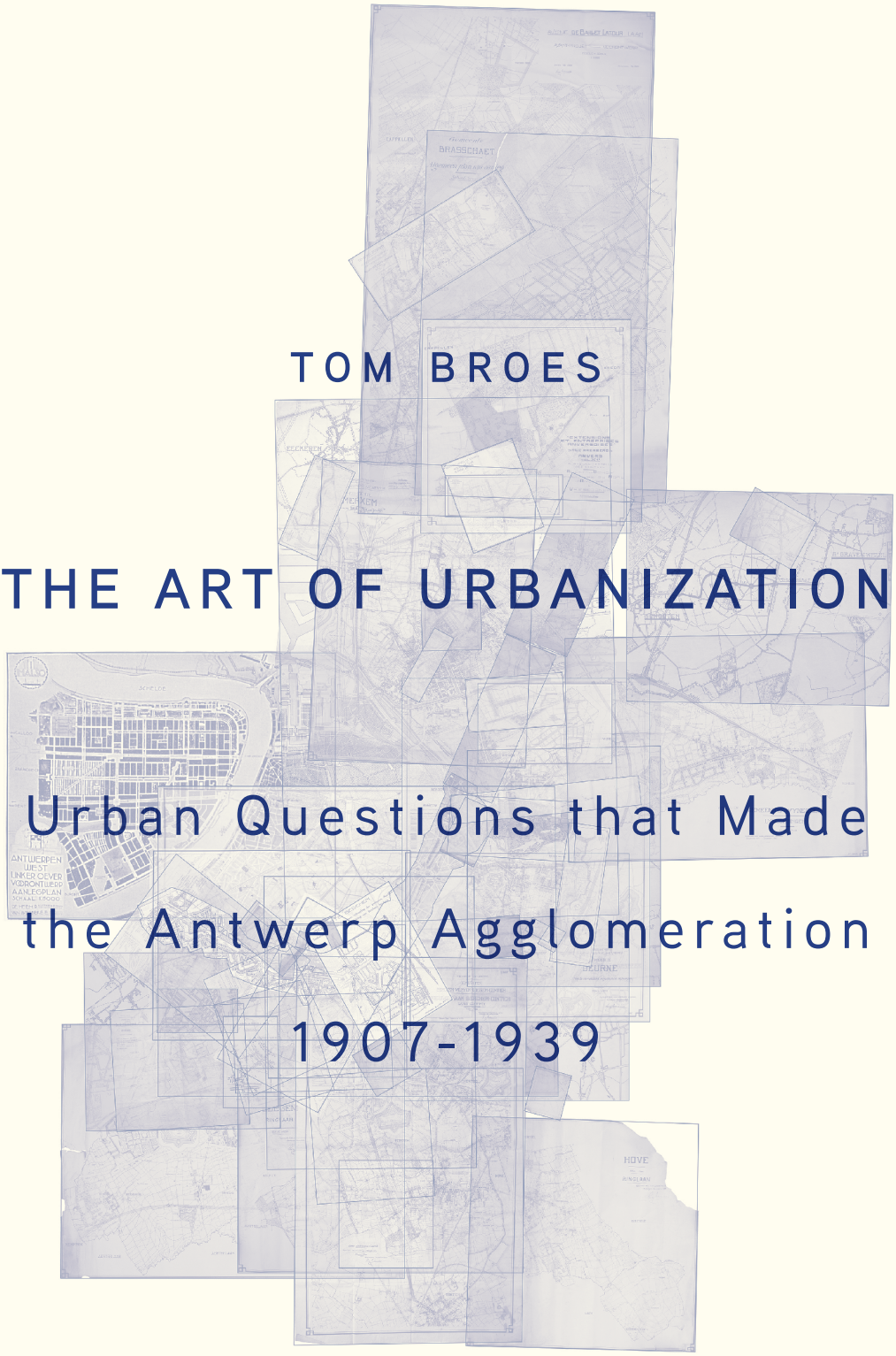
TOM BROES

THE ART OF URBANIZATION

Urban Questions that Made the Antwerp Agglomeration 1907-1939



Leuven University Press

The Art of Urbanization

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The publication of this book was supported by Universitaire Stichting, KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access, Stad Antwerpen, and the Open Book Collective (see www.lup.be/obc)



This book was partly developed under the Excellence of Science (EOS) project: *Construction History, Above and Beyond: What History Can Do for Construction History*. This project (40007559) has received funding from the FWO and F.R.S.-FNRS under the Excellence of Science (EOS) programme.

Published in 2025 by Leuven University Press / Presses Universitaires de Louvain / Universitaire Pers Leuven. Minderbroedersstraat 4, B-3000 Leuven (Belgium).
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ISBN 978 94 6270 482 4 (Paperback, colour)
ISBN 978 94 6270 489 3 (Paperback, B/W)
ISBN 978 94 6166 679 6 (ePDF)
ISBN 978 94 6166 680 2 (ePUB)
https://doi.org/10.11116/9789461666802
D/2025/1869/38
NUR: 648

Layout: Crius Group
Cover design: Daniel Benneworth-Gray
Cover illustration: Practicing urbanization: the urban agglomeration as the reasoned outcome of numerous incremental plans. Collage by author.



Table of Contents

Foreword 9

Acknowledgements 11

Introduction. Urbanization in Theory, History, and Practice 15
The *Art of Urbanization* in theory: On urban questions and reproduction 16
Contemporary critique of urbanization 17
Grounding urbanism in a theory of urbanization 18
Aspects of the Art of Urbanization in international urbanism discourse 21
The *Art of Urbanization* in history: Requalifying the legacy of Belgian planning 22
Pragmatic urbanisms for the open-ended agglomeration 22
Requalifying the historical significance of Belgian planning 24
The *Art of Urbanization* in practice: The study of reason and intent 26
The SCAA as a social platform for urbanization 26
Specific situation—productive universal? 30

Chapter 1. The Question of Metropolitan Governance: Confederal municipalism, provincial policy entrepreneurship, and programmatic urbanization 33
Governing unbounded urbanization 33
The impossibility of pure and plain annexation 33
Intermunicipal cooperation under provincial supervision 34
Municipal confederalism 36
Three forms of municipalism for three regimes of urbanization 38
Mythical municipalism and urbanism 38
Managerial municipalism and cheap urbanization 40
Confederal municipalism and programmatic urbanization 42
Provisional provinces 45

The SCAA, policy entrepreneurship, and the relative ideal 48
Urbanization as the work of men 48
The relative ideal 53
Policy-entrepreneurship in-between realpolitik and ideology 58
Grounding urban governance in the process of urbanization 63

Chapter 2. The Question of Urban Ways: The urbanization of technology and ecological infrastructures 67
The urbanization of technology 67
Sanitary amenities as a techno-natural prerequisite for urbanization 69
Les 'Hommes de l'égout' 70
Technology deduplicating nature 71
The necessity of incremental implementation 78
Toward a metropolitan grid: The modern road as urban project 81
Les 'Hommes de la route' 81
Building a one-mile metropolitan grid, a work for the long haul 84
An urban profile for the modern road 97
The urbanization of railway infrastructures 98
From ambitious plans to local porosity 99
Radically careful infrastructures for an urban ecology? 102

Chapter 3. The Question of Collective Consumption: Generative urbanization and spatial differentiation securing the right to the city 109
Generative urbanization rather than parasitic urbanization 109
Parasitic urbanization and uneven development 109
Generative urbanization and spatial differentiation 110
The SCAA's approach to generative urbanization 112
Parks and squares as a public backbone for continued accumulation 113
Saving public parks from private subdivision 114
Weaving parks into the urban fabric 121
Urban parks and the right to the city 125
Squares as communal spaces or civic centralities 127
Positive externality and continued accumulation 130

Sports facilities for a new urban imagination 132
Polo and golf clubs: Playgrounds for Antwerp's high society 132
Antwerp's major stadiums: Sports for the common man 136
A sports dome and aviation plains for a new metropolitanism 139
Private capital stimulating public welfare? 141
The urbanization of public transport 143
Vicinal railways penetrating the historical city 143
Urban trams breaking out of the historical city 146
Practicing generative urbanization 147

Chapter 4. The Housing Question: Real estate agency and the urbanization of taxes on urban rent 153
The consolidation of real estate agency 153
Real estate and urbanization 153
The professionalization of real estate agency 155
An urban revolution avant la lettre 157
Urbanizing the agglomeration as a prerequisite for the urbanization of capital 159
The rise of an autonomous secondary circuit of capital 159
Providing a permanent flux of 'urbanizable land' 162
A pertinent critique of capitalist urbanization 166
An urbanistic turn: Redistributing class-monopoly rent 167
Urban rent in Belgian politics 168
Uniform tax regulations for the agglomeration? 171
The municipalization of land 172
Negotiating urban fortunes 175
A socially fair redistribution of urban fortunes 182
A job well done, but what if? 184

Chapter 5. The Question of Aesthetics: Spatial agency and *L'esthétique intégrale* for an architecture of urbanization 189
Subordination and subsistence of aesthetics in an urbanizing world 189
The SCAA's loose ideas and efforts 190
The persistence of the aesthetic question 191
International master-urbanists and the critique of liberal irony 192
A local plea for a worldly contingency 195
The critique of the master urbanist as a liberal ironist 197

Situated architects and spatial agency 199
The 'young watchmen' and the practice of architecture in an age of urbanization 199
Four forms of agency for a concrete utopia 202
The SCAA's enabling role 217
L'Esthétique intégrale for an architecture of urbanization 220

Chapter 6. The Sociocultural Question: Urbanization as the work of city-amateurs 225
Urbanization as a sociocultural practice 225
Urbanization and public opinion 226
Amateur readings of urbanization 227
Reciting and exhibiting urbanization: The SCAA in search of an audience 229
Exploring communication channels 229
The 1910 exhibition: Publicity campaign for the urban elites 233
The 1913 event: Exhibition at a tipping point 236
The 1932 Exhibition: Immersing large crowds within the relative ideal 239
Experiencing and exploring urbanization: Civic festivities and regional tourism 245
The 1920 Olympics and the 1930 World Fair 247
Les Amis des Parcs d'Anvers and Les Environs d'Anvers 251
Amateurism as precondition for urbanization as a sociocultural practice 255

Post Scriptum. Final reflections on the *Art of Urbanization* 263
The *Art of Urbanization*: Bridging urban theory and urban history? 265
The *Art of Urbanization*: Belgian practice for a different kind of planning history? 267
The *Art of Urbanization*: Grounding a notion of urbanism in urban theory? 270

Appendix. List of SCAA Meeting Minutes 277
Notes 309
List of Abbreviations 349
Bibliography 351
Illustration Credits 369
Index 373

Foreword

I wish I would have been able to consult this book when I was involved in the Labo XX design research on Antwerp's 20th century fringe, an exercise that Kristiaan Borret, the then City Architect, had initiated in 2011. We would have understood some of the rationale behind its present urban organization so much better. Not that we didn't have any documentation. Tom Broes, as a member of the design research team of the city, had spent quite some time on the compilation of an atlas made in preparation and anticipation of the work of 4 invited design teams. This atlas documented in broad outline the historical development of the urban agglomeration. It clearly explained some of the morphological variations pointing to the factors within the physical geography and historical development sequence that had co-determined these differences: the port in the polders, the urban development to the south, on dry land and oriented towards Brussels. It made sense to me.

But little did we know about how this development had been structured, what choices had informed it. And why there were such great differences in quality. Even less were we aware of who had been in charge, if anybody. We knew there had been a committee in the beginning of the 20th century responsible for the planning of the agglomeration, but we had been told the commission hadn't achieved much as it had only been acting in an advisory capacity. The committee was proof of the general failure to establish a proper level of metropolitan governance. No one had ever studied that work in detail and there was, it seemed, not that much reason to do so. The perspective changed when Tom Broes dug up an overview of all the meetings of the Studiecommissie ter Inrichting van de Antwerpse Agglomeratie [Study Committee for the Development of the Antwerp Agglomeration] (SCAA) and its subcommittees. The list (included in appendix) shows numerous meetings over a period of more than 30 years and a clear focus on specific areas of work. The effort that followed was that of painstakingly reconstructing what all this activity in the committee was about, piecing together all their advisory work from different sources. This book not only brings this work to live, it also graphically shows how the seemingly piecemeal efforts add up and gave direction to the development of the agglomeration. The work of Tom Broes provides

a great opportunity to revisit the discussion on the future of Antwerp's urban fringe. But more generally, it finds precedent in urbanisms that shaped the urban agglomeration for what a postsuburban strategy may look like, in Antwerp and elsewhere, prefiguring a scenario of continued and continuing urbanization work.

There is, however, another reason why I wish this book would have existed before. The book is a timely contribution to give language to a collective theoretical project that seeks to ground urbanism in a theory of urbanization, taking inspiration from the work of Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid and many others around the notion of planetary urbanization. In the work of Schmid and Brenner the effort to theorize planetary urbanization takes root in the speculative work of Henri Lefebvre. The urbanist in me always imagined a longer lineage that would have to go back at least to Idelfons Cerdà and his effort to establish urbanism as the general science of urbanization. I wish I had this book to explain what kind of urbanism, what kind of urbanization work stands within that lineage. This book retraces a particular experience within that tradition, gives it voice. '*Urbanisons!*' was the working title for this book, turning 'Let's urbanize' into the motto of a community of practice working under the injunction to urbanize. It offers a perspective on urbanization at eye level, looking over the shoulder of agents of urban transformation involved in the confusing work of trying to initiate, direct, reinforce or tame the shapeshifting dynamics of urbanization. Tom Broes gives us language to speak about urbanization not as a process with urban results but as an activity, a practice, an art that deliberately articulates and expresses specific modalities of the urban.

Does an author pick his or her book or does a book pick its author? This book feels very much like it existed somewhere already, the same way that a marble statue is already inside the block from which it will be carved. It is not so easy to release it from the block. There are many other statues in the same marble mass competing for attention. This proved to be a long work, and one more complicated than anticipated. But the result is a beautiful piece of work that can finally be shared. It is a source of inspiration for the community of practice busy with the study and development of the Antwerp agglomeration. Most of all it is a joy for everybody who is interested in better understanding the conundrum of urbanization: how urbanization is made and how it makes us.

Michiel Dehaene, June 2025, Antwerp

Acknowledgements

Every academic book is, to some extent, a reflection of the various worlds its author was part of at various points in time. These acknowledgements offer a glimpse into the diverse realms, rich with inspiring people and foundational ideas, that gradually wove themselves into the pages of this book.

It all began at the Urban Planning Department of the City of Antwerp, where I started working as a young urban designer in 2006. Colleagues such as Peter Claeys, Kitty Haine, Kristiaan Borret, and Hardwin De Wever, among others, patiently and skilfully introduced me to the world of planning practice. They taught me that good urban design fundamentally depends on the careful and persistent assembling of all the political, economic, and social conditions necessary to enable—or even enforce—desired socio-spatial change, often from the depths of public administrations. I believe it was there that my interest in grounding a notion of urbanization in the everyday practices, policies, and archives of planning departments first took root.

The scholarly frameworks that helped me conceptualize these mundane practices of urbanization came later, after I joined Ghent University in 2013. I owe an immeasurable intellectual debt to Michiel Dehaene, who introduced me to the world of critical urban theory. I found in Michiel a cordial amateur of everyday life and an original and generous academic thinker—a rare combination that made our collaboration both easy-going and intellectually demanding. His intuition of grounding a notion of urbanism in a theory of urbanization resonated strongly with my historical case and sparked a collective conversation about *les urbanistiques belges*, involving researchers such as Géry Leloutre, David Peleman, and Dieter Bruggeman. Their contributions were crucial to the tone and spirit of this work.

The importance of historical particularism was conveyed to me by insightful historians of urbanism (Pieter Uyttenhove), the city (Ilja Van Damme), architecture (Johan Lagae), and history more broadly (Jens Van de Maele). Access to often non-inventoried archival records depended on the remarkable memory and generosity of many local history connoisseurs—whether active in government archives (Bart Willems, Sofie Roebben, Johan Dambruyne), municipal history circles (Andreas Elsschot, Patrick Pieters), or private companies (Gerda Gevaers). These raconteurs

and guardians of our distant and recent past reassured me that the thrill and nostalgia of archival research will remain invaluable—even in the age of artificial intelligence.

Like many first academic books, this one began as a doctoral dissertation, shaped by countless exchanges with far too many colleagues and peers to name. I do, however, want to mention Sébastien Marot and Paola Viganò, whose open reviews at the VIII Urbanism & Urbanization seminar on the Horizontal Metropolis at EPFL Lausanne in 2016 were the first to truly convince me that my academic path was worth pursuing. Elena Cogato Lanza, Anne Kockelkorn, Johan Lagae, Géry Leloutre, and Veerle Van Eetvelde turned my PhD defence into a replenishing moment—thanks to their art of reading, on which every academic author ultimately depends. Reworking the doctoral manuscript into this book began with their engaged reading reports.

This book was made possible thanks to my extended appointment at Ghent University, first as a postdoctoral assistant and later as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Excellence of Science project *Construction History, Above and Beyond*—funded by the FWO-FNRS. Without the time, space, and trust granted to me by colleagues Laurence Heindryckx, Robby Fivez, Simon De Nys-Ketels, Mirte Wambacq, Igor Bloch, Louis Debersaques, Rika Devos, Ine Wouters, Stephanie Van de Voorde, Dave De Ruysscher, and once again Michiel Dehaene and Johan Lagae—true academic comrades by now—this book would never have seen the light of day. The project also brought me into contact with outstanding scholars such as Linda Clarke, Carl Nightingale, Jane Hutton, Lionel Devlieger, and Inge Bertels, whose work and ideas provided last-minute inspiration to refine several passages in this book.

The generous support of the City of Antwerp (with special thanks to my fabulous accomplices Katrien Embrechts and Valerie Van de Velde), the Universitaire Stichting, and the KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access made it possible to publish this book as an open access volume. Heartfelt thanks go to Leuven University Press and to Mirjam Truwant, Beatrice Van Eeghem, and Annemie Vandezande for their much-appreciated help in publishing and distributing this work.

Unconditional gratitude goes to my family and a wonderful group of friends who, whenever necessary, reminded me that the only way to make progress with this manuscript was to stop working on it in time and enjoy the pleasures of non-productive life. Thank you Luke and Lili for being my most honest critics. Your completely disappointed reactions to

the fact that twelve years of hard work yielded no more than a scant 350 pages were very helpful in putting things into perspective. My deepest love and gratitude go to Isabel, for her unfailing daily support and critical responses—swinging between enthusiasm and shrugged shoulders—that always helped me clarify what might be (and what is definitely not) at stake in the pages that follow.

Tom Broes, October 2025, Antwerp.

"Man's sociability is the reason for the development of urbanization. Man's need for shelter, which exists in any and all situations and circumstances, lies at the origin of urbanization. From there, we see that shelter is its first constituent element. Shelter is not, however, urbanization itself—far from it—just as a single drop of water is not the sea. Urbanization, thus, is much more than a single shelter, and much more than many shelters, considered by themselves and in isolation. Urbanization, to be considered as such, must be characterized by a more or less well-organized grouping of shelters to enable inhabitants to communicate with one another and provide mutual services."

