they pursue there, what it means to them, and what the institutional discourse surrounding the site is. The next chapter outlines the methods and methodology of this thesis. The different means of data collection will integrate what has been reviewed in this chapter. Indeed, the interview forms (in Appendix) are based on uses, emotions, and experiences in relation to the Hasard site. The five analytical propositions, presented in Part II of this chapter, will come back when the results of the data collection are presented and analysed in Chapter V.

**Chapter II: Methodology**

The methodology and methods used for answering the four research sub-questions and ultimately the main research question are of qualitative nature. The data comes from secondary sources such as journal articles, academic books, newspaper articles, and from my own fieldwork. The fieldwork is especially relevant for gathering first-hand data not available anywhere else.

The fieldwork data is collected in three ways. It is collected through short door-to-door interviews in the rue du Fort, a street going right through the site, onsite structured and exploratory observation, and through lengthier semi-structured interviews of stakeholders (users and institutional actors).

Door-to-door Interviews

The short door-to-door interviews are aimed at local residents and include questions about the area investigated and personal experiences and emotions regarding the site. The population targeted by these door-to-door interviews are the inhabitants living at in the middle of the area investigated, namely the rue du Fort (see Figure 4 below).

This street is extremely interesting because it was built by the Colliery for its workers and is situated right in the middle of the site investigated. Its inhabitants are both descendants from workers and new comers with no affiliation or long-term emotional attachment with the history of the site and the street. Although residents might be users too—which may cause overlap with the user interviews—there is a number of factors that make investigating this street a mine of information that is relevant for this thesis. While some of the residents are users as well, they have a different perspective on the area due to their strategic location. They do not just come to the site and then leave after the completion of an activity but they experience the site constantly, whether they like it or not. In addition, the residents are the ones most affected by the site on the long term. What will happen to them and their houses is intimately connected with the future of the place. They therefore experience the precariousness of the site's ambiguous status the most. Moreover, they have had quite some time to reflect thoroughly about the site and some have even fought for its preservation. However, others have sold and left. As a result, the street is composed of two types of people; those who have been there most of their lives and those who are newcomers. Despite their different experiences and life trajectories, the residents of the Rue du Fort are equally dependent on the site's current status. It is because of these particular reasons that doing these door-to-door interviews offer an additional layer of complexity and depth but also a better understanding of the place and the uses, emotions, and experiences revolving around and within it.

The method of door-to-door interviews—although more strenuous than simply giving out questionnaires or contacting the participants via phone calls—was chosen because these other options usually have a low response rate (Bryman, 2008). Considering the very limited area covered by this form of data collection, a very high response rate is necessary. Open questions, unlike structured questionnaires, allow participants to mention as much as they want and on a vast range of topics that might not have been considered when making a structured questionnaire. In addition, going from door to door

creates a human contact with the respondents. They then know who I am, what I am looking for and can ask questions themselves as well. This can alleviate typical suspicion about my motives and creates a comfortable zone to talk. Standing in front of them also allows me to encourage them to speak if I see that they are thinking of something but are unsure about its relevance.

The questions asked are straightforward and require short answers, ranging from a yes/no answer to answers of a couple of sentences (see appendix for the full interview form). These door to door interviews take place in the same time period as the on site observation of the uses of the space as they might reveal important elements on what types of uses to look for and when to encounter them. The main aim, in addition to knowing more about the site and the uses of it, is to get a feel on how much residents know about the site and its past history as well as a feel on what it represents to them. There is most likely some overlap between the users and the residents but the latter have had a more prolonged observation time of the area and can point out interesting locations, types of people and activities that are worth investigating. By questioning the residents on their knowledge and their experiences and opinions of the site, I gain a more general and thorough understanding of the context in which the site and its users revolve.

Observation

Observation is the second form of data gathering used. It is crucial in this context because it allows for a broader understanding of the site, the users (profile, numbers), and the activities happening there (Malone, 2002). Users of the Hasard site can be observed while engaging into something, such as a specific activity, and then approached for some questions in the later stages of research. Observation is a great data gathering means in this particular case because it improves knowledge of what happens on site and allows for a better overview and understanding of the area. There are three types of observation methods used. The first is exploratory observation, which includes strolling around the site in a very random manner, just to have a feel of it and noting down interesting observation locations (Low, 2000; Bruner, 1986). It is expected that signs of activity will mostly be seen but not necessarily the users themselves, or at least not those who perform the most illegal activities (such as trash dumping, vandalism and the like). The second observation method is structured, non-participant, and location-bound. It will allow for more detailed and structured observation on the profile of the users and the numbers of people on site throughout most days of the week. When all the data is collected from the three observation locations, movement maps, in the manner Setha Low (2000) did in her book "On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture," will be made for each location. These movement maps will visually show the main flows of people grouped on the basis of specific characteristics that will become clear as the data is collected. Examples of such specific characteristics could be gender or cyclists versus walkers or joggers. According to Low (2000), "comparing the movement maps…adds another dimension to the way in which the spaces are used and experienced differently" (p. 163). The third observation method concerns the users of the Hasard slag heap. With the help of two residents of the rue de la Chapelle (from which the slag heap is especially well observable), I will collect data on people climbing up the heap over a period of three

months. This will give an idea of how the slag heap is used, by whom, when, and in which conditions.

Although observation is an important data gathering means, it is the first stage of fieldwork and the short and detailed interviews allowed gathering more data that is not readily observable. By readily observable is meant that some signs of activity or the activities themselves may be observable but the motives, experiences, and maybe practices and activities that do not leave physical signs can only be discovered through conversation. The structured and location-bound observation is done by selecting three strategic locations on site and remaining at each of them for four time periods per day during three full weeks, so as to cover every day of a week for each location, except Tuesday and Thursdays (see Figure 4). The form used during the observation is in the Appendix (Figure 2) and the observation schedule is below (Figure 3).

The method of using a mostly structured observation form was decided upon to make it possible to record as many details without missing any people passing by. The form is constructed into four 'boxes'. While the first box includes basic information such as the time and day of observation and the weather, the second box contains all the criteria that should be looked for. There are eight criteria, namely "direction of movement," "gender," age group," "mode," "activity," "accessories," "clothing style, " and "language spoken (if known)". The third box allows for the recording of additional information if deemed necessary and the fourth box is meant for signs of activity. This last box allows for recording changes in the setting or environment that are the result of human activity, such as, for example, new tire marks, new trash, moved objects, new graffiti, etc; therefore noticing uses and activities even though the users themselves cannot be seen at that specific time period. The Observation Form can be found in the Appendix, as well as detailed information on each criterion, their significance, and how they should be recorded (Figure 2 in Appendix A).

The observation schedule can be seen below (Figure 3). The figure below includes the observation times and locations. When choosing the three locations, I wanted to make sure to have a good sample of the activity happening on site. My first location is located on the former rail line 38, which is now a walking and cycling path going through the site. The second location is located in the woods next to a former power house. The third location is very close to the slag heap and has a more 'hilly' landscape (see Figure 4 for the chosen locations, represented by red crosses and numbered). Based on my exploratory observations and what I have heard from people living in the area, I realised that these three specific locations would offer a fair overview of the activity happening at the Hasard.

The schedule for observing the three locations is spread over four weeks as to allow for some free days for the door-to-door interviews and the data coding and writing process. The locations are covered four times a day for an entire week, except on Tuesday and Thursday. The remaining days cover busy and less busy days in order to have a good sample. The times are spread throughout the day also in concern for busy times and less busy ones. As it is now, there is a wide range of times and days that should offer quite a good overview of the site in terms of users and crowdedness. For example, the morning time is expected to be quite empty, while the four to five pm time period is expected to be crowded. In the same manner, Mondays are not expected to be busy at all, while

Saturdays should be. Definite results will only be clear once the observation period is over.

**Figure 3: Observation schedule**

|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.00-9.00 | Location 1 |  | Location 2 |  |  | Location 1 | Location 2 |
| 12.00-13.00 | Location 2 |  | Location 3 |  |  | Location 2 | Location 3 |
| 16.00-17.00 | Location 3 |  | Location 1 |  |  | Location 3 | Location 1 |
| 20.00-21.00 | Location 1 |  | Location 2 |  |  | Location 1 | Location 2 |

|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.00-9.00 |  |  | Location 1 |  | Location 2 | Location 3 | Location 1 |
| 12.00-13.00 |  |  | Location 2 |  | Location 3 | Location 1 | Location 2 |
| 16.00-17.00 |  |  | Location 3 |  | Location 1 | Location 2 | Location 3 |
| 20.00-21.00 |  |  | Location 3 |  | Location 1 | Location 2 | Location 3 |

|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.00-9.00 | Location 2 |  | Location 3 |  | Location 1 |  | Location 3 |
| 12.00-13.00 | Location 3 |  | Location 1 |  | Location 2 |  | Location 1 |
| 16.00-17.00 | Location 1 |  | Location 2 |  | Location 3 |  | Location 2 |
| 20.00-21.00 | Location 3 |  | Location 1 |  | Location 2 |  | Location 1 |

|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.00-9.00 | Location 3 |  |  |  | Location 3 | Location 2 |  |
| 12.00-13.00 | Location 1 |  |  |  | Location 1 | Location 3 |  |
| 16.00-17.00 | Location 2 |  |  |  | Location 2 | Location 1 |  |
| 20.00-21.00 | Location 2 |  |  |  | Location 3 | Location 3 |  |

Semi-Structured Interviews

Lastly, there are also more detailed interviews of the main actors—including users—both on site and off site. These interviews are semi-structured. They follow an interview guide but the questions do not require simple-to-code answers and tangents are welcomed in the conversation (Bryman, 2008). The questions, which can be found in the appendix, serve more as a guideline of subjects that need discussing. This mode of data collection is especially relevant and useful when it comes to asking people about their opinions, uses of and emotions towards a particular space. The interview forms contain questions about the frequency of the user's visit, the activities performed, the knowledge of the site, the experiences and emotions of the user towards the site and about the site and its future among others. The purpose is to obtain data on the uses and on the experiences and emotions. The questions allow them to mention activities or offer new insights into the issue, such as how they perceive the colliery, which might not have been thought of when designing the interview guides.

**Figure 4: Map of the area investigated**



Source: SPW-DGO4 (2008). Plan de Localisation Informatique (PLI) (under licence).

Although semi-structured, the questions asked to the users on site do not require extremely lengthy contributions, unless the participants desire to do so. It will also be possible to schedule for an interview meeting later. The way the user interviews are collected follows a pattern. First, the three locations used for observations will be used to collect these user interviews. In addition, a more random circuit within the boundaries of the site will be covered in order to account for more users. In addition, users are also found using word of mouth.

There were three main institutional actors identified. These are the two local authorities (the site spreads over two different municipalities, namely Fléron and Soumagne) and the owners. I also contacted several environmental groups and associations specialised in activities on and preservation of former coal mining sites and slag heaps such as Pays des Terrils[5] and Espace Environnement, but they all denied being actively involved, at this point in time, in this particular site, for a number of reasons (see Chapter III for more details). The institutional actors are listed below:

1. The municipality of Fléron (Retinne)
2. The municipality of Soumagne (Micheroux)
3. Société Immobilière Régionale (SIR)

A representative of each of these institutional actors/groups was contacted for an interview. This means that only one or two people (and always together) are interviewed for each of these groups.

The interviews are for both the users and the institutional actors (with different interview forms) but with a special emphasis on the users. The contributions of the institutional actors are used to frame the responses of the users (and the residents). This means that the responses of the institutional actors serve to situate the uses that take place on site as well as user emotions and experiences. These contributions explain the area, the current situation, possible future plans, and offer a broader picture of the multiple representations of the space. The questions asked to the institutional actors reflect these aims (see appendix). More specifically, I also want to know how much they, the institutional actors, know about what is happening there. Answers such as 'the space is unused' or 'nothing is happening there' are expected.

These procedures and data collection methods are reflective of qualitative research and the programme Nvivo is used to analyse the data. The complete interview and observation guides can be found in the Appendix (B, C, and D). In total, 16 door-to-door resident interviews and 11 semi-structured user interviews were collected. The semi-structured interviews are audio recorded but the responses to the door-to-door interviews are collected by hand.

Translating the theoretical framework and literature review into relevant fieldwork is a crucial part of planning a thesis (Bryman, 2008). When designing the data collection methods, I wanted to make sure that they encompassed all the necessary elements in order to be able to answer the research questions in the end. When laying out the questions, I incorporated the main concepts of the thesis as presented in Part I of Chapter I, namely uses, emotions, and experiences. I then proceeded to incorporate the rest of the elements of the research questions into each form. I therefore devised the questions of the interview forms and the criteria of the observation form based on what information I needed to collect from each group of participants. For example, how users experience and use the space is very important to know, while, for institutional actors, it matters more to know their general visions and representations of the space and what they expect for its future.

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[5] Under the European "Interreg" project

It will only be in the last stage of the research that the analytical propositions retrieved from the relevant literature (Part II of Chapter I) will be used in order to analyse and understand the findings of the data collection.

The research follows the case study model, as I investigate and analyse one case. The site is the former Colliery of Hasard (Retinne-Micheroux), which is located in a semi-urban environment (in terms of planning, crowdedness, and infrastructure). I chose this site because it is very large and does not have many legal initiatives happening on it (such as cultural excursions or museums). In fact, part of the site is forbidden to the public for security reasons (the slag heap threatens to slide) and the rest, apart from small areas, is officially a private property. The mere size of the Hasard site and the fact that it is officially unused and more or less left to itself creates the necessary conditions for, potentially, a diverse range of unregulated activities and experiences. Although it has been left to itself, it still is of interest for local authorities and environmental groups. Special circumstances make it quite an exceptional case. Indeed, as is uncovered in the next chapter (Chapter III), the site of Hasard, with a surface of around 45 hectares, has been left untouched for almost 40 years by its owners in the middle of a growing semi-urban area (Salmon, 2012). These conditions offer much to investigate and results of the data analysis will help clarify the issue around the site. There are many layers and perspectives within and surrounding this site and nothing is simple or straightforward.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, as it only investigates one case, the results of the data analysis will most likely not be directly generalisable to other industrial sites outside or even within Wallonia. However, while the exact results cannot be transferred to another case, they help in understanding other instances, especially for the other former collieries in the province of Liège. The literature review, the data gathering methods, and the structure of the fieldwork used in this thesis could prove extremely useful for anyone attempting a similar project on another former coal mining site. There are also some methodological considerations when trying to collect and analyse emotions and experiences. As Hubbard (2005) explains, language might not be the best way to capture emotions, due to their embodied nature. In addition, the limitation of the medium of exchange between the researcher and the interviewee should not be ignored. It is also important to remain "critical and reflexive about the act of interviewing, and pay due care to the dynamic relationship of interviewer and interviewee" (Hubbard, 2005, p. 123; Davidson, 2000). However, despite these methodological limitations, the forms of data gathering chosen for this thesis are, by far, the best options if the central research question and sub questions are to be answered. What is lost in generalisability and absolute empirical certainty is gained in complexity, richness, and depth.

**Chapter III: National Context, Historical Development and Background of the Area**

Belgium has had a long history of coal mining. As far back as the 12th century, there has been coal extraction (Gaier, 1988). It is only at the time of the industrial revolution that the Kingdom sees its coal production increase tremendously. As a scholar of the time aptly explains, "coal is the most important and valuable of the mineral products of Belgium, and the extent of the supply gives to Belgium the second position in Europe, as a coal-producing country," after the United Kingdom (Valpy, 1847, p. 70). Today, coal mining has almost completely disappeared in Belgium and only the remnants of the past industry can be seen.

The story is no different for the former colliery investigated in this thesis. This chapter offers a detailed timeline of its history, going back at its very beginnings till its shutting down in 1974 and its destruction in 78-79. The last date on the timeline, 2012, describes recent developments. The timeline is structured in chronological order. In addition to the main dates and events, specific outcomes and consequences of the industrial activity of the colliery are pinpointed. The available information is scarce, especially due to the fact that in 1914, all of the archives of the municipality were burned down by the German invader. However, much can be found in the work of those who tried to collect as much information throughout the years and to this day.

This chapter gives the reader a strong background on the Hasard Colliery located on the municipalities of Fléron and Soumagne (Retinne and Micheroux). In addition to proving interesting, it will help understand the lasting legacy of this particular industrial activity on the area, including the surrounding neighbourhoods and population, presently investigated. Indeed, by understanding how this very rural setting with few buildings changed into a bustling urban area in a few decades, the reader will have a sense of the place, its people and what it has been through—both tragedies and victories—as well as the reasons behind its current status.

1. The National Context

Belgium is a federal state with a constitutional monarchy (SPF, 2012). This means that the country is divided into 10 provinces, three 'communities' and three regions`, each with their own powers.

At the head of the country, there is a King and a Prime Minister. The population is around 10,840 thousand people (2009 numbers) (Eurostat, 2011). Coal mining was especially salient in Wallonia (bottom half of the map below).

The Hasard Colliery had its activities concentrated in the Liège Province, next to the Dutch and German borders. More specifically, the site investigated in this thesis, spreading across Soumagne and Fléron, is located approximately 15 kilometres east of the city of Liège.

**Figure 5: Map of Belgium**



Source: "Belgium Map" by the National Geographic Society (2012)

## 2. Historical Development of the Area

### 1838

On October 15th of that year, four men, Julien d'Andrimont-Demet (24 years old), Gustave Bosquet, Albert Florent Joseph Baron Prisse (Lieutenant General), and Chrétien de Guaita, sign an act of association to make geological searches in the area of Micheroux, in the Liège Province (Figas, 2006). Soon after, they create together the "Société Charbonnière du Hasard à Micheroux" (i.e. Coal-Producing Company of Hasard in Micheroux). The d'Andrimont family will manage the company for five generations till its closing (Figas, 2006). It is interesting to note that this same year, there already were 37 171 people employed in Belgium for coal extraction, and related activities, and the overall produce was of 3,201,584 tonnes (Valpy, 1847).

### 1842 until the 1870's

On December 22, 1842, an exploratory gallery is started at the Laid Broly location and the concession rights for a 417 hectare area were given to the company on June 1st, 1846 (Grandeurop, 1994; Figas, 2006).

As the Colliery starts bringing in workers in the area, a small church is built in 1850 (Figas, 2006).

June 18, 1851 is a very important date for the Hasard Colliery. It is the day that the Hasard seam is discovered, with one metre of thickness (Gaier, 1988; Grandeurop, 1994). From this point on, the future of the Company is guaranteed. In 1857, the construction of the underground Bay-Bonnet tunnel is started. The purpose of this new tunnel is to ensure the transport of coal over a length of 3200 meters from Micheroux till Bay-Bonnet (Grandeurop, 1994). It took 13 years to complete it (Grandeurop, 1994). In addition to the work in progress on the tunnel, the infrastructure available at the Colliery

becomes more complex and diverse, including a railway. And between 1859 and 1865, the Company started acquiring more concessions of a total surface area of 351 hectares.

**1870**

As soon as the Bay-Bonnet tunnel was completed, the Hasard colliery took off (Figas, 2006; Grandeurop, 1994). New infrastructure, such as a system of riding chains in the tunnel and a railway running till Trooz, completed the transformation of the colliery and enabled it to reach major distribution points for its goods (Figure 6). Indeed, the production and sale doubled in less than a year (Grandeurop, 1994). They also made the wells deeper and installed new compressors and machinery.

But the year 1870 did not only see technological changes in the company. The Hasard Company also started building the Hôtel Louise, which was completed in 1872 (Figure 7) (Grandeurop, 1994). The purpose of the building was to host as many as 175 single workers with a canteen and laundry facilities (see figure 7) (Figas, 2006). In later years, the company also build two housing developments for the workers. One was a garden city, with 36 houses clustered in groups of four within a large green park. The second development will consist of terraced housing with independent courtyards and exterior gardens. In addition, 23 other houses, scattered around the colliery are built over the years (Grandeurop, 1994). However, the company had a major problem with attracting workers to live in the area as there were no shops, no entertainment, and almost no houses (until the two developments were build in following years) (Figas, 2006; Grandeurop, 1994).

**Figure 6: Visit of the new riding chains system**



VISITE DU 28 DÉCEMBRE 1872 AU CHARBONNAGE DU HASARD
INSTALLATION DU TRANSPORT PAR CHAINE FLOTTANTE AU BAY-BONNET

Source: Figas (2006)

**1874**

The Hasard colliery does more than just extracting coal and contributing to the Kingdom's economy. Also at the local level, the industry, in addition to providing working opportunities and producing large amounts of pollution, contributes to the development of an otherwise extremely rural region. A few shops open, houses are built and the entertainment sector starts to flourish. In 1874, the Fanfare du Hasard (i.e. Hasard's Brass Band) is created as well as a concert hall. Moreover, a small hospital with

12 beds is opened (Grandeurop, 1994). The village is taking off and its population keeps growing.

**1875**

In 1875, an annexe is added to the Hôtel Louise with a capacity of around 200 beds (Figas, 2006). Although the number of workers keeps growing and profits keep coming in, workers have no rights and there are almost no unions. They are truly exploited and no one, either the bosses or the State, seem to care. In fact, the direction just decided to reduce everyone's salary by 10 percent (Figas, 2006). On Septembre 4, the Hasard Colliery suffers its first strike. A few workers refuse to go down the well and other follow the movement, armed with some guns (Grandeurop, 1996). But they are put under a tremendous amount of pressure and two days later, with no advantages gained, the work starts again. Indeed, as soon as the strike started, the colliery was taken control of by the police, the examining masgistrate, the public prosecutor, the cavalry, and an infantry battalion (Figas, 2006)! Although the strike failed, it opened the way for more and better organisation among workers and future strikes.

**Figure 7: The Hôtel Louise**
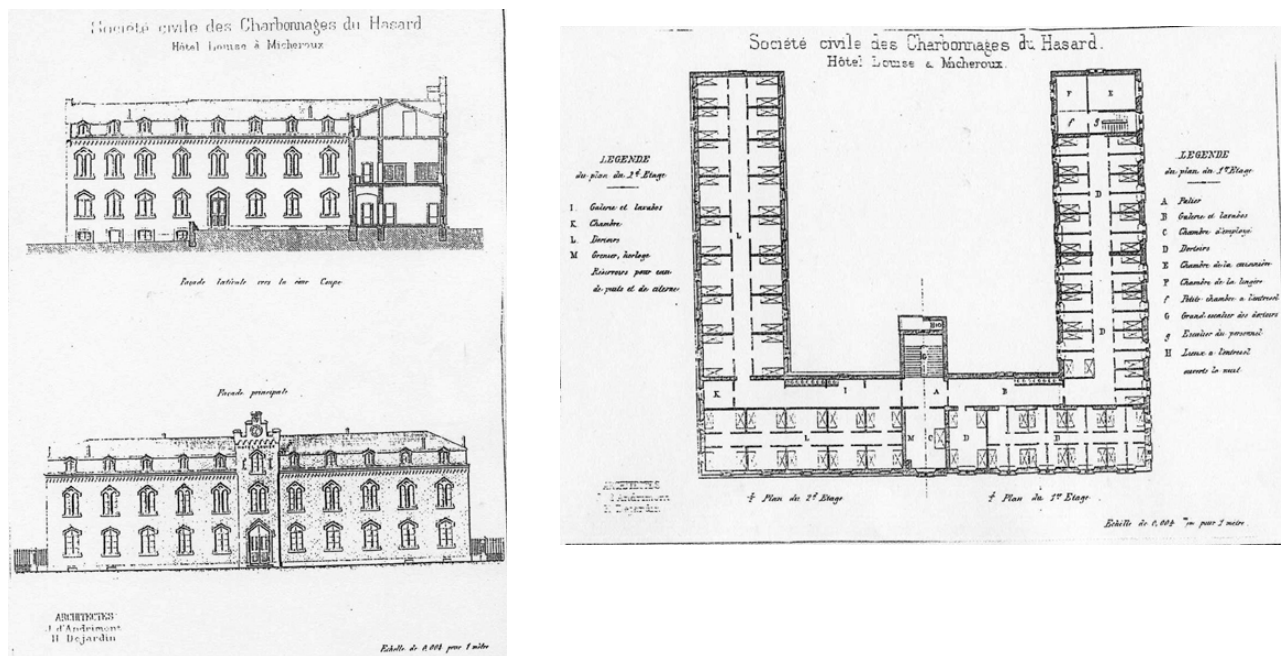


Source: Figas (2006)

**1877**

The previous year, a new mineshaft, named the Cinq-Gustave, was dug (Figure 8). Its purpose was to allow for the transport of workers up and down (Grandeurop, 1994). With a diameter of 4.10 metres, it was ready for the cages in 1878 (Figas, 2006). In 1877, one of the housing developments for the workers "Les Trois-Chênes" was built, as well as the town hall (Figas, 2006). One year later, the primary school was constructed. These new developments continued to contribute to the development of the area, from rural pastures with a few farms to a small and growing town. Last, the Company diversifies its production by opening a factory of briquettes (Grandeurop, 1994).