Ildefons Cerdà, *General Theory of Urbanization*, 1867 (2018), p. 79

"Among the modern problems is that of the development of large urban centers, which has come to be known as urbanization, a word ignored by Littré, but which the Académie will no doubt add to the Dictionary when the immortals come to deal—everything happens!—with the letter U (…) While the principles of urbanization have not changed much in the last thirty years, the ways in which they are applied have. Urban planning is an evolving science by its very nature, as it must take into account the future much more than the present, subordinate as it is to the very evolution of material progress and the economic conditions governing a community. (…) Where you used to find wastelands or the silence of the woods, suddenly the trowels of the masons ring out, and man sets up the extraordinarily complex apparatus of life in society. May he at least strive to create some harmony in his urban appropriation of the earth."

Jean Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise*, 1929, n.p.

Introduction
Urbanization in Theory, History, and Practice

This book contributes to reconceptualizing urbanization as a practice rather than a process. It does so by recollecting the activities of the Study Committee for the Development of the Antwerp Agglomeration (SCAA) between 1907 and 1939—a prime case of a largely forgotten episode in Belgian and European planning referred to in historical sources as *L'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations*.[1] For more than thirty long years, the SCAA was charged with 'urbanizing' the Antwerp agglomeration, which consisted of the historical city and (over time) twenty-one surrounding municipalities that were still largely rural in nature. Urbanization, in these discussions, had a strong programmatic charge and stood for "developing the extraordinarily complex machinery of men's life in society" in such a way as "to bring harmony in men's urban appropriation of the earth."[2] As the book will argue at length, the SCAA never wanted to accomplish its task by developing and implementing master plans or rational models as the modern planning movement increasingly advocated in the early twentieth century.[3] Instead, the committee preferred to shape urbanization by articulating, interlocking, socializing, politicizing, and spatializing historically and geographically contingent responses to a number of quasi-universal questions that Antwerp's urbanizing society was faced with, such as the urgent need for sewers, drinking water, (public) transport infrastructures, housing, public parks and squares, etc. The book mobilizes a wide variety of historical sources to demonstrate how the Antwerp agglomeration was not the fruit of master-planning but gradually emerged as the result of collective, pragmatic, incremental, and sustained action on these urban questions. It was in response to this practice that the historical statement was made that the "agglomeration's urbanization required a form of art."[4] The main ambition of this book, then, is to recollect and conceptualize the SCAA's peculiar approach to urbanism as the *Art of Urbanization*—revealing the collective project behind urbanization by scrutinizing the urban questions and practices comprising that project.

In doing so, the book is informed by and aspires to contribute to three broader research conversations. First, and perhaps foremost, this work takes the framing of urbanization that is explicitly present in the practice and rhetoric of the SCAA as a serious starting point to contribute to an intellectual project that seeks to ground urbanism in a theory of urbanization. Second, the forgotten episode of urbanizing the agglomerations, and the Antwerp agglomeration in particular, is scrutinized to affirm Belgium as a model case for writing alternative planning histories outside the dominant quest for rational models or comprehensive master plans—which in turn allows to requalify the Belgian contribution to the making of the planning profession. The third conversation is of a more methodological nature and deals with the question of how to research the reasoning behind historical practices in ways that convey meaning beyond the bounded context in which they occurred. Before plunging into the thick of empirical material that informs this book, this introduction briefly unpacks how these conversations informed choices regarding the understanding, methodological processing, and presentation of that material.

THE *ART OF URBANIZATION* IN THEORY: ON URBAN QUESTIONS AND REPRODUCTION

This book starts from the presumption that the fact that the SCAA was asked to *urbanize* the agglomeration—and not to plan, design, or build it—is far from insignificant. Urbanization was not just another word for practices such as '*Planning*', '*Städtebau*,' or '*L'Esthétique des Villes*' in vogue around the turn of the twentieth century in Europe, undergirding famous model cases such as Amsterdam, London, Vienna, Berlin, Geneva, Hamburg, etc.[5] Compared to these iconic yards of modern European planning, the SCAA's work, operating without an overall plan, simply seems to pale—which explains why the reception of the committee's work has mostly been one of failure.[6] Yet urbanizing the agglomeration was a distinctively different practice, which came with its own rationale and peculiarities that need to be assessed within a different lineage, outside the quest for comprehensive planning models. Reading the SCAA's project from an explicit urbanization perspective, mobilizing urban theory and urbanization literature, proved a method that enabled me to fundamentally reassess the committee's *Art of Urbanization*.

Contemporary critique of urbanization

Starting from an urbanization perspective may come across as somewhat counterintuitive at a moment when the critique of urbanization sounds louder than ever before. Numerous scholars have demonstrated how successive waves of technological progress increasingly implicated our world in what is called a global or planetary process of capitalist urbanization.[7] Many of them have framed urbanization as a compromised project aimed solely at the reproduction of social labor in support of the continued growth of capitalist production.[8] Urbanization, in this tradition, is nothing less than the manifestation of 'capitalism conquering the production of space itself,' increasingly moving the locus for social struggle from the factory to the middle of the urban arena.[9] An arena that should no longer be understood as the city but as a "huge tsunami of unknown urban substance" that continues to engulf our urban planet.[10] Within this larger framing, urbanization stands for world commodification, coupled with several notions of loss or destruction, such as the loss of true citizenship and grassroots agency,[11] the increase of social injustice,[12] the collapse of use value under the crushing weight of exchange value and commodification,[13] the increasing disruption of socio-natural ecologies and the ever widening urban-rural metabolic rift,[14] a tendency toward creative destruction, homogenization and loss of socio-aesthetic distinctiveness,[15] etc. The list is long and has fostered a growing critique of urbanization that Neil Brenner has summarized in an edited volume with a kaleidoscope of selected essays.[16]

Much of this critique asserts that urbanization was almost exclusively deployed as a geographical paradigm aimed at sustaining growth, underpinning accumulation for accumulation's sake only. In the words of David Harvey urbanization has not, in recent history, been much about reproducing bioregions, (socio)ecological complexes, social justice or equality, soil fertility, resource sovereignty, creative integrity, or much else other than sustaining production and capital accumulation.[17] Arguably, it is this ultimate reduction of urbanization to its single productive function that may explain the (misleading) impression that it unfolds 'automatically', almost as if it were a natural force beyond human control—thus contributing to "the chief sin of the 20th century that urbanization happened and nobody either cared or noticed in relation to other issues of the day judged more important."[18] In classical production studies, scholars have indeed argued that a narrowly productivist orientation tends to privilege the emergence

of 'hegemonic technologies' or a form of 'hyper-technological monism'. This paradigm, as Bernard Stiegler contends, constitutes the formal condition for the rise of the 'automatic society'—a socio-technical configuration in which technological productivity not only dictates operational norms but also systematically occludes alternative modes of organization. Within such a framework, potential pathways for innovation, resistance, or reform are effectively black-boxed, excluded from public discourse and policy agendas.[19] Arguably, urbanization increasingly became such a "hyper-technological monism" throughout the twentieth century—'automatically' turning our universe into a 'monoverse' colonized by the homogenizing logics of production and capital, rather than a 'pluriverse' reproducing the socio-ecological diversity of life on earth.[20] In response, critical urban theorists started to advocate the right to reclaim 'control over the urbanization process', insisting on the fact that things could be otherwise—asserting that 'alternative urbanizations', 'alter-urbanizations', or 'alternative urban practices' are possible and urgently needed in our urbanizing planet.[21] By reclaiming the right to control the way urban space is produced, urbanization "immediately loses its passive qualities and becomes a dynamic moment in overall processes of [socio-spatial] differentiation and change."[22] The urbanization perspective thus helps to understand how the production of space becomes a "fundamental moment within social processes, inseparable as a relational attribute of it, rather than as something constituted with absolute qualities *a priori*."[23] It encourages us to move beyond a positivist (Newtonian-Cartesian-Kantian) notion of urbanism, in which the city is considered as an object that can be (pre)engineered "by imposing the right spatial form as a means to control, contain, modify or enhance social processes."[24] Rather, the city becomes an ever-evolving assemblage of simultaneous social processes, made of different and reasoned "practices of urbanization."[25]

Grounding urbanism in a theory of urbanization

The work of Dehaene is most explicit in conceptualizing how such 'practices of urbanization' could underpin the development of an approach to urbanism that he too calls the *Art of Urbanization* [*verstedelijkingskunde*]—curiously mirroring the SCAA's own historical language.[26] By grounding urbanism in a theory of urbanization, he argues, the discipline "acquires a different theoretical basis: one that does not demand normative theory,

based on all the *do's and don'ts* and recommendations from the handbooks of *good city form*, one that does not rely on a canon of plans, but rather allows theory to begin with the question of why there is a field like urbanism altogether: namely the 'urban questions' that society faces, over and over again, in the process of urbanization."[27] The more urbanization progresses and becomes the hallmark of civilization, the argument goes, the more individuals are cut off from the ability to fully provide for their own needs, resulting in a process of strong mutual interdependence.[28] That is why pertinent urban questions such as the housing question, the provision of drinking water and disposal of wastewater, the organization of public services and transport, etc., require collective socio-spatial arrangements at given times and places. Urbanization becomes an 'art' when collective agency succeeds in curbing the burdens that living together initially entails into mutual benefits shared by society at large.

These benefits are traditionally framed in terms of agglomeration effects or positive externalities, i.e., the building of value outside the internal economic logic of singular enterprises or institutions, and which individual actors consequently cannot bring about on their own.[29] Both terms point to a mode of urbanization that, in Merrifield's words, "reallocate[s] the bulk of its surplus and accumulated wealth, giving it back in the form of investment that benefits production *and* human capital."[30] The *Art of Urbanization* is a project of expanded capital accumulation, including the building of social, spatial, cultural, human, experiential, ecological, and aesthetic capital—to name only a few of its aspects.[31] It conceives of the city as an oeuvre or use value rather than a product or exchange value.[32] It explicitly chooses to pursue the mutual benefits, positive externalities, and agglomeration effects that come with urbanization—rather than merely preventing the emergence of negative externalities, which seems to be the subject of much planning thinking.[33] It returns, in sum, to Cerdà's foundational concept of *urbanización*, which started from the conviction that the "very reason for the development of urbanization was to be sought in people's sociability—in their understanding that acting together, in proximity to one another, enhanced the chances of providing mutual services."[34]

Such an *Art of Urbanization* can never be reduced to 'prescriptive principles of good practice' simply because it unfolds in an endless number of different spatio-temporalities. Rather, the *Art of Urbanization* must be "reframed as part of an interpretive tradition that looks at urban development and urbanization as a material-historical process, the meaning of which must be established time and again, in every place and at every

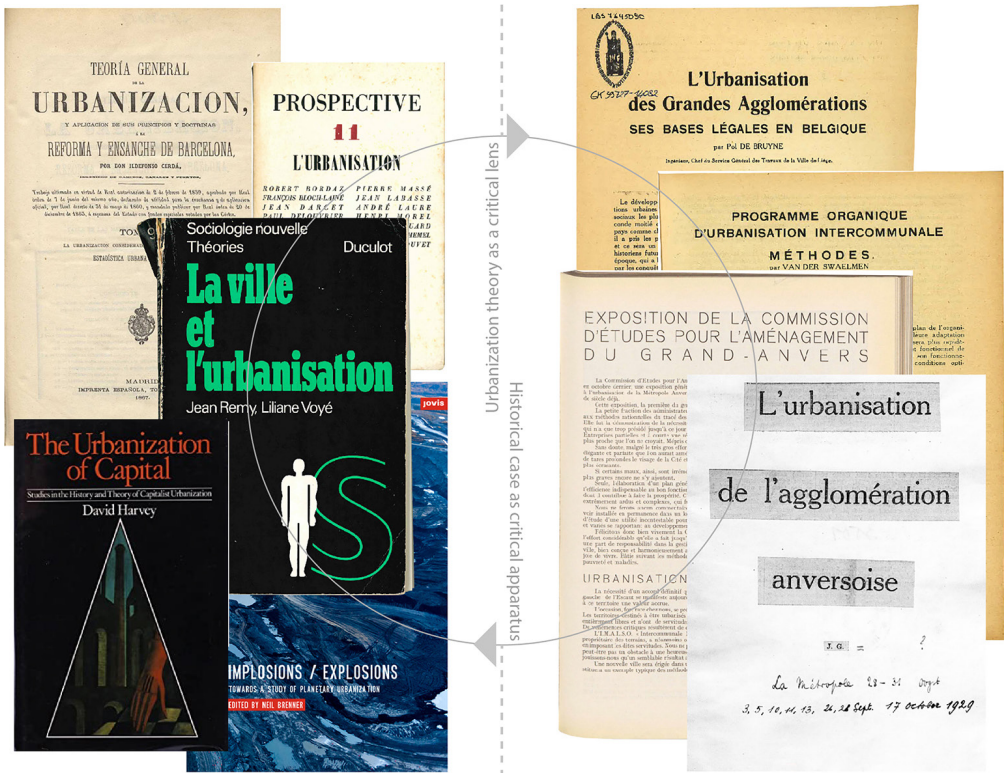


Figure I.1 Reading an historical urbanization practice against urbanization theory, and vice versa.

specific juncture in history."[35] To put it succinctly: urbanism depends.[36] It is fundamentally situated, relational, and historical, refutes to be captured in universal dogmas, and is more of a reflective practice or a *savoir* than a rational model-based science.[37] This theoretical notion of the *Art of Urbanization* proves an utterly appropriate critical apparatus for reinterpreting and requalifying the SCAA's historical *art de l'urbanisation*. And conversely, the case provides valuable entry points to further reflect on the theoretical framework. (Fig. I.1)

Aspects of the *Art of Urbanization* in international urbanism discourse

Only a very limited number of seminal texts, from the hand of scholars like Dehaene, Brenner, and Harvey, or Lefebvre, explicitly address the implications of adopting an urbanization perspective on the conceptual outlines of urbanism and the making of emancipatory urban politics.[38] An increasing body of literature, however, has in recent decades emphasized the relational nature of space, architecture, and urbanism as part of social processes, embedded within and conditioned by systems of political economy and political ecology—echoing aspects of an urbanism grounded in a theory of urbanization.[39]

Several authors have framed urbanism as a sociocultural and essentially historical practice;[40] as a reflective practice, a *savoir*, or a 'conversation with the situation' that both requires and produces knowledges that are less formally and technically informed yet more social, contingent, practical, and situated;[41] as a nondeterministic practice that is less structured by doctrinal thinking than by relative thinking marked by a provisional morality unpreoccupied by a fixation on the plan;[42] as a practice geared toward making the noncommodifiable tangible and giving it social meaning;[43] as a practice oriented toward socio-spatial redistribution;[44] as a practice highly aware of the tense dialectics between social processes (*cité/población*) and urban form (*ville/ciudad*),[45] etc. Essentially concerned with interlocking multiple urban questions at the same time, finally, the *Art of Urbanization* is not easily aligned with the more than hundred 'specialized' or 'adjectival' urbanisms that emerged around the turn of the twenty-first century.[46] Rather, the *Art of Urbanization* joins attempts at more integrative theorizing, with a focus on the urban problematic at large.[47] Whereas little of the referred work explicitly departs from an urbanization perspective, it nevertheless seems a very promising umbrella concept under which much conceptual thinking can be gathered.

THE *ART OF URBANIZATION* IN HISTORY: REQUALIFYING THE LEGACY OF BELGIAN PLANNING

Back in the 1920s, Senator Emile Vinck suggested looking at the early twentieth century agglomerations to explore the roots of Belgian urbanism.[48] Today, a hundred years later, however, Vinck's call has still largely remained unanswered. Belgian scholarship on planning and urbanism mainly focused on the historical city,[49] post–World War I reconstruction,[50] a number of illustrious figures,[51] and the nebular city—with a thematic focus on generalized mobility and infrastructures,[52] private home-ownership,[53] splintered territorial governance models institutionally centered on the municipality,[54] and the dispersal of industry across the nation's territory.[55] Much of this research led to the dominant description and perception of Belgium as a country of "*urbanisation sans urbanisme*."[56] The large urban agglomerations are conspicuously absent from this list and seem to have been predominantly treated as part of the expanding historic core or as part of the legacy of dispersed urbanization in Belgium.[57]

Pragmatic urbanisms for the open-ended agglomeration

There are, however, good objective reasons to study the Belgian agglomerations much more in their own right. Belgium's pertinent policies of dispersal notwithstanding, intriguing infographics from census tracts in the 1930s show that the number of inhabitants in the large urban agglomerations of Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, Ghent, and Liège rose from 10 percent to 24 percent between 1830 and 1930. (Fig. I.2) The agglomerations developed de facto—but the urban discourses and practices underpinning their development have remained understudied.

Fundamental research into the urbanisms of Belgium's larger urban agglomerations has so far only been conducted in the context of Brussels. Both Benedikte Zitouni's book *Agglomérer* (1828–1915) and Géry Leloutre's work on *L'agencement de l'espace urbain bruxellois* (1949–1979) thoroughly portray how urbanization in and around Belgium's capital was mastered in pragmatic, incremental, provisional, yet targeted ways—rather than by integrated forms of metropolitan planning.[58] Similar detailed research does not exist for the period 1910–1940, except for a few exploratory articles, again mostly focused on Brussels, that reiterate Belgian urbanism as a pragmatic-incremental practice.[59] In an intriguing article on the

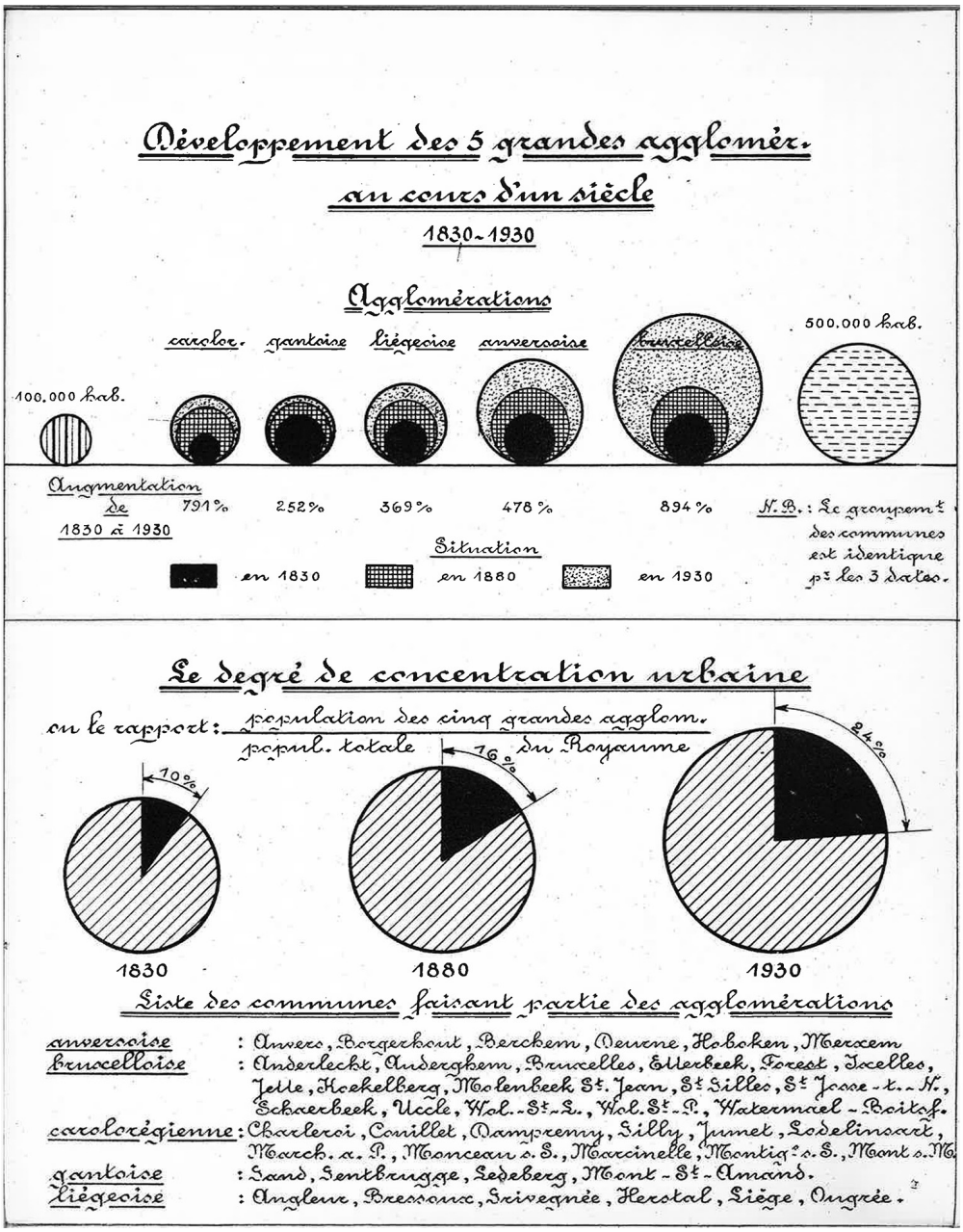


Figure I.2 Belgium's large agglomerations urbanized de facto, but the urban practices that undergirded these processes of urban agglomeration have remained understudied.

epistemological construction of Belgian urbanism, Grulois describes how a few intellectuals of the Belgian Town Planning Association "envisaged the city as a continuously evolving totality" irreducible to normative and universal planning models.[60] Instead, a peculiar approach to urbanism emerged from a "detailed exploration of the process of fabricating the urban," which gave shape to the "agglomeration as an open and non-deterministic concept specific of the Belgian territory."[61]

This book will further substantiate these claims, by exploring the forgotten project of *L'urbanisation des agglomérations belges*, of which *L'urbanisation de l'agglomeration anversoise (1907–1939)* is studied as a prime case. This work, in sum, inserts the notion of the *Art of Urbanization* within a long lineage of metropolitan urbanisms that have all been described as nondeterministic, open-ended, and pragmatic—in a city other than Brussels and in a timeframe in which planning the Belgian metropolis has not been very deeply explored so far.

Requalifying the historical significance of Belgian planning

The timeframe in which the SCAA operated was very much dominated by the (misplaced) desire to turn urbanism into a positivist science, by an urge for demarcation—and in that sense the self-disciplining of the planning profession.[62] In her now-classic 1965 work *L'urbanisme, utopie et réalités*, Françoise Choay described how two main 'models'—a progressive, and a cultural one—lay at the roots of the epistemological construction of modern planning that proposed rationally ordered model cities to counter the urban disorder and alienation caused by the industrial revolution. Several authors, however, have argued that these emerging planning discourses and doctrines never resonated well within the Belgian context,[63] and that pursuing them only resulted in "the continuity of an illusion."[64] Conversely, Belgian pragmatism was barely picked up in the international planning debate.[65] In general, the feeling prevailed that Belgian urbanism had little to offer to the scientific and international development of the planning profession.[66]

The academic acclaim of Choay's two dominant models, however, has largely obscured the fact that her book also mentioned a 'third' way to conceptualize urbanism, a way that lay dormant in the work of Marx and Engels, who "formulated their critique without appealing to a notion of 'disorder' that was caused by industrialization."[67] Indeed, she proposed

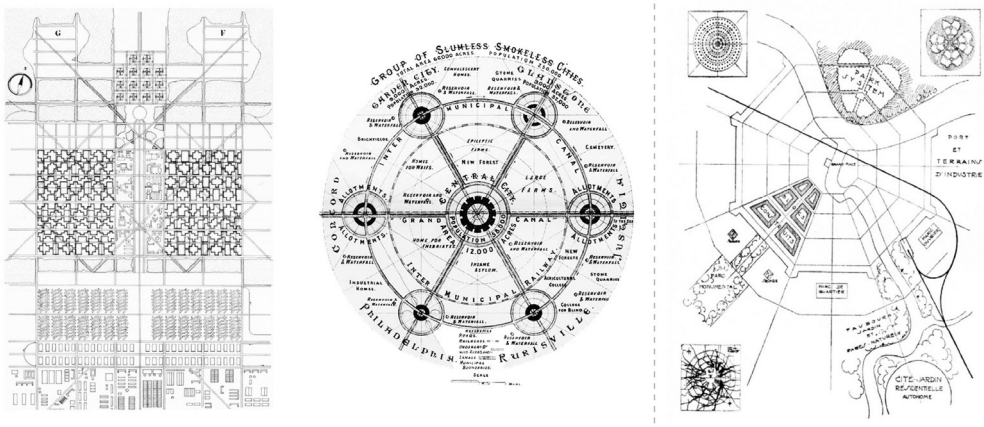


Figure I.3 *L'urbanisation des agglomérations belges* as a model case to explore Choay's 'third' and 'historical' way of conceptualizing urbanism?

a way in which "the certainties and precisions of a model were rejected in favor of an indeterminate future, the contours of which would only gradually emerge as collective and pragmatic action developed."[68] "In *The Housing Question*," Choay argues, "Engels does not provide any panacea or theoretical solution (…) He just seeks to provide the proletarians with a sort of existential minimum, by whatever means, hence his concern for housing, to which he momentarily reduces the 'urban question' [*sic*]."[69] These ideas and vocabularies again fit seamlessly with the ambition expressed above to ground urbanism in an analytical understanding of urbanization, based on the exploration of collective agency on urban questions. This work forwards the Belgian context, its project of *urbanizing* the agglomerations, and the Antwerp agglomeration in particular, as a promising case for substantiating Choay's 'third way' of writing planning history. (Fig. I.3)

THE *ART OF URBANIZATION* IN PRACTICE: THE STUDY OF REASON AND INTENT

The shift from studying urbanism as a model-based science—to be analyzed by the "examination of historical plans and the recollection of applied models"[70]—to urbanization as a fundamentally historical and collective practice (*savoir*) is not free from fundamental methodological challenges. "The study of practices and *les savoirs* poses particular problems," Bernardo Secchi wrote in his *Première leçon d'urbanisme,* in reference to "a great historian of the early 20th century, Gustave Lançon, who, after publishing a history of French literature, aspired to write a 'literary history of France', by which he meant the history of the culture and activities of the large crowds that read and wrote,"—a project that was never finished. How then to research an urbanism that operates without plan or model, that fundamentally sees the production of space as a sociocultural project resulting from the collective agency of large crowds on a selection of urban questions? This mission was even further complicated by the fact that the SCAA left no central archive. In the end, the recovery of nearly seven hundred meeting minutes of the SCAA—scattered in various (municipal, provincial, and state) archives and documenting more than thirty years of activity—became crucial to writing this work. They allowed me to write a planning history based on the reasoning and intentions behind urbanization practices, and to present the urbanization of the Antwerp agglomeration as a very explicit and highly intentional urban project. The minutes, in sum, made it possible to write this book as an account of "many interconnected figures, engrossed in the [urbanization] politics and passions of their time."[71]

The SCAA as a social platform for urbanization

Established by Royal Decree on December 27, 1907, the SCAA is almost exclusively remembered for the international design competition for the urban expansion of the city it organized in 1910, following the 1906 law decreeing the demolition of the old ramparts—won by Parisian urbanist Henri Prost but never executed.[72] Moreover, various archival records claim that "the demolition of the city walls served the sole purpose of expanding the port and not the expansion of the city whatsoever."[73] Belgium's economy and prosperity were at stake, not the expansion of the city. It is revealing, in that respect, that the SCAA was only hastily

established right after one of the most violent strikes ever in the port of Antwerp caused major economic losses and reputational damage to the Belgian state in fall 1907.[74] The strike mainly concerned arduous working conditions and low workers' pay, but it did raise other questions such as the poor accessibility of the port, the lack of decent and nearby housing, and the cumbersome commutes dockworkers had to make every day. For almost twenty years, the state had massively invested in the expansion of its main port in order to keep it internationally competitive.[75] But in 1907 it came to the simple conclusion that the "maritime, commercial and industrial extension to the North of the city equally required urban expansion to the South and the West, for the construction of new neighborhoods to accommodate the growing labor force in Antwerp."[76] Urbanizing the agglomeration surfaced as an afterthought, as a project that gradually became indispensable for the social reproduction of labor in the service of economic production and growth.[77] (Fig. I.4)

From the onset, however, the SCAA was asked to build other forms of sociocultural capital through urbanizing the agglomeration. In a letter from Minister of Public Works Auguste Delbeke to King Leopold II, as he prepared the royal decree establishing the SCAA, no less than six pertinent urban questions can be distinguished.[78] These six questions explicitly structured the SCAA's urbanization mission and have structured the six chapters of this book: (1) the question of urban governance, (2) the question of urban infrastructures, (3) the question of collective consumption, (4) the housing question, (5) the question of aesthetics, and (6) the sociocultural question. The meeting minutes allowed for a patient reconstruction of the debates, reasoning, and decision-making processes regarding these urban questions, adding up to a so-called urbanization program on the basis of which the SCAA managed to develop a shared politics of urbanization. This choice of a thematic way of narrating the SCAA's project is consistent with the ambition of conceptualizing the committee's urbanization practices, rather than meticulously reconstructing its entire history. It is, moreover, a narrative strategy that allows for the introduction of many different social actors involved in urbanizing the agglomeration in a systematic way.

Reassembling foundational documents and a consistent list of nearly seven hundred scattered meeting minutes, accounting for thousands of pages of explicit reasoning, was crucial to understand many other, and seemingly isolated, archival bits and pieces as constituent parts of the urbanization puzzle that the SCAA was gradually putting together in the

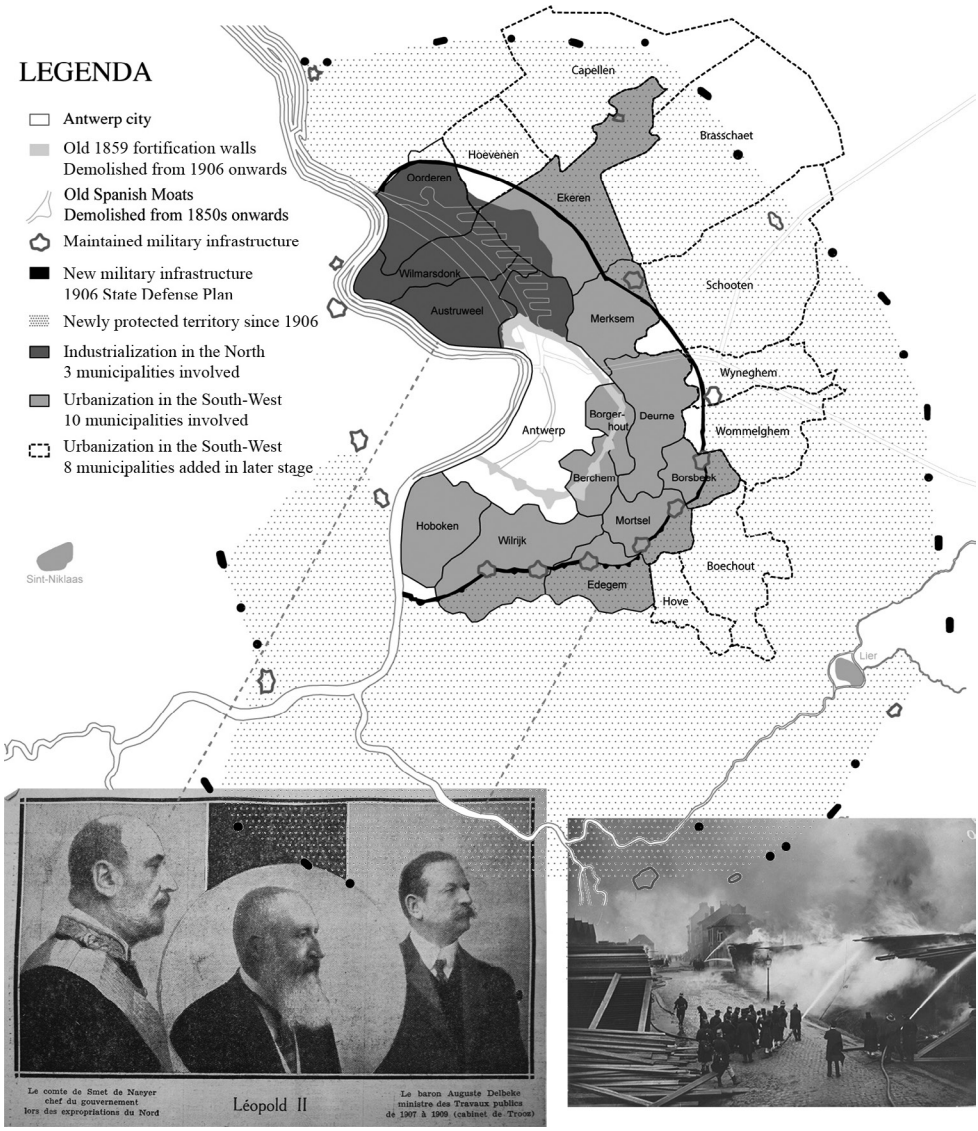


Figure I.4 Urbanization in the south-west supervised by Baron August Delbeke, in order to support industrial expansion in the north supervised by Count De Smet de Naeyer, under the watchful eye of King Leopold II.

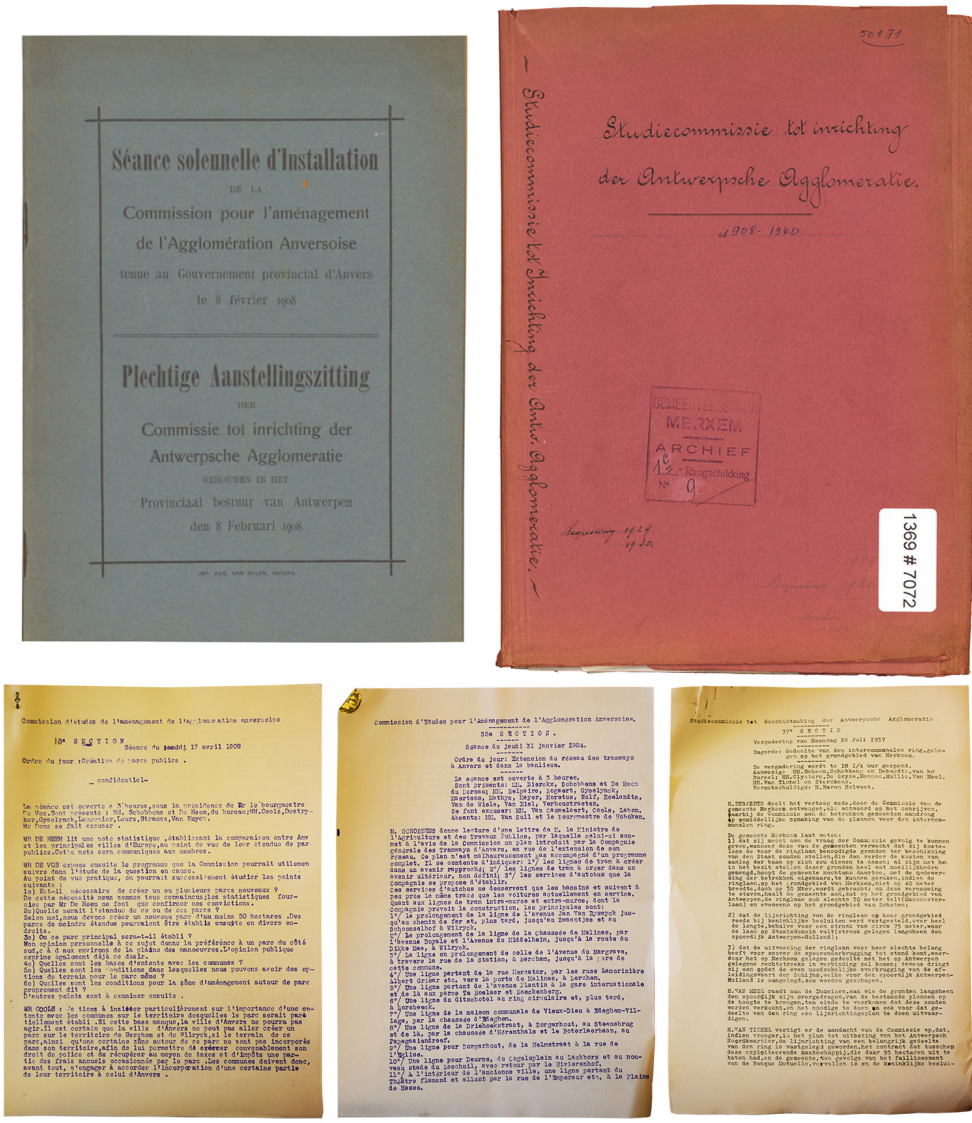


Figure I.5 Typical archival fragments. Correspondence between the SCAA and the municipality of *Merksem (1908–1940)*; a report on the SCAA's official inauguration (1908); and a few key examples of typical meeting minutes on the questions of public parks (1908), tram network (1924), and intermunicipal ring roads (1937) respectively.

agglomeration. (Fig. I.5) Among these pieces were partial plans, sketches, diagrams, and correspondence in archival records of many municipalities; discussions and preliminary design sketches in the private archives of firms and actors; articles in the journals of professional associations; opinion pieces, interviews in the local press or reviews in the publication channels of several local, national, and international organizations, etc. The compilation of all these different sources, with the meeting minutes as the glue, allowed for a meticulous construction of the reasoning behind day-to-day urbanization practices, over more than thirty long years. In this context, the techniques of 'collage', 'tracing', and 'redrawing' served as effective methods for reconstructing and representing the SCAA's urbanization practices. On quite a few images, crucial data layers were traced by the author, without adding any additional information, to make certain readings explicit (and simply legible in black-and-white print). Each chapter concludes with an author-produced conceptual map that graphically represents the SCAA's agency on the urban question under study, in an attempt to capture and substantiate an idea of urbanization as a reasoned project.

Specific situation—productive universal?