**Figure 8: Cinq-Gustave**



Source: Figas (2006)

## 1882

In 1882, the colliery changed its name from the "Société Charbonnière du Hasard" to "Société Anonyme des Charbonnages du Hasard" (i.e. Anonymous Company of the Hasard Collieries) (Figas, 2006). In concrete terms, this simply means that the colliery became a joint-stock company, creating changes in its management, allowing for more efficiency and capital generation (Valpy, 1846). The headquarters are then moved to Trooz (this will remain until 1891, when the headquarters are moved back to Micheroux) (Figas, 2006).

Around the same time period, there are also some changes in legislation which will modify who is allowed to go down the mines. In 1884, children under 12 years old are no longer allowed to work underground and the same will apply to women in 1889 (Figas, 2006; Gaier, 1988). Of course, women and children under 12 years old still worked at the surface, sorting, cleaning, and transporting the coal.

## 1901-1905

In 1901, the workers opened their very own Maison du Peuple (i.e. House of the People) as a response to difficult economical and societal issues (Grandeurop, 1994).

One year later, the Company purchases the Prés de Fléron coal mining concession, which has a surface of 182 hectares (Figas, 2006; Grandeurop, 1994). It is the beginning of many purchases that will hugely increase the mining surface of the Company. Around 1905-06, the concession of Cheratte is bought, increasing the total surface by 880 hectares (Figas, 2006). There is a telephone cable linking the Micheroux headquarters with those of Cheratte over eight kilometres (Figas, 2006).

Two cooling basins are also created over twelve hectares of land in front of the Rue du Fort and along line 38 and the Rue Rôthys (Figas, 2006)

**Figure 9: The strikers of 1906-7**



Source: Figas (2006)

## 1906-1907

On November 21st, 1906, the Great Strike began. It was called so because it only ended on September 26th 1907 (Figas, 2006). Over the year the Great Strike took place, there were two periods of three weeks each where the work started again. The very first strike, back in 1875, had been heavily repressed by the direction and the authorities but since then, the socialist movement had taken off resulting in a much better organised strike (Figas, 2006). It all started when a worker was fired. The other workers wanted him back but the management refuses and installs a lock-out (Figas, 2006). The 1,500 workers on strike march down the streets of the municipality and neighbouring towns singing songs (Figure 9). This allowed them to collect some money to survive without their income (Figas, 2006). Numerous local newspapers started publishing articles in favour of the strikers. Meanwhile, the management of the Colliery are in dire need for workers. The rumour spread that after hiring German workers who then refused to work when they realised there was a strike, the management started hiring criminals and other infamous people to go work down the mines (Figas, 2006). While there was a strike, the children of the strikers had been sent away by them in other families to alleviate the financial burden of their parents and ensure the children had enough food (Grandeurop, 1994).

**Figure 10: The return of the children**



Source: Figas (2006)

When, in September 1907, the strike broke off, the children came back from their exodus (Figure 10). Despite this happy reunion, the strike was a failure and the workers went back to their jobs with almost no more benefits from their bosses.

**1914-1918**

As soon as the First World War started, Belgium was invaded and this had consequences for the Hasard Colliery as its infrastructure was very close to the German border, especially in Fléron, which was situated next to the fort, and was heavily damaged by lost projectiles (Figas, 2006). The Germans also set fire to the community shops, archives, workers' houses, the church, and destroyed much of the infrastructure and work only started again in the mines by the end of the year 1914 (Figas, 2006). However, there is a resistance movement and the production of coal is cut by half (from 396 953 tonnes in 1913 to 155 368 tonnes during the war years) (Grandeurop, 1994). The Colliery regularly sent packages of food to its workers made prisoners in Germany but nevertheless, the war was a tragic and deadly time for all (Grandeurop, 1994). Out of the 1,663 workers, 60 had been shot at the beginning of the war by the invader and out of the 152 who had joined the war, eight never returned (Figas, 2006).

**1919-1939**

During the interwar period, the coal production goes back up to earlier levels and by 1927, it has reached 620 653 tonnes (Grandeurop, 1994). Despite new measures, working conditions are still harsh and accidents often happen. More manpower is needed to keep the extraction going and in 1922, the first Polish workers arrive at the Colliery. They are part of the first large wave of immigration in the small municipality (Figas, 2006). They are very appreciated for their hard work and many of them settled for good in Belgium (Pierlot, 2012).

Between 1929 and 1930, the Company acquires more concessions, namely Bas-Bois (Crahay), Belle-Vue and Bienvenue, and Violette (Figas, 2006). The name of the concession then changes to "Hasard-Cheratte" with a surface area of 3 532 hectares or 3 329 hectares depending on the sources (Grandeurop, 1994; Figas, 2006). Although the exact numbers differ, the fact that the Company owned, by 1930, an extremely large concession does not change.

In 1936, a new head frame for the Cinq-Gustave mineshaft is built in armed concrete (Figas, 2006). In Belgian French, such a shaft head frame is called a "Belle-Fleur," meaning beautiful flower in English. In 1939, a new briquette factory is built (the first one had been abandoned in 1895).

**1940-1945**

During the Second World War, the Colliery suffered great losses. Around 75 percent of its underground workforce had disappeared (either gone or deceased) (Figas, 2006). In addition, its coal production had been requisitioned by Germany (Grandeurop, 1994). Times were hard but the Company did try to help its workers. It grew a hundred hectares of potato fields to distribute to its workers (Figas, 2006).

**1945 onwards**

As soon as the Second World War ends, a new battle starts, "La Bataille du Charbon[6]," where everything is done to restart the national economy, at the expense of the workers (Figas, 2006; Grandeurop, 1994). Coal mining companies hire as many people as they can and in 1946, an agreement is made between Belgium and Italy to bring in Italian workers in exchange for coal (Figas, 2006; Gaier, 1988). At this time, one of the housing developments mentioned earlier is built on the Rue du Fort (Figas, 2006).

On December 23, 1960, a new strike begins and lasts till the end of January 1961 (Figas, 2006). As a result, workforce has been missing and the extraction rate is lower than it should have been, even a year later. In 1963, the extraction numbers of the Hasard-Cheratte concession are of 672 983 tonnes and 1964 sees the first state subsidies being given to the Company (Figas, 2006). Despite these problems, the life around the colliery continues to flourish. The local inhabitants cohabit with the newcomers and much comes out of it (Joris, 1996). Sports clubs are created, such as the "Club Sportif Polonia Retinne" and the "Réal Hasard" (Grandeurop, 1994). The year of 1964 also sees the first immigrants from Morocco and Turkey, and a new building is built for the single workers in place of the old Hôtel Louise (Figas, 2006; Pierlot, 2012).

**1974**

On the 31st of March 1974, the Micheroux headquarters close down (Figas, 2006). The Company as a whole will continue functioning until 1977. The closing down of the colliery was due to increasing extraction costs and other workforce problems. Although the mining seams are not exhausted, they are very thin and sinuous, making it hard to mine effectively and cheaply (Pierlot, 2012). Indeed, as Haagen (1982) explains "the closure of the Belgian coal mines is more a consequence of high extraction costs rather than coal seams having been fully worked out" (p.62).

In addition, the last years suffered from many workforce problems. Out of all the underground workers, there was a rotation of 70 percent meaning that out of more or less a thousand people, 700 were constantly changing, making it very difficult for supervisors to know them, control them, and ensure the most stable working environment (Pierlot, 2012).

**1978-1979**

Between August 1978 and October 1979, all the infrastructure of the Hasard Colliery in Micheroux-Retinne was destroyed (Grandeurop, 1994; Figas, 2006). Even the two mineshafts, Cinq-Gustave and Vieux Bure, were filled in and covered with a concrete slab and a memorial stone. Only a few buildings, such as the offices and houses, and some ruins remain to this day. The change from the extremely industrial landscape to a bare land—now covered with woods—is very impressive (Figure 11). Indeed, as this timeline shows, the Hasard Colliery was one of the greatest of the Liège Province (Gaier, 1988). However, when the Colliery closed, the majority of the buildings were razed to the ground. The formerly bustling town changed into a quiet residential area with a humongous 'hole' in the middle. Visual clues of what had been its core for more than a century disappeared over four short years. This had intense visual, social, and economic consequences (Gaier, 1988).

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[6] meaning "the battle of coal"

**Figure 11: The site before and after the demolitions**
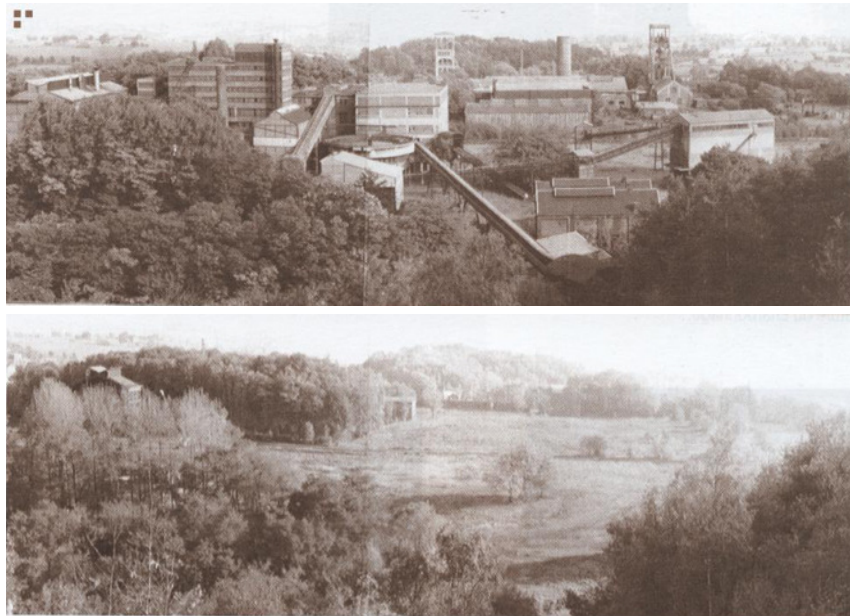


Source: Figas (2006)

## 1980's onwards

In 1982, there were six coal mines left in Belgium (Haagen, 1982). It was the end of the coal mining era for the country and yet, Belgium was putting a lot of effort in trying to save the industry. They were collaborating with Germany to find new ways of extracting coal with less pervasive effects, especially in terms of environmental and social repercussions (Haagen, 1982). Some of the techniques investigated were opencast mines and gasification of coal underground. It seems that some people were arguing for more state subsidies in order to avoid unemployment rates from increasing (it was at 14 percent in 1982) (Haagen, 1982). Despite these efforts, the coal mining industry was definitely dying and soon all collieries closed down.

## 2012

Today, not much remains from the Hasard Colliery, except for the two slag heaps, the rail line 38 turned into a greenway, and the ruins of tunnels, a power station, and of the basin bank separating the two cooling ponds. The area is still owned by a remnant of the Anonymous Company of the Hasard-Cheratte Colliery and is called the Société Immobilière Régionale[7]. Micheroux and Retinne have been thoroughly conditioned by the development and closing of the Colliery. From a very urban, industrial function, they now are residential areas with few commercial ventures. As can be seen on the map below (Figure 12), these are urban areas still surrounded by a rural landscape, creating a semi-urban layout. It has a very diverse population, both in terms of social and economic backgrounds. Part of the former Colliery site of Hasard is located right in the middle of these two towns. The area can be seen on the map very clearly as it is covered in woods,

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[7] Translates as the "Regional Estate Company"

making it a darker green than the rest of the fields (see Figure 12). The black line, crossing it on the map, shows the borders between the municipalities of Fléron on the left and Soumagne on the right.

**Figure 12: The site seen from above (woods) with Fléron (Retinne)
on the left and Soumagne (Micheroux) on the right side**



Source: SPW- DGO4 ( 2006-2007). Orthophotoplan. Authorisation number: 121001-1601

Figure 13 is a similar map as the one pictured in Figure 4 but showing the 'sector plan,' or urban activity plan, for the area. The rue du Fort is listed as a housing sector (in red on the map). On its right side, where the former cooling basins used to be, the area is listed as an "activité économique mixte[8]" sector (in purple on the map). This means that the land there is meant for the craft industry, services and distribution activities, research, and/or small industry. On the left side of the street, the area is listed as a "ZACC" or "zone d'aménagement communal concerté[9]". This means that the function of the area is to be decided by the communal council according to the municipality's needs. When the council has devised a plan for the area, it has to send it to the Federal government for approval. If, after 60 days, the government has not given its answer, the plan is considered approved. Since the company is in compulsory liquidation, it is ultimately supposed to sell all the land it possesses to others.

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[8] "Mixed economic activity"
[9] "Concerted Communal Planning Zone"

However, the site investigated in this thesis has not been sold yet due to a piece of the land reserved for the construction of the CHB (Cerexhe-Heuseux/Beaufays) highway (see Figure 13 below for the exact trajectory of the highway; marked with black lines). In 1969, the federal government planned to build a highway (Fléron Municipality, 2007). This highway was to cut through the site on its way to Beaufays, in order to alleviate the heavy traffic suffered by the city of Liège (Bodeux, 2012). This part of the highway was to complete the traffic ring built around the city. The project has been put aside for around 40 years now and yet, nothing has been decided on whether or not to build this highway. This year has seen the issue put back on the table with a new study affirming that a highway is not necessary and that a smaller road should be built (Bodeux, 2012; L'Avenir, 2012). In regards to this particular segment of the CHB highway (running through the Hasard site), the Fléron municipality is more touched than Soumagne. In 2007, it issued a report on their concerns for the highway. This report states that there is a clear need for a solution, the highway being one, but that more consideration should be given to alternatives. It also demands that the Walloon region would develop a plan to relocate the people who will be expropriated and that the slag heap be bought by the region to secure it and make it a protected green space (Fléron Municipality, 2007).

Until something is decided, the land reserved for it, including the former coal mining site and the rue du Fort investigated here, cannot be planned into something else, or even changed or 'improved' (this includes the houses). In practice, this means that the site has more or less been 'frozen' for all this time and virtually inaccessible to any developer or projects. This is an important aspect of the situation as it explains why such a big surface is left untouched in the middle of a growing urban area.

In 2006, a biodiversity report of the Hasard site was made in the context of the European project, so-called Projet Interreg Pays des Terrils or the "Industrielle Folgelandschaft" project (PDT, 2006). This report was also strongly requested by the municipality of Fléron when, a couple of years ago, they attempted to gain management of the site (Buron, 2012). It was done by Natagora, a Belgian environmental organisation closely connected, and often collaborating, with local and federal governments. The Interreg project has the end goal of renewing and rooting the regional identity and enhancing the industrial landscape of France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium (Pays des Terrils (PDT), 2006; PDT, 2009). The census taking was mostly carried by naturalist volunteers and set to evaluate the biodiversity value of the site of Hasard-Micheroux.

The report states that there is a biological interest in the site although the biological richness could be improved if there was more grassy land on site. There are several flora species present on site that are absent from the other Walloon slag heaps. There are many fauna species on the Hasard site but they are mostly common species. However, the site attracts many forest species such as the badger due to its large size and wood coverage and shows major potential in hosting species that are disappearing from the rest of Wallonia if only there were more grass-like areas (PDT, 2006). The site naturally has such areas but the absence of management allows these areas to be colonised by trees. Overall, the report states that the site is very interesting in terms of biodiversity but that some management is required to ensure that this richness in habitats is maintained and enhanced. It concludes with the statement that the Hasard site is a major natural heritage site for the region (PDT, 2006).

**Figure 13: 'Plan de Secteur' with highway plans**



Source: SPW-DG04 (2011). Plan de Secteur Fléron-Soumagne (rue du Fort).
http://carto6.wallonie.be/WebGIS/viewer.htm?APPNAME=PDS&POPUPBLOCKED=false&BOX=
243740:146746,835755814:246207:147973,164244186

**Chapter IV: Results and Analysis**

Introduction

This fifth chapter provides the results of the fieldwork and analyses it according to the research questions stated in the introduction of this thesis. The chapter is structured as follows. First, the three days of exploratory observations will be described. This section is the most personal as it expresses my first impressions and discoveries at the start of this thesis. The next section explores the results of the structured observations, the movement maps, and the results from the slag heap observations (collected with the help of the rue de la Chapelle residents). Then, the chapter moves on to the door-to-door interviews, the user interviews, and ultimately, the interviews carried out with the institutional actors. The final section brings together all the analyses and answers the research question, using insights from the literature (the five analytical propositions) and the historical context of the site.

Exploratory Observations

The exploratory observations took place over three days, at random intervals. The aim was to get familiar with the space and observe it with a researcher's eye. Although I had some background knowledge on the layout of the area and the different activities taking place there, I needed to go for the sole purpose of observing with all my senses. There were many aspects that had always seemed obvious to me and that I had to start questioning and analysing. It was very exciting to discover the site in this new light and be critical of my position as a former user and now researcher.

The first time I went was in the beginning of April and the weather was truly awful. It was extremely rainy, cold, and dark. I started walking from the 'bottom' of the site, from the Micheroux slag heap; passing next to the 60's building replacing the Hôtel Louise, up through the riding stables and former colliery offices. I was taking pictures of the old offices when I saw a face peaking through the curtains (see Figure 14 below). An old woman came out with her three dogs and asked me what I was up to and we started talking. She told me of her life there and how she would not trade it because she was left in peace over there. She told me she enjoyed the big windows and that thanks to the very big original stove she never went cold—she uses wood from old pallets that her son cut for her. I asked her who owned the building and she said she was not sure but that she believed it still belonged to the Colliery and that she sent money to a "Société[10]." When she had realised I meant no trouble, she was very helpful and nice and she encouraged me to look at the riding stables, facing her residence, and told me old stories about the days of the colliery. Nevertheless, she asked me not to take any pictures of herself. On her advice, I walked to the riding stables and saw remnants of the old colliery days. The courtyard still has the rail trails for the little trolleys and the buildings and stables are virtually unchanged. As I was taking pictures and notes, I ran into the manager of the riding stables, who asked me what I wanted. As soon as I explained that I was a student doing research on the former colliery, his initial mistrust turned into helpful advice. He

_____

[10] A company

pointed to me the way to where the two mineshafts had once been and told me they had been marked by a stone. One of them, the Cinq-Gustave, was located in the middle of one of the horse fields and he told me that the stone had been covered by old tires to prevent the horses from hurting themselves against it but that I could remove the tires to look at it and take pictures. He then went back inside, wishing me luck. I went to look at the memorial stones and took pictures despite very curious horses constantly getting in the way!

**Figure 14: The former offices inhabited by the old lady**



Source: Author's

I then went to the derelict power house from the riding stables and then down the tunnels going below the railway line 38. As I came out of one of the tunnels, I went through the woods and passed next to the remains of the small canal (see Figure 15). In some parts of the woods, I truly had the feeling of being in a jungle, with uncontrolled nature invading every centimetre square and showing off its power, almost saying "you built an industry and look what I did to it." Finally, after more or less three hours, I came out of the woods on the Rue Rôthys.

The itinerary I took was partly dictated by spontaneity and previous knowledge of interesting things to see, such as former buildings and other ruins. As I walked, I saw many signs of activity, ranging from abandoned fires, coal sorting 'devices,' trash such as empty cans and bigger objects, marks on the trees to indicate specific paths and routes, remains of youth groups' constructions and games—fabric tied around branches and riddles carved into tree trunks—as well as many paths, horse shoe marks, tire marks, and wood clearance (see Figures 16 and 17). I also ran into a man on a big and loud machine, pulling the larger trunks out of the property.

**Figure 15: Remains of the canal**



Source: Author's

**Figure 16: Youth groups' constructions**



Source: Author's

**Figure 17: Wood clearance**



Source: Author's

The second exploratory day took place in the beginning of May. The weather was slightly warmer and more importantly, it was dry. This time, I circled around the slag heap and tried to figure out which paths people took to go up and down. I found several

points where paths had been created with many tire marks. Some of these paths go round and round till the top, offering easy slopes and others go up in an almost straight manner, creating extremely steep slopes. Motorcyclists highly enjoy riding down from these steep slopes. As the weather was brightening up, I also took the opportunity to visit the former cooling basins now covered in trees and grass. I had heard from locals that there were people making kitchen gardens in those basins. The small path I took was almost completely gone. As I entered the clearing, I could not believe my eyes. I had expected small allotment-style gardens. What I had in front of me was beyond allotments. It was huge. This day, I did not see anyone there but I came back several times later in the year. I met a couple of the gardeners, especially during summer. They told me that there were 10 gardeners in total and all were of Turkish origin. My grand-father had told me that the gardeners used to be Italians. The men I met confirmed this and told me that there used to be many Italians but also Greek and Spanish people. Figures 18 and 19 illustrate two of the kitchen gardens during summer time.

**Figure 18: Illegal allotments in the old basin**



Source: Author's

The first time I saw one of the old men working in their field, they looked at me a little suspiciously. Their French was not so good but they were extremely friendly as soon as I asked them questions about their production. One of the men, Mr. S., used to work at the Waterschei Colliery and found out about this site 10 years ago when one of his Turkish friends told him people were planting food there. He really likes coming here because otherwise he gets bored at home. His production includes potatoes, cabbage, mint, strawberries, peppers, eggplants, corn, beetroots, nuts, and peas. His harvest is only for his extended family and he never sold anything. Another gardener I met, Mr. B., arrived from Turkey in 1980 to enrol in the mines but all the collieries were closing at the time and he never got a job there. He used to live in the rue du Fort but has moved a little further away. He has been working in this garden for three years. He used to work in

53

another part of the basin, growing vegetables and breeding chicken, for 20 years but he moved 200 metres away to his present location because there were too many foxes and mice. On his previous location, there is a very large and beautiful rosebush. Seeing that I had picked one of the flowers, he told me he had brought the tree from Turkey many years ago and that if I wanted he could give me a piece of the rosebush to plant back in my own garden. I said that I would love having these roses grow in my garden. As promised, he asked his daughter to call me in September, telling me that I could come and pick up the small trees. When I went there, I met his wife and his daughter. I had baked them a cake and they gave me some tabbouleh and tiramisu. It was an amazing encounter and I intend to take good care of the rosebush.

A very interesting aspect of these kitchen gardens is their illegality. None of the men I spoke with said anything about being bothered. They do not pay anything and the gardens have been occupied for more than 30 years. It is only later, when I interviewed the representative of the SIR—the company owning the site—that I learned more about the status of these gardens and their potential future (see Institutional Actors section of this chapter).