Even if similar committees were modeled after the SCAA to coordinate urbanization in Ghent (1920), Bruges (1923), Brussels (1931), and Liège (1950),[79] this book only presents the Antwerp case (1907) in-depth. A full reconstruction of the broad social networks and actors that practiced urbanization as a civic project was simply not feasible for multiple cities. The mono-case research centered on Antwerp, however, is inspired by a tradition of writings that aim to describe how the agency of singular, previously unacknowledged actors and their worldviews contribute to an understanding of the making of global history and its repercussions on local territory.[80] Reading the SCAA's situated urbanization practices against universal theories of urbanization, this work develops an empirically grounded theoretical approach that brings the *Art of Urbanization* in theory in a direct conversation with *L'art de l'urbanisation* in history. As such, studying practices of urbanization opens "an approach to the recurring problem of how to navigate between global models and particular encounters, (…) replacing the clear-cut opposition between the universal and the specific with the investigation of their mutual entanglement."[81]

The book, then, investigates the dialectics of urbanization as the always particular articulation of a quasi-universal phenomenon, as an abstraction that necessarily becomes concrete in practice. The methodology at work in this volume thus becomes an inherent part of the argument it unfolds.

Examining specific cities in search of new (epistemological) approaches to urbanism is, of course, nothing new. Think for instance of Koolhaas's Manhattanism (New York); Ungers's Archipelago City (Berlin); Rowe's Collage City (Rome); Marot's Sub-Urbanism (Ithaca); Banham's four ecologies (Los Angeles); Venturi's learnings from Las Vegas, etc.[82] Yet they differ fundamentally from this work. These classic books all read as retroactive manifestos that start from a deep fascination with these cities' exceptional morphologies, physiognomies, and architectural typologies—and then reconstruct the contours of a plausible, but necessarily implicit project or conceptual approach that could have underpinned their making. This book, however, exchanges these formal preoccupations and fascinations for a sincere interest in the actual social processes and reasoned political wayfinding that precede and underlie the reified city. It aspires to historically recollect and theoretically ground urbanization as an explicit political project and explores the entanglement of the *Art of Urbanization* as both a 'specific situation' and a 'productive universal' that might inspire to more reproductive urbanization politics across time and space.

"The first incorrect thought is: the State will take everything on itself, it pays, commands and rules all alone. If this were true, this committee [SCAA] would not be necessary. Moreover, you Flemish municipalities would certainly not tolerate it: your independence is too close to your heart. (…) No! The State can nor should take the matter upon itself. It can help you, assist you, inform you and encourage you. The best proof it is in the creation of the SCAA."

Auguste Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting der Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie*, 1908, 36.

"To avoid a slow death of the committee, the 'bureau' created a large number of sub-commissions. Problems involving several communities were sometimes very difficult to resolve. Long studies, frequent meetings and repeated efforts have finally produced encouraging results, as you will see."

Paul De Heem, *Conférence donnée par M. De Heem*, L'Emulation 52, no.11, 1932, 328-329.

"The agglomerations quickly become the site of functions of exchange and assimilation, and as the function creates the organ, through a process of functional specialization, differentiated organs are gradually created, tailored to their particular function. Together, these organs make up the city, the theater and instrument of social life, a collective living organism in a state of perpetual evolution (…) But like any natural and spontaneous process of progressive adaptation, urbanization is not without its share of setbacks, backlashes, regressions, ruptures of equilibrium, trial and error (…) It is easy to see that if, at a given moment, citizens rise (…) to attain a level of conscious organization, a better adaptation of the organs to their function will be achieved."

Louis Van der Swaelmen, *Programme organique d'urbanisation intercommunale*, 1925, 41.

Chapter 1
The Question of Metropolitan Governance
Confederal municipalism, provincial policy entrepreneurship, and programmatic urbanization

GOVERNING UNBOUNDED URBANIZATION

The law of March 30, 1906, mandating the demilitarization of the ramparts around Antwerp, finally relieved the city of the military corset that had long impeded its natural expansion.[1] A large territory stretching across many different municipal boundaries, most of which were still quite rural in nature, suddenly became the subject of metropolitan urbanization. However, it was not so clear how this vast territory was to be managed. "At present, matters still have to be settled concerning the administration of these territories," Louis Franck wrote in 1907, adding that "if this were not properly done, the measure taken [to demolish the fortification walls] would be of very little use to the Antwerp population and the city's expansion."[2] This chapter examines which form of metropolitan governance was put in place to urbanize the Antwerp agglomeration and how it related to political discussions on this topic at that time. It reconstructs how the SCAA was rooted in the province and not in the city, which must be understood as part and parcel of a new phase in Belgium's history of urbanization and territorial development. It reveals how the provinces were increasingly put in a position of 'neutral leaders' managing a kind of confederal municipalism as a consequence of the fact that pertinent urban questions began transcending municipal boundaries—especially in the context of Belgium's large urban agglomerations.

The impossibility of pure and plain annexation

Louis Franck was a member of a liberal group advocating the expansion of Antwerp's administrative boundaries in 1907.[3] Otherwise, Antwerp citizens would be "forced to live outside of the city's administrative territory,"

so that "military isolation would be replaced by administrative isolation" because people "thus forced to leave the city they loved would be deprived of any real participation."[4] At the same time, these annexationists stated that subjecting all municipalities to one single administration was a theoretical exaggeration, as most of these municipalities were still very much "determined by problems of rural nature, which were preferably dealt with by the independent municipal councils."[5] They anticipated the many objections a large administrative merger would entail, most certainly in Belgium, which was frankly called "a country of municipal autonomy."[6] In order not to upset the existing municipal councils, Franck proposed to exclude all the historical cores of Antwerp's surrounding municipalities from annexation. The result of so much caution was rather clumsy. Franck's 1907 bill proposed to annex two tentacles of fallow land in-between the old nuclei of Berchem, Deurne, and Wilrijk to Antwerp's administrative territory, a highly artificial proposal that was never realized.

Apart from some tinkering on the margins, a real administrative-territorial reform never took place in the context of Antwerp—at least not until 1983.[7] The largest annexation for the purpose of urbanization happened in 1923 when the uninhabited polder of Borgerweert was incorporated within Antwerp's territorial boundaries. For the purpose of industrialization, a more radical direction was taken. In 1929, three entire municipalities (Oorderen, Wilmarsdonk, and Austruweel) were annexed to Antwerp in view of the expanding port. Apparently, municipal autonomy was less resistant to industrialization than it was to urbanization in the Belgian context. Urbanizing the agglomeration became a polycentric project of autonomous municipalities or 'communes'. (Fig. 1.1)

Intermunicipal cooperation under provincial supervision

This short anecdote confirms the extent to which the principle of municipal autonomy took on almost "mythical proportions" in the Belgian context.[8] There was, however, a broad consensus that municipal autonomy alone would not suffice to accommodate the collective arrangements needed to urbanize the Belgian agglomerations—a project that implicated many fringe municipalities in a context of mutual interdependence. In an intriguing text titled *Programme organique d'urbanisation intercommunale,* the renowned Belgian *paysagiste-urbaniste* Louis Van der Swaelmen stated that "it [was] impossible to solve the problem of urbanization rationally



Figure 1.1 Map by August Mennes, traced by the author, suggesting the 'Eingemeindung' of municipalities and new neighborhoods into a multipolar urban agglomeration with Antwerp City at the center (full white line). Territorial expansion for urban development (dashed white line) left historical cores untouched, as opposed to territorial expansion for industrial development (dotted white line). All images dated circa 1910.

within the strict limits of a single administrative territorial district, i.e., the municipality, simply because the administrative boundaries of a municipality never coincide with the organic delimitation of territories marked by the same functional regimes."[9] Yet, as the epigraph suggests, Van der Swaelmen acknowledged that it was equally impossible to master urbanization without acknowledging the local level and its social fabric.

The question of metropolitan governance always remained something of a paradox in the Belgian context. It was bound by the principle of municipal autonomy, which at the same time had to be transcended.[10] The

legitimacy of local decision-making would inevitably be challenged by a certain heteronomy of the agglomeration as a whole, which prompted questions of how to keep these opposing forces in balance and who was best placed to do so. In the Antwerp context, the administrative level of the provinces was increasingly put forward as an appropriate intermediary level. In 1905, the governor of the Province of Antwerp Fredegand Cogels first called for an intermunicipal committee, operating from within the provincial administration, to manage the conflicting claims of transmunicipal urbanization in the larger agglomeration.[11] Ultimately, the SCAA was established in 1907 as a complex administrative vehicle with representatives from the state (ministers, engineers), the province (the governor, clerks, and engineers), and officials (mayors, aldermen, etc.) from all municipalities involved. It was what we today call a multilevel policy body.[12] Although the SCAA had a marked center of gravity within the provincial administration, that doesn't mean the province was given a strongly centralized mandate. The 1907 Royal Decree clearly stated that the "committee was not empowered to make any decisions" and that by "sending their representatives, the municipalities, the province nor the state gave up on any of their freedom or powers." The SCAA's only remit was to "study, to inform and to mediate" in order to urbanize the agglomeration in more concerted ways.[13]

Municipal confederalism

The question of metropolitan governance beyond local boundaries emerged as a much-debated dilemma in planning history. Whereas preserving municipal boundaries was feared to culminate in weakly integrated metropolitan policies, major administrative reform was believed to facilitate the top-down imposition of an abstracted spatial order fostering alienation.[14] Throughout Belgian history, the radical choice was consistently made to perpetuate local boundaries to "urbanize *with* the municipalities, not *against* them."[15] At the same time, it was argued that the "current anarchy [of Belgian municipalism] could not persist" in the context of the urbanizing agglomerations.[16] The legitimization of local and autonomous governance, despite processes of urban agglomeration, was certainly not exceptional in the context of early twentieth century Europe. It featured, for instance, in Rudolph Schwartz's notion of *Eingemeindung*, which consisted of a de facto recognition of municipal boundaries and

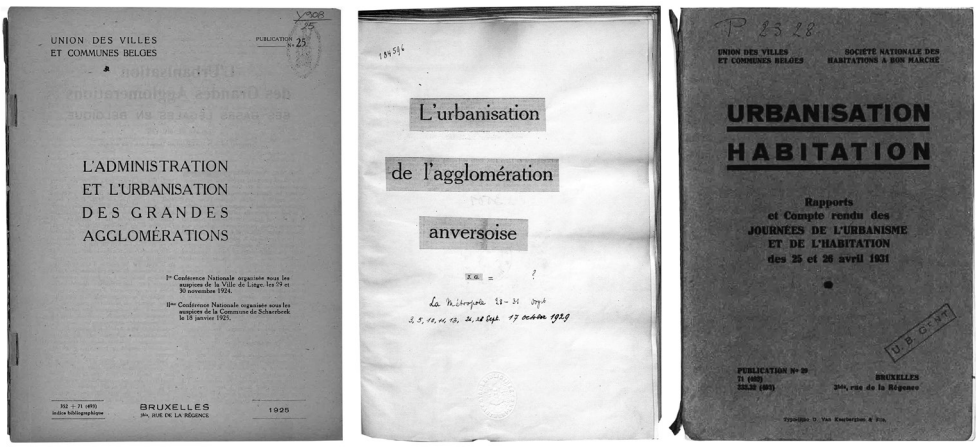


Figure 1.2 Urbanization as an emerging term with a programmatic charge and strongly linked to the development of large urban agglomerations in early twentieth-century Belgium.

customs, a strong preference for (local) self-government and a predilection for urban agglomerations federated into large and small municipalities.[17] Similar notions of federalism were raised in anarcho-communist circles as well. In 1902, Peter Kropotkin urged for the understanding of urban agglomerations as a cooperation or "federation of village communities,"[18] which he described as legitimate "forms of union, territorial in their principle (…) called into existence by the social genius of man."[19] Much later, Murray Bookchin reverted to Kropotkin's writings to develop his notion of 'confederal municipalism' as an ultimate governance model to harmonize "the interdependence among communities and regions without surrendering the legitimate principle of local control."[20]

Interestingly, anarcho-communists like Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus took a sincere interest in municipalist-organized Belgium, which they referred to as a "*champ d'expérience de l'Europe*."[21] Both Kropotkin and Reclus maintained close ties with protagonists of the social movement in Belgium, such as Emile Vandervelde and Emile Vinck, who were typecast as leading intellectuals in "seeking solutions to the emerging problems of urbanizing societies."[22] Vinck became one of the driving forces of the 'Municipal Movement' that flourished in Europe between 1900 and 1960 and which was firmly rooted in the Belgian context.[23] Vinck founded both the Union Internationale des Villes (UIV) and the Union des Villes et des Communes Belges (UVCB) on the occasion of the well-known international planning conference in Ghent in 1913. The UIV's mission was to explore

the quasi-universal nature of the 'urban questions' that were emerging in cities around the world, driven by the conviction that only cooperation among municipalities, both national and international, could provide optimal solutions to the major problems of urban life. The UIV stressed that "it [was] not at all the intention to destroy the necessary hierarchy of local, regional and central power, nor to set up states within the State [...] but that boundaries nevertheless [had to be] defined in the best interests of municipal autonomy, that is, of decentralization; because the greater a municipality's freedom of action, the more constructive that action [would] be."[24] Thus, while the ideology of the UIV and UVCB was certainly not completely aligned with that of the anarcho-communists, it did echo their notions of autonomy and confederal municipalism. Many of the UVCB's publications reveal a marked interest in municipal autonomy, and this chapter will elucidate how the idea of 'federated municipalities' grew into a *leitbild* for urbanizing the Belgian agglomerations. (Fig. 1.2)

THREE FORMS OF MUNICIPALISM FOR THREE REGIMES OF URBANIZATION

Before introducing the members of the SCAA and its day-to-day operations in detail, this section scrutinizes a number of UVCB publications to reconstruct in which moment of territorial and administrative development the committee was founded. This exercise shows how urbanizing the agglomerations at the turn of the 20th century depended on the implementation of a new form of municipalism—next to two pre-existing forms each connected to different historical regimes of urbanization. This section, in sum, explains how three parallel urbanization regimes shaped the urban territory in Belgium, each underpinned by a different mode of municipalism. (Fig. 1.3) It is crucial to understand the exact context in which the SCAA was launched and how it conditioned its practice.

Mythical municipalism and urbanism

Several UVCB publications refer to Belgium's medieval urban history to invoke a 'metaphorical' and 'symbolic' meaning of the idea of municipal autonomy, assuming that local municipalities had been able to escape the centralizing dominance of sovereign regimes because of the relative "weakness of and distance to the respective centers of power."[25] That was

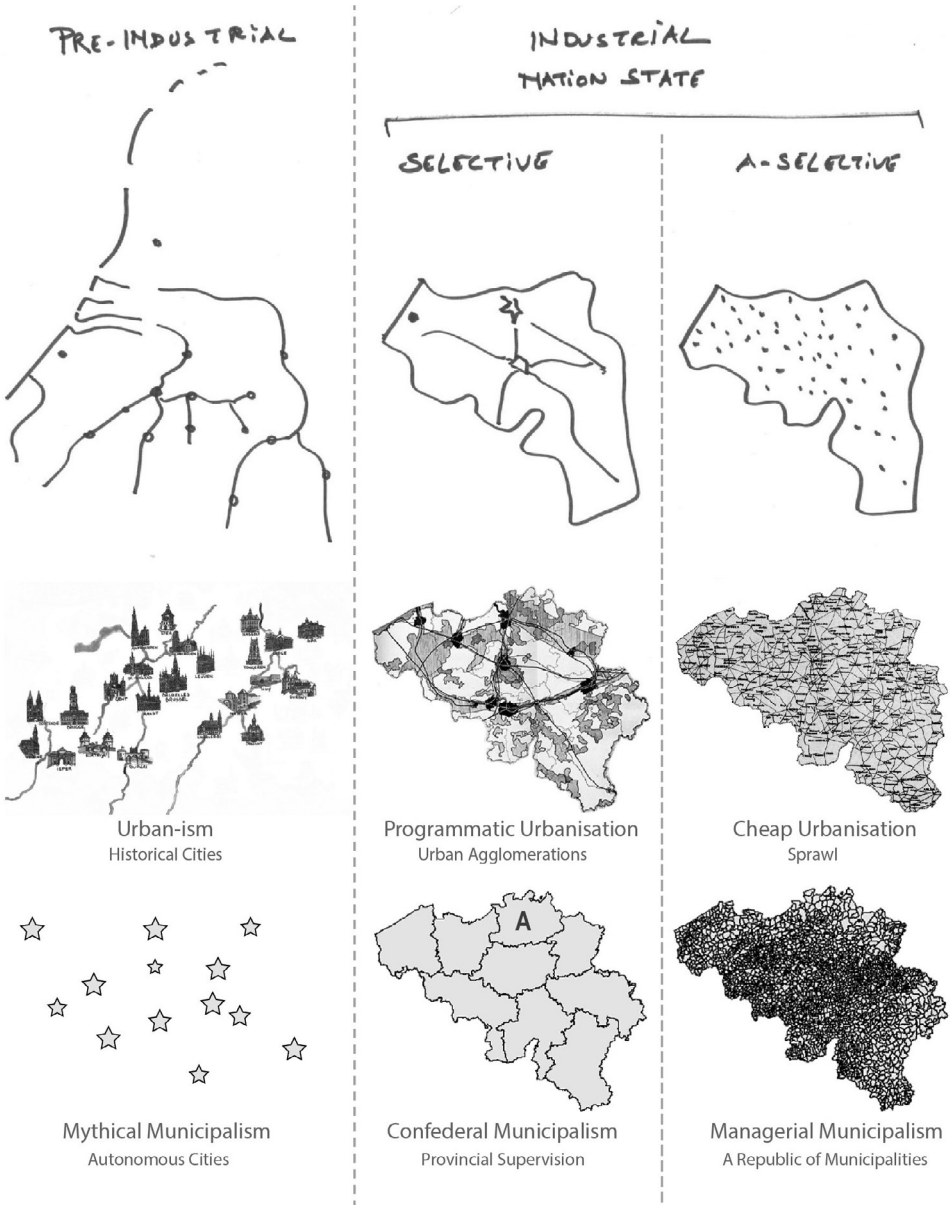


Figure 1.3 Three different, but parallel regimes of urbanization in Belgium, each undergirded by different notions and modes of municipalism. The province of Antwerp is marked with an A. Elaboration by author of a sketch by Dehaene.

particularly true for larger trading cities with their guilds, fraternities, and juridical-economical prerogatives. This high degree of independency encouraged the flourishing of a strong urban culture, yielding the highest rate of urban population in the whole of Europe throughout the Middle Ages.[26] The territory that later became Belgium was defined by a large number of autonomous trading cities clinging to the country's navigable waterways. Belgium's foremost historian Henri Pirenne "famously defined the Belgian medieval civilization as a decidedly urban culture of independent trading cities that were jealous of their freedoms and abhorred both foreign rule and despotic interference."[27] As a consequence, "the local, municipal level was almost naturally imagined as urban."[28] In general, historians agree that even if the medieval degree of autonomy eroded over time, the principle of municipal autonomy nevertheless remained a fundamental feature in Belgium's 1830 constitution. In *Le municipalisme belge*, Perrot argued that in Belgium "national unity was the result of federating municipalities, all fond of their own prerogatives and particularity, into one single state with the common goal of preserving their very independence."[29] Most scholars indeed frame Belgium as a unitary but decentralized state[30]—a "republican commune in a monarchical state."[31] Others, on the contrary, have stressed the new government's centralized powers.[32] This chapter follows historian Van Ginderachter in his thesis that after 1830, "Belgian municipalities had a dual function from the very start: they at once administered local affairs and acted as agents of the central government."[33] It elaborates on the idea that centralism and local autonomy existed side by side and jointly defined the state's territorial development after 1830, each undergirded by different notions and practices of municipalism.

Managerial municipalism and cheap urbanization

During French Reign (1795–1814), the juridical prerogatives of 'Belgian' cities were all repealed, their formal status equalized with that of small and rural municipalities. Moreover, after Belgium's independence, the 1836 municipal law significantly expanded the number of municipal responsibilities.[34] The Belgian nation-state, in other words, extended the same sweeping rights to every single of its more than twenty-five hundred municipalities, whatever their size or importance, vastly expanding the right to self-determination that had marked Belgium's historical cities all

over its territory.[35] With so many responsibilities left to the local level, it was claimed that the Belgian state acted as a "night watchman, i.e. a classic liberal state with minimal functions."[36] The state only intervened to "create a unified economic space,"[37] mainly through the development of dense infrastructural networks (canals, railways, and roads) supported by a host of sectoral laws.[38] Whereas these infrastructures "facilitated the transportation of goods and people within the country and abroad [...], the task of absorbing the social excesses of progressing industrialization was left to the municipal level."[39] Initially, the consequences of this policy were rather limited for local administrations. Some more land was "parceled out, and the slight increase in the children to be educated, the poverty to be alleviated or the rascals to be kept in line could be coped with by the villages' social fabric."[40] In short, the central efforts of industrializing the nation didn't confront the average municipality with 'urban questions' worthy of that name yet.[41]

However, in his UVCB publication on Belgian municipalism, Perrot reported the dire consequences this policy eventually had on many a municipality's treasury.[42] He showed that Belgium's massive population growth between 1830 and 1930 was mainly absorbed by numerous small municipalities of maximum twenty-five thousand inhabitants, urging them to "strengthen existing public services such as hospitals, schools, police, administrative town halls (...) new facilities such as theatres, stadiums and sports grounds, swimming pools and shower baths, dispensaries (...) new equipment and utilities such as electric lighting, increasingly expensive road surfaces, sewers, water, gas etc."[43] These responsibilities caused significant municipal debts and resulted in high municipal taxes.[44] Three paths were considered to counter this situation: (1) by nationalizing services, (2) by federating municipalities, and (3) by allowing municipalities to associate with each other, their respective provinces, and the state. A pure nationalization of services never happened in the decentralized state that was Belgium, and large municipal federations were avoided, because "it might lead to the formation of a political body the power of which was potentially dangerous to the central government."[45] And so the only possibility left was the principle of voluntary associations between municipalities, provinces, and state, which was first anchored in a series of sectoral laws and eventually culminated in the famous law of March 1, 1922, legally accommodating intermunicipal cooperation in general.[46]

This path resulted in several Régies Coopératives, a typical product of Belgian municipalism, such as the Municipal Credit (1860), the National

Railway Company (1889), the National Association for the Distribution of Drinking Water (1913), and the National Association for Affordable Housing (1919).[47] The Municipal Credit allowed individual municipalities to pay an annual fee, that, according to necessity, allowed them to obtain important loans at favorable interest rates—a construction that avoided large state subsidies. The other Régies allowed municipalities, provinces, state, private enterprises, and even individuals to pool capital for the organization of a number of 'shared' public services such as housing, railways, or water supply. The idea was to stimulate economies of scale, a "performance law that applies as much to public services as to private industries,"[48] allowing "municipalities to reconcile their autonomous prerogatives with modern exigencies."[49] Moreover, the state was only expected to invest some start-up capital with the aim of triggering much larger (private/local) investment waves.[50] It lead Perrot to conclude that "overall achievements ha[d] thus been carried out at the lowest public cost."[51]

Here lie clues to describe intensifying processes of territorial development throughout the nineteenth century as 'cheap urbanization' in the Belgian context, delegating questions of social reproduction to the local level in ways that were as lenient as possible for the state treasury.[52] Arguably, this regime of cheap urbanization perpetuated a dispersed municipal realm producing at most a semiurban condition of *rural urbanisé*[53] or *urbanisation sans urbanisme*[54] that may have been cheap to produce but that today appears increasingly difficult to sustain in terms of utilities, mobility, ecology, social equality, etc.[55] Arguably, it established what has been described as a paternalistic 'gas-and-water-municipalism', marked by an utterly managerial agenda—in which the ability to balance budgets and 'maximize services at minimal cost' were considered the sole hallmark of municipal success, turning citizens into passive tax-payers who are not expected to get deeply involved in municipal politics.[56] It is exactly such a managerial conception of municipalism that, according to Bookchin, leads to urbanization without cities.[57]

Confederal municipalism and programmatic urbanization

However pertinent and supported by the work of many scholars, managerial municipalism and policies of dispersal alone are insufficient to recount Belgium's entire urbanization history. It has been argued that "by writing the history of dispersal as a separate case, as the history of a

separate urban form, we run the risk of forgetting that during the same period in which these distributed settlement patterns were facilitated, a parallel project took place under the wings of the nation state."[58] This was a far more selective project, in which Brussels was turned into the nation's political and cultural capital, Ostend into its health resort, Antwerp into its military redoubt, while larger agglomerations such as Bruges, Ghent, Charleroi, and Liège were centered upon the capital by the very same train network that had undergirded the politics of dispersal. All dispersal policies notwithstanding, it was in these larger industrial agglomerations that accumulation deficiencies began to occur around the turn of the twentieth century. In his 1924 study, Pol De Bruyne argued that the "disorderly extensions, made in the span of a few decades around the historical centers without any overall conception, now impeded these cities' orderly expansion just as much as the old ramparts had done earlier."[59] Moreover, in these lager agglomerations, urbanization continually collided with a multitude of administrative boundaries. It was precisely these problems that became the central focus in the UVCB's twin conferences on 'L'administration et l'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations' in Liège and Brussels, in 1924 and 1925 respectively.

People like Vinck and De Bruyne explained that the sectoral laws that had undergirded spatial development throughout the nineteenth century had been sufficient "as long as the agglomeration's different municipalities had not merged with each other, but were only interconnected by large state infrastructures such as provincial roads and vicinal railways."[60] Once the fringe municipalities had started to conglomerate into urban agglomerations, these laws no longer sufficed. Of course, the several laws on the *régies coopératives*—with the general law of March 1, 1922, as a spearhead—had been a promising step. But observers wondered whether these laws were effective "for the planning of entire agglomerations extending over the territory of many municipalities?"[61] Laws allowing the "pooling of resources to provide some services" were simply not enough to make "two or more municipalities agree upon entire urban development programs."[62] Emile Vinck himself concluded that "the main obstacle to the implementation of *urbanization programs* [sic] was the lack of specific laws for this purpose."[63] All laws into force "predated the era in which the rapid urban growth had become a marked phenomenon" and had only been installed to ensue "other projects [than] urbanization."[64] Tellingly, De Bruyne stated, for instance, that "the legislation on vicinal roads (1841) [did] not seem to have had (…) any direct connection with the question of urbanization."[65] The spatial

consequences of national infrastructure policies were simply not perceived as urbanization—a concept that was exclusively linked to the programmatic development of the urban agglomerations.[66] Not coincidentally, the word 'urbanization' only emerged in Belgian vocabulary when the agglomerations' orderly development became a tangible matter of concern.[67]

Much more than as a process, urbanization was defined as a project. It was not just a descriptive term indicating the emergence of roads and houses in what used to be the countryside. The term had a programmatic charge, reminiscent of what Idelfons Cerdà had in mind when he put forward his General Theory of Urbanization in the mid-1860s. The true meaning of "urbanization [was] the *organic development*, the *embellishment* and the *methodical extension* of towns through the improvement of *their social, economic and administrative organization*."[68] In the large agglomerations, it were above all the many "territorial and administrative boundaries no longer correspond[ing] to reality" that impeded this project.[69] "What is lacking in our current legislation in terms of urbanization," De Bruyne concluded, "is the existence of an empowered authority the competence of which extends to the agglomeration as a whole."[70] In theory, merging agglomerated cities and municipalities into one new administrative unit was thought to be the most rigorous solution. In practice, however, such mergers were considered obsolete even before they could take effect, because "many municipalities, following their own methods, [had] already strongly developed into distinct centralities with their own local character [...] rather than into urban quarters of one and the same city."[71] In these circumstances, the relevance of a strong and central planning authority was considered very relative. And so the pragmatic choice was made to "install a 'higher' authority responsible for the coordination of urbanization, while preserving the municipalities' decision-making powers."[72] Here we see yet another strong confirmation of the persistent nature of Belgian municipalism, albeit in a new guise.

Somewhat surprisingly for a 'municipal movement', the UVCB thought this coordinating role could best be taken on by the higher authority of the provinces. The provincial council's and deputation's main task would be "to bring about amicably (and, *if necessary*, to impose forcefully) a common vision, needed to develop urban agglomerations composed of several municipalities."[73] These provincial coordinators were not asked to develop blueprint plans "with detailed regulations for each and every street throughout the entire agglomeration."[74] Their role was to "elaborate and execute general urbanization plans," defining the outlines within which

municipalities remained "free to develop their own detailed development plans."[75] In 1924, De Bruyne incorporated these ideas into a preliminary bill on the urbanization of cities and municipalities.[76] Article 1 allowed the permanent deputation of the provinces to indicate the "municipalities that belonged to the same agglomeration (or that were on the verge of inclusion) and to devise the joint development of general extension plans."[77] Article 7 endowed the provincial deputation with the "necessary powers to overrule those municipalities, whose negligence or unwillingness would be likely to compromise the collective achievements of all the agglomerated municipalities taken together."[78] Article 10, finally, allowed the provinces to install "technical and provincial committees" to develop urbanization programs and to provide technical assistance to the deputation. In order to respond to the constant changes and evolutions to which urbanization was subjected, the regular review of municipal urbanization plans was mandatory. The provincial authorities were thus attributed a key role in moderating a kind of 'amicable cooperation' between municipalities quite reminiscent of Murray Bookchin's definition of confederal municipalism:

> Confederalism is explicitly not 'localist' but rather integrative. It rests on the mutual obligations of confederated municipalities to systematically adjudicate conflicting claims, coordinate common efforts, and see to the administration of municipal policies without infringing on the right of the majority of its participants. That consensual forms of agreement were possible, does not mean that the majority decision-making should not be adopted if a confederation was risking the prospect of being tyrannized by the few at the expense of the many.[79]

This is an almost literal description of what the provincial committees were supposed to do according to the UVCB's bill—and what the SCAA had started putting into practice from 1907 onward, long before these bills had even been put forward.

Provisional provinces

In 1931, leading socialists Emile Vinck, Camille Huysmans, and Hector Lebon submitted a final bill on "The urbanization of cities and towns"—which was almost an exact copy of De Bruyne's 1924 proposal, including the prominent role for the provinces.[80] A special committee with officials from the Ministries of Interior Affairs and Public Works concluded that

the bill was "an excellent basis for a law on urbanization."[81] After a few amendments, mostly on the protection of private property rights, the committee's slightly adapted proposal was accepted by the "High Chamber on April 2, 1936 with an impressive majority of votes of 120 out of 125."[82] And yet the bill never officially went into effect. On February 8, 1939, the Chamber of Representatives announced in a report of barely five sentences that the bill was considered outdated compared to the "progress made abroad in the field of urbanization."[83] The bill died a silent death, perhaps also because of the central role it attributed to the provinces.

In Belgium, the provincial level was traditionally perceived as an executive rather than as a true political body: "The provincial council, where material interests are the main objective, should not be governed by political thinking (…) why would we want to prioritize political opinions over shared material interests that affect us all?"[84] The execution of infrastructural policies already decided at the national level seems to have been the province's main and so-called 'apolitical' mission throughout the nineteenth century.[85] Around the turn of the twentieth century, however, things started to change. As the competence of small municipalities to manage the growing complexities of urbanization was increasingly questioned,[86] the number real responsibilities attributed to the much more competent provinces grew.[87] A circular from 1910 issued by Minister of Agriculture and Public Works Joris Helleputte even urged provincial governors to take action regarding intermunicipal development.[88] This growing acknowledgment anticipated the central role that the UVCB later gave to the provinces to manage programmatic urbanization.

Encouraged by the UVCB's discourse and studies, provincial governors such as Verwilghen (Limburg), Fredericq (East-Flanders), Houtart (Brussels), and Holvoet (Antwerp) all gave speeches claiming a more prominent role for the provinces. (Fig. 1.4) The question of urbanization in the agglomerations simply gave new legitimacy to the provincial institutions. However, taking a clear stance and choosing programmatic urbanization as it was defined at that moment by the socialist-inclined municipal movement wasn't exactly the apolitical project the provinces were supposed to stand for. Apart from party-political reckoning,[89] this may well have been one of the reasons why Vinck's bill on urbanizing Belgian towns and cities never passed—but that doesn't mean the provinces resigned themselves to their fate.

Fredericq's 1937 speech "Urbanization and Province" expresses the provinces' provisional attitude most clearly. Referring to UVCB



Figure 1.4 The provinces and their governors claiming topics of urbanization and urban development beyond the historical cities.

publications, Fredericq argued that the provinces should claim their role as "counsellor and mentor for all the municipalities affected by urbanization that [...] had dissociated itself from the city (...) and now covered entire urban agglomerations."[90] Even if the 1936 revision of Vinck's bill had not yet been voted on, Fredericq nevertheless proposed to establish a provincial urbanization committee. He argued that in the case the bill were adopted, the new committee would "have already conducted a great deal of useful research." And even in case "the bill's approval kept being delayed, the committee would be able to produce most sustainable results."[91] Governor Fredericq was not alone in his provisional morality. Several urbanization committees (Antwerp, Antwerp, December 20, 1907; Ghent, East-Flanders, July 24, 1920; Brussels, Brabant, November 30, 1931) had been set up under the auspices of the provinces before a general legislative framework on their constitutional role in urbanization materialized.[92] These committees were all appointed by royal decree as mere advisory boards, avoiding the need of lengthy procedures for new legislation. This precarious position allowed the provinces to take provisional action, but they were never in a position to impose their vision 'forcefully'. They could only develop ideas 'amicably', in an attempt to get all municipalities involved.

Already established in 1907, the SCAA may readily be regarded as the very first of these urbanization committees set up in the Belgian context. The committee was an early manifestation of the need of new administrative regimes in response to new geographies of urbanization and

became an early moderator of confederal municipalism. In the absence of real legislative powers, the SCAA's members depended upon proactive and entrepreneurial approaches, creatively exploring what was within their legal powers and what was not and constantly trying to expand their possible field of action.

THE SCAA, POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND THE RELATIVE IDEAL

The SCAA was founded at a pivotal moment in history, when the agglomerations began to be confronted with urbanization, yet before organizations such as UVCB started disseminating concrete legislative frameworks. In other words, it was far from clear how an organization such as the SCAA was supposed to function and how it should tackle the question of urbanizing the agglomeration. This section paints a portrait of the SCAA's organization and everyday practice—based on a first reading of the nearly seven hundred meeting minutes documenting the committee's activities. It explores the SCAA's membership, clearly showing that its center of gravity was indeed situated in the province. Second, it argues that the committee's protagonists were very well aware of their precarious institutional situation, which convinced them to develop an essayistic practice, working toward a 'relative ideal' instead of an 'absolute ideal'—an attitude that was informed by both pragmatism and conviction.[93] Finally, the SCAA is conceptualized as what Cohen defined as an 'organized anarchy' led by what Kingdon later described as 'policy-entrepreneurs.'[94] It portrays the SCAA's protagonists as 'urbanization pioneers' who were inventing, informing, coproducing, and testing policies upfront, rather than merely applying them post hoc—which is what defines the policy-entrepreneur's very raison d'être.

Urbanization as the work of men

From the start it was clear that the SCAA was never meant to be a strong hierarchical and centralized organization. The mayors of all municipalities in the agglomeration, their secretaries, and occasional technicians constituted the largest part of the SCAA's membership. At the other end of the spectrum, several ministries (Public Works, War, Agriculture, Interior, etc.) delegated ministers and prominent state-engineers. In-between

these opposing realms were a number of provincial members, such as the provincial governor, the provincial clerk, and a few engineers—acting as bridge builders between abstract statecraft and grounded municipalism. As the majority of members were eligible, more than 250 different people were part of the SCAA between 1907 and 1939, causing a very high membership turnover.[95] However, a small group of six people, referred to as the SCAA's 'bureau', had to ensure the continuity, consistency, and efficiency of the SCAA's mission.[96] It was composed of a president, three vice presidents, and two secretaries, ensuring equal representation from the state, province, and municipality. (Fig. 1.5)

Minister of Public Works Baron Auguste Delbeke (1853—1921), an Antwerp-based doctor of law and early provincial career politician, became the SCAA's first president.[97] As a member of the anti-statist Catholic Meeting Party, Delbeke was nevertheless remarkably close to King-Urbanist Leopold II, mainly as his advisor in terms of urban planning. It was Delbeke himself who asked the king to ratify the royal decree establishing the SCAA in 1907. While Delbeke was very well-networked within national politics, he was firmly rooted in Antwerp's political and economic life as well (see chapters 3 and 4). Remarkably, he remained in office as the SCAA's president after his resignation as minister of public works in 1910 until his death in 1921. As he was never replaced by the incumbent minister, all vice presidents of the 'bureau' moved up a rank after 1921. The function of first vice president (president after 1921) was fulfilled by the successive governors of the Antwerp province, who were all prominent aristocrats from the Catholic Party. As appointed by the king and responsible to the central government, the governors were close to national politics. As local dignitaries, however, they were also very close to Antwerp's aristocratic elites, consisting of local politicians, landowners, entrepreneurs, and financiers, most of whom were implicated in urbanizing the agglomeration (see chapters 3 and 4). The Antwerp mayors were appointed second vice president (vice president after 1921). Whereas they mostly represented the interests of the city of Antwerp, it should not be forgotten that some of them, such as Camille Huysmans, were strong statesmen as well. The role of third vice president (second vice president after 1921) was fulfilled by the district commissioners of Antwerp, representing the common interests of the agglomeration's patchwork of Catholic, liberal, and socialist municipalities within the 'bureau'. Interestingly, however, these districts fell directly under provincial rule.