**Figure 19: One of the kitchen gardens**



Source: Author's

The third exploration day was spent walking through the woods for two hours. I took additional pictures, as the weather was slightly better. I also took the opportunity on this third day to figure out the best observation spots and made final decisions on my three locations. This is when I decided to pick a 'wood' setting, close to the abandoned powerhouse, for my third location. I also explored the second basin—the one furthest from the slag heap—a little more thoroughly. Although this third day was a little more structured than the two other days of exploratory observation, I still managed to discover new things. At some point of the walk, I decided to follow the canal. The forest is very dense in that part of the site and I sometimes had trouble moving forward due to the extensive vegetation. I was looking at a badger's burrow when I saw a sofa downhill. As I approached, I realised that the sofa was part of a small shed with a fire (Figure 20). I wish I knew who built this and with what intentions. The site is full of such surprises, making the strangest scenes appear from nowhere.

**Figure 20: A small shed hidden in the woods**



Source: Author's

During these three exploratory days, I saw many places I recognised from when I was a child and though the site seems smaller now than it did then, it has kept all of its magic and wonder. I met so many people; most were extremely friendly and others slightly dangerous but this contributed to the incredible richness of the interactions happening there. These days allowed me to familiarize myself with the site in ways I had not before. They also trained me to look at the site with a researcher's eye.

Structured Observation, Movement Maps, and Slag Heap Users

The exploratory observation days were followed by 60 hours of structured observation. These observations were spread over a month's time, from May 21st till June 24th 2 2012.

There were three selected observation locations, referred to as "Location 1", "Location 2", and "Location 3" (see Figure 4 for the exact position of each location). Each of these locations were observed for a total amount of 20 hours, with four hours for each day of a week except for Tuesday and Thursday (please refer to Chapter II: Methodology for more details).

In this section, the results of the structured observations are explained and analysed. This section is not divided per location. On the contrary, it goes through the main variables one by one. This ensures that the locations are readily comparable for each main variable. These variables are gender, user numbers and age groups to activities observed, 'mode,' and direction of movement. Observations about slag heap usage are also discussed. Overall, the structured observations carried out on site are extremely useful and revealing of the type of activities happening there and the general profile of its users.

1. User Numbers and Gender

The user numbers for each location differ greatly, with Location 1 (former rail line 38) being the most crowded. In total, 681 people were observed on this location, whereas only 14 people were observed on Location 2 and 27 people on Location 3. User numbers for each location also differ according to time, day of the week—whether it is the weekend or not—and according to weather. This summer 2012 has been quite unusually rainy and cold and as a result, I only got to record a few hours of warm and sunny weather for each location. Overall, male users dominate in all three locations except at specific time frames (e.g. location 1 on Wednesdays, see Table **A**).

As can be seen in Table **A** below, Location 1 (Loc. 1) has people spread out quite evenly throughout the week and days with preponderance of people during the weekend. Sunday seems especially popular but it is important to note that it featured two of the nicest summer days of the month. Indeed, the weather was very nice from 8:00 to 9:00 and from 16:00 to 17:00 (these two observation hours being recorded on two different Sundays). Another very important point is the nature of the visit and the profile of the visitors of the 8:00 to 9:00 Saturday and Sunday time slots. On these mornings, there are mostly men (93.7 and 97.5 % respectively) passing by on their bikes. Many of them belong to cycling groups. This can be seen by the matching cycling uniforms they all wear as opposed to everyday western clothing or random sports attire. The age of these men generally varies between 30 and 55 years old (see also Table **D** on age groups).

Overall, there were more men than women observed on Location 1 (73.9% of men). Every hour is dominated by men except for two instances where there were more women. These two observation hours were both on Wednesdays, from 8:00 to 9:00 and from 20:00 to 21:00. The women of Wednesday morning are mostly middle-aged while the ones in the evening are young women (see also Table **D** on age groups). Table **A** shows all the recorded user numbers divided per gender as well as the total amounts for the entire week, each day, the combined time slots, and gender percentages. The numbers refer to the people observed and the numbers in brackets are the percentages. Below the 'total per day' numbers, the percentage of women for each day is also displayed.

**Table A: Location 1 Users numbers and gender**

## Loc. 1

| Time | | Monday | Wednesday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8:00 | women | 5 (35.7) | 6 (60) | 9 (45) | 1 (6.3) | 4 (2.5) | 25 (11.2) |
| 9:00 | men | 9 (64.3) | 4 (40) | 11 (55) | 15 (93.7) | 159 (97.5) | 198 (88.8) |
| 12:00 | women | 5 (29.4) | 2 (33.3) | 4 (44.4) | 13 (35.1) | 5 (33.3) | 29 (34.5) |
| 13:00 | men | 12 (70.6) | 4 (66.7) | 5 (55.6) | 24 (64.9) | 10 (66.7) | 55 (65.5) |
| 16:00 | women | 0 (0) | 5 (15.6) | 4 (11.8) | 11 (28.2) | 60 (40.3) | 80 (30.5) |
| 17:00 | men | 8 (100) | 27 (84.4) | 30 (88.2) | 28 (71.8) | 89 (59.7) | 182 (69.5) |
| 20:00 | women | 5 (29.4) | 25 (59.5) | 11 (39.3) | 3 (17.7) | 0 (0) | 44 (39.3) |
| 21:00 | men | 12 (70.6) | 17 (40.5) | 17 (60.7) | 14 (82.3) | 8 (100) | 68 (60.7) |
| | Total per day: | 56 | 90 | 91 | 109 | 335 | 681 |
| | | (26.8% wo.) | (42.2% wo.) | (30.8% wo.) | (25.7% wo.) | (20.6% wo.) | (26.1 % wo.) |

Note: The numbers refer to the people observed with the percentage in brackets. "Wo." refers to women

There were far less people observed on Location 2. This location is close to Location 1 but is different in terms of landscape and user profile. Instead of being a straight and asphalted road bordered by woods, it is made of numerous dirt paths surrounded by woods, with quite some slopes and an abandoned building left from the colliery days (see Figure 21). It is important to note that despite the low amount of people observed during the structured observation time slots, I observed many changes in the 'settings' from one day to the next, with, for example, new horse shoe and bicycle tire marks and objects that have moved or that have been added.

**Figure 21: Location 2 (Centrale)**



Source: Author's

As can be seen in Table **B**, users are well spread across the days of the week but with more people on Saturday. From the numbers, it also seems that users tend to come to

Location 2 during the middle of the day, rather than early in the morning or late in the evening, with evenings being completely empty. Of course, it is always possible that users of Location 2 prefer coming between 9:00 and 12:00, 13:00 and 16:00, and/or 17:00 and 20:00. However, it is more plausible, based on the user profiles—children, young horse riders, people with dogs, and young motorcyclists among others—observed on Location 2, that people tend to come in the afternoon or on the weekends.

Similarly to Location 1, Location 2 is mostly visited by men, with even a lower percentage of women than Location 1 (21.4% against 26.1%). However, horse riding, which is an important activity on Location 2 (see Table **H**), is dominated by young women.

**Table B: Location 2 Users numbers and gender**

## Loc. 2

| Time | | Monday | Wednesday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|------|------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|-------|
| 8:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (100) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (50) |
| 9:00 | men | 1 (100) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (50) |
| 12:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (20) | 0 (0) | 1 (12.5) |
| 13:00 | men | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 4 (80) | 3 (100) | 7 (87.5) |
| 16:00 | women | 0 (0) | 1 (33.3) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (25) |
| 17:00 | men | 0 (0) | 2 (66.7) | 0 (0) | 1 (100) | 0 (0) | 3 (75) |
| 20:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| 21:00 | men | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| | Total per day: | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 14 |
| | | (0% wo.) | (33.3% wo.) | (100% wo.) | (16.7% wo.) | (0% wo.) | (21.4 % wo.) |

Note: The numbers refer to the people observed with the percentage in brackets. "Wo." refers to women

**Figure 22: Location 3**



Source: Author's

Location 3 is very different than both other locations in terms of dominant user profile, setting, visit times, and activities performed on site. However, one similarity is the preponderance of male users.

The days I was there to observe, no one came in the morning. Most users of Location 3 come during the weekend or on Wednesday afternoon. This is when young people and families are available for activities outside the home as children in Belgium do not go to school on Wednesday afternoons. This fits with the age groups found on Location 3 and the composition of the groups (often an adult with children or groups of children and teenagers) (see also Tables **F** and **L** for more details on age groups and group numbers). Table **C** below displays the user numbers, gender, and when they were present on site. Of course, Table **C** only refers to the people I have seen during my structured observation hours. There were many signs of activity, such as marks in the dirt of different tire sizes and trash dumping, from one day to the next but for which I was not there (similarly to Location 2).

**Table C: Location 3 Users numbers and gender**

**Loc. 3**

| Time | | Monday | Wednesday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|------|------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|-------|
| 8:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| 9:00 | men | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| 12:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (14.3) | 0 (0) | 1 (14.3) |
| 13:00 | men | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 6 (85.7) | 0 (0) | 6 (85.7) |
| 16:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 3 (30) | 2 (28.6) | 5 (26.3) |
| 17:00 | men | 0 (0) | 2 (100) | 0 (0) | 7 (70) | 5 (71.4) | 14 (73.7) |
| 20:00 | women | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| 21:00 | men | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (100) | 0 (0) | 1 (100) |
| | Total per day: | 0 | 2 | 0 | 18 | 7 | 27 |
| | | (0% wo.) | (0% wo.) | (0% wo.) | (22.2% wo.) | (28.6% wo.) | (22.2 % wo.) |

Note: The numbers refer to the people observed with the percentage in brackets. "Wo." refers to women

2. Age Groups

The three tables below (Tables **D**, **E**, and **F** in Appendix A) display the different age groups observed per location, according to days and hours. The dominant age group(s) for each time slot is shown in bold. The numbers displayed in the three tables were collected during the structured observations, where I had to evaluate the age of each passerby. Whereas gender percentages were very similar (see previous section), age group predominance differ consequently among the three locations.

The age group category of 41 to 65 years old is heavily represented in Location 1 (see Table **D** in Appendix A). Table **D** shows how, despite a majority of users aged between 41 and 65 years old across all days and times, younger adults, teenagers, and children are better represented in the afternoon and during the weekend. There were no children or toddlers in the morning during the weekdays except for one but as soon as the day advances and during the weekend, the age groups present diversify and more children can be observed. The strong presence of people of working age (21 to 65 years old) present

on location early in the morning—between 8:00 and 9:00—during the weekdays leads to the estimation that they are on their way to work. Most of these people are cyclers, with bags on their saddle. Wednesday afternoon displays a younger population, mostly women (Location 1, Wednesday 20:00-21:00; also refer to Table **A**). Older people, aged 66 and more, are mostly seen in the late afternoon between 16:00 and 17:00 without difference between weekdays and weekends, except for Sunday morning where they joined the cycling frenzy.

Contrary to Location 1, Location 2 has a more even distribution of age groups across the week, except for toddlers whom were not observed at all. Table **E** in Appendix A displays the different age group categories observed on location according to observation times and days of the week. Location 2 seems differently affected by weather than Location 1. Location 1 always has users despite bad weather but it is clear that as soon as the weather is pleasant, user numbers increase exponentially (see Tables **A** and **D**). Location 2, on the other hand, does not seem to have users on bad days but on pleasant days, user numbers do not seem to increase very much. For example, Sunday from 8:00 to 9:00 at Location 2 had great warm and sunny weather; yet, there were no users observed during that hour (see Tables **B** and **E**). However, as soon as the weather gets better, children can be seen in Location 2. Indeed, Saturday from 12:00 to 13:00, one child and five teenagers—not together in the same group—were observed and the weather was very warm and sunny (see Table **E**). Unfortunately, the weather was generally cold and very wet during the whole month of observation. It is possible that with better weather, more age groups would be represented although it is quite unlikely that toddlers would be observed there due to the impassability of the landscape and the danger of the old building present on site.

Location 3 is quite different than both other locations in terms of age group representation. This location is geographically quite far from the two other locations and has a very steep landscape due to its proximity with the slag heap. This location is predominantly visited by children and teenagers. There were also a couple of adults observed but they were always accompanied by one or more children. Table **F** in Appendix A displays the different age groups present on site during the structured observations hours. Despite the isolation of the place, children and teenagers/young adults seem to enjoy going there for 'fun' sports such as mountain biking, motorcycling, and driving quads (see Table **I** for more details). As mentioned before, there are sometimes accompanied by adults but this was only the case four times with one time being two adults accompanying a group of children (see Table **F** in Appendix A). Another important point is the fact that no one was observed in the 8:00 to 9:00 time slots. It is plausible to assume that some users may pass by Location 3 much earlier in the morning to observe animals or a little later (between 10:00 and 11:00) for hiking; meaning an older age group. Note that there were no seniors observed on site, which was not the case for Location 1 and 2 (see Tables **D** and **E** in Appendix A).

3. Activities Observed

There are recurrent activities performed among the three locations but each location displays different levels in popularity for these activities. The tables in this section display the percentage of each activity per location. It is quite interesting to see how they differ according to location and compare these observations with the already known user numbers, gender, and age groups observations. In addition to common activities, each location has its own uses that are not present in others. These uses are labelled as 'other' in Tables **G**, **H**, and **I** and will be specified in the text.

**Table G: Location 1 Activities Observed**
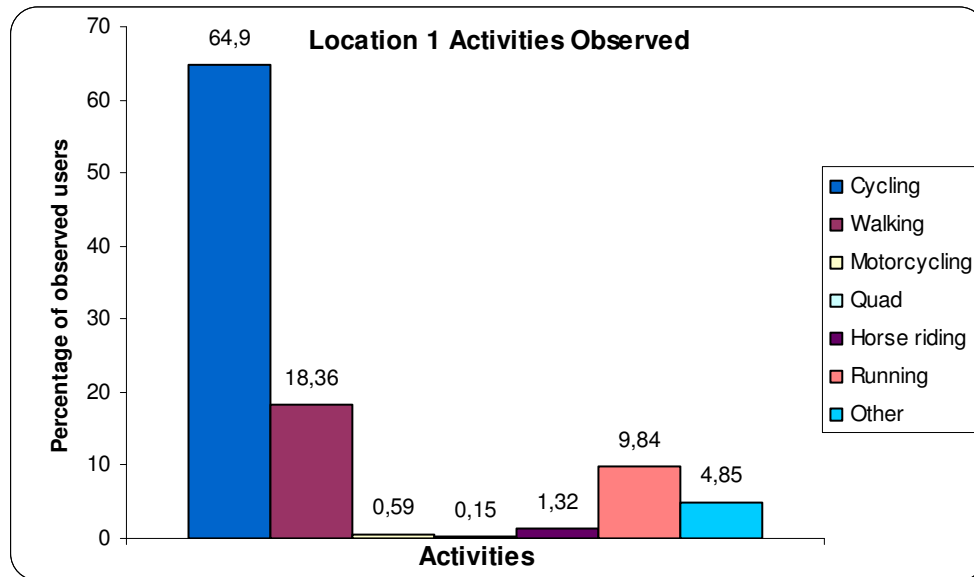


Location 1 has a predominance of cyclers (64.90%), followed by walkers (18.36%). Running, or jogging, comes in third place with 9.84% (see Table **G** above). The rest of the percentages are divided between 'other' (a little less than 5 %) and horse riding, motorcycling, and driving quads. 'Other' in Location 1 refers mostly to sitting on a bench and talking, but it also includes maintenance, wearing roller skates, being on a scooter, or being in a pram.

From these observations, it is clear that Location 1 is not a place where people stay still for a long time, although there is a group of men who often linger on the benches when the weather is good in the evening (see Table **G**). On the contrary, it is a place of movement and its main activities require almost constant movement (e.g. walking, cycling, running…). People sometimes stop to talk or sit on benches but not to, for example, read or eat their lunch (unless they are on a big cycling trip and taking a break). As there are only two small benches, lingering is not encouraged in this location, especially considering that there are sometimes large amounts of people on location at the same time (see Table **A**).
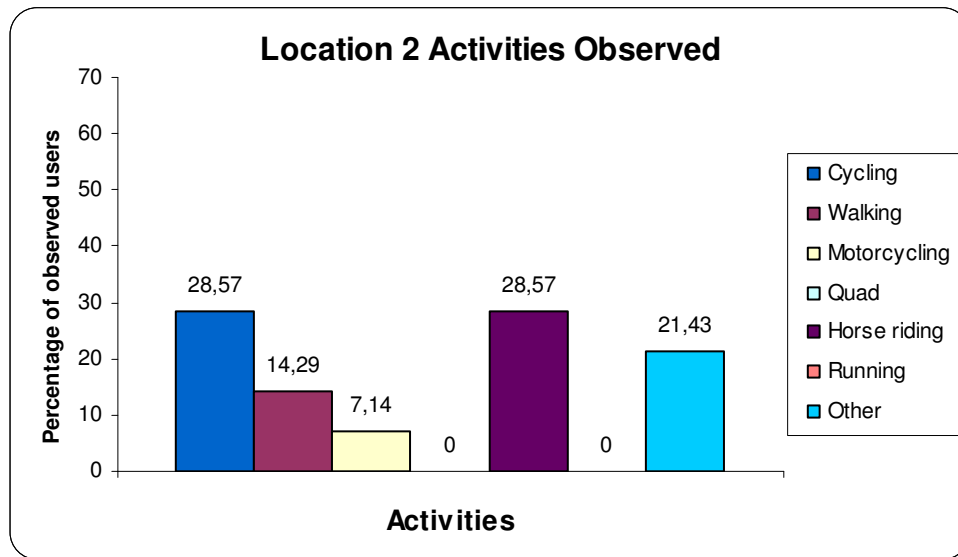
The two activities most observed at Location 2 are cycling and horse riding (both 28.57%) (see Table **H** above). It is no surprise that horse riding would be one of the most observed activities as there is a riding school a hundred meters from Location 2. The horse riders passing by Location 2 are always quite young and it is assumable that they are crossing Location 2 to go in the woods across the former rail line (see Figures 4 and 21).

In third comes the 'other' category. This is very specific to Location 2 in the sense that it is the location that seems to have more 'random' uses than the other two locations. For example, the three men I observed on Sunday around noon were playing with small radio-controlled cars. There are also other uses that are directly observable although the users themselves are not seen. One example is the graffiti on both the inside and the outside walls of the abandoned building on Location 2 (see Figure 23 below). Other unusual activities include building wooden shelters, hosting homeless people, and playing games. Walking and motorcycling (14.29% and 7.14% respectively) are the last two activities observed on site. There were no joggers or quad drivers observed, although these activities would not be out of place there (especially jogging). The activities performed in this location are more evenly distributed than those of Location 1. In addition, it is actually possible to stay there for a while without having to be in constant movement. The place is almost inviting the user to stay a little, visit the building or listen to the sounds of the small forest.

**Figure 23: Examples of graffiti in the old power house**



Source: Author's

**Table I: Location 3 Activities Observed**
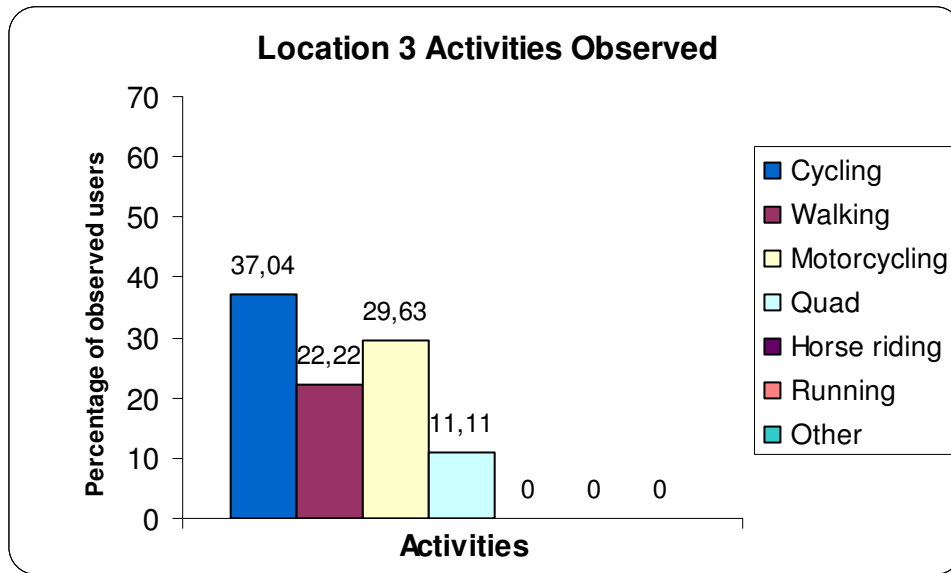


The structured observation of Location 3 showed that the main activities its users perform are cycling (37.04%), motorcycling (19.63%), walking (22.22%), and driving quads (11.11%) (see Table **I**). In this particular case, cycling would be more accurately referred to as mountain biking and walking would be best called hiking. I have not observed any joggers or people carrying random or different activities there. In addition, I have not seen any horse riders but I have observed numerous horse shoe marks in the dirt of Location 3's paths. I have also observed a lot of waste dumping and even some small hand made dams in the clay-like dirt where there is a huge puddle of water. I also observed many motorcycle and quad tire marks but did not see so many motorcycles or quads. One potential explanation is that these users have different preferred time frames to come on site. Twice, as I was on my way to the observation spot nearby, I came across young men in a group of three. They were in the middle of nowhere discussing very quietly and secretly. I have also come across two boys in a car in the middle of the path not far away from my observation spot. I do not know what these boys and young men were doing but it seemed like a good spot not to be seen and they certainly seemed concerned that I was passing by. I could observe this by looking at how their body language changed as soon as they saw me—for example, by suddenly parting and breaking their circle.

Overall, Location 3 is used by young people for high sensation activities (mountain biking, motorcycling, and driving a quad) and for family hiking or biking trips. Unlike at Location 1 and 2, I have not observed at Location 3 any 'functional' activities such as crossing over on one's way to 'point B'.

4. "Mode"

Before going into details on how people move within these spaces, their preferred "mode' must be discussed. In this particular case, "mode" refers to whether users come alone or in groups. This completes the information on the activities they like to pursue on site and

hints at the reasons they come to this specific site for these activities. Tables **J**, **M**, and **N** display the 'modes' seen during the structured observations for the three locations, by showing how many of each group type (i.e. groups of one, two, three or more people) was observed. As will be seen, there are clear differences among the three locations.

Location 1 has the biggest variety in group types (see Table **J** below). The majority of groups are 'groups' of one person (276 people). Groups of two come in second place (98 groups) and there were 29 groups of three people. In addition, there were also several groups of four, five, six, and seven people (see Table **J**). Once, a group of 19 people was observed. This was during the Sunday 8:00 to 9:00 time slot and it was a group of male cyclists. The bigger groups (six people or more) were all cyclists except for one group that was a family of six.

**Table J: Location 1 Observed Mode**
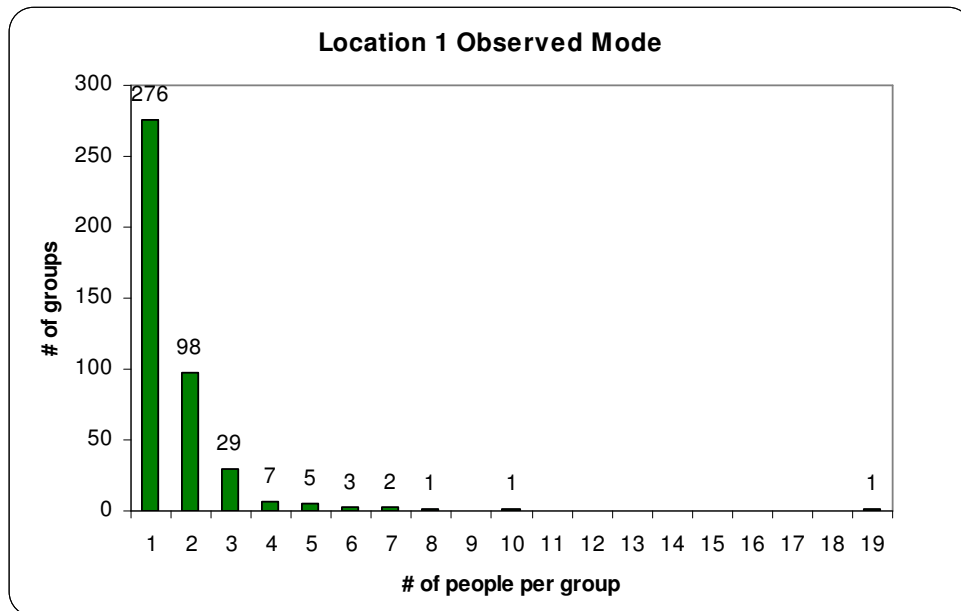


Table **J** displays the different modes for all 20 hours, meaning the entire week. However, the modes observable on Location 1 are quite different depending on whether it is the weekend or not. To exemplify this, Tables **K** and **L** were made using the data of a working day and of a weekend day during the same time period (see below). Table **K** presents the data for Wednesday 16:00 to 17:00 and Table **M** presents the data for Sunday 16:00 to 17:00. These two tables are good examples of how different group composition is depending on the time of the week. Table **K** shows a very typical afternoon with common weather (wet and grey). There were only three different combinations of group composition and the majority of users, 23 people (71.9%) were alone. Three groups of two and one group of three were also observed.

**Table K: Location 1 Wednesday 16:00-17:00 Mode**

**Location 1 Wednesday 16:00-17:00**

A bar chart titled "Location 1 Wednesday 16:00-17:00" with y-axis "# of groups" (0 to 25) and x-axis "# of people per group". Bars: 1 person = 23, 2 people = 3, 3 people = 1.
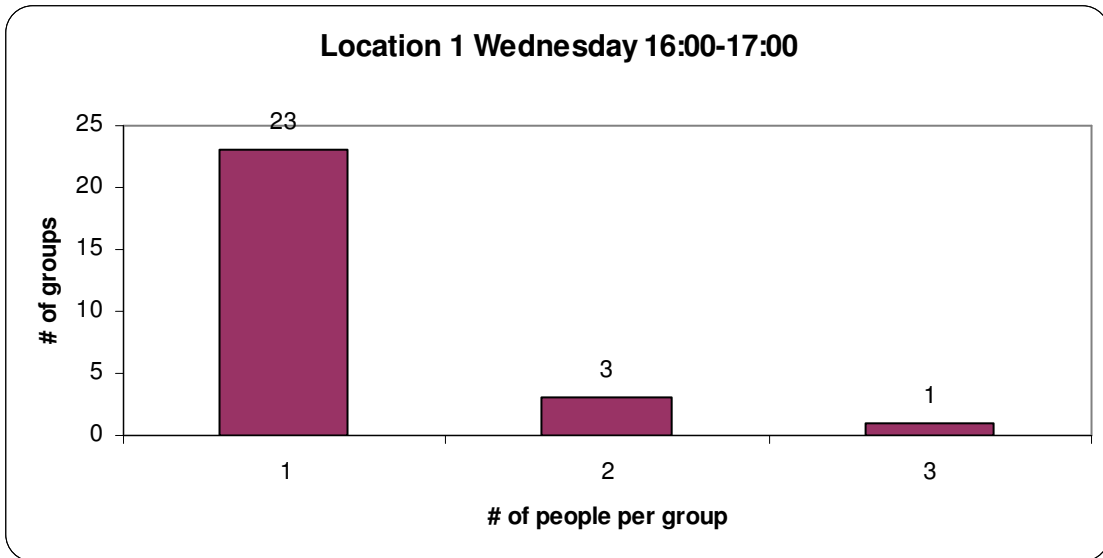
**Table L: Location 1 Sunday 16:00-17:00 Mode**

**Location 1 Sunday 16:00-17:00**

A bar chart titled "Location 1 Sunday 16:00-17:00" with y-axis "# of groups" (0 to 40) and x-axis "# of people per group". Bars: 1 person = 26, 2 people = 36, 3 people = 7, 4 people = 3, 5 people = 1, 6 people = 1, 7 people = 1.
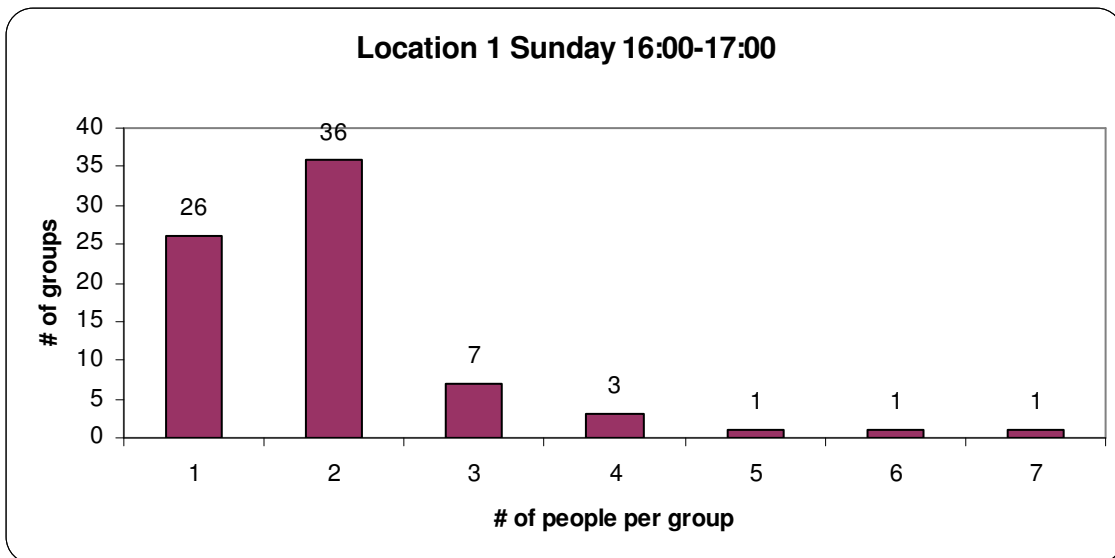
Table **L** displays the data for Sunday 16:00-17:00. Contrary to Wednesday at the same time, Sunday 16:00-17:00 has more than three group combinations (seven in total). Coming alone is not the main 'mode' and 48.3% of the people came in groups of two (see Table **L** above). The variety of group composition shown in Table **L** shows well how weekends and an agreeable weather drastically change the profile of Location 1 users.

Location 2 never displayed the same variety in group composition as Location 1 did. Table **M** below shows all 'modes' for the 20 hours of observation (i.e. the full week).

There were only three group combinations observed with the majority of people being on their own. There was also one group of two and one of three users. The group of two were two children on bikes and the group of three were the three men playing with the radio-controlled cars (see also the section on the activities observed).

**Table M: Location 2 Observed Mode**
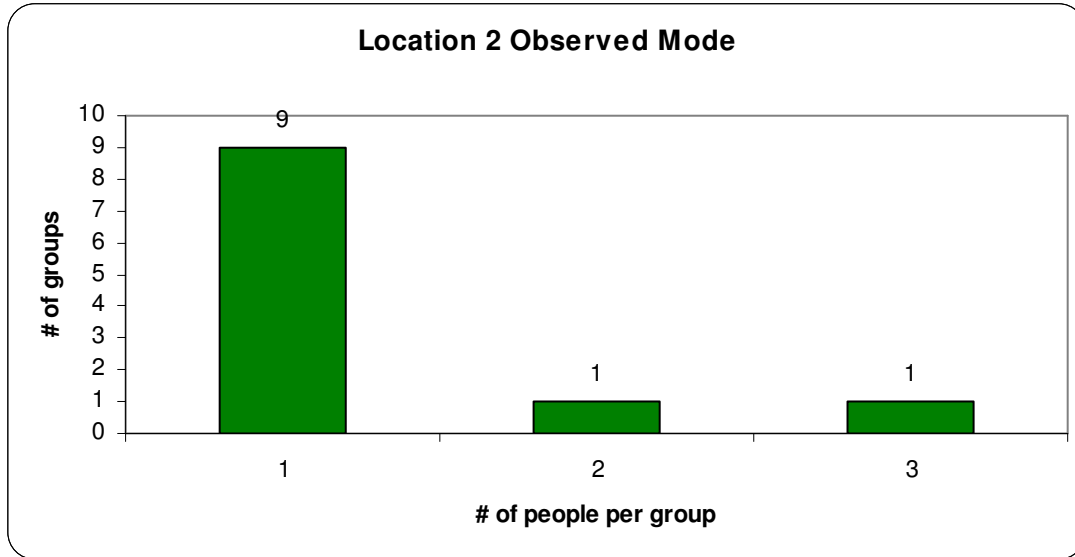


The different 'modes' observed at Location 3 are displayed in Table **N** below. This table compiles all the data for the full week of observation at Location 3. Again, the group combinations found at this location are very different than those found at Location 1 and Location 2, just as Location 2 was very different from Location 1 (see Tables **J** and **M**). Location 3 shows quite a variety of group composition but unlike Location 1, it does not have an overall majority of groups of one person; it was actually quite the contrary, as only one user was seen alone. The most popular group composition is of two people, closely followed by groups of three and groups of five. There was also one group of four observed.

The fact that there was a variety of group sizes but almost no one alone (3.7%) is in accordance with what has been learned in the previous sections (user profile and activities performed). Indeed, the fact that almost no one is found alone on Location 3 emphasises the socialising aspect of the activities done there. The results of Table **N** exemplify this well. As was mentioned in previous sections, Location 3 is primarily visited by children, teenagers and families. The activities performed there are often more attractive and 'fun' when done in a group, such as driving motorcycles or having a hiking trip.

So far, the structured observation has permitted us to see what kind of people use which location and for what purposes. The results show that there are mostly men between the age of 41 and 65 years old who use the former Hasard site. It was also demonstrated that although the entire site is used by the people, there are some areas more frequented than others. For example, the Ligne 38 is sometimes extremely busy, while this has not been observed for the other locations. Activities were also distributed differently depending on

the location. For example, there were many cyclists on the Ligne 38 while Location 2 had more diversity and 'random' uses. Location 3, on the other hand, was mostly used for slightly more 'extreme' sports such as motocross and quad driving. This shows that the Hasard site does not have a homogeneous user population. Rather, its different areas are used by different people. These three areas have different landscape features that are congruent with the uses performed there. For example, Location 3 has many steep slopes while Location 2 stages an old building and forest-like environment and Location 1 is a straight, asphalted and flat path.

**Table N: Location 3 Observed Mode**
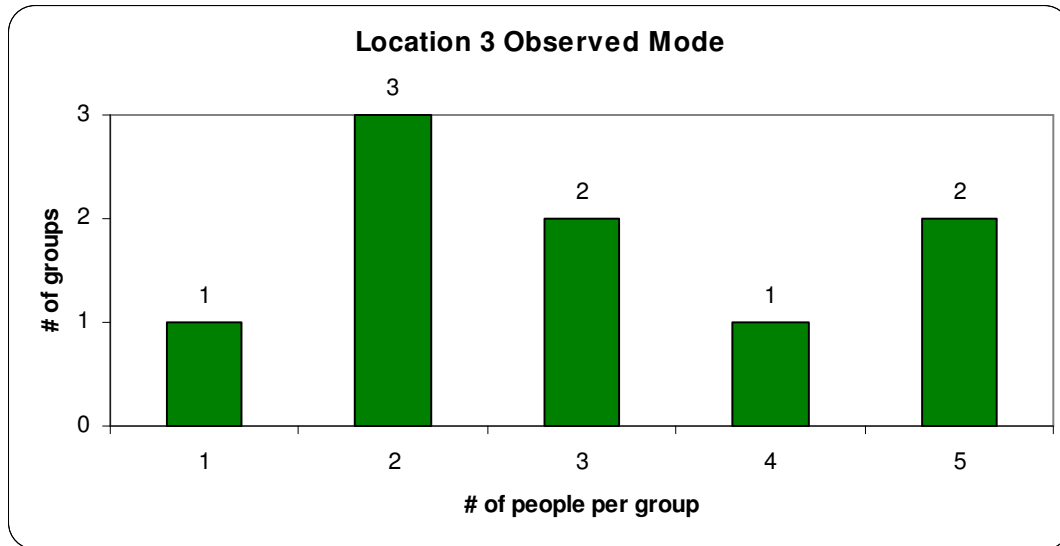


5. Movement Maps

How people move, and when, within a space is also indicative of their use of, and relationship with, it. During the 60 hours of structured observation, I have observed changes in direction of movement and spatial use of the site. The movement maps below exemplify these changes (see Figures below). The blue arrows give the direction of movement and are proportional to the number of people going in that direction. Exact numbers will be given in the text. Circles identify users sitting or standing still and a red cross in each figure shows where I was positioned for observing. The colour coding of all movement maps is explained in the legend below (Table **O**).

Figure 24 shows the movement of Location 1 users from Monday to Friday (four hours of data per day, excluding Tuesday and Thursday). There are two main arrows going following the asphalted path. The arrow pointed at the right goes towards Micheroux, a small town of Soumagne, and the arrow pointed at the left goes in the direction of Retinne, which is part of the Fléron municipality. There are also several smaller arrows coming to and going from those two larger ones. These smaller arrows show to what extent the people observed use the smaller paths of black dirt (also called 'schlamm' in French). As can be seen in the figure, the majority of the users went straight in the

direction of Micheroux. This amounts to 142 people, while there were only 95 people crossing the site straight to Retinne.

**Figure 24: Location 1 Monday to Friday Movement Map**
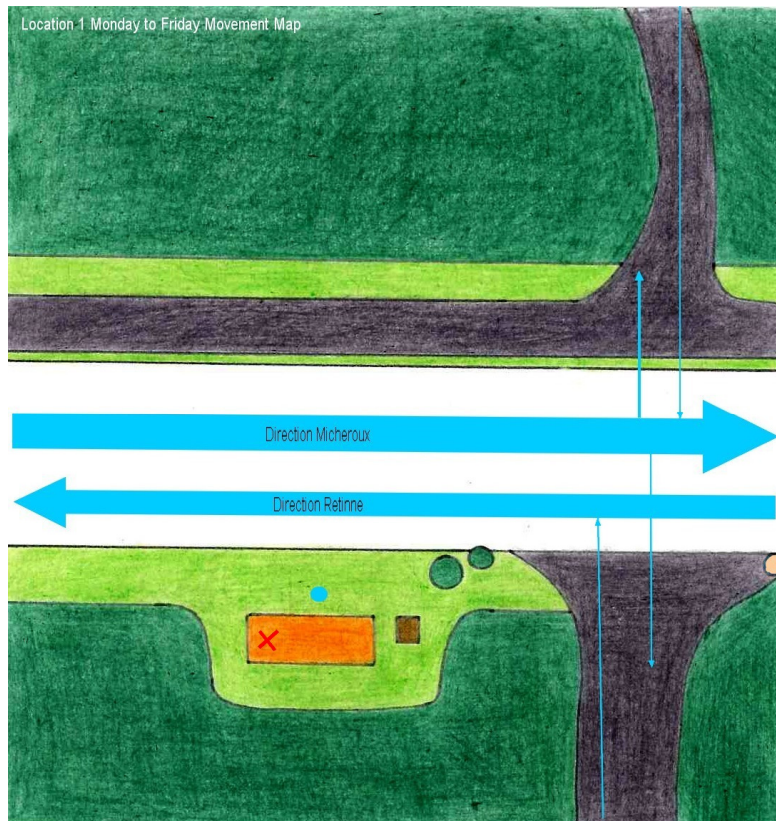
**Table O: Movement Maps Legend**



In addition to these numbers, there were several people who did not follow the flow completely and either left the larger arrows to enter one of the smaller paths or joined the main arrows coming from one of these smaller paths. Following the direction of Micheroux, five people left the main path to turn to their left and one person left it turning to the right. Moreover, one person joined the Micheroux arrow, coming from the 'upper' dirt path. Only one person joined the Retinne arrow coming from the 'lower' dirt path. There were also four people gathered around the bench I was on (see Figure 25). Overall, 249 people were observed.

Figure 26 below displays the movement flows for Location 1 during the weekend (Saturday and Sunday).

This movement map shows how reversed the two main flows are compared to working days. Indeed, in this figure, the main arrow goes straight in the direction of Retinne, with 264 people. In comparison, there are only 153 people going straight, in the direction of Micheroux. In addition to these numbers, two people joined the Retinne arrow from the upper dirt path. Two other people left the Retinne arrow to turn right in the upper dirt path and one person left it to turn left in the lower dirt path. There was only one person who left the Micheroux arrow to turn right into to lower dirt path. I also observed seven people gathered around the bench (two separate groups) talking and, for

three of them, drinking beer and two people standing in the middle of the asphalted rail line 38 taking pictures of each other (see Figure 25 ). Four hundred and thirty two people were observed in total during the eight hours of weekend observation.

**Figure 25: Observation Location 1 (bench on Ligne 38)**



Source: Author's

**Figure 26: Location 1 Weekend Movement Map**
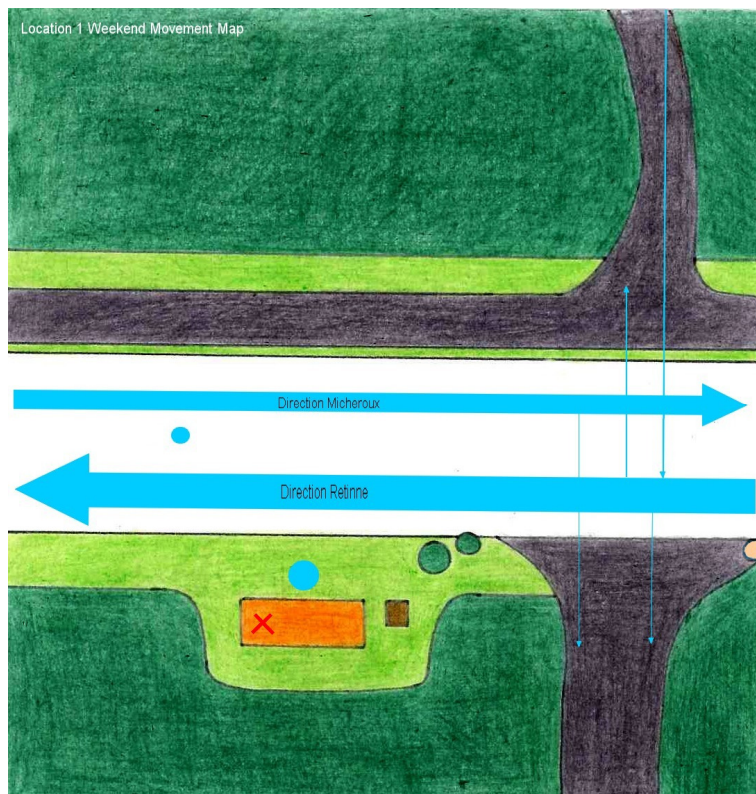
Figure 27 (see below) shows the different movements of Location 2 users, between Monday and Friday (i.e. 12 hours of observation in total). There were three people who came from Ligne 38; two of these turned right after the old building and one took the path towards the riding school. There were also two people coming from the path of the riding school towards Ligne 38. As can be seen, the use of the whole space is limited and mostly linear. This changes during the weekend.

**Figure 27: Location 2 Monday to Friday Movement Map**
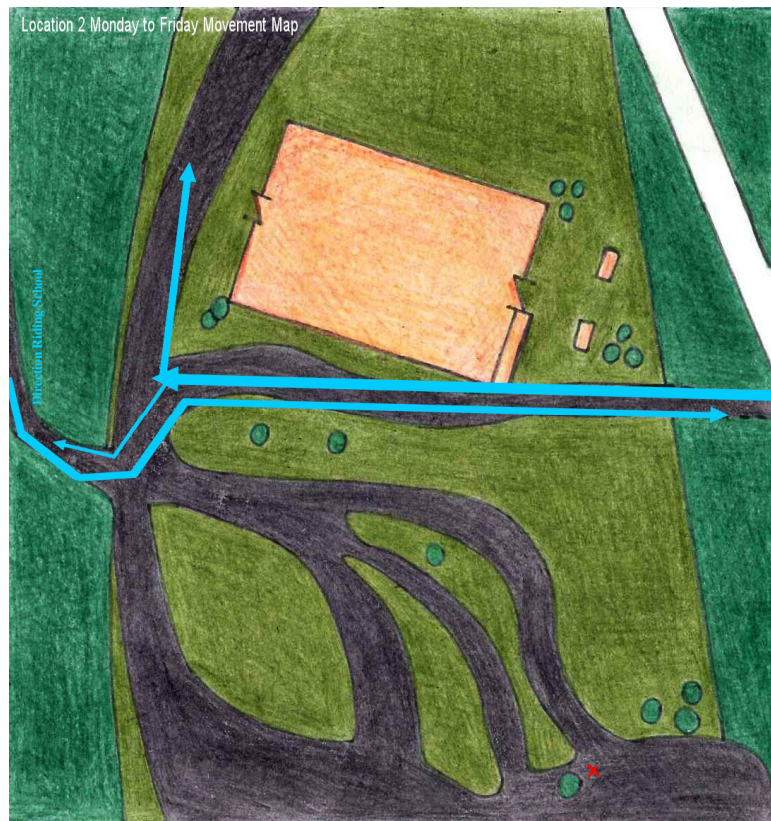


During the weekend, I observed changes in how people used the space. Three movement maps were made to exemplify this change. The first two maps are of Saturday afternoon from 12:00 to 13:00 and from 16:00 to 17:00. The last map is of Sunday from 12:00 till 13:00.

Figure 28 shows how differently the space is used over only one hour compared to a full week (12 hours of observation). The user flows are not just movement from A to B. As can be seen, one user has been circling with his motorcycle using the smaller and steep paths of black dirt. Of the three people coming from the riding school path, one turned left, leaving the old building to his right, and the other two people went towards Ligne 38. There was also one person who came from the upper path and turned right towards the riding school.

On another Saturday, between 16:00 and 17:00, the use of space is similar to the one displayed in Figure 28. Unlike the Monday to Friday movement map, the use of the space

is not as linear (see Figure 29 below). There was only one person observed, a cyclist, but he clearly made use of the little bumps and paths of the site. One thing that is not shown on the map is that after half an hour of disappearing behind the building by taking the upper path, the cyclist came back and circled the location once more then leaving towards Ligne 38. He seemed to have made his own little circuit using the landscape for his sporting exercise.