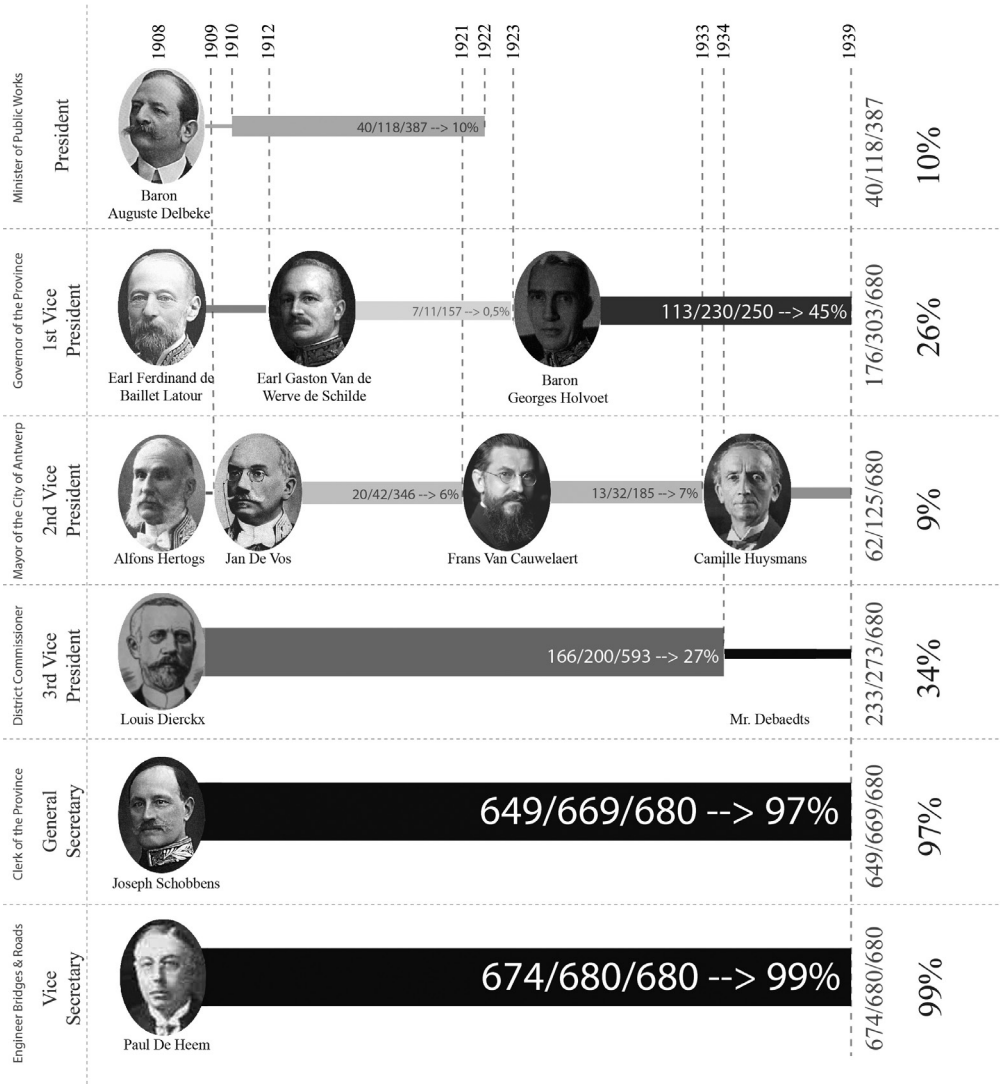


Figure 1.5 The members of the SCAA's 'Bureau' and an indication of the attendances/invitations/total amount of meetings between 1908 and 1939. The thicker the line, the longer a specific member stayed in function; the darker the more the member was present. The only two members that were present the entire period, and who attended the highest number of meetings by far, were secretaries Joseph Schobbens and Paul De Heem.

Apart from these dignitaries, two secretaries were appointed: Joseph Schobbens (1871–1939) as the SCAA's general secretary and Paul De Heem as his vice-secretary. As a doctor of Law, Schobbens quit a promising career at the Antwerp Bar to become the head of the provincial governor's cabinet (1901–1914) and later the province's registrar (1914–1938). Deeply immersed in provincial politics, Schobbens became a confidant of many governors and a much-respected figure both in the province's council and permanent deputation. At some point, he was even nicknamed the province's 'shadow governor'. The present study largely confirms that nearly "everything that was realized in terms of urbanization within the Antwerp agglomeration was marked by Schobbens' tireless efforts."[98] Paul De Heem, in turn, was a civil engineer graduated from the State University of Ghent, after which he pursued a career at the Ministry of Public Works. He specialized in road engineering and was a respected member of the Permanent International Association of Road Congresses that organized conferences all over the world.[99] On the occasion of the SCAA's establishment, De Heem was put in charge of a special service tasked with developing the road network of the Antwerp agglomeration.[100] This turned De Heem into an Antwerp citizen himself, de facto working at the province, supervising an entire technical service.

Although on paper, the SCAA's 'bureau' had a balanced multilevel profile, in reality many of its members were tied to provincial politics. The central position of the provincial level is even more apparent when considering the members' actual attendances at the SCAA meetings. Of all the dignitaries, the provincial governors and district commissioners were most actively involved, with attendance rates of 26 percent and 34 percent respectively as opposed to only 9 percent among the Antwerp mayors. But it was the SCAA's secretaries, Schobbens and De Heem, who stood out, for two reasons. First, they were the only two who were continuously part of the SCAA 'bureau' between 1907 and 1939. Second, they had a degree of attendance far greater than that of other members: Schobbens was present 95 percent of the time and De Heem 99 percent. Until 1939, De Heem had only missed one meeting, somewhere in 1926, due to illness.[101] In early July of that year, in the days following the death of his companion Schobbens, he missed another five. Together, the lawyer and the engineer became the SCAA's unquestioned protagonists, governing programmatic urbanization from within the provincial administration. (Fig. 1.5)

Next to these 'bureau members', a few other figures would play important roles in the agglomeration. Most notable was engineer August

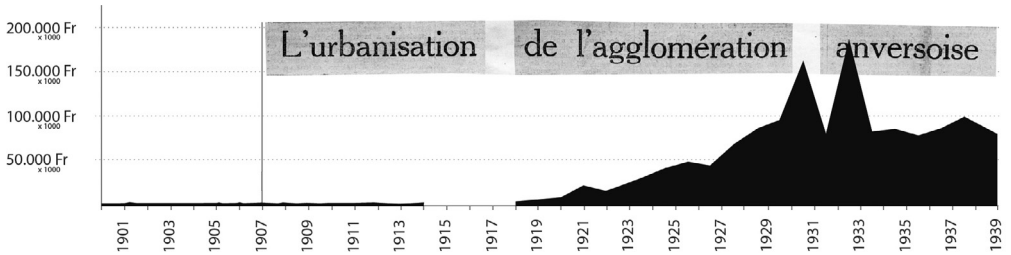


Figure 1.6 Provincial government spending in Antwerp increased exponentially in the first decades of the twentieth century. Arguably, the need of programmatic urbanization in the Antwerp agglomeration marked a trend break with the paradigm of 'cheap urbanization.'

Mennes, a Merksem-born engineer who worked at the Department of Hygiene residing under the Ministry of the Interior. From the early 1920s onward, Mennes got engaged by the SCAA as a technical advisor in the field of sanitary engineering (see chapters 2 and 4). Apart from engineers, the SCAA also engaged a number of landed property specialists, to which the SCAA owed its profound understanding of land-ownership and -transaction in the agglomeration.[102] Finally, the chief engineer and secretary from the city of Antwerp deserve a mention. Much more than their mayors, they represented the city and its interests within the SCAA's meetings.[103] Although initially they were very present, their attendance rates dropped significantly over the years, especially when compared to their provincial counterparts De Heem and Schobbens.

Despite its limited legal status, it must be acknowledged that the SCAA could rely on a great deal of social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital.[104] It was led by a bureaucratic group of civil servants and engineers that took the lead in urbanizing the Antwerp agglomeration, mainly operating from within the provincial level, combining political power, technical skills, and economic clout.[105] It became a multilevel platform where divergent political and technological frameworks, inherent to different levels of governance, were openly debated in pursuit of a 'shared politics of technology.'[106] The SCAA pursued an integrated politics of technology radically opposed to the sectoral infrastructural policies that had undergirded patterns of urban sprawl throughout the nineteenth century. Using the language of David Harvey, the SCAA's protagonists could be characterized as 'community improvers' seeking a genuine "alternative to dispersal and to the moral influence of the suburbs (…) in the application of doctrines of community improvement."[107] In the case of the Antwerp agglomeration, this community improvement was pursued

through the implementation of renewed approaches to pertinent urban questions such as the provision of decent roads and housing, water supply, public transport, sewage, public parks, etc. These were all questions that underpinned a consolidated urbanization program, requiring structural public spending as opposed to the dominant mode of 'cheap urbanization' in nineteenth-century Belgium. (Fig. 1.6) Remarkably, this shift toward community improvement coincided with the introduction of the general (single) voting right that heralded an "era of (prudent) democratization" in the Antwerp province, putting aspects of social redistribution and inclusion as genuine concerns on the political agenda (see chapter 3).[108]

The relative ideal

In the SCAA's early days, King-Urbanist Leopold II initially tried to impose a strong centralist mark on Antwerp's expansion. In 1915, renowned urbanist Joseph Stübben recalled how Leopold invited a number of guests on his royal yacht *Alberta*, on July 26, 1907, where he expounded his ideas for the Antwerp agglomeration, pointing with his cane to a series of urban projects on a giant plan that completely covered the floor of a large room.[109] Soon after, de Heem started drafting a series of blue-print plans with Stübben, a personal friend and advisor to the king. During this collaboration, the German planner is alleged to have suggested the organization of an international urban design competition for the urban reconversion of the fortification walls—a formula that seemed best suited to give shape to the king's royal aspirations. However, after Leopold's death in 1909, the idea of this 'royal' urbanism quickly faded into the background and made way for a project that was much more relational, incremental, and localist in nature.

In fact, the traces of a completely different approach had been anchored in the SCAA's statutes from the very beginning. As the SCAA was asked to coordinate several urban questions, at different levels of government, it was soon decided to establish a number of subcommittees, tailored to the expertise of different committee members.[110] They had to embed the SCAA's mission within existing administrative structures so as to prevent "a slow death of the Committee."[111] At the SCAA's opening session on February 8, 1908, only eleven of these subcommittees had been appointed.[112] The meeting reports, however, reveal that by the end of 1914, no less than thirty-four subcommittees had been created—and a

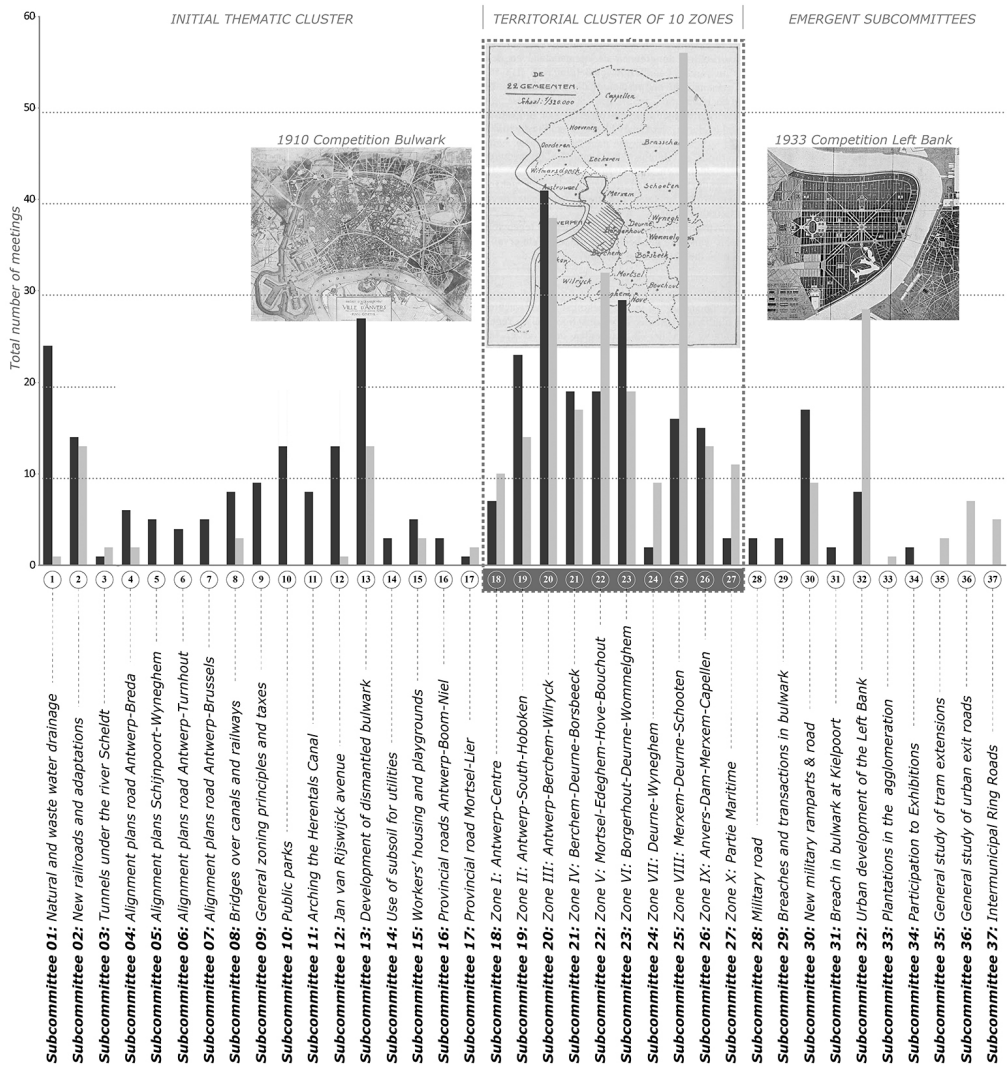


Figure 1.7 All thirty-seven of the SCAA's thematic (urban questions 1–17), territorial (ten zones, 18–27), and emergent (28–37) subcommittees and their activity rates before (black) and after (grey) World War I. The territorial clusters represent the bulk of the SCAA's intermunicipal work. Subcommittees 13 and 32, responsible for the urban planning competitions for which the SCAA is mostly remembered, represent only a small fraction of its work.

total of thirty-seven by 1939. (Fig. 1.7) The creation of new subcommittees responding to emerging needs and questions, or the involvement of new municipalities when deemed necessary, testifies to the incremental nature of the SCAA's project. The only members expected to attend to all meetings in all subcommittees were secretaries Schobbens and De Heem, making them the only members who had an overview of the project as a whole.

The SCAA's subcommittees can roughly be divided in three clusters. A first relatively insignificant cluster (subcommittees 13 and 32) was related to the famous international design competitions of 1910 (Fortification Walls) and 1932 (Left-Bank area), in which the avant-garde of the international design world participated, from Henri Prost to Le Corbusier. A second cluster had a 'thematic' logic (1–17 and 35–37) and focused on technological aspects of the major urban questions such as roads, sewers, railways, utilities, etc. Most of these subcommittees were particularly active in the SCAA's early years and were well-attended by national functionaries and state engineers from several ministries. A third and final cluster followed a 'territorial' logic and was composed of ten different subcommittees (18–27) that corresponded to ten different zones in the agglomeration averse to the municipalities' administrative boundaries. The number of participants in these 'local' committees was low, with their rank and expertise being less intimidating, which strongly reinforced the position of Schobbens and De Heem. These territorial subcommittees reveal that the SCAA was much more active beyond the historic city, in the agglomeration's outer municipalities in a rather random pattern of intensity. (Fig. 1.8)

Subcommittee 9, which dealt with issues regarding the agglomeration as a whole, was remarkably ill-attended, representing only 9 out of 680 meetings in total. It illustrates the committee's aversion to overall master planning and its preference for intermunicipal tinkering. The bulk of the SCAA's work was splintered over many thematic and territorial subcommittees, in which Schobbens and De Heem negotiated with many different people, none of whom had a precise idea of the agglomeration's final destination as a whole. State engineers rarely looked beyond the right-of-way of large national infrastructures, whereas municipal servants did not think beyond their own municipal borders and concerns. It is this in 'negative space' in-between municipal and state interests that Schobbens and De Heem had to fill, and in which the SCAA found its raison d'être as a provincial committee. Devoid of official decision-making powers, the SCAA was never really in a position of imposing strong planning

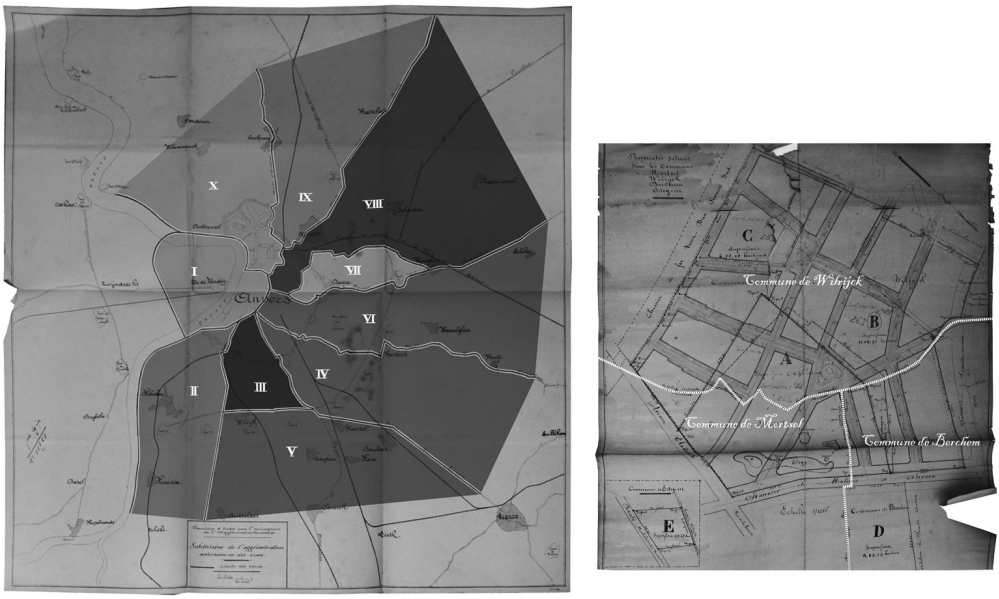


Figure 1.8 The SCAA's ten zones with a representation of their activity level (the darker the more active) based on a count by the author of the total number of meetings per zone. The sectors completely disregard municipal boundaries, resulting in emblematic intermunicipal development plans, typical of the SCAA's work.

principles, and the absence of an overall master plan came to symbolize their way of working. As a mere 'advisory body', the SCAA was never asked to develop such a plan in the first place. In a letter to Joris Helleputte, who had succeeded Auguste Delbeke as the minister of public works in 1910, Schobbens and De Heem explicated the SCAA's modus operandi:

> While it can be answered positively and categorically that the Study Committee proceeds on the basis of general plans *[plans d'ensemble]* and guidelines for the many proposals it develops with many competent administrations, it must also be acknowledged that it has not been able to adopt a final master plan that is fully developed and ready for implementation. The reasons for this are very clear. It stems from a reality of several facts, such as the many independent administrative units and levels of government that are involved, or the inadequacy of existing legislation regarding the rational and modern extension of large cities, along with a whole series of other contingent elements. (…) What had to be decided in these circumstances? Two different paths opened up for the committee. The first path was rather theoretical and adopted the point of

> view of an absolute ideal. It assumed the drafting of a complete and precise overall plan for the entire agglomeration. But that would have been an almost never-ending cabinet's job of little practical use—because before such a perfect plan would ever be finished, its preconditions would have long changed anyway. Moreover, waiting for such a plan would have hampered private initiative by the necessarily slower administrative action—and to make matters worse, the opinion of different public administrations would most likely differ on many occasions. The other path—the one that has been followed so far—responds to a relative ideal which has taken into account many contingencies and was informed by experience acquired along the way. The program that was followed can be summarized as follows: 1°) to advise on the most urgent problems and fight at speed with private initiative, in order to safeguard the common interest by taking all the forward-looking decisions that public authorities are legally allowed to take 2°) not to stop at half measures, but to aim for final and resilient solutions by taking into account the future situation, i.e. meeting the anticipated needs of a population of one million inhabitants.[113]

In the absence of strong legislative and institutional frameworks, the path of the absolute ideal was simply not an option. Rather, the SCAA should be understood as an experimental and 'soft institution' that had to bring a sense of order to the agglomeration's splintered administrative landscape. (Fig. 1.8) The SCAA's rationale was never to impose forcefully, but to bring about amicably, de facto implementing a regime of confederal municipalism. Schobbens and De Heem realized all too well that, in such a context, there was little use in operating along singular and unquestioned axes of expert knowledge, universal truth claims, rigid ideology, or centralized master planning:

> Our aim is not to generalize. Because we do not know how the problem arises in Paris, Lille or other cities, we will simply provide answers for the Antwerp case; and again, by saying what has been done—and well done in our opinion—we only intend to advocate the merits of the methods followed in Antwerp (…) Our contribution is therefore more practical than theoretical.[114]

Rather than committing to universal planning ideologies, standards, and rational blue-print master plans, the SCAA's protagonists preferred to practice urbanization as a highly contingent and incremental project, in order to develop an urban environment, the vantage point of which was not determined in advance. Each intervention again redefined the

premises of their mission, revealing previously unthinkable horizons, goals, and aspirations. Slowly but surely, the SCAA would interpret its way towards a new *milieu urbain* without a fixed destination. This interpretation leans toward the notion of philosophical pragmatism as developed by John Dewey at the beginning of the twentieth century, which presented the production of knowledge as arising from an active and reiterative adaptation of the human organism to its environment.[115] Not coincidentally, several frameworks leaning on Dewey's philosophical pragmatism are very helpful in conceptualizing and appreciating the nature of the SCAA's mission.