**Figure 28: Location 2 Saturday 12:00-13:00 Movement Map**
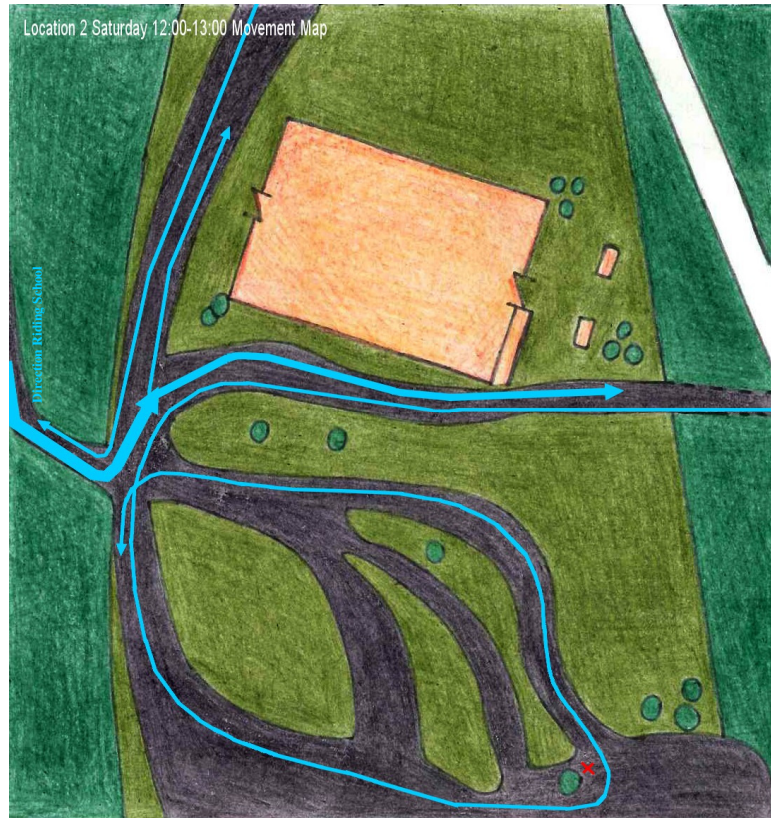


The last movement map of Location 2 shows another different use of the space. As can be seen in Figure 30, three men came from the riding school path and stopped in the middle of the location. They were carrying boxes full of objects and started setting up. While they stayed in the middle of the location, their small radio-controlled cars covered almost every square meter of the location, following dirt paths, falling down steep slopes, bumping against rocks. The three men, despite not moving, positively explored the entire space available to them through their cars. They were the ones in control and they made full use of all the landscape features available to them.

**Figure 29: Location 2 Saturday 16:00-17:00 Movement Map**



Location 2 Saturday 16:00-17:00 Movement Map

**Figure 30: Location 2 Sunday 12:00-13:00 Movement Map**



Location 2 Sunday 12:00 - 13:00 Movement Map
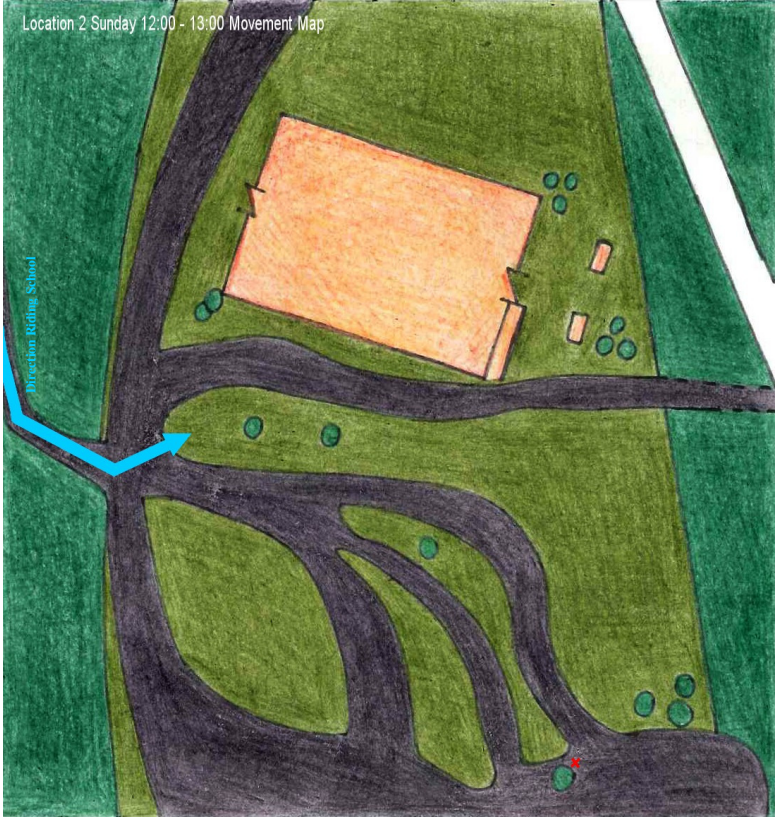
The last movement map displays the flows of users for Location 3 from Saturday till Sunday (the weekend) (see Figure 31 below). No movement map was made of the week as the location was barely used during that time (only once by two motorcyclists crossing the map vertically from bottom to top. However, the movement flows for the weekend are quite interesting. The main movement arrow (from the bottom till the top of the map) shows that 13 users coming from the direction of the slag heap went straight ahead towards a 'real' street, rue Rôthys, located outside the private property (not shown on this map but located 'above' it). Also coming from the slag heap, 4 teenagers made a circuit, going towards the larger path on the far upper left corner of the map and coming back down with their motorcycles from the extremely steep dirt path located on the right of the map (see Figure 31). Their movement arrows can be recognised by their dotted lines. Three younger children on bikes, standing in the middle of the location (represented on the map by a circle) were observing them taking turns at the two motorcycles. After a couple turns, they moved on towards the slag heap. The map also shows two people coming from the upper left corner of the map and crossing the puddle of water on quads. Another three people, on foot, coming from the rue Rôthys, crossed the location taking the path towards the slag heap. In total, 25 people were observed during the weekend observation hours. The use of the space is well distributed with the path from the slag heap towards the rue Rôthys being the most used. As mentioned above in this chapter, Location 3 is quite different from the two other locations in the sense that it cannot be used for utilitarian purposes (such as being used as a shortcut to go somewhere). The people observed there are all there for leisure purposes and this is reflected in the concentration of users during the weekend and the appropriation of the entire space available (also found to a lesser extent in Location 2).

**Figure 31: Location 3 Saturday and Sunday Movement Map**
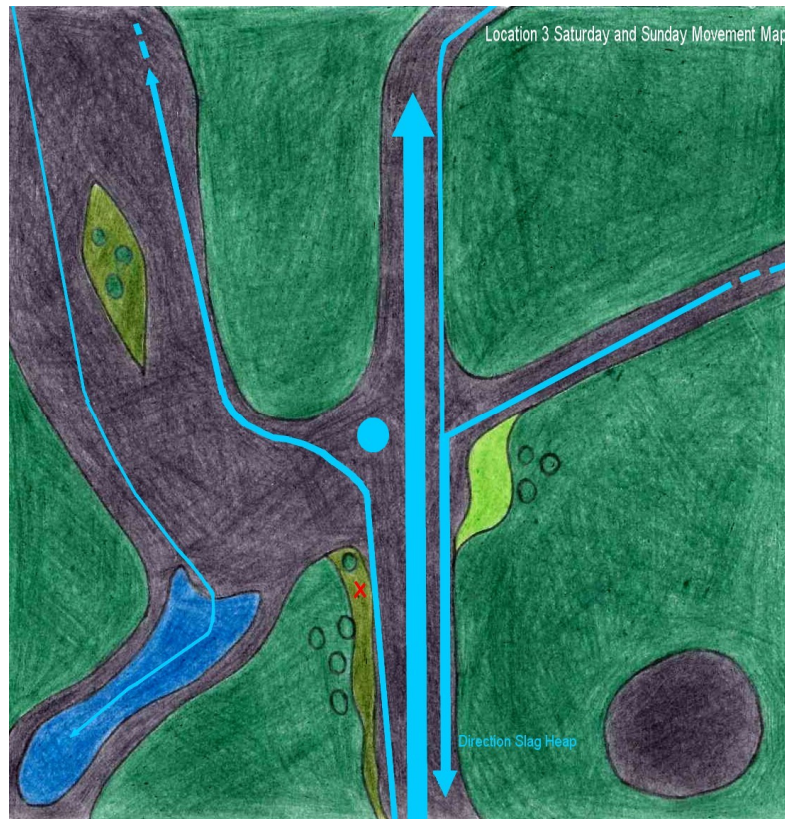
## 6. Slag Heap User Numbers

As mentioned before, in addition to the 60 hours of structured observations, I gathered data on the users of the slag heap. I asked the help of two residents of the rue de la Chapelle to gather data as to have a better overview when I am not there (see Figure 4).

Over a period of three months, from May 13th till August 8th, they wrote down every time they saw someone on the slag heap (when I was not on site to do it myself). This gives a good idea of how often the slag heap is used, when, and what type of people go there (groups, people on foot, motorcyclists, etcetera). The results are shown on the next page in Table P. This table displays the month, day, time of the day, and the type of user including how many are seen over that particular time period. Weekends are highlighted in green. Each triangle colour refers to a different type of user, blue being for people on foot, green for cyclists, and red for motorcyclists.

The table shows that most of the visits seem clustered around weekends and holidays. Weather also plays an important part; as soon as the weather clears a little, people start going up again. The data also reveals that most of the users are people on foot and midday seems the best time to observe someone up the heap. Most of the time people are alone or in small groups but sometimes, especially when on foot, there is a big group of people going up the slag heap. This is consistent with the knowledge that there are some guide tours organised by local naturalists (see section below on users for more details on this particular point).

Despite hikers being the most widely observed, there were also a noticeable number of motorcyclists seen up there and even cyclists were seen on two instances. The slag heap presents two advantages that are looked for by these user types. First, the view is quite extraordinary from up there, the Hasard slag heap being the highest of Wallonia ( more or less 263 meters above sea level in addition to 92 meters of height) and when the sky is clear, one can see as far as the Netherlands (Natagora, 2006). It has real touristic appeal. In addition, the challenging slopes and the hilly landscape of the heap make it a must-go location for all thrill-seeking motorcyclists, cyclists, and hikers. Overall, the data shows that despite the impracticability of reaching the slag heap and the widely-known existing danger, there are still many people climbing up for a number of activities and the slag heap is an attraction in its own right for both local people and foreign visitors.

**Table P: Hasard Slag Heap  User Numbers**

| | Date | 8:00-12:00 | 12:00-17:00 | 17:00-22:00 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Sun 13 | | | 2▲ (Hikers) |
| | Mon 14 | | | 4▲ (Hikers) |
| | Tue 15 | | | |
| | Wed 16 | | | |
| | Thu 17 | | | |
| | Fri 18 | | | |
| | Sat 19 | | 2▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sun 20 | | | |
| | Mon 21 | | | |
| | Tue 22 | | | |
| | Wed 23 | | | |
| | Thu 24 | | | 4▲ (Hikers) |
| | Fri 25 | | 1▲ (Motorcyclers) | |
| | Sat 26 | 1▲ (Motorcyclers) 1▲ (Hikers) | | 2▲ (Hikers) |
| | Sun 27 | | | 1▲ (Motorcyclers) |
| | Mon 28 | | 2▲ (Cyclers) | 4▲ (Hikers) |
| | Tue 29 | | | |
| | Wed 30 | | | |
| | Thu 31 | | | |
| June | Fri 1 | 7▲ (Hikers) | | |
| | Sat 2 | 1▲ (Hikers) | 3▲ (Hikers) 2▲ (Motorcyclers) | 2▲ (Hikers) |
| | Sun 3 | | | |
| | Mon 4 | | | |
| | Tue 5 | | | |
| | Wed 6 | | | |
| | Thu 7 | | | |
| | Fri 8 | | | |
| | Sat 9 | | | 1▲ (Hikers) |
| | Sun 10 | | 3▲ (Cyclers) 2▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Mon 11 | | | |
| | Tue 12 | | | |
| | Wed 13 | | | |
| | Thu 14 | | | |
| | Fri 15 | | | |
| | Sat 16 | | | |
| | Sun 17 | | | |
| | Mon 18 | 1▲ (Hikers) | | |
| | Tue 19 | | | |
| | Wed 20 | | | |
| | Thu 21 | | | |
| | Fri 22 | | | |
| | Sat 23 | | 1▲ (Motorcyclers) 2▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sun 24 | | | |
| | Mon 25 | | | 1▲ (Hikers) |
| | Tue 26 | | | 1▲ (Hikers) |
| | Wed 27 | | | |
| | Thu 28 | | 1▲ (Hikers) | 4▲ (Motorcyclers) |
| | Fri 29 | | | |
| | Sat 30 | | | |

| | Date | 8:00-12:00 | 12:00-17:00 | 17:00-22:00 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| July | Sun 1 | | | |
| | Mon 2 | | | 2▲ (Hikers) |
| | Tue 3 | | | |
| | Wed 4 | | | 1▲ (Hikers) |
| | Thu 5 | | | |
| | Fri 6 | | 2▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sat 7 | 2▲ (Motorcyclers) 2▲ (Hikers) | 1▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sun 8 | | | |
| | Mon 9 | | 1▲ (Hikers) | 1▲ (Hikers) |
| | Tue 10 | | | |
| | Wed 11 | | | |
| | Thu 12 | | | |
| | Fri 13 | | | |
| | Sat 14 | | | 4▲ (Hikers) |
| | Sun 15 | | | |
| | Mon 16 | | 1▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Tue 17 | | | |
| | Wed 18 | | | |
| | Thu 19 | | | |
| | Fri 20 | | | |
| | Sat 21 | | 3▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sun 22 | | 4▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Mon 23 | | 2▲ (Hikers) | 2▲ (Hikers) |
| | Tue 24 | | | |
| | Wed 25 | | 4▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Thu 26 | | 4▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Fri 27 | | | |
| | Sat 28 | | | |
| | Sun 29 | | | |
| | Mon 30 | | | |
| | Tue 31 | | | |
| August | Wed 1 | | 1▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Thu 2 | 1▲ (Hikers) | | |
| | Fri 3 | | 9▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sat 4 | | 4▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Sun 5 | | 1▲ (Hikers) | 1▲ (Motorcyclers) 1▲ (Hikers) |
| | Mon 6 | | 1▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Tue 7 | | 2▲ (Hikers) | |
| | Wed 8 | | 6▲ (Hikers) | |

Legend:
▲ Hikers (blue)
▲ Cyclers (green)
▲ Motorcyclers (red)

Door-to-door Interviews

While collecting data for the structured observations, I also went for several afternoons to the rue du Fort in order to interview the residents. I made sure to go on Wednesday afternoons and on Saturdays as to put the most chances of a high response rate on my side, as well as to collect contributions from younger residents (i.e. children and teenagers). It was important for me to have as many interviews and from a wide range of people. In the end, 16 people agreed to talk to me. Often, others—grandchildren, friends, spouse—were listening to the interview and often helping with the translation as many of the residents speak French as a second or third language. This section is structured according to the main themes of the interview form. It follows the main topics covered in the interviews, comparing what residents say on the same topic. It is a natural way to present the data and makes the section flow as a conversation between the researcher and the participants.

The rue du Fort is a long, sinuous street, caught in between the slag heap and the bank of the former basins (see Figure 31). Until not so long ago, this bank was covered in trees but these were cut between December and March of this year (Salmon, 2012). My main objectives, during these interviews, were to know how the residents used the place, what they thought about it, and if they had any personal connection or emotional attachment to it (see the details of the interview form in the appendix). I especially wanted to a get a sense of what it meant to them to be living there; to be *surrounded* by and *within* the site.

After careful inspection of the data, I noticed that the 16 respondents could be separated in three groups; those who have lived there for less than 10 years, those who have lived there between 10 and 20 years and those who have been there for more than 20 years. The years lived in the street seem to be correlated with different views, uses, emotions, and perceptions of the site and the challenges facing it. Although there is certainly some overlaps between these groups, separating the respondents into three main groups helps identifying general trends in user responses and profile. This facilitates analysis. Table Q simply displays the three different groups, including the respondents' identifier (two initials), their gender, age, and years lived in the street. The identifiers do not allow for recognition of the respondents' identity (anonymous identifiers). The two initials are arbitrary letters chosen by me.

There were six women and 10 men interviewed. The ages range between 13 and 73 years old. The first group shown on the top of the table has been living in the street for less than 10 years (ranging from one and a half to six years). Their age range, 25-40, is very uniform and unlike the two other groups. Indeed, there is no one in that range in the other groups. The second group, those who lived for 10 to 20 years in the street, is composed of younger people, who have lived there their entire life, and of people in their early fifties. The third group, who has been living in the street for more than 20 years (42 years being the highest), is older with a mean age of 63 years old. A.O., at the bottom of the table, is not in a group because he did not divulge the number of years he has been living in the street for.

**Table Q: Identifier and Characteristics of Residents**

| Identifier | Age | Gender | Years lived |
|---|---|---|---|
| S.Y. | 26 | male | 1.5 |
| S.E. | 31 | male | 2 |
| S.A. | 40 | female | 3 |
| A.L | 33 | female | 6 |
| M.R | 26 | female | 1 |
| C.O | 39 | male | 5 |
| | | | |
| H.A. | 19 | female | 19 |
| S.D | 19 | female | 19 |
| B.K. | 13 | male | 13 |
| O.N. | 46 | male | 18 |
| C.G. | 52 | male | 20 |
| | | | |
| M.A. | 53 | female | 28 |
| A.S. | 57 | male | 30 |
| P.R. | 73 | male | 35 |
| A.N. | 68 | male | 42 |
| | | | |
| A.O. | 60 | male | unknown |

Special attention should be given to these three clusters, especially when investigating emotional attachment and personal connection with the site. Residents living there for less than 10 years all denied having any personal connection or special bond with the location. Some simply said they did not think the place represented anything in particular to them. For example, S.Y. told me that he did not feel like he had any special emotional or historical connection to the place because he came from another village. However, he was very proud to mention that he had bought the house on his own; and in that sense, this has created a connection between the place, the first home he owns, and himself (Hull et al., 1994). M.R. said she did not have any strong bonds with the place but that her partner, who has been living in the house for a year longer than she has, used to play in the woods when he was a child. He was next to her when she told me this and he instantly reacted with a large smile, saying they had had really great times there as children. A.L. told me she was not there when it was a colliery and so had no special connection with the place when first moving in but that it has grown on her over time and that she really enjoys living there. She said "Je m'y plais bien, c'est entouré par la nature[11]".

The response of those who have been living in the street between 10 and 20 years was quite different. First of all, they were all much more talkative when it came to personal attachment or lack thereof. C.G., when asked if the place represented anything in particular to him or his family, said "Avant, c'était le Charbonnage[12]". He said this as if he had answered it all and did not want to say anything more about it. But when talking about the state of the site, he started being all talkative about how, at this point he would

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[11] "I enjoy living here; it is surrounded by nature"
[12] "Before, it was the Colliery"

not care so much if the place was to disappear completely. He is getting tired of this highway business and just wishes they would get over with it. But when asked about his feelings about the street, he talked very fondly of it. He said the street was very pleasant and quiet, and that neighbours were really nice. He said "la rue est belle[13]". O.N. said that he felt really positive about the place. He said that when thinking of the site and his street, he only felt good things. He has been living here ever since he moved to Belgium, 18 years ago. He said "C'est beau, le quartier est calme, les gens sont biens et les voisins surtout[14]". The last three residents who fall in the 10 to 20 years cluster are all younger than 20 years old (19, 19, and 13). H.A. and S.D. are both 19 year old girls who have been living there for their whole life but they have a radically different opinion on their personal attachment or emotional bond with the street and the site. H.A told me that the site represented a lot to her and her family. Her grandfather worked at the colliery and most of her family lives in the street (her aunts, uncles, cousins, parents, and grandparents), and she spend her entire childhood there. She used to play in the woods and on the slag heap a lot as a child. She loves the street because she knows "tout le monde[15]" and the neighbours are really nice people. She also told me that she believes that older people must have an even stronger emotional connection with the street and the site as many of them knew the Colliery. She told me she felt like there was "une histoire dans la rue; le terril rappelle ce qu'il s'est passé ici[16]". S.D.'s grandfather also worked at the Colliery and her father has been living in the street for more than 40 years. However, she feels entirely different about the former industrial site and the rue du Fort than H.A. does. She said that despite the personal link her family had with the site and its past, she did not feel particularly attached to the site or the street. She told me she kind of liked the slag heap except that it was really useless and "gâche la vue[17]," but really, it would not really matter to her if the site and the houses were destroyed for the construction of the highway. In fact, she does not really care about the highway because as soon as she can, she will go live more in the centre. Here, she said, "il ne se passe rien[18]".

In the third group—residents who have lived in the street for more than 20 years—the men all mentioned some personal connection or emotional bond with the site but the woman, M.A., said "je m'en fous[19]". Despite being polite, she was quite aggressive in the way she talked about it all while answering my questions. I felt like she was not as indifferent as she affirmed but that she was clearly sick of the whole situation, especially concerning the poor maintenance of the site (dangerous trees threatening to fall on the houses) and the uncertainty surrounding the construction, or not, of the highway. A.S., who has been living there for 30 years, proved to be the one most emotionally attached to the site. He was very happy to tell me stories of how he used to play there as a child, ice skating on the basins during winter, playing everywhere on the site as soon as it was open back in the seventies. His father was a miner for 33 years. A.S. has lived all his life there and raised his children there as well. He said the place really meant something

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[13] "The street is beautiful"
[14] "It is beautiful, the neighbourhood is quiet, the people are good, especially the neighbours"
[15] "everyone"
[16] "a story in the street; the slag heap reminds of what has happened here"
[17] "ruins the view"
[18] "nothing ever happens"
[19] "I don't give a damn"

to him; "toute ma jeunesse[20]". P.R., the oldest respondent of the street, told me he had no particular relationship with the Colliery but he really wished the site wouldn't go. Although he did not particularly care for it, he thought it was better than a factory. He enjoys the fact that there are a lot of trees and really emphasised that it was much more beautiful than a factory or any site of industrial activity for that matter. A.N., who has been living in the street for the longest of all the respondents, 42 years in total, said that the site did not represent much to him but he has been living there ever since he came to Belgium from Italy in the seventies. He mentioned that although he never was involved with the Colliery, his wife, on the other hand, has been deeply affected by Wallonia's mining history as her father lost his life as a rescuer during the Bois-du-Casier tragedy. Despite the heavy meaning attached to mining in his family, A.N. said he really loved the street, especially how quiet it was and how sweet the Turkish neighbours were. He also really emphasised how he loved being "tranquille[21]" in this street. This particular word and other synonyms such as "calm" and "peaceful" came back quite often in all the interviews. The last respondent to be discussed in terms of place attachment and emotional bonds is A.O. He told me he had nothing to discuss because he couldn't care less about the site, that he never went there anyways and that he had no time to discuss such things. However, he took the time to say that he hates the way they cut the wood on the basin bank in front of his house. He said the job was real "saleté[22]".

A second criterion that should be closely looked at is age, especially when considering uses of the space. It seems, from the data collected during the door-to-door interviews, that past a certain age, residents tend to lose diversity in their uses of the space. This is seen for example in the account of B.K. or of adults telling me of their childhood on the site (e.g. A.S., M.R.'s partner, H.A. and her siblings, A.L.'s son, P.R.'s grandson). B.K. told me he goes in the woods (where the old basins used to be) very often. He goes there to play with his friends and his brother, pick up wood, ride his bike, and look for animals and funny objects. As soon as I was done interviewing him, he ran off up the basin bank and started chasing around another kid. They were both laughing and running everywhere. H.A. told me she used to go a lot to do all sorts of things as a child but now she only goes once a week to walk on Ligne 38. She also used to go on the slag heap but she does not anymore since she heard it was collapsing. However, she said "mais les enfants y vont *tout* le temps[23]" (her own emphasis). S.D. said she is not interested in the woods; she sometimes goes on Ligne 38 for walking. This very much different from B.K. who told me that he loved the site because there were so many interesting things to do and explore. A.S., who now goes there almost every day with his children, also mentioned the diversity of the activities he used to carry out on site when he was little. The other respondents often mention the same activities, namely walking the dog(s), cycling, walking alone, jogging, and sometimes going on the slag heap (mentioned twice; both times by men). O.N. was the only adult to mention an additional activity, namely tending to his allotment on the other side of the basin bank. He said he really loved his garden and has been doing it ever since he came to the street. Others (H.A. and C.G.)

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[20] "My entire youth"
[21] Has several meanings: "peaceful, being left alone, undisturbed"
[22] "crap"
[23] "but the kids go there *all* the time"

have mentioned the "potagers[24]" but only as an activity carried out by others. A.O went as far as saying he never used the site because he did not have time for it and was not interested in it. P.R., the oldest respondent, said he used to sometimes walk on the site but not any longer because he can't trust his legs anymore.