Policy-entrepreneurship in-between realpolitik and ideology

Donna Haraway, for instance, put "particularism and contingency" and the "multiplication of situated knowledges" over, or at least next to, "theorizing the world" from "universal truth claims" in order to "build meanings that have a chance for life."[116] In his classic work *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, Kingdon, for his part, described the essence and merits of pragmatic governance models as opposed to rational, linear, or systematic decision-making processes.[117] Kingdon based his approach on Cohen's idea of the "garbage can model of organizational choice"[118] practiced by organizations that were described as 'organized anarchies' defined by three main characteristics: (a) problematic preferences, (b) unequivocal technology, and (c) fluid participation.[119] Kingdon's own definition of organized anarchies almost reads as a characterization of the SCAA itself:

> As to preferences, people characteristically do not define their preferences very precisely (…) [and] people act in the absence of clearly defined goals (…) Thus, (…) the organization is a loose collection of ideas [rather than] a coherent structure; it discovers preferences through action, more than it acts on the basis of preferences (…) Second, as to unequivocal technology, an organized anarchy's members do not understand the organization's processes very well. They may know their own jobs, and the organization as a whole may get along rather well, but most of its members have only fragmentary and rudimentary understandings of why they are doing what they are doing and how their jobs fit into a more general picture of the organization (…) Third, participants drift in and out of decision making, so the boundaries of such an organization are rather fluid. The time and effort members of the organization devote to

> different subjects vary. Who shows up for or is invited to a given critical meeting, and their degree of activity at the meeting, for instance, turn out to make a tremendous difference.[120]

Likewise, the SCAA was an organization marked by a high turnover of (political) members, different frames of technological expertise, a permanent search of undetermined ideals and goals, suspended in-between conflicting views of many local and supra-local administrations, in which hardly anyone had an overview of what the organization as a whole was working toward. In such organized anarchies, Kingdon argues, decision-making and agenda setting are not necessarily the outcome of comprehensive rationalism or of systematic incrementalism. Rather, decisions are taken when so-called policy-entrepreneurs manage to create and seize the opportunity of opening 'policy windows' that appear when three separate 'streams' running through the organization collide: (a) problem recognition, (b) the formation and refining of policy proposals, and (c) politics proper.[121] The policy-entrepreneur anticipates such potential policy-windows and acts upon them adequately and creatively, in different directions: he doesn't necessarily have to find solutions to given problems, but equally has to get a problem recognized in order to push through his preferred solutions. Organized anarchies are, in sum, "a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work."[122]

SCAA members such as Schobbens and De Heem both match the prime qualities that Kingdon attributes to a typical policy-entrepreneur.[123] As chairmen of a committee residing under sptate and provincial authority, they certainly had a "claim to a hearing." They disposed of a "significant political network" and combined De Heem's "technical expertise" with Schobbens's "political savvy."[124] A strong policy-entrepreneur, finally, "is one who is just there, he is willing to be at the meeting"[125]—and as was argued, De Heem and Schobbens hardly missed any SCAA meeting for more than thirty years. By the end of this book, the reader will have understood that both protagonists spent "a great deal of time giving talks, writing position papers, sending letters to important people, drafting bills, (…), all with the aim of pushing their ideas in whatever way and forum that might further the cause."[126] As the pages progress, these men's "persistence" and "willingness to invest large and sometimes remarkable quantities of [their] own resources"[127] will increasingly stand out. All of
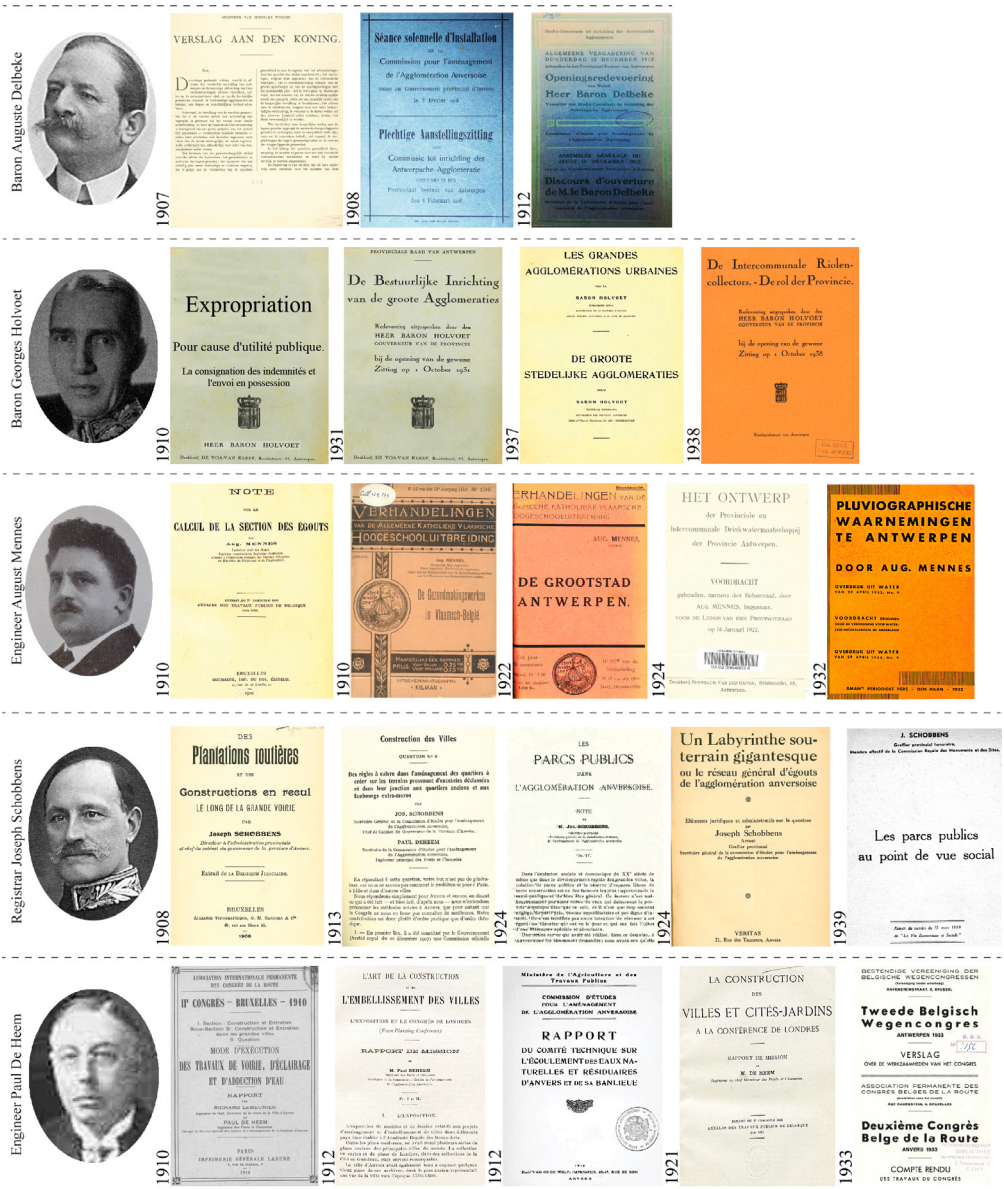
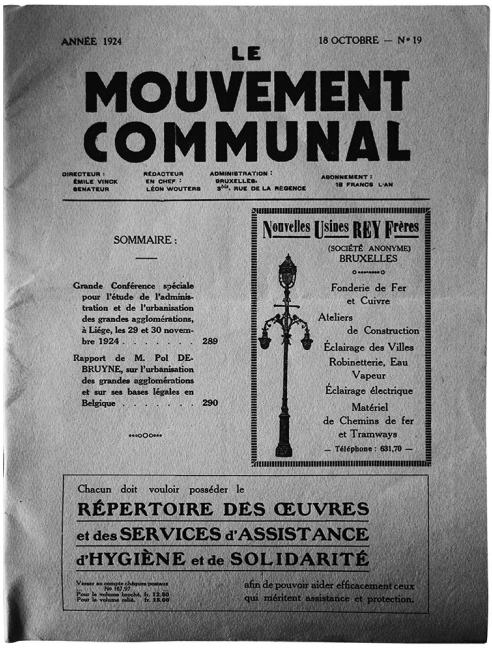


Figure 1.9 Many of the SCAA's protagonists were prolific writers. Their reports, pamphlets, and books connected their practical experience in the Antwerp context to more substantive and universal fields of knowledge.

the SCAA's most prominent members were prolific writers and published many a book on many of the urban questions the SCAA encountered. They did so not only to describe the Antwerp context, but as a way to reflect on more broad policy objectives in general. (Fig. 1.9)

Moreover, Schobbens and De Heem managed to build close ties with organizations that weighed on decision-making regarding urbanization, such as the UVCB. After their presentation at the International Planning Conference in Ghent in 1913, they were summoned to the office of then–UVCB president Emile Vinck, inquiring about their opinion on general recommendations that could be derived from their contribution.[128] Schobbens and De Heem then proposed "to establish administrative committees similar to the one in Antwerp in all important cities."[129] Arguably, the idea of provincial committees managing urbanization—firmly present in the UVCB's discourse from the 1920s onward—was directly informed by the SCAA's pioneering practices. On several occasions, Vinck later referred to the SCAA and invited Schobbens and De Heem as lecturers at several UVCB conferences, such as the 1931 *Urbanisation-Habitation* venue, where a draft of Vinck's 1932 bill was a central theme.[130] The experiences of these local officials, in sum, strongly informed national agenda setting—which, according to Kingdon, is the policy-entrepreneur's ultimate goal and motivation. Such interactions worked the other way around as well. As soon as the findings of the twin conferences on 'L'administration et l'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations' (1924–1925) were published in an issue of the UVCB's journal *Le Mouvement Communal*, Schobbens started disseminating copies to all municipalities in the Antwerp agglomeration. (Fig. 1.10) This démarche was very effective, as the SCAA's meeting reports reveal that, from 1924 onward, several municipalities submitted municipal development plans to get the committee's approval, which was one of the 'good practices' that were prescribed in the early draft of De Bruyne's bill on urbanization—included in full in the publication spread by Schobbens. The preliminary UVCB bills were used provisionally to get municipalities to draft development plans—even though there would, in the end, never be any law that obliged them to do so.

Even at the highest political level, marked interactions between national policy-making and the SCAA's practices occurred. The urge for drastic reform throughout the politically turbulent 1930s inspired Prime Minister Van Zeeland in 1936 to appoint a number of so-called royal commissioners to draft a *status quaestionis* and policy recommendations regarding several public matters of concern.[131] It is in this context that



ANNEE 1924 — 18 OCTOBRE — N° 19

LE
MOUVEMENT
COMMUNAL

DIRECTEUR : ÉMILE VINCK SENATEUR — RÉDACTEUR EN CHEF : LÉON WOUTERS — ADMINISTRATION : BRUXELLES- 3^bis, RUE DE LA RÉGENCE — ABONNEMENT : 18 FRANCS L'AN

SOMMAIRE :

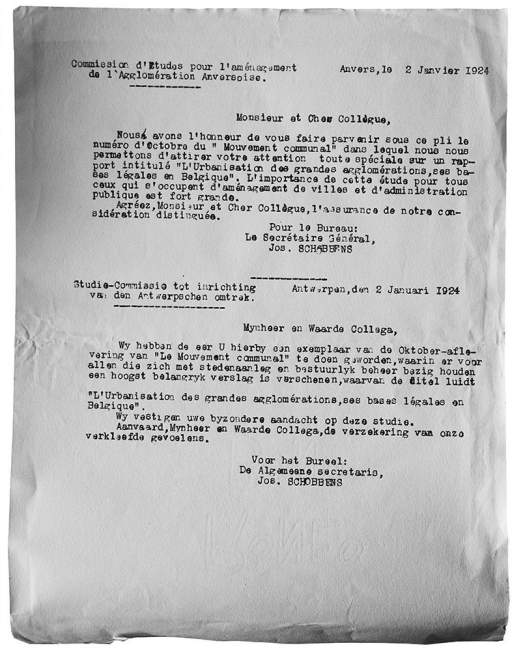
Grande Conférence spéciale pour l'étude de l'administration et de l'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations, à Liége, les 29 et 30 novembre 1924 289

Rapport de M. Pol DEBRUYNE, sur l'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations et sur ses bases légales en Belgique 290

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et des SERVICES d'ASSISTANCE
d'HYGIÈNE et de SOLIDARITÉ
afin de pouvoir aider efficacement ceux qui méritent assistance et protection.



Commission d'Etudes pour l'aménagement de l'Agglomération Anversoise. — Anvers, le 2 Janvier 1924

Monsieur et Cher Collègue,

Nous avons l'honneur de vous faire parvenir sous ce pli le numéro d'octobre du " Mouvement communal" dans lequel nous nous permettons d'attirer votre attention toute spéciale sur un rapport intitulé "L'Urbanisation des grandes agglomérations,ses bases légales en Belgique". L'importance de cette étude pour tous ceux qui s'occupent d'aménagement de villes et d'administration publique est fort grande.

Agréez,Monsieur et Cher Collègue,l'assurance de notre considération distinguée.

Pour le Bureau:
Le Secrétaire Général,
Jos. SCHOBBENS

Studie-Commissie tot inrichting van den Antwerpschen omtrek. — Antwerpen, den 2 Januari 1924

Mynheer en Waarde Collega,

Wy hebben de eer U hierby een exemplaar van de Oktober-aflevering van "Le Mouvement communal" te doen gaworden,waarin er voor allen die zich met stedenaanleg en bestuurlyk beheer bezig houden een hoogst belangryk verslag is verschenen,waarvan de titel luidt "L'Urbanisation des grandes agglomérations,ses bases légales en Belgique".

Wy vestigen uwe byzondere aandacht op deze studie.

Aanvaard,Mynheer en Waarde Collega,de verzekering van onze verkleefde gevoelens.

Voor het Bureel:
De Algemeene secretaris,
Jos. SCHOBBENS

Figure 1.10 A theme issue of the journal *Le Mouvement Communal* on the urbanization of Belgium's large agglomerations and its legal bases was disseminated by Schobbens to all his SCAA colleagues.

Baron Georges Holvoet, SCAA president between 1923 and 1939, drafted his renowned report on *Les grandes agglomérations urbaines.* Although widely cited,[132] it has never been acknowledged that Holvoet's report on the question of metropolitan governance should be read as an account of his fifteen years of firsthand experience in the Antwerp agglomeration.[133] After examining many administrative and legal options to tackle the question of urban governance in Belgium, Holvoet nevertheless confirmed his preference for intermunicipal councils at the provincial level as the most appropriate solution in the Belgian context.[134] He did make, however, a number of additional suggestions to increase the province's clout, such as establishing a significant equalization fund for the major agglomerations to cover the high costs of community improvement.[135]

Holvoet summarized his governance proposal as a "federative system" at the municipal level, relying on "methodical decentralization."[136] This vocabulary echoes the UVCB's discourse—and even the anarcho-communist notion of confederal municipalism. Unlike the real anarchists, however, Holvoet added that when a society was "unable of influencing

the actions of the authorities in all tiers of government, it could only enjoy incomplete freedom."[137] It certainly seems as if addressing the question of urban governance, in the context of Belgium's urbanizing agglomerations, was an experiential coproduction of an intellectual elite of state politicians on the one hand and pragmatic real-politicians in the province on the other hand. Yet even among the SCAA's real-politicians, the preference for confederal municipalism and the relative ideal seems to have been inspired by more than just pragmatism. Unlike national planners such as Raphaël Verwilghen, for instance, all SCAA protagonists refused to take part in the administrative reforms under German rule, even if the implementation of a *Grosser Antwerpen* guaranteed more straightforward conditions for the achievement of their goals. Holvoet was formally opposed,[138] De Heem resigned from his position,[139] and engineer Mennes suspended all his activities.[140] Indeed, these events confirm the SCAA's moderate interest in the "absolute ideal" of rational and centralized planning.