Two of the questions I asked all residents were "In your opinion, what is the use of the site today? Does it have a specific function in the neighbourhood or the community?" Out of the 16 respondents, half of them told me that they could not think of any use or that the site was useless. Two respondents, S.Y. and H.A. respectively said that it was "commemoratif[25]" and "un heritage culturel[26]". C.G. said that the playground (built at the edge of the slag heap on former colliery land) and the kitchen gardens, especially, were a contributing to the community and made the site useful. S.D. said that the slag heap was completely useless and ruined the view but that at least the Ligne 38 was useful for all. Some, like M.R. and C.O., said they believed that the site must have some ecological function and significance but probably a low one due to the lack of care and maintenance. All of them, regardless of their answer, took a long time to respond. B.K. was the only one of all the 16 respondents who replied right away to the questions about function and usefulness and seemed really confident about his answer. He said: "Oui, il faut des arbres pour voir comment c'est la nature[27]"; he added that he thought the site was very important and useful for everyone because of that. Overall, respondents did not seem to be sure about the utility of such a site for the neighbourhood or community, except for the boy.

Unlike the questions on function and usefulness, the question about what the residents thought of the state of the site made people really talkative. Three main topics kept coming up in the discussions. These were trash, wood clearance, and positive attributes.

Out of all respondents, 11 extensively mentioned trash dumping as a big concern. Their use of words was very varied, using words such as "ordures," "crasses[28]," "dépotoir[29]," "foutoir[30]," "catastrophe," "nettoyer[31]," "pas entretenu[32]," "saleté[33]," and "détériorée[34]". Two of the respondents also mentioned that residents of the street have often pressed charges against the owners and the municipality so that the street and surrounding woods would be cleaned up. M.R. said she did not understand why people were being so dirty and dumping trash in their street when the waste management facility is two feet away. It seems that trash dumping on site, including the rue du Fort, is out of control (also see section below on institutional actors for more details). Indeed, while at first sight the street and surrounding areas seem pretty clean and well-kept, as soon as one

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[24] "kitchen gardens"
[25] "commemorative"
[26] "cultural heritage"
[27] "Yes, you need trees to see what nature is like"
[28] "filth"
[29] "junkyard"
[30] "shambles"
[31] "to clean"
[32] "badly maintained"
[33] "crap" or "dirtiness"
[34] "deteriorated" or "damaged"

looks closer, little mounts of trash and discarded objects come into view. Every week, the municipalities have to come by and pick up illegal dumping and the police often come to receive complaints by the residents. This has become unacceptable for the residents and seems to be one of the only points on which the residents, users, and institutional actors agree on.

Another popular topic of answer is the wood clearance that has been happening this year on the basin bank facing the houses (see Figure 32 below). Twelve respondents mentioned the topic right away. Unlike trash dumping, opinions on the wood clearance are very differing from one person to the next. Those who mentioned it talked about it for about half of the interview (on average). Five of them thought cutting the trees on the bank was a good thing with the main arguments being that there is finally some sun reaching their front porches and that the danger of having rotten trees falling on their houses is taken care of. Three of them had mitigated opinions, saying that something had to be done but that it was done badly and that too many trees were cut down. All three mentioned that they liked having the trees around and that nature is important but these rotten trees had become a real danger. P.R. said that cutting was not the solution when they could have just pruned the trees and A.L., despite being happy about having some sun reaching her house, was concerned they (the lumberjack and the owners) might get carried away and destroy the basin bank completely. Those who were against the wood clearing operation thought that the work was sloppy and crappy, that it is almost worse than before, and taking much too long. These people missed the trees and were really disgusted by how the job had been done ("ils l'ont fait comme des porcs[35]" said A.S.).

**Figure 32: Rue du Fort with the basin bank on the left**



Source: Author's

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[35] Very strong expression (involving pigs) more or less translating as "they did a really bad and disgusting job"

Despite these two big issues surrounding the site and in the direct vicinity of their homes, many of the respondents found positive attributes about the state of the site today. Twelve of them mentioned positive aspects about the street being located in the middle of the former Colliery. Recurrent themes were: the beautiful surrounding nature, how peaceful the street is, the proximity with the Ligne 38, how nice and friendly the neighbours are, how wonderful it is to live in a street where people come from all over the place and yet get along, the possibility to have one's own kitchen garden, and being able to know everyone. Overall, people seem quite satisfied with living there if it were not for the uncertainty surrounding the construction of the highway.

This brings us to our last point, namely the respondents' opinions and ideas concerning the future of the site, including their street. Only three of the respondents did not know what to reply to the question of what they would suggest or wish for the future of the site. The rest of the respondents offered a number of suggestions and concerns about the site's future. Six of them mentioned the highway. For example, S.D. and C.G. both said they did not mind if the site had to disappear. Except for M.R. and C.O., all the respondents who mentioned the highway said they were tired of the whole waiting. "L'autoroute, c'est depuis 40 ans et toujours rien[36]" said C.G. M.R. also told me : "ici, rien ne bouge[37]". A.S. explained to me that he was really scared of being expropriated but that, because it has been so long now, he really just wants them to make a decision and, if the highway is passed, that they would give him a fair value for his house. He said: "c'est triste mais ils feront ce qu'ils veulent à la fin de toute façon[38]". A.L. believes the highway is going to do a lot of harm, destroying all these houses and destroying the nature. "C'est con![39]" she said. C.O., whose house would not be touched by the contruction of the highway, said that maybe it was "un mal pour un bien[40]" and that making this highway would clean up[41] the whole thing. Others, such as B.K. and O.N., told me they thought the trees were really important and should be kept in the future. Likewise, A.N. told me that despite the fact that he thought they stopped the coal mining too soon, the trees were nice and if it were up to him, the whole site would become some sort of a park where people can sit and stroll. According to him, this can only be successful if they would start maintaining the site and stop cutting the trees down. A.L. said she really wanted the basin bank to stay and P.R. told me he thought the site was beautiful and that they should keep it the way it is now, with all the greenery. Other respondents, less keen on nature, offered different suggestions. S.A. thought they should asphalt the whole basin bank and build a parking instead for the residents' cars and S.E. said he would not mind a new industrial site and would not be bothered by a couple more trucks passing in the street. S.Y. said "surtout ne pas faire un parcours touristique et laisser les gens tranquilles[42]". One of the most widely discussed topic among all residents was the clean up of the site. They *all* wished for

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[36] "The highway, it's been 40 years and still nothing"

[37] "Here, nothing 'moves'"

[38] "It is sad but they will do what they like anyways, in the end"

[39] Can be translated in a number of ways, including "it's a shame!" and "it's stupid!" with a preference for the former.

[40] "A bad for a good"

[41] His exact words were "ça re-nettoierait".

[42] "especially do not create a touristic route and leave the people [of the street] in peace"

someone, the owner or the municipalities, to pick up all the trash other people keep piling up in their street and on the site.

The residents of the rue du Fort emphasised the problems, such as the accumulation of waste, facing the site. The feelings they evoke are not unanimously positive and they brought up in the conversations aspects that other people do not see or care less about. Residents, in general, showed strong attachment to the place although emotional attachment and connection is much stronger when one has spent their entire life living there or chose to move there for the conditions. Others, who did not discover the site until adulthood, are less emotional about it and less inclined to forget its 'flaws'. Having known the site in its former years of activity sparkles nostalgia for all the actors I interviewed. Residents of the rue du Fort are almost in a time capsule, where most houses have not changed since the 1970's, but they seem to enjoy it very much, especially the strong connection and sense of community among themselves. This is quite remarkable considering that there is a great diversity of nationalities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Despite their strong attachment to the place, a majority of residents is not as inclined as ordinary users (see next section) to compromise on the state of the site and really want something to happen, whether good or bad.

User Interviews

I interviewed 11 users of the former Hasard Colliery site of Micheroux-Retinne. I found these users on site, but also through word-of-mouth, often going to their houses in order to interview them. I attempted to have a 'range' of users so as to have as many different types of uses and emotional geographies.

Out of the 11 users interviewed, seven of them are women. Although the structured observations showed that they were more men than women using the site, these men are often on a bike and I found that women in general were more inclined to agreeing to answer my questions whereas the men I asked were less inclined to. Nevertheless, despite that there were more female than male respondents, I do not expect much difference in the results. This is because women and men seemed to have very similar views on the site and differences were more noticeable between long-term and new users. This section follows the structure of the interview form and goes through the main topics that came back among users.

Below is a table summarising the characteristics of the users who agreed to being interviewed (see Table **R**). Their identifiers (two initials) are listed along with their age, gender, postal code, and number of years of coming to the site.

**Table R: Characteristics of Users**

| Identifier | Age | Gender | Years Coming | Postal Code |
|------------|-----|--------|--------------|-------------|
| A.M. | 79 | female | 40 | 4630 |
| A.P. | 81 | male | 64 | 4630 |
| J.N. | 19 | female | 16 | 4630 |
| C.M. | 19 | female | 19 | 4621 |
| M.I. | 54 | female | 9 | 4040 |
| K.A. | 40 | male | unknown | 4830 |
| N.S. | 30 | female | 1 | 4020 |
| T.H. | 46 | male | 13 | 4630 |
| S.R. | 57 | female | 40 | 4630 |
| F.I. | 60 | female | unknown | 4621 |
| G.M. | 48 | male | 42 | 4630 |

Most of the users I have interviewed have been coming to the site for a long time, some even for their entire life (e.g. C.M). Most of them usually come for strolling, walking somewhere specific, or cycling. However, some of them also come for other activities. For example, F.I. is a former biology teacher who organises nature tours on the site. She goes there three to five times a year for these tours, through the woods, the former basins, and up the slag heap. A.P. and G.M. both go there sometimes to pick up some really young trees to plant back at home or at their friends and family's places. A.P. told me he believes the first time he came to the site was 64 years ago when he was getting coal from the Colliery in the winter. K.A. only comes twice a year with his children and his partner for a family outing. He says he only uses Ligne 38 because some of their children are still too young to be able to walk properly and no pram is able to use the small dirt paths. T.H. told me he only comes in the summer to stroll, jog, and climb up the heap. J.N. and C.M. both told me they come a lot on Saturdays with the other girl scouts. They play many games there and use the former rail line but also the woods and the slag heap, although now that the slag heap is threatening to slide, they never go completely up. All of the respondents who grew up in the area had fond memories of playing there as children or doing activities with their parents and grandparents. J.N. told me she used to go see a little circus parked in the woods with her grandfather when she was little. I remembered myself hearing about this little circus (they had two tigers). It is no longer there today. C.M. told me she once saw two hunters as she was strolling in the woods with her dad. She also went sledging on small slopes on site when it was snowing (at Location 3, see section on structured observations for more details). G.M. used to come play all the time as a child with his friends. The basins and the canals were still full of water back then and they used to build small rafts and later, when the Colliery was closed, they used to go on 'expeditions' to explore the tunnels and buildings. Users seemed to have a wider variety of activities to pursue on site when they were children. Indeed, most adults, especially those who are not from the area (postal codes other than 4630 and 4621), usually keep to strolling and cycling. Many of them, including G.M., A.P., A.M., N.S., S.R., J.N., T.H. and C.M. specifically told me they also used the space as a 'shortcut' or 'safe road' to go somewhere, as in getting from 'A to B' by going through the site.

Part of the research question of this thesis enquires about what the site represents, if anything, to the main actors, including the users, through the collection of experiences

and emotions. In order to answer the question properly, I questioned the users on several aspects related to experiences and emotions, which, when compiled, form a part of the users' emotional geographies and representations of the site.

When I asked the user respondents what attracted them to the site, they offered many answers, with some being very similar to others' answers and some specific to the activities they perform on site. Being in a calm and relaxing space was the most popular answer, given by seven people out of 11. Eight out the 11 added that being surrounded by nature was also what attracted them there. K.A., who was on a family outing with six children said that what attracted him the most to the site was the fact that is was so safe for his children to run around, although they avoided the woods because it was not possible to push a pram around there. There are no cars allowed on the Ligne 38 so he trusts that none of his children will be harmed; however, he mentioned that there are many bikes but he finds that this is more manageable than cars. The 'no cars' argument was shared by three other users and F.I. said that she loves this place because it feels so far away from everything and yet it is so close. Also, she especially likes to take her nature tours there because it is so rich in biodiversity and has a true value, historically and emotionally, for the region and its inhabitants. She told me the slag heap was a landmark for the region and Fléron's backbone. From the point of view of N.S., the former coal mining site is also very safe for cyclers to ride and she likes the site for that particular reason. A.M. said that she was attracted to the site because she can really breathe a little, spin her arms in the air, maintain her health and her heart, and also meet old acquaintances she does not see anywhere else and they talk a little. J.N. told me she is attracted to this site because it is so perfect for playing games with the younger girls of the youth group. The landscape features are great for "camouflage" when playing hide and seek and other similar games. She also likes that it is so safe for the girls to play and she said she felt relaxed there because she knew no one would run over the kids.

A second aspect worth looking at when trying to determine what the site represents to them was the words they chose to describe and/or explain the site. I asked for three words only. There were a couple of words that kept coming back, such as "calme[43]" and "tranquillité" (both were mentioned three times, by six different people). "Paix" and "paisible[44]" were also mentioned. These four words fall in a similar category of experiences. Other words that were mentioned often were words like "nature" and "verdure[45]" (both mentioned twice). Two people also mentioned "beauté" and "beau[46]" and two others mentioned "culture" and "mémoire[47]". Three people also mentioned the words "agréable," "relaxant" and "accueillant"[48]. These three words fall in a similar category of emotions. The rest of the words mentioned were very specific to the person telling them. For example, J.N., who is part of a youth group and grew up knowing the site, mentioned "jeux" and "jeunesse"[49]. K.A. said "facile[50]," in the sense that it was easy for him to take his children there without having to worry about cars and being able to

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[43] "Calm"  and "peaceful/undisturbed"
[44] "peace" and "peaceful"
[45] "Greenery"
[46] "Beauty" and "beautiful"
[47] "memory/recollection"
[48] "pleasant" "relaxing" and "welcoming"
[49] "games" and "youth"
[50] "Easy"

push the pram. T.H., who jogs often, mentioned "sport". A.M., who strolls on the Ligne 38 almost everyday, said "amitié[51]" because she often comes across people she knows but does not normally see. It also reminds her of when she still had her book and stationery store and used to see the miners come in everyday. A.P. did not know which words to choose and instead told a sentence he thought most expressed his idea of the site. He said "un lieu dont il faut profiter car peut devenir un zoning industriel[52]". Here, A.P. refers to the fact that a large area of the site is considered a 'mixed economy zone,' meaning that it will eventually be sold to entrepreneurs or anyone looking for industrial land, unless the government changes it into another zone (such as a green zone or a zone for the municipality to plan for example).

Another aspect worth looking at was the respondents' general feeling when being on site. The general feelings they expressed were consistent with the three words they used when describing the site. T.H. expressed "un sentiment de plenitude[53]" and G.M. told me he felt in peace and "absorbé par le milieu[54]". J.N. and C.M. felt undisturbed and relaxed, as if everything around them were calm and composed. Others were less talkative about their general feeling and A.M. said she felt "bien[55]," N.S. said she felt safe, and S.R. said it was just pleasant. All the respondents have given different answers to what attracted them to the site as well as to which activities they carried there, and even on the three words they thought of when thinking about the site. However, despite these differences, when it came down to the general feeling they felt when being on site, they all gave similar answers. It is unanimously a positive feeling of safety and peacefulness.

I also considered the respondents' personal connection with the site. Did they have any? What did the site mean to them personally, if anything? I found there were three main clusters of users. The majority of users explained that they did not have any particular personal or family connection with the site. Indeed, they mostly spoke of a connection with the nature on the site rather than with the site itself. They felt connected to the nature surrounding them and this encouraged them to keep coming. Three of the users, J.N., C.M., and G.M. specifically talked of feeling personally connected to the site because it was completely intertwined with their childhood memories. C.M. told me it would really break her heart if the site would disappear, especially considering that they would probably build really ugly buildings in its place. "On a quand même beaucoup de bons souvenirs" said J.N. G.M., the oldest of the three, expressed his personal and emotional connection over the years with more detail. He said:

> J'ai grandi à son ombre, j'ai vieilli avec lui. C'est positif. Cela reste une sorte d'espace non colonisé, une ressource bienvenue, en jeunes arbres, le fait que cela ne soit pas trop colonisé, cela offre des espaces discrets où on peut entendre les arbres et pas trop la vie tout

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[51] "Friendship"

[52] "A place one should make the most of because it can become an industrial site"

[53] "A blissful feeling"

[54] "Absorbed by the atmosphere"

[55] "Good"

autour. Trouver des traces d'autres usages est amusant, une sorte de
terrain d'aventure, de terrain d'échappée[56].

The third identifiable cluster of users is of those who have known the Colliery in their adulthood. A.M. and A.P. are my oldest respondents and they both new the site for a very long time (40 years of A.M. and no less than 64 years for A.P.). They both mentioned their former professions and how, because of it, they had been in close contact with the workers and the colliery itself. A.M. kept a stationary and book shop, while A.P. worked for the Soumagne municipality. He also said that he knew the Colliery from when he was a teenager as they would, with his family, go there to buy coal in the winter. They both have really fond memories of the site and what has happened there. The fate of the site means a lot to both of them, albeit in different ways.

I also asked each of the respondents to tell me a good and a bad memory they had of the site; something that had happened to them while being there. They all had something to say; some stories longer than others. Most of the residents had quite some positive memories and few negative ones. The negative ones were often stories of being lost or seeing the trash accumulating in the space they like. However, there were a couple interesting memories, good and bad, to consider in this section. They exemplify well the diversity and 'wildness' of the site, which cannot be found in one's traditional urban park. F.I. remembered that not long ago, in July of this year, as she was preparing one of her tours on site she came across a roe deer. The animal just stopped when it saw her and then just moved on. She called it a happy surprise and said that this happens often if one makes sure to be very quiet while walking around the site. A.M. recalled sledging with her granddaughters when they were small. For her, it was a fond memory of being together as a family and having a great time. G.M. remembers fishing at one of the basins, dropping pieces of glass with his little friends where the train was about to ride and see the glass being reduced to dust right before their eyes. He also remembers cycling with his children and looking for young trees with his father to plant back at home. One of A.P.'s fondest memories of the site was in the early fifties when he used to go fishing with the rural policeman who was a former employee of the Colliery. The water is long gone now and the basins are filled with trees, old cabins, and other wonders. The bad memories are just as telling. They show how dangerous and uncertain the site can be but also how people tend to learn about themselves and others while they are there. When C.M. was younger, she was walking her dog all alone in the woods. At one point, her dog fell in a hole. She was so scared; she said she will always remember. The hole was too deep for her and she could not get her dog back. The dog could not come back up because it had been hurt by pieces of metals sticking out. Her dad had to come and get the poor dog back. Fortunately, the dog survived the whole event. Another time, as she was playing a game in the woods with the girl scouts that had been organised by the boy scouts, the boys got lost and did not know how to get back. Apparently the boys found the whole situation quite funny but C.M. remembers panicking very much. She says that to this day she does not like boy scouts! J.N. remembers being really scared once when

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[56] "I grew in its shadow, went old with it. It's positive. It remains a kind of non-colonised space, a welcomed source of young trees; because it is not that colonised it offers quiet spaces where one can hear the trees and not so much the surrounding life. Finding traces of other uses is fun, a kind of adventure playground, a place to escape"

she was playing with other children on the heap. They were not high up but they could hear motorcyclists driving up. It was very dangerous because the motorcyclists could not see them but they were right on their trajectory. They were driving so fast that patches of black dirt were collapsing next to the children. She did not know what to do and it was impossible to talk to them and make them stop or go away. Children and teenagers are not the only ones being prey to the dangers of the site. T.H. told me that his latest 'scary' moment was as he was coming to the site. He had to cross a field to enter the site and got chased by cows. He said that this had never happened to him before and was quite scary but he was laughing as he was telling me his story. Entering a private property can be dangerous! He also mentioned that many dog owners do not keep their dogs on the leach when being on site as there are no rules for them to do so. T.H. is sometimes not so reassured when one of those bigger dogs is around.

It happens that, despite the size of the site, different uses compete with one another and create risk for others. As it is completely uncontrolled, no one is there to regulate or writing down complaints. After listening to the users, it seems that this situation is both a danger and a blessing. They know what dangers to expect when going there but also that they will be left in peace whatever their business there is.

Part of figuring out how people perceive a space and what it means to them in terms of emotional geographies is to understand where they go, what for, and, as importantly, where they *avoid* going. Depending on their activities and profile, the users avoid different parts of the site or do not avoid any at all. K.A., because of his children, avoids the woods for their impracticability and so does A.M. because she does not see very well and only goes there when her husband is with her. A.P. has heard of violence at night, with people stealing bikes and therefore, he avoids coming to the site at night unless he really must. S.R., who comes to the Ligne 38 everyday, said she *never* goes in the woods. G.M., on the contrary, does not avoid any places; he likes the uncertainty and the 'risk' of exploring around. For F.I., it all depends on the season and the people she is with. She sometimes avoids some areas of the site because they have a number of old wells with metal sticking out and because, if there is snow or if the person is not experienced, one could slide, trip, or fall in one of those. It is too risky because there is no one else there to get you out. However, despite the risk, she goes on the slag heap because there, she says, one can see the danger. C.M. does not really care herself that the slag heap is sliding and she says it has not stopped her from going on it although she now avoids the very top. J.N., however, does not go on the slag heap anymore because she believes it is too dangerous nowadays. She also never goes in the old electrical building, known as the "centrale," and also does not allow 'her girls' (the younger girl scouts) to go in because she thinks that it is really dangerous. This contrasts with other accounts of users telling me that they actually enjoyed going in the building to look around, shield themselves from the rain, or take pictures of all the creative graffiti.

The woods and the slag heap are avoided by those who feel less confident about their abilities, their knowledge of the site, or because of their responsibility towards others (such as children). This brings us back to a section above on the activities performed on the site. The former coal mining site has very different areas that are used by different people pursuing different aims. Often these areas have specific activities that are not shared with others (such as sledging at Location 3).

The ordinary user seems, in general, very happy with the condition of the site and mostly

wishes that it would just remain as it is. Many users also suggested that the nature present on the site would be taken advantage of and enhanced as to create a sort of natural reserve or park. Unlike the residents who were more demanding of a change in the current situation and who pinpointed all the problems facing the site, users were less concerned about the owners and authorities. However, a common point between the two groups concerned the 'trash problem' facing the site. There was also a slight hypocrisy among some users and residents who complained that this trash situation is to be expected if the site is left open to the public.

Now that the responses of the residents and the users have been covered and understood, it is interesting to turn to the institutional actors. Knowing how the two municipalities and the owners of the site view it and address the different issues put forward by the other actors will frame what has been said before and contribute to its contextualisation.

Institutional Actor Interviews

In order to have a better understanding of the context and of the responses, reactions, and activities found on site, it is important to see in what sort of structure or system the former Hasard Colliery evolves in. When analysing the interviews made with the institutional actors, namely a spokesperson of the SIR, of the Soumagne municipality, and of the Fléron municipality, four main issues structuring each entity's discourse were noticed. These are uses, communication, regulation, and future.

I managed to interview the person responsible for all the technical problems happening on site. He has been working for the SIR for two years now and plays the role of the mediation between the company and other actors such as the municipalities or the users. It was extremely difficult to find someone from the SIR willing to talk to me. They were always sending me to another person but I finally reached him and he was very helpful and professional. His discourse is very much focused on how unruly people are and how liable the SIR is for anything bad that happens on site (such as an accident). He felt like some people had more self-control than others but that mostly people using the site were irresponsible. His personal goal, as an employee of the SIR, is to make people responsible of their actions. His biggest fear is to be sued by anyone because something has happened on site. He told me himself that he finds it extremely scaring thinking of all those people who wander about the site. However, he is not against having people using the site, although he reminded me that it was completely illegal as this was a private property. His only wish is that people would do it in a discreet way and without damaging the site (i.e. dumping trash). He says the situation is out of control and is completely unmanageable. The SIR just does not know what to do anymore. He also complained about the residents of the rue du Fort because they kept pressing charges against the rotten trees threatening to fall on their cars and their houses and now they are complaining about the loss of greenery and the slow pace of the job. They are never happy, he says. When I asked him about this wood clearance he told me that they had found a lumberjack who agreed to do the job for 10 000 euro but they did not want to spend money on it so he hired one who agreed to do it for free on the condition that he could keep the woods. Because of that, the lumberjack also wanted some trees from the interior of the site as well. The spokesman went with him to choose the trees. When I asked him whether or not he had seen the site

since the cutting down had been done, he said he had not seen it yet but he believed it was a *disaster*. He justified that saying that this, after all, was not a forest or a natural reserve, and the most important goal was to protect the people and prevent problems for the SIR. He showed really good knowledge of all the uses happening on site, telling me about the kitchen gardens, the motocross, the quad driving and even the radio-controlled cars. I had not expected that he would have so much knowledge of what was happening on the propriety. His detailed explanations, albeit slightly exaggerated sometimes, demonstrated that he carried regular visits to the site in order to check its state. This means that despite the abandoned feel of the place, there is a close watch over the situation. Even in this 'free' space where there seems to be no control, there is still someone checking on things. He told me he did not mind people using the site unless they were bothering others or becoming a liability for the company. He also said that as soon as activities started to look professional, such as gardeners bringing it motor engines for ploughing, he tried to charge them a rent. He has done it before with a man using a piece of land on site to store construction equipment and is still considering doing it with the gardeners.

The lady I interviewed on behalf of the Soumagne municipality is part of the heritage department at the municipality and has participated in creating many touristic walks, including one passing right on the site of the former Hasard Colliery at Micheroux-Retinne. This walk is named the "Tour des Terrils[57]". She told me this walk was very popular. The region is starting to be more successful as a tourist destination for the Belgians living up north (in Flanders) but it also attracts foreigners such as Dutch people. Usually, when the local government wants to organise something on private property, they send a letter to the owner in order to create a small convention allowing them to pass through. In this particular case, the municipality did not ask the SIR if they could make their walk cross the property. When I asked why, she told me that they had not even considered it, knowing that the site was almost abandoned and that already hundreds of people were using it without permission. She also said that it would not have mattered to send them a letter, as they never answer anyways ('vertical classification' she called it). Interestingly enough, despite the fact that the site is also located on Soumagne, the spokeswoman told me that the general idea in the municipality was that the site was attached to Fléron rather than Soumagne. As a result, they do not feel responsible or concerned at all about what happens there. It was clear that she was very much aware of the illegal uses of the site but she did not know as many details as either the spokesman for the SIR or the spokespeople of Fléron. Basically, she said, we pretend it is not really there, unless we use it for something or a particular event, such as an accident, happens. The walk has been in place for two years now so she believes that if they had something to say about it, they would have done it already. This position is fascinating. In terms of the Hasard site, it basically means that almost anything could happen there, and unless it is a serious crime, no one will come have a look. Despite the SIR's regular visits, there truly is no control over the site, making it a real 'free' space.

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[57] "Walk of the Slag Heaps"

**Figure 33: A path in the woods from the ligne 38**
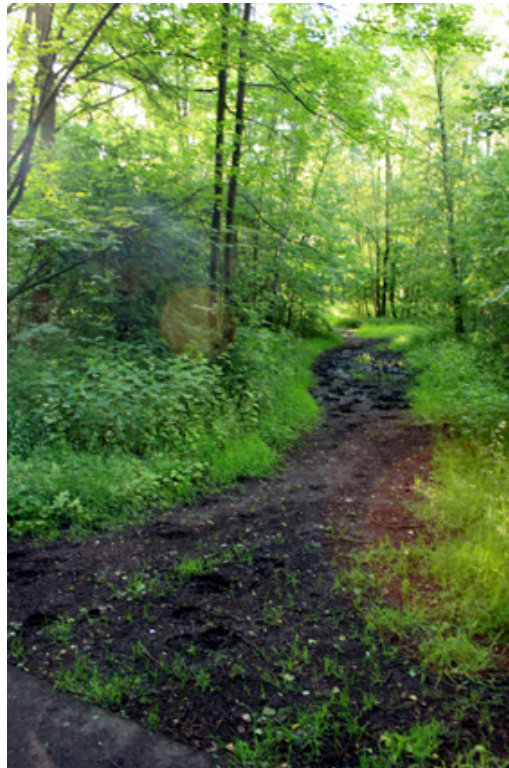


Source: Author's

On behalf of the Fléron municipality, where most of the site including the rue du Fort is located, I was able to interview two employees, a lady from the urbanisation department, and a man from the department of environment. As were the spokespeople of the SIR and the Soumagne municipality, they were both very nice and helpful. They were both also very much aware of what happens on site, especially the man. He gave me a short list of all the uses of the site he had observed over the years. After reminding me that it was illegal to go there, he admitted that he went himself at least once a month on top of the slag heap to look at the view and take pictures. They described most of the uses as inconsequential but mentioned some that they believe were more problematic, such as trash dumping and self-appropriation of the property for money-making purposes. They mentioned the same man as the SIR's spokesman mentioned; the one who stored construction materials, equipment, and waste on the site without permission. The municipality of Fléron seems more involved than the municipality of Soumagne in the sense that they showed an extensive knowledge of the situation (especially with the European Interreg project and the highway plans) and felt the need to be kept updated, by whoever was responsible, on what was going on there.

A second big theme that came back during those three interviews was communication, or lack thereof. The spokesman of the SIR was very conscious of the company not really communicating with the users. He told me he wished to create a 'dialogue' with, for example, the quad drivers and the motorcyclists in order to figure out an arrangement. He was willing to allocate a space for them as long as they were responsible for it and kept it

in good shape. Again, his main concern was more on how to make people less unruly rather than ban them from using the space. He also mentioned that there had been some communication between him and the Fléron municipality. Together, they have tried to make the space cleaner.

The Soumagne spokeswoman mentioned an *absence* of communication with the owners. As was mentioned above, she told me that the municipality barely tries to contact the trustees of the SIR as they have experienced a long history of unanswered mail and phone calls. For the Interregional project sponsored by the European Union, the municipality tried to work hand in hand with the SIR and she said "ça a été impossible de travailler avec eux[58]". According to her, it was not even a problem of not wanting to collaborate with the municipality but simply that they were not answering any attempt to contact them. She believed that Fléron had more contact with them since the site was much more on their territory. The relations with Fléron are better although she deplores how the two municipalities mostly think about their own problems and do not think on a larger scale— such as across both municipalities or even at a regional level. "On en est loin[59]," she explained. There is no attempt to communicate with the users, except with those asking details on the walk.

The man of the Fléron municipality mentioned that every since the spokesman of the SIR had started working there two years ago, every thing was going much better in terms of communication. The man employed by the SIR comes often to the site, he cooperates with the municipality in order to find the people seriously infringing the private property rights of the company, and he is very friendly and accessible. Before that, the relations with the company were far less friendly. The spokespeople deplored that the trustees never responded to any phone calls and only communicated through official letters. A couple years ago, the municipality tried to gain the right to manage the site without actually owning it. They were planning to make it more accessible, cleaner, and make sure the biodiversity capital was well maintained. The trustees only came to one meeting and made clear that it was all possible as long as the municipality paid for it. For the municipality, this was seen as a total lack of commitment and interest as the site is 'frozen' anyways due to the highway 'reservation'. What difference would it make to them, they asked. Today, the trustees are not more communicative but the spokesman makes it much more agreeable to discuss the site and ensure a minimum of cooperation.

Regulation, as briefly mentioned above, was also a big concern of the spokesman of the SIR. In fact, it seemed to be one of his main concerns along with making sure no one gets hurt on site. In order to bring some control to the site, several tools were used by the spokesman. As he told me, the old fences, now mostly gone, are not the most efficient way to keep people out. In addition to collaborating with the Fléron municipality, he also tries to charge people. This means that he attempts to identify who does what on site and then charge them the activity. He did that with the entrepreneur who was keeping construction equipment on site. He is now also trying to do so with the gardeners. Moreover, he has a strategy to control uses. Trash dumping is an enormous problem on

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[58] "It has been impossible to work with them"
[59] "We are far from it"

site. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is a waste disposal facility on the rue du Fort, on former Colliery land. According to the spokesman, people go there at night, jumping the fence of the facility, and bring trash out and sort it in the woods. They then leave the remains on site. By strategically renting the land right next to the waste disposal facility, the spokesman hopes to make it more difficult for people to cross due to the presence of several fences instead of one. Renting the land also creates more control by the renters who will try to make sure no one trespasses on their rented land. They also have the obligation to keep their area free of trash, giving a double insurance that the site is kept clean. The SIR has started doing this. According to the spokesman, regulation is truly a nightmare on such a big site and with so many people using it.

The municipality of Soumagne is mostly unconcerned with regulation on the Hasard site. According to its spokeswoman, the municipality is absolutely not involved in the site and does not really care who uses the site and for what, unless it is a huge breach in the law. They actually go as far as officially using the space without having asked for the owners' permission. In fact, they are illegal users themselves and are quite fine with it.

The municipality of Fléron, because it has more contacts with the spokesman of the SIR, is a little more involved in regulating the uses of the Hasard site. However, as the spokespeople insisted, they only give tips or help the spokesman by giving him ideas or people to contact for help, they do not actually perform the regulation or control themselves. As they also said, the police are actually more involved as they sometimes call the spokesman to ask the SIR to clean up its site. Another issue in terms of regulation is the interdiction for the inhabitants of the rue du Fort to renovate or improve their houses, unless allowed to, because they are located on the highway 'reservation'. The municipality is supposed to regulate this but they told me that it has been so long— around 40 years—that they 'close their eyes' when people sell or renovate their houses.

The last recurrent theme that came out of the institutional actors' interviews was their expectations for the site's future. As the spokesman for the SIR reminded me, ultimately, the site will be sold. He expects the slag heap to be given up to the municipality of Fléron.  However, he believes that none of this can happen until the 'highway question' is solved. He repeatedly mentioned throughout the interview that the source of all problems was the uncertainty around the highway. He holds that once a decision is made on whether or not to build it—yes or no; it does not matter at this point anymore— everything will be solved. The trouble, he says, is that no one is willing to stick their neck out and make a final decision. The SIR spokesman also said that, in his opinion, no one is going to buy 45 hectares of land and invest millions into making it safe for a natural reserve, or a green park, open to the public. In his words, this scenario is 'unthinkable'. It is too much money for no economic benefit. He believes much more in light industries and infrastructure for local entrepreneurs. However, he also thinks that today, modernity and progress should take nature into account and therefore he hopes the future of the site will include greenery. Despite his personal expectations, he admits that he does not know at all what will happen of the site, except that it is going to change.

Because of their lesser involvement in the site, the spokeswoman of the Soumagne municipality had fewer predictions about its future and more unanswered questions. The first thing she said, when I asked about the future of the site was that because it has been so many years, we cannot know what will become of it. However, she believes that things should 'move' one day. The trustees should decide on what to do sooner or later. It is interesting to see how she considers that the responsibility lies with the trustees and the SIR while the spokesman of the SIR held that all problems came from the government's inability to take a risk and make a decision. In her personal opinion, the site is probably going to be bought by private parties but the slag heap's future depends on what the Fléron municipality is going to decide. She does not exclude that they may raze it to the ground. As for the CHB highway, it has been in the 'refrigerator' for a long time now but she expects that a decision will certainly be taken by 2014 (election time). Despite the fact that a highway is a very permanent decision, she thinks that there are real mobility issues and that if they decide not to build it, they are going to have to look for other solutions. If only they had built it in the seventies, she said, there would be no questions today and we would have it.

She also mentioned that since Fléron is developing so much, it would not be surprising if "cet espace-là, ils vont vouloir en faire quelque chose[60]". The wording is very interesting here. It expresses the spokeswoman's belief that the space is ultimately unused at this present moment. As for the heritage buildings and ruins present on site, she said that the Soumagne municipality is already working on two heritage projects, one of them being the Bas-Bois Colliery, and these are a big drain on their finances already. It is very unlikely in her opinion that the municipality would accept to refurbish and maintain these buildings even if they were given to them for free. At the end of the interview, she told me that if me asking questions around would make things move, they would be very grateful. But as for now, she said, "on attend de voir[61]".

The perspective of the Fléron municipality is quite different from that of its Soumagne counterpart. The two employees interviewed had specific ideas of what they wanted to see happening in the future and of what was unacceptable. As mentioned in Chapter III, the municipality has already tried gaining management of the slag heap from the SIR. They have also suggested to the Walloon regional government that they purchase the slag heap and hand it over to them. The two spokespersons I talked to both readily agreed that there will be an outcry if one day something be said about razing it to the ground. They both held that the site and the slag heap have major heritage significance. Therefore, their initial idea, before gaining management of the slag heap proved so difficult, was to make the site an environmentally valuable zone with some touristic planning. They meant to connect the abutting play ground with the slag heap, adding an adult space to the already existing children's space.

As for the rest of the site, the spokeswoman from the department of urbanisation said that the municipality does not want the space to become industrial again. According to her, the sector plan (see Chapter III) has already been made, with all the necessary industrial zones planned, and she believes that the space would be best used as a natural/touristic area. This is at odds with the expectations of the municipality of

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[60] "They will want to make something out of this space"
[61] "We wait and see"

Soumagne. Indeed, in her interview, the spokeswoman of Soumagne said that they expect Fléron, as a result of its rapid growth, to have industrial or residential plans for the site.

The two spokespersons of Fléron also said that there were a couple of buildings worth saving as heritage. However, they believe that this is out of the question as long as the highway reservation is in place. The question of the highway resonates differently among the municipality's departments. While the environmental department is against it, the department of urbanisation is more nuanced. They believe there is a real mobility problem and that something should be done about it in the near future. However, they hope that other solutions and alternatives to the highway will be thoroughly investigated before proceeding with the construction.

Institutional actors did not react as expected to the question of what was happening on site and why. Instead of saying, as I expected, that the site was unused, the Soumagne municipality representative told me that because she knew people were using it illegally all the time, she did not see why the municipality could not use it as well.

As mentioned above, the municipality created and rehabilitated a walk on the private property itself without asking permission to the owners. The other municipality, while more concerned with private property rights, has a similar approach to the problem and even the spokespeople I interviewed were very open about their own personal uses of the site (such as climbing up the heap at least once a month). It is as if the site is 'not there' and yet everyone uses it and the municipality of Fléron cares about its future. This shows how different the site is from other cases investigated in the literature review. Here, the authorities do not perceive the site as inherently empty and needing a project. Unlike what has been found in relevant literature investigating similar spaces, there is almost no 'perceived emptiness' by the institutional actors. They are all well aware of everything that happens there. However, it is perceived as empty in the sense that not much credit is given to the importance of the activities happening there. None of the institutional actors mentioned any social benefits deriving from the site being illegally used. However, they all agreed that there was some environmental benefit to the site being in the state it is now.

They have chosen to mostly ignore its existence (especially for Soumagne and the SIR until the spokesman was hired two years ago). Fléron, while assuring me they would not have any uses for it except for what it is useful for today, seems to care about enhancing the site's attributes such as for touristic reasons. They seemed to be truly feeling connected to the space and agreed that the site was a strong local icon and symbol. They recognised its role in creating place identity. Despite the sector plan being very clear on the economic vocation of the site, all institutional actors interviewed did not wish for the site to inherently change. They rather wanted it to be more secure, cleaner, or with better infrastructure as to allow people to go about it freely. In this sense, the 'free space' aspect of the site is extremely strong at all levels, from users to residents and even institutional actors. The site, because it has been 'fixed' since 1979, has grown on people as a place where one can do anything, from strolling to more illegal activities. It answers a *nature need*, literally as well as figuratively. There, anyone can run wild without the slightest fear of control or sanction. One only gets in trouble when their activities, located near a street, start to infringe on the lives of others, such as unhappy and vocal residents.

There are many tensions in such a situation. This is because of the uncertainty that revolves around the Hasard site. Residents fear expropriation and are therefore tense towards the local government and the SIR. They are not sure who is in charge or what will happen. They have been waiting for 40 years. The SIR does not know either what will become of the site and fears lawsuits. Local governments find it impossible to communicate with the SIR. The Company cannot seem to control users. People complain. This creates a tense atmosphere but it also brings mystery to the site, making its appeal even stronger.

**Conclusion**

In this thesis, the Hasard site of Micheroux-Retinne is investigated. Formerly the centre of a very successful colliery, its infrastructure was demolished in the late seventies. Due to management issues and the highway plans, the place was left to itself, almost frozen in time, and yet the stage of thousands of uses and experiences. It is paradoxical to think that such a dynamic place in terms of activities has not physically changed much, except for the luxurious vegetation, since 1979. As a matter of fact, it has only been frozen in terms of its 'purpose;' that is, there has not been any urban development on site. The first chapter of this thesis identified and discussed the main concepts and themes relevant to the topic of uses and experiences of former industrial sites. Then, the methodology came, outlining how the fieldwork was to be carried out. After offering an extensive timeline of the site's history from its beginnings as a colliery till this day, the next chapters displayed the results and analysis of the fieldwork in order to answer the research questions stated in the introduction.

In order to remind us of the main research question of this thesis, it is good to state it one last time. The question was: Although this space is officially unused, empty, and restricted, what, if any, are the present uses of the former coal mining site of Hasard (Micheroux-Retinne) and what does the site represent, if anything, to the main actors in terms of experiences, emotions, and ultimately place identity, as framed within the site's past history and surrounding official/institutional discourse?

There were also five sub questions in order to insure that the entirety of the main research question would be answered. These sub questions were:
a. Who are the major actors involved in this site?
b. What is the former coal mining site used for today and what about it is specific to the site?
c. What experiences and emotions do the main actors have of this former industrial site?
d. What is the Hasard's past history?
e. What is the official/institutional discourse regarding the site?

Throughout this thesis, we looked into the history of the site, who its users and residents were, what they felt and experienced about it, and what the institutional actors believed and tried to accomplish.

Although the former site of the Hasard Colliery of Micheroux-Retinne is officially unused, empty, restricted, and 'frozen' in time, it is actually bursting with uses, meanings, challenges, emotions, and experiences. The uses of the site vary from cycling, strolling, motorcycling, playing games, dumping waste, growing vegetables, discovering nature, hunting, hanging out with friends, shortcutting, being alone, acting wild and many more. The uses are infinite and keep being invented depending on the needs of its users, old and new. As was shown in the previous chapter, there is not a homogeneous use of the Hasard site. The three locations observed, and the slag heap, were used by different people. Location 1, the former rail line 38, was mostly used by middle-aged male cyclists. In the morning during weekdays, there were many workers shortcutting through the site. On weekends, there were more leisure cyclers and families using the location. In the evenings, people walked their dogs or went for a run. Location 2 had a more diverse age

range in its users. There were not so many 'utilitarian' uses and people seemed to enjoy carrying out 'random' activities there. There were also a smaller proportion of cyclists and more motorcyclists and horse riders. The third location was unlike the other two. The age group was much younger and most users were in groups of three or more people. The activities carried out on this location were related to its specific landscaping and its isolation from the rest of the site and residential areas. Overall, the Hasard site seems to cater for a wide range of uses and users. In the sense of Kamvasinou (2006) and Groth and Corijn (2005), the Hasard is a 'free space,' accessible to all and with almost absent control. There are some 'rules,' known to all, such as the interdiction to drive on the Ligne 38, but I have seen many people bypassing these—yes, I have seen someone drive a car on the Ligne 38—without consequences. I asked the driver why she felt like she could do this and she told me "who will check?" The Ligne 38, because of its user 'density,' is the location used by many different socio-economical groups in ways that are noticeable. It is possible to see homeless people drinking a beer while watching a child learning to cycle, a girl coming back from school, and an middle-aged man in a suit holding a bag of groceries.

As was discovered in the last chapter, the Hasard site is not 'perceived as empty' in the direct sense of the phrase. In Part II of the literature review, it was shown that many similar sites are perceived as empty by the local authorities while residents seem to hold strong beliefs in its occupancy. As a result, many of these sites are the target of urban renewal policies and other redevelopment projects (Rérat et al., 2010). This is not the case for the Hasard. The institutional actors do not believe that the site is empty but they seem to keen on closing their eyes on what happens there and often even just pretend that it is not there. Nevertheless, they do perceive it as empty in the sense that they do not put much value on the activities happening there. They also all mentioned the sense of 'abandonment' of the space—even the spokesman of the owners. The municipality of Fléron, which is the one where most of the site is located, is even happy with the presence of the site and actually wishes to enhance its natural features rather than redevelop it into a residential or industrial area. The spokesman of the SIR was the one most inclined into saying that the site is not used to its full 'potential'. For residents, however, the site does not seem to have any particular function, except for keeping them away from the madness of urban life and providing some much appreciated nature.

Even though the site is not perceived as empty per se, there is still much uncertainty on its present purpose and ownership status. Except for the obvious biodiversity value, none of the actors I interviewed were able to give me a clear explanation of what role the site really served. In terms of ownership, things seemed even more confused. Some of the respondents, except for the institutional actors, had no idea who owned the site. Other emitted 'wild guesses' and suggested that it might belong to the former Colliery. It was obvious to me that the majority of my users had no information on who owned the place. Residents were much more informed and knew it must belong to the former Colliery.

The site itself represents many things to many different people. Sometimes, there is a personal history or connection; sometimes, there is simply a need or recognition. Emotions—as shown by the users, the institutional actors, and the residents—range from fear and worry, to blissfulness. They are as varied as the people experiencing them.

Nevertheless, place identity, exacerbated by the long-term presence of the site and its specific landscape characteristics (a small forest and the highest slag heap of Wallonia), is quite strong, especially among the residents. As a term, 'place identity' is not exchangeable with 'experience' as it is more the result of a collection of experiences than a unique experience (Hull et al., 1994). However, place identity is highly related to experiences of and emotions directed at the particular place. In the case of the Hasard, place identity feelings are quite strong. As all institutional actors said, the site, and especially the slag heap, is a landmark of the region and people have a love/hate relationship with it. To many of the actors, the site has been around for as long as they remember and many have heard or know someone in their family who has been involved with coal mining. Often, their mere presence, as residents of the rue du Fort for example, is a direct consequence of the coal mining activities of the Colliery. It is also a known touristic destination for anyone interested in looking at the region of Liège-Maastricht and taking landscape photographs. This place identity is recognised by the institutional actors and the municipality of Fléron stressed that people would be extremely unhappy if the slag heap was to be removed or damaged. This place identity will most likely be exacerbated as the towns keep developing and 'eating' on more and more greenspaces (Hull et al., 1994; Jacobs, 1961).

The institutional discourse surrounding the site is very vague and divergent. While the owners try more and more to regulate the uses and make some money out of it, the two municipalities use it almost impudently and only wish for it to prosper in its present form. The major issue is the uncertainty surrounding the construction of the highway. This uncertainty is the stage of many tensions and friction between the different groups of actors. The residents are in an especially vulnerable position having their houses put under potential expropriation for the last 40 years. The users, on the other hand, do not seem to worry much about this uncertainty and did not express concern that the site is at risk of being destroyed and deeply modified.

A pervasive element that came out of the fieldwork is the importance of the 'green' aspect of the site. There seems to be a real nature need and the Hasard site answers to it. A very large majority of respondents, institutional actors residents and users alike, mentioned the greenery and the nature as one of the most striking and desirable feature of the space. Not only do they see health benefits in going to the site regularly but they also expressed the peaceful feeling of being surrounded by nature (Bowler, Buyung-Ali, Knight, & Pullin, 2010). This is not in contradiction with the literature reviewed in Chapter I. Usually, greenspaces in urban environments contain a rich biodiversity and the Hasard is no exception (Kattwinkel, Bierdermann, & Kleyer, 2011). Natural landscapes, especially in cities, serve many uses including teaching children about nature, providing a happy living environment and soothing element to urban life (Fjørtoft & Sageie, 2000). All these characteristics were identified by the respondents and describe the site well. In addition to answering a nature need in the literal sense of the phrase, the Hasard is also an outlet for many users. Indeed, they said that they do not feel contrained when they are on site and do "crazy" things sometimes when they believe no one can see them. One of the users mentioned screaming to the top of his lungs; something he would never do anywhere except there.

Writing this thesis really has taught me a lot. As mentioned in the introduction, I personally grew up knowing and using the site. Today, as a researcher, I discovered the site as a place where people live, interact, experience, and feel. It is at the centre of a very old power struggle. This power struggle is among the different stakeholders, but also between man and nature and past and future. For the occasional user, this *rapport de force* is not necessarily noticeable. As soon as I started to methodologically investigate the site and reflect on what I was seeing and hearing, this underlying struggle became clear to me. I also realised that the site was at a crossroad, or more precisely, at a tipping point. After the many years of mining and a dramatic change in 1978-79, it was left mostly untouched for a little less than 40 years. Today, this is about to change again. In the current political climate, it would be difficult for the government to delay the decision of whether to build the highway or not much longer. According to the institutional actors, 2014 should be an important year in that sense.

The Hasard site, despite having few standing buildings left, is still covered in industrial remains such as foundations, bricks, pieces of concrete, tunnels, and wells. It would take a large sum of money to rehabilitate it into anything secure to insurance standards. However, it is very unlikely that the site will be left to its current state for a long time to come. As the other stakeholders, I can only speculate on its future appearance as there are so many random variables involved. After having spent so much time wandering around it and investigating it, I am convinced of its richness and necessity in the present semi-urban landscape of the Liège Province. As a result, my personal wish for the site's future would be to see it remain in a very similar form as it is today. My main current concerns are about the way the 'green capital' of the site is managed and the amount of trash that is abandoned there. The fact that the slag heap is sliding should also be addressed. The issues facing the Hasard are not unique. Cities around Europe, as described in the literature review, have many urban wastelands, spaces that seem empty but that are dynamic and holding enormous potential. However, it is important that, before trying to implement a project or redevelop a 'vacant' space, the space be carefully investigated and its existing situation analysed. Much can be learned from seemingly empty sites and their uses can offer clues to what would work there (Mostafavi, 2003).

There had never really been any research or investigation done with the Hasard site of Micheroux-Retinne as its focus. Only once did the national environmental association Natagora investigate the biodiversity present on site in order to produce a report on the environmental importance of the site. This report had been made on the request of the Fléron municipality when they were trying to gain management of the site without owning it.

This thesis, with its quite extensive fieldwork, has been able to offer the reader a thorough overview of the Hasard site, its past, its uses, the emotions and experiences it reveals in people, its challenges, and its potential future. However, one never has enough time and more research on why this many people feel a need or desire to use this space is necessary. This has been done to some extent here but more research would be very interesting. It would be especially interesting to investigate the specific features of the site that encourage place identity as well as the ways to encourage and tap into that strong

connection in order to make the surrounding urban environment more pleasant and satisfying to all (Kamvasinou, 2006).

Although this was not a specific part of my research questions, I have developed throughout this thesis a need to understand why most of the buildings, including the Belle-Fleurs, were destroyed in 1978-79, while those of one of the smaller collieries bought by the Hasard, named the Bas-Bois, were preserved. Unfortunately, I have not found an answer to this question yet.

The former site of the Hasard Colliery of Micheroux-Retinne is a wonder in itself. There is such a complexity, richness, in this site. The slag heap and its woods seem unflinching, an aspect often expressed by the participants of this thesis, and yet, it is in constant change; adapted and adapting.

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# Appendix

A. Large Tables and Figures

**Figure 2: Observation form**

| Location: | | Time: | | Weather: | | # of ppl: | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Criteria | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Additional Observation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direction of Movement | | | | | | | |
| Gender | Female | | | | | | |
| | Male | | | | | | |
| Age Group | 0-4 | | | | | | |
| | 5 to 12 | | | | | | |
| | 13 to 20 | | | | | | |
| | 21-40 | | | | | | |
| | 41-65 | | | | | | |
| | 66 + | | | | | | |
| Mode | alone | | | | | | |
| | accompanied by: | | | | | | |
| Activity | walking (f/s) | | | | | | |
| | cycling | | | | | | |
| | running | | | | | | |
| | motorcycling | | | | | | |
| | driving a quad | | | | | | |
| | playing | | | | | | |
| | still (s/e/t) | | | | | | |
| | horse riding | | | | | | |
| | other (specify) | | | | | | |
| Accessories | pet | | | | | | |
| | motor/bike/quad | | | | | | |
| | cane | | | | | | |
| | horse | | | | | | |
| | wheelchair | | | | | | |
| | pram | | | | | | |
| | other (specify) | | | | | | |
| Clothing Style | sports attire | | | | | | |
| | youth uniform | | | | | | |
| | non-western | | | | | | |
| | western ordinary | | | | | | |
| Language Spoken (if known) | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SIGNS OF ACTIVITY: | | | | | | |

The first box includes the name of the location, the time of observation, and the weather. It also includes the number of people observed, which should be filled in at the end of the observation period. The second box includes a double entry table, with the criteria to be observed and the person observed, as well as an 'additional observation' table, in case anything additional should be written down (whether a general remark or additional information next to the person's number). Although the criteria mostly speak for themselves, there are some important things to mention. First, for the criterion "direction of movement," the space next to it should be filled in accordingly depending of the location, for example "left" and "right". Second, for "mode," if the person is accompanied, a number should be filled in, in the appropriate box. In "Activity", the "s" of "walking" refers to "slow" and the "f" means "fast"—it should be filled in the appropriate box. For "Activity", the "s" of "still" means sitting, the "e" means "eating", and the "t" refers to "talking." "Clothing Style" is an important category because it can give indication on the profile of the people observed and on the reasons for which they are on the site. "Sports attire" refers to for example, a helmet, walking shoes, cycling shorts, backpacks, and other specific sports accessories. The criterion "Language spoken" must be filled in only if information is known. In the category "clothing," "non-western clothing" refers to specific clothing pieces that are reflective of a specific identity that does not fall in the usual western clothing style. This may include scarves, boubous, saris, etc and should be specified in the appropriate box.

**Table D: Location 1 Age Groups**

## Loc. 1

| Time | | Monday | Wednesday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|------|------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|-------|
| | 0-4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 8:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 3 | **7** | 4 | 14 |
| 9:00 | 21-40 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 61 | 70 |
| | 41-65 | **12** | **7** | **9** | **7** | **85** | 120 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 15 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 12:00 | 13 to 20 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 9 |
| 13:00 | 21-40 | **7** | **3** | 3 | 6 | 5 | 24 |
| | 41-65 | 6 | **3** | **6** | **20** | 7 | 42 |
| | 66+ | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 18 | 22 |
| 16:00 | 13 to 20 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 32 | 48 |
| 17:00 | 21-40 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 34 | 60 |
| | 41-65 | **3** | **20** | **15** | **14** | **57** | 109 |
| | 66+ | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 19 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 20:00 | 13 to 20 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 21 |
| 21:00 | 21-40 | 6 | **25** | 4 | 4 | 1 | 40 |
| | 41-65 | **9** | 8 | **14** | **8** | **4** | 43 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |

Note: The numbers refer to the people observed.

**Table E: Location 2 Age Groups**

## Loc. 2

| Time | | Monday | Wednesday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|------|------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|-------|
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | **1** | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | 41-65 | **1** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 12:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **4** | 1 | 5 |
| 13:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **2** | 2 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 1 | 0 | **1** | 0 | 2 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 66+ | 0 | **2** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note: The numbers refer to the people observed.

**Table F: Location 3 Age Groups**

## Loc. 3

| Time | | Monday | Wednesday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| 12:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **4** | 0 | 4 |
| 13:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **6** | 1 | 7 |
| 16:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | **2** | 0 | 2 | **2** | 6 |
| 17:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **2** | 2 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | **2** | 4 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 to 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20:00 | 13 to 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** | 0 | 1 |
| 21:00 | 21-40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 41-65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 66+ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note: The numbers refer to the people observed.

B. Inhabitants' Short Interview Form

Bonjour. Je m'appelle Louise et je suis étudiante à l'université d'Utrecht. J'écris mon travail de fin d'études sur l'ancien charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux, c'est-à-dire le terril, la ligne 38, et les bois autour. Est-ce que je peux vous poser quelques questions ? Ce sera très rapide.

1. Comment vous appelez-vous (un prénom suffit) et quel âge avez-vous ?

2. Depuis quand vivez-vous près de l'ancien Charbonnage ?

3. Est-ce que l'endroit représente ou signifie quelque chose de particulier pour vous et/ou votre famille ?

4. Est-ce que vous aimez l'état dans lequel il est aujourd'hui ?

5. Est-ce que vous y allez souvent ? Qu'y faites-vous ? (marcher, potager, jeter l'herbe de la pelouse, jouer avec les enfants etc)

6. Est-ce que vous avez déjà observé des choses qui se passent là-bas en termes d'activités ou du type de personne (en bien ou en mal) ?

7. A votre avis, à quoi sert-il aujourd'hui?

8. Est-ce qu'il a une fonction particulière dans le quartier ou la communauté ?

9. Est-ce que vous avez d'autres choses à dire sur l'ancien Charbonnage ou le site lui-même? Une suggestion pour le futur peut-être ?

Merci beaucoup d'avoir répondu à mes questions ! Bonne journée !


English translation:

Good morning! My name is Louise and I am a student at Utrecht University. I am writing my thesis on the former Hasard Colliery of Micheroux, meaning the slag heap, line 38, and the surrounding woods. May I ask you some questions? It won't take long.

1. What is your name (a first name is enough) and how old are you?

2. Since when do you live next to the former Colliery?

3. Does the place represent or signify something in particular for you and/or for your family?

4. Do you like the state in which it is today?

5. Do you go there often? What do you do there? (Walking, gardening, throwing lawn residues, playing with the children, etc)

6. Have you ever observed anything happening there in terms of activities, type of people etc (whether good or bad)?

7. In your opinion, what is the use of the site today?

8. Does it have a specific function in the neighbourhood or the community?

9. Would you like to mention anything else about the former Colliery or the site itself? Maybe a suggestion for its future?

Thank you very much for answering my questions! Have a good day!

C. Users' Interview Form

Bonjour! Je m'appelle Louise et je fais un travail sur l'ancien site du Charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux pour l'université. Ca comprend le terril, la ligne 38, et les bois autour. Est-ce que je peux vous poser quelques questions ? Ce sera rapide !

1. Comment vous appelez-vous (un prénom suffit) ? Quel âge avez-vous et quel est votre code postal? (Votre nom n'apparaitra nulle part et les informations que vous me donnez ne permettront pas de vous identifier).

2. Quelle est votre profession actuelle ?

3. Qu'est-ce qui vous amène ici ? / Pourquoi y allez-vous d'habitude ?

4. Est-ce que vous venez parfois pour d'autres choses/activités ?

5. Vous venez ici spécifiquement ou juste parce que c'est plus facile (pour la proximité par exemple)?

6. Qu'est-ce qui vous attire le plus ici ?

7. Quel âge aviez-vous la première fois que vous êtes venu(e) ici ?

8. Est-ce que vous venez parfois lorsqu'il fait noir ?
a. Et dans quel but ?
b. Avez-vous peur ?

9. Par exemple, par mois, combien de fois venez-vous sur le site ?
a. Est-ce que ça change en fonction des saisons ?

10. Venez-vous plus souvent seul(e) ou en groupe ?

11. Quelles sont vos attentes par rapport à ce site lorsque vous venez ici ? (être seul(e), passer un moment agréable avec quelques personnes, croiser des gens (in)connus) ?

12. Est-ce que vous croisez souvent d'autres personnes ? Si oui, que font-elles ?
a. Y a-t-il des gens que vous avez l'habitude de rencontrer ? Des amis ?

13. Que faites-vous lorsque vous croisez quelqu'un ici ? (bonjour, hochement de tête, indifférence, inattention etc.…)

14. Est-ce que cet endroit représente quelque chose de particulier pour vous ? Si oui, quoi donc ? Est-ce positif ou négatif ?

15. Décrivez le site en trois mots (ex. dangereux, silencieux, aventure, relaxant…)

16. Comment vous sentez-vous lorsque vous venez ici ? Quels mots utiliseriez-vous pour décrire ce sentiment ?

17. Y a-t-il des endroits de ce site que vous évitez ?

18. Est-ce que vous aimeriez faire/avez déjà fait découvrir le site à d'autres personnes ? (ami, enfant, collègue, famille…)

19. Décrivez-moi une chose agréable ou un bon souvenir qui vous est arrivé(e) sur ce site.

20. Décrivez-moi une chose désagréable ou un mauvais souvenir qui vous est arrivé(e) sur ce site.

21. Est-ce que vous êtes satisfait de l'état dans lequel il est aujourd'hui ?

22. Est-ce que vous trouvez que d'une fois à l'autre le site change ?

23. Trouvez-vous que tout le monde a sa place ici ? (cyclistes, chevaux, sans-abris…)

24. Est-ce que ça vous poserait un problème si plus de gens venaient ici ?

25. Avez-vous d'autres choses à ajouter à propos de cet endroit ? Par exemple une suggestion pour améliorer l'espace ?

26. Idéalement, qu'aimeriez-vous que ce site devienne ?

Merci beaucoup d'avoir répondu à mes questions ! Bonne journée !


English Translation:

Good morning! My name is Louise and I am a student at Utrecht University. I am writing my thesis on the former Hasard Colliery of Micheroux, meaning the slag heap, line 38, and the surrounding woods. May I ask you some questions? It won't take long.

1. What is your name (a first name is enough)? How old are you and what is your zip code? Your real name will not appear in the final work if you do not wish so and the information you give me will not make it possible for anyone to identify you.

2. What is your current profession?

3. What brings you here?/ Why do you usually go there?

4. Do you sometimes come here for other things or activities?

5. Do you specifically come here or is it simply easier (as in proximity issues for example)?

6. What attracts you the most here?

7. How old were you the first time you came here?

8. Do you sometimes come when it is dark?
a. For what reasons?
b. Are you scared?

9. For example, per month, how often do you come on this site?

10. Do you mostly come here alone or with other people?

11. What are your expectations regarding this site when you come here? (to be alone, spend quality time with some people, meet people you know or do not know…)

12. Do you come across other people often? If yes, what are they doing?
a. Are there people you are used to meeting here/there? Friends?

13. What do you do when you come across other people here? (say hi, head sign, indifference, inattention etc…)

14. Does this place represent something in particular for you? If yes, what is it? Is it positive or negative?

15. Describe the site in three words (e.g. dangerous, silent, adventure, relaxing…)

16. How do you feel when you are here? What words would you use to describe the feeling?

17. Are there areas of the site that you avoid?

18. Would you like/have you already introduced someone to this site? (friend, child, colleague, family…)

19. Tell me one nice/agreeable event or memory that happened to you on this site.

20. Tell me one bad/disagreeable event or memory that happened to you on this site.

21. Are you satisfied with its current state?

22. Do you find that the site changes from one time to the next?

23. Do you find that everyone has their place here? (horse riders, cyclers, homeless people…)

24. Would it be a problem for you if more people came here/there?

25. Do you have other things to add concerning this place? For example a suggestion on how to improve the space?

26. Ideally, what would you like this site to become?

Thank you very much for answering my questions! Have a good day!

D. Institutional Actors' Interview Form

Bonjour ….Merci beaucoup d'avoir accepté de répondre à quelques questions au sujet du site de l'ancien Charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux. Pour mon travail, cette appellation comprend le terril et le bois autour, y compris la ligne 38 (montrer carte des lieux).

1. Quelle est votre position (travail) ?

2. Quel est votre lien avec l'ancien site du Charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux (en termes professionnels) ?

3. Connaissez-vous ce site depuis longtemps ?

4. Quelle est votre opinion sur l'état actuel du site ?

5. A quel point êtes-vous impliqué(s) au niveau du site ?

6. Que se passe-t-il à l'heure actuelle là-bas ? (en termes d'activités etc.)

7. Pensez-vous que beaucoup de personnes aillent là-bas de façon régulière ?

8. Si oui, pourquoi pensez-vous qu'il y ait autant de personnes qui aillent là-bas ?

9. Quel type de personnes penseriez-vous trouver là-bas?

10. Qu'aimeriez-vous y voir (si différent de l'état/fonction actuel(le)) ?

11. A votre avis, que va-t-il se passer en termes concrets dans un futur proche (ou moins proche) ?

12. Quels sont les enjeux ? Que va-t-il falloir adresser absolument ?

13. Etes-vous actif (active) dans la gestion du site ou dans les discussions au sujet du site ?

14. Y a-t-il quelque chose de fait pour empêcher les utilisateurs d'utiliser ce site (ou certaines parties), et si oui, qu'est-ce ?

[15. La commune reçoit-elle souvent des plaintes (des riverains ou des propriétaires) ?]

16. Quelles sont vos relations avec les propriétaires (au niveau de votre département ou de la commune) ?

17. Que représente cet endroit pour vous personnellement (si cas est) ?

18. Que pensez-vous que l'endroit représente pour les gens vivant à proximité ?

19. Y êtes-vous déjà allé(e) et si oui, y allez-vous régulièrement ?

20. Si cet endroit devait changer de fonction, être fermé au public pour de bon, ou disparaitre complètement, que pensez-vous que les gens feront ?

21. Ou iront les utilisateurs ?

22. A votre avis, est-ce que ce serait perdre quelque chose d'important?

23. Y a-t-il d'autres choses ou aspects que vous voudriez partager au sujet de l'ancien site du Charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux ?

Merci beaucoup pour votre aide !


English Translation:

Good morning _____. Thank you very much for letting me ask you some questions about the site of the former Hasard Colliery of Micheroux-Retinne. In my work, this includes the slag heap and the woods around it, including line 38 (show map).

1. What is your position (job)?

2. What is your link with the former coal mining site of Hasard in Micheroux-Retinne (in professional terms)?

3. Have you known this site for a long time?

4. What is your opinion about the current state of the site?

5. How far is your organisation involved at the level of the site?

6. What currently happens there (in terms of activities etc)?

7. Do you think many people go there on a regular basis?

8. If yes, why do you think so many people can be found there, on site?

9. What kind of people do you think go there?

10. What would you like to see there (if different from current state/functions)?

11. In your opinion, what will become of the place in the near, or not so near, future?

12. What are the issues? What will need to be addressed absolutely?

13. Are you actively involved in the managing of the site or in discussions about the site?

14. Is there something done to stop the users from using this site (or certain parts of it), and if yes, what is done?

15. Do people, such as residents, local governments, or owners, frequently complain to your organisation?

[16. What is your relationship with the owners (in terms of your department or organisation?]

17. What, if anything, does this place represent to you personally?

18. What do you think the place represents for people living close to it?

19. Have you ever been there and if yes, do you go there regularly?

20. If this place was to change function, be closed for good to the public, or disappear completely, what do you think people will do?

21. Where will the users go?

22. Will something important be lost in your opinion?

23. Are there other things or aspects you would like to share about the former Hasard Colliery's Micheroux site or about the colliery itself?

Thank you very much for your help!

E. Interview form for Mr. Pierlot (former Engineer at the Colliery of Hasard)

1. Quelle était votre position (travail) à l'ancien Charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux? En quoi est-ce que ça consistait ?

2. Quand avez-vous commencé à travailler là-bas ?

3. Quand avez-vous cessé de travailler au Charbonnage et pour quelle cause ?

4. Qu'avez-vous fait après ?

5. Que s'est-il passé pour les autres employés (y compris les mineurs) après la fermeture ?

6. Et pour Micheroux et Retinne ?

7. Allez-vous encore régulièrement sur le site (le terril, les bois, et la ligne 38) ? Si oui, qu'est-ce qui vous y amène ?

8. Quelle est votre opinion sur l'état actuel du site ?

9. Que se passe-t-il à l'heure actuelle là-bas ? (en termes d'activités, d'utilité etc.)

10. Qu'aimeriez-vous y voir (si différent de l'état/fonction actuel(le)) ?

11. A votre avis, que va-t-il se passer en termes concrets dans un futur proche (ou moins proche) ?

12. Que représente cet endroit pour vous personnellement (positif/négatif)? Est-ce que vous y tenez beaucoup ou pas du tout ?

13. Que pensez-vous que l'endroit représente pour les gens vivant à proximité ?

14. Y a-t-il d'autres choses ou aspects que vous voudriez partager au sujet de l'ancien site du Charbonnage du Hasard à Micheroux ou du Charbonnage lui-même?

15. Open discussion on Mr. Pierlot's experiences and insights.


English Translation:

1. What was your work/position at the former Hasard Colliery in Micheroux-Retinne? What did it consist of?

2. When did you start working there?

3. When did you stop working at the Colliery and for what reasons?

4. What did you do after working there?

5. How did things go for (what happened to) the other employees (including the miners) after the closing?

6. And for Micheroux and Retinne?

7. Do you still often go onsite (the slag heap, line 38, and surrounding woods)? If yes, what brings you there?

8. What is your opinion of the site's current state?

9. What happens there these days (in terms of activity, utility, etc)?

10. What would you like to see there? (If different from current state/function(s))

11. In your opinion, what will become of the place in the near, or not so near, future?

12. What does the place represent for you personally (positive or negative)? Do you care for/about it much or not at all?

13. What do you think the place represents for the people living close to it?

14. Are there other things or aspects you would like to share about the former Hasard Colliery's Micheroux site or about the colliery itself?

15. Open discussion on Mr. Pierlot's experiences and insights.

F. Interesting Additional Links

Biodiversity Action Plan for Birmingham and the Black Country (2000). Habitat Action
    Plan: Urban Wasteland. Retrieved on January 4th, 2012 from:
    http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/urban/ecorecord/bap/html/urban.htm

CPU (Cours de Projet Urbain) (2009-2010). *Aménagement de la ZACC dit 'Terril du
    Piron'*. Univerity of Liège. Retrieved on January 14th, 2012 from
    http://www.lema.ulg.ac.be/urba/Cours/Projet/0910/enonce2009_10.pdf

Dumesnil, F. & Ouellet, C. (2002). La réhabilitation des friches industrielles: un pas vers
    la ville viable? *Vertigo 3(2),* Retrieved on January 3rd, 2012 from
    http://vertigo.revues.org/3812

ICI (2009). *The Industrial Culture Route*: http://www.ici-itineraire.eu/index.php?lang=en

On people visiting and documenting forbidden and abandoned sites and buildings and
    their resulting pictures and experiences:
    http://www.forbidden-places.net/
    www.abandoned-places.com
    http://bakuravoyage.blogspot.com/

Other interesting websites:
    www.thenaturalstep.org
    http://fr.franceguide.com/Les-sites-industriels-
    revisites.html?NodeID=1&EditoID=196039

PDT (Pays des Terrils) (2008). *Les Secrets du Pays des Terrils : Carnet Pédagogique.*
    Retrieved on January 13th, 2012 from
    http://www.paysdesterrils.eu/files/paysdesterrils_dossier-pedagogique.pdf

SMMW (2012). *Les Sites Miniers Majeurs de Wallonie*:
    http://www.sitesminiersmajeursdewallonie.be/