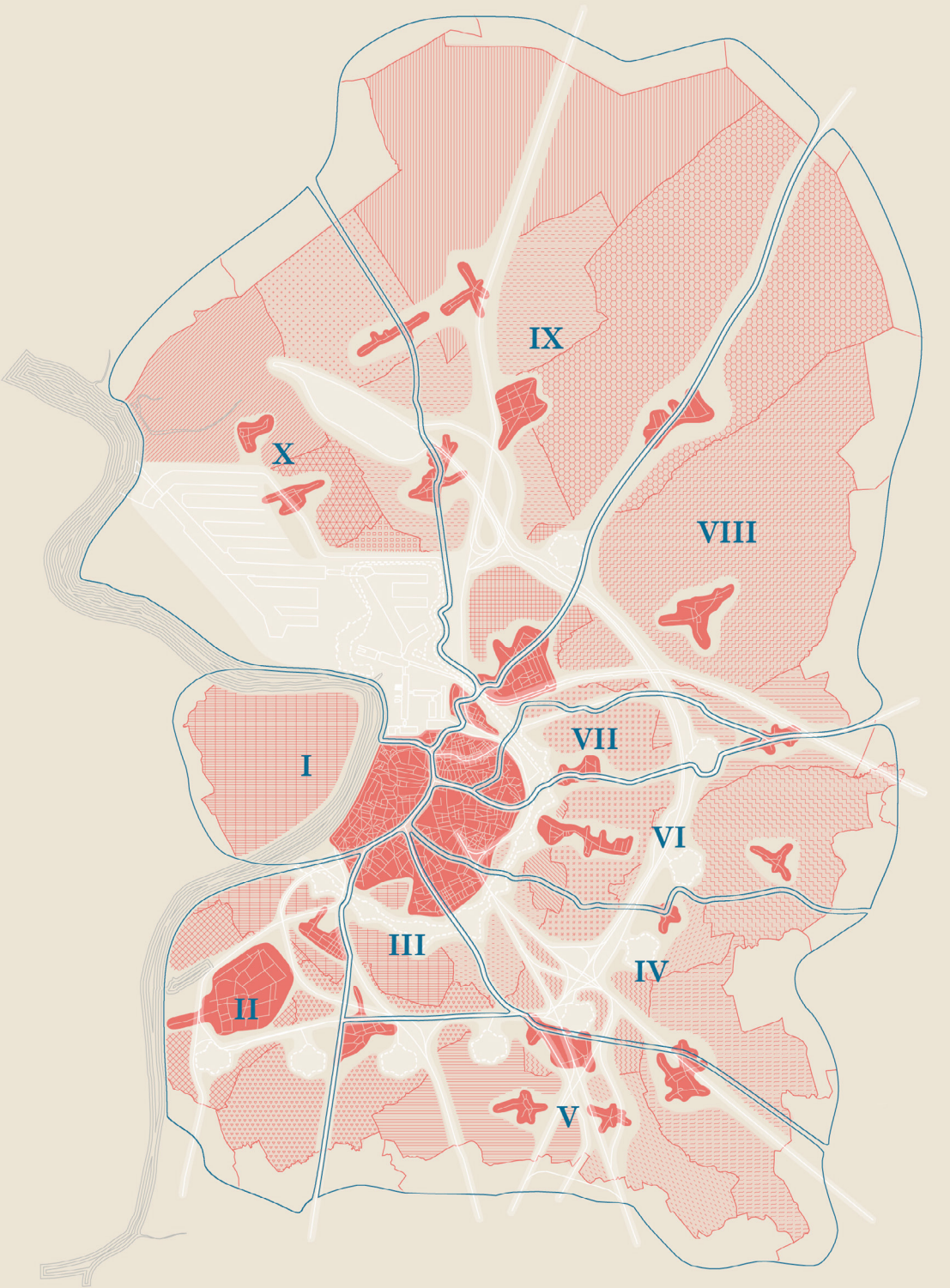
GROUNDING URBAN GOVERNANCE IN THE PROCESS OF URBANIZATION

As municipalities were increasingly confronted with cross-border urban questions they could not solve individually at the turn of the twentieth century, Belgium's successful and 'anarchist-like' regime of absolute municipal autonomy was no longer adequate to underpin more consolidated ways of developing the territory. It was in this void that the SCAA was founded as an early and experimental policy body, rooted in the provincial administrations, charged with coordinating urbanization and municipal action in the Antwerp agglomeration. In close conversation with organizations such as the UVCB, the SCAA's 'policy-entrepreneurs' cleared provisional paths toward more workable forms of urban governance without surrendering the ideal of municipal autonomy. Put somewhat rhetorically, the SCAA was an 'organized anarchy' bringing about a form of 'organization' in the 'anarchy' of absolute municipal autonomy. Methodical decentralization and intermunicipal cooperation, managed from within the provinces, became a preferred and provisional policy model. It was in the context of the agglomerations that managerial municipalism gave way to confederal municipalism underpinning the shift from 'cheap urbanization' to 'programmatic urbanization'. This was a shift, in short, from an interpretation of urbanization as a sprawl-producing process undermining the city to urbanization as a social project leading toward and producing the city.[141]

It is precisely in this context that Emile Vinck wrote that "urbanization [had] become a matter of science and art."[142] This was a practice rather than a process, one that was not interested in the doctrines of rational and centralized planning but gave rise to an incremental search for a relative ideal, seizing opportunities as they gradually emerged, acknowledging local particularities and preferences. The SCAA practiced urbanization as the provisional art of the possible, turning urbanization into a spatial project centered on interlocked urban questions that shaped an urbanization program around which collective action was structured, at the same time securing the legitimate principle of local control *and* organizing intermunicipal solidarities according to need. The following chapters investigate how the SCAA dealt with a number of pertinent urban questions, for which distinctive institutional, technological, and even personal techniques were mobilized to turn urbanization into a reflective social practice. It is this practice, or set of practices, this 'art of urbanization', that this book seeks to recollect and conceptualize.

Map 1: Governing the In-Between

This map projects the outlines of several plans for large state infrastructure works from the first decade of the twentieth century (mostly military belts, major roads, and railroads) onto the administrative and spatial condition of the agglomeration in 1908—on the eve of the SCAA's urbanization project. The future agglomeration appears as a fragmented patchwork of historical cores crisscrossed by national state infrastructures. It was the meshed 'no-man's land', or 'negative space' falling in-between the focus of municipal cores and state infrastructures that became the SCAA's preeminent field of action. Initially the agglomeration consisted of fourteen municipalities only, but in practice it grew into a working area of more than twenty different municipalities, represented here by an amalgamation of different hatches, one for each municipality. The SCAA introduced new territorial units of action, in the form of ten spatial sectors, which completely ignored existing administrative, territorial, and urban-rural boundaries. The committee was never given central authority to rigorously plan this highly fragmented territory, and could only rely on a model of 'confederal municipalism' and 'amicable cooperation' to turn this splintered reality into a more or less concerted new whole. It was a starting point that compelled the committee to pursue a 'relative ideal' leaning on incisive forms of policy-entrepreneurship, which required a day-to-day commitment of more than thirty long years of the SCAA's protagonists.



ANTWERPEN
BERCHEM
BOECHOUT
BORGERHOUT
BORSBEEK
BRASSCHAAT
DEURNE
EDEGEM
EKEREN
HOEVENEN
HOBOKEN
HOVE
KAPELLEN
MERKSEM
MORTSEL
OORDEREN
OOSTERWEEL
SCHOTEN
WIJNEGEM
WILMARSDONK
WILRIJK
STATE: DEFENSE
STATE: PUBLIC WORKS
HISTORICAL CORES
V SCAA SECTORS

“Providing a sewage system also secured the preservation of the valley of the river Schijn: in other words, this river, the largest in the Antwerp surroundings, would be saved from contamination. Whereas in the past, engineers had diverted all wastewaters to natural watercourses, until the resulting nuisance forced them to turn them into sewers, now the problem would receive a more rational solution, both scientifically and aesthetically. In addition, the rational handling of large amounts of clean water can be used to create new ponds for fishing, swimming, canoeing and other similar sports.”

Joseph Schobbens, *Les Parcs publics dans l’agglomération anversoise*, 1924, p. 33–34.

“ We don’t necessarily need to expropriate by zone. All it takes is to enact an alignment plan that would be realized little by little, as construction progresses.”

Joseph Schobbens, *Alignement nouveau de la rue Lozanne*,
SCAA meeting minutes, 03/03/1910.

Chapter 2
The Question of Urban Ways
The urbanization of technology and ecological infrastructures

THE URBANIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY

The most pressing questions that the SCAA was faced with at its inception were all of hard infrastructural nature. Urbanizing the Antwerp agglomeration was considered impossible without the provision of a collective sewerage system, the (re-)development of an efficient and modern road system, and the alignment of major national railways with urban expansion.[1] Fresh water supply and waste water disposal became vital objectives as the committee sought to keep the hygienic crisis of the historical city from spreading throughout the agglomeration. To guarantee the performance of the expanding harbor and to better connect the historic city with its hinterland, the widening, straightening, and extension of the road network—adapted to the emergence of motorized traffic—were urgently needed. Finally, the railway network needed to be modified in such a way as to support, rather than impede, the agglomeration's further urbanization. If these infrastructures were not dealt with in a proper way, the "efficient development of new urban areas [would] irreversibly be endangered."[2] This chapter portrays how the SCAA's efforts created a context in which these rather technical issues could be treated as fully-fledged 'urban' questions. Developing such infrastructures was not considered a trivial task that could be carried out by just anyone. Infrastructural design was the exclusive field of expert engineers, "men of study and technical knowledge," as president Delbeke called them in his 1908 speech inaugurating the SCAA.[3]

The figure of the engineer gained importance as societies evolved from relatively stable, nonaccumulative regimes (based on simple reproduction) into accumulative regimes (fueled by reproduction at an extended scale).[4] Under industrial capitalism, the city of the nonaccumulative society—a slow sediment of human lore and tradition—progressively made way for the accumulative society's dynamic metropolis. This metropolitan accumulation did not come without constantly looming threats of congestion,

epidemic outbreaks, social segregation, etc., all of which jeopardized the city's socio-natural ecology. Dealing with these negative externalities required radically new design methodologies. Spatial interventions were no longer principally based on formal, symbolic, representative, and architectural traditions; rather, they were now entrusted to more rational designers grounding their decisions on new developments in science, technology, calculation, and even cartography.[5] The rise of accumulative societies, "or phrased more poetically: Promethean societies,"[6] both initiated and depended on what has been described as "Modernity's Promethean Project," named after Prometheus, who, in one of his customary moments of rage and hubris, stole a branch of Zeus's holy fire to bring it to man(kind)—thus contributing greatly toward making nature work for the benefit of humankind.[7] Unleashing a "historical geographical process that started with industrialization and urbanization and aimed at controlling the natural world through technology, human labor and capital investment."[8]

This chapter testifies to the fact that the SCAA's main engineers such as Paul De Heem, August Mennes, and Richard Lemeunier were building their careers during what can be called the "Heroic Moment of Modernity's Promethean Project" (from the late nineteenth century to the first three quarters of the twentieth).[9] This heroic moment represented an era in which "new technologies were admired and fetishized, promoting the myth of progress and modernization as an automatic means of producing a better society."[10] It was an era in which "large-scale urban sanitation projects (water supply and sewerage) as well as the construction of impressive transport and communication networks"[11] implicated ever larger territories in the process of urbanization. The SCAA's engineers provided the Antwerp agglomeration with state-of-the-art infrastructures to manage the ever-increasing flows of people, raw materials, commodities, capital, energy, water etc.—far beyond the confines of the historical city. A seemingly bold and heroic story indeed.

Yet this chapter also describes how the continuous efforts of the SCAA created a context that allowed engineers to avoid the pitfalls of overconfident, narrow scientific and technological determinism for which the promethean project was increasingly criticized from the ecological turn in the late 1960s onward. By this time, it was becoming clear that the ambitions to control the natural world through technology did not come without a price, and promethean urbanization was increasingly criticized for jeopardizing 'natural' and 'social' ecologies alike.[12] However, as the epigraph to this chapter suggests, the SCAA seems to have relied on

more 'ecological' approaches to infrastructural engineering. As argued in the previous chapter, the SCAA was never in a position to 'impose' its technocratic ideals on the agglomeration, regardless of local concerns and contingencies as diverse as topography, environmental features, or sociopolitical dynamics, etc. This chapter reconstructs how the SCAA used infrastructural technologies as constituents to bring an 'urban ecology' to fruition in the agglomeration. Just like Ildefons Cerdà described urbanization as a sophisticated interplay between what he called *Ways*—managing all kinds of urban flows—and *Interways—l'immobilier* harboring everyday life—so the SCAA tried to explore meaningful relationships between the agglomeration's flow-smoothening infrastructures and its urban development potential.[13] In the Belgian context, large infrastructures, ranging from canals to railways to large roads and highways, have mostly been studied at the scale of the nation or the region, implicating extended territories in a process of national industrialization that, at best, gave rise to 'implicit' patterns of urban development.[14] In sharp contrast to this dominant tradition, the SCAA engineered urban infrastructures in much more consolidated, ecologically sound, and urban ways.[15]

SANITARY AMENITIES AS A TECHNO-NATURAL PREREQUISITE FOR URBANIZATION

From the very start, the SCAA stressed the urgent need for a sewage system as an unconditional prerequisite to urbanize the Antwerp agglomeration. More than a post hoc technological fix, the rollout of a sewerage system had to precede urbanization in order to keep disorderly urban extensions from obstructing a rational layout of the sewerage system in the first place.[16] Moreover, everyday reality turned the problem of waste water disposal into a tangible matter of concern. The sewerage system in the agglomeration consisted of little more than a set of primitive structures disposing of wastewater at the edges of each municipality. De facto, the entire network of regional waterways, the river Schijn in particular, had gradually been turned into open sewers, causing an unbearable stench at certain places.[17] Due to its downstream position, the city of Antwerp was affected as well, even though it had its own sewage system.[18] High rates of infant mortality reaching up to 20 percent among the working class and up to 10 percent in aristocratic circles, suggest that mortal diseases such as typhus fever, croup, or tuberculosis affected all social classes.[19] Alleviating the sanitary crisis was perceived as a matter of place-based solidarity involving the entire agglomeration,

"because everything that endangers our neighbor's health equally endangers our own."[20] In his inaugural speech in 1908, SCAA president Delbeke stressed that the issue would invoke highly specialized knowledge, because when it came "to fighting the difficulties and challenges of torrential rains and waste waters, the number of talkers melted like snow in the sun!"[21]

Les 'Hommes de l'égout'

Sewage systems became an increasingly relevant issue in regional urbanization during the first decades of the twentieth century.[22] Early twentieth-century sanitary conventions gave new impetus to nineteenth-century associations in the field of sanitary engineering,[23] leading to the establishment of the international Association Générale des Ingénieurs, Architectes et Hygiénistes Municipaux (AGIAH, 1905), later renamed into the Association Générale des Hygiénistes et Techniciens Municipaux (AGHTM, 1911).[24] This association united sanitary engineers from French-speaking countries, including Belgium.[25] The Department of Health and Hygiene at the Belgian Ministry of the Interior and Agriculture was one of the AGHTM's early instigators.[26] It was precisely at this department that a young sanitary engineer, August Mennes, started working in 1907, after graduating from the Catholic University of Leuven as a civil engineer in mining, construction, and electricity.[27]

Viviane Claude argued that one of the AGHTM's main objectives was to construct a technical field that would transcend 'sanitary engineering' *pur sang* and that the AGHTM itself described as 'urban engineering' from 1905 onward.[28] Similar to Peleman's 'Hommes de la route'—culturally engaged engineers moving beyond the realm of the road to discover a broader horizon for their project in the city and urban society—the AGHTM's sanitary engineers could be termed 'Hommes de l'égout', who discovered the city via a detour along sewers, conduits, and pipelines.[29] August Mennes undeniably became one of the spokesmen of this tradition in the Belgian context.[30] As a sanitary engineer, he nevertheless participated in urban planning conferences such as the 1913 event in Ghent where he may have run into Schobbens and De Heem.[31] A number of his articles appeared in the AGHTM's journal *La Technique Sanitaire*, which, in turn, provided Mennes with state-of-the art expertise regarding fresh water supply and wastewater disposal. He eventually brought this knowledge to the SCAA, which in turn, created a thankful context for him to evolve from a 'sanitary' into a genuinely 'urban' engineer.

Technology deduplicating nature

Before August Mennes became involved in the sewerage question in 1919, the SCAA's first subcommittee, composed of engineers such as Lemeunier, De Heem, and Hachez (who was Mennes's superior), produced a preliminary study on the topic.[32] Informed by fieldtrips to European cities such as London, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, and Ostend, this subcommittee developed a keen understanding of the specific complexities of the Antwerp case, such as the agglomération's flat surroundings, the strong tidal working of the river Scheldt, etc. Although the objective had been "to draw up a preliminary design with estimated details of the sewerage system and treatment facilities," the report concluded that these goals had been abandoned as the subcommittee "did not have the time, staff or financial resources to carry out such a vast study."[33] Moreover, the SCAA remained undecided on the major question of whether to develop a unitary system (mixing sewage and rainwater) or a bilateral one (separating sewage and rainwater, allowing biological treatment and the use of highly concentrated sewerage as manure for agriculture).(Fig. 2.1)

Nevertheless, the SCAA's preparatory work forged an agreement between twenty-two municipalities to draw up one joint plan, made by one independent expert, appointed shortly after the First World War: August Mennes.[34] Under the auspices of a provincial committee, Mennes

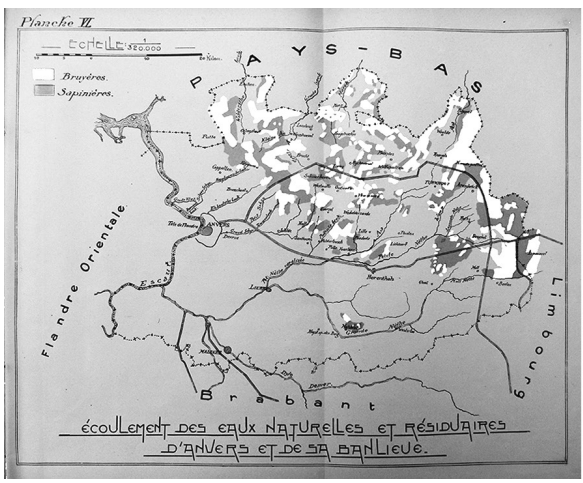




Figure 2.1 The construction of a bilateral sewerage system would consolidate the existing use of human manure as a fertilizer in the Campine region, but the idea was soon abandoned.

embarked on what became an intensive three year study trajectory, starting with a detailed survey of the condition of all the municipalities' sewerage networks in relation to the agglomeration's hydrological network. (Fig. 2.2) He concluded that the elements that were generally in favor of a bilateral system did not apply in the Antwerp agglomeration and that the double costs for "pumping equipment, de-doubled supply pipes, soil preparation and maintenance would be disproportionate to the benefits obtained,"[35] such as biological purification and fertilization of land. Clearly, economic and practical considerations prevailed over deep ecological beliefs of circular waste management, which inevitably contributed to a growing metabolic rift between the city and its rural hinterland.

That doesn't mean that all environmental considerations were abandoned all at once. Claude argued that Belgian engineers were known for introducing aspects of geology, topography, and hydrology into the discourse of sanitary engineering.[36] Mennes's project for the Antwerp agglomeration started from a very detailed understanding of the interrelationships between the agglomeration's geomorphology, topography, hydrological dynamics, and urban development. To fully comprehend the currents and tides of the waterways around Antwerp, Mennes spent years making precise pluviographic measurements throughout the agglomeration.[37] Expected population growth, consequent urbanization patterns, and soil impermeability (up until 1960) were all projected on top of intriguing maps. (Fig. 2.3) Mennes divided his sewerage scheme into three 'sewerage basins' that roughly corresponded to the Scheldt, Schijn, and Struisbeek river basins, thus completely fusing his artificial sewerage network with the agglomeration's natural hydrology. Using natural topography, the collectors' cross-sections could be reduced to a minimum, as could the necessity of pumping units. At the same time, it alleviated unnecessary strain on the subsoil while optimizing the project's cost efficiency.[38] As a result, the sewerage system's main branches emerge as an organic network that reads as a technological deduplication of the agglomeration's natural waterways. The provision of overflows at strategic locations alleviated pressure on the sewerage system in case of heavy rainfall. In the event of obstructions, water from the natural waterways could be used to rinse the sewerage collectors. Mennes's infrastructure, in sum, fused technology and nature, reconciling the needs of an urbanizing society with dynamics of hydrology and constructing the urban as a socio-natural hybrid.[39] (Fig. 2.4)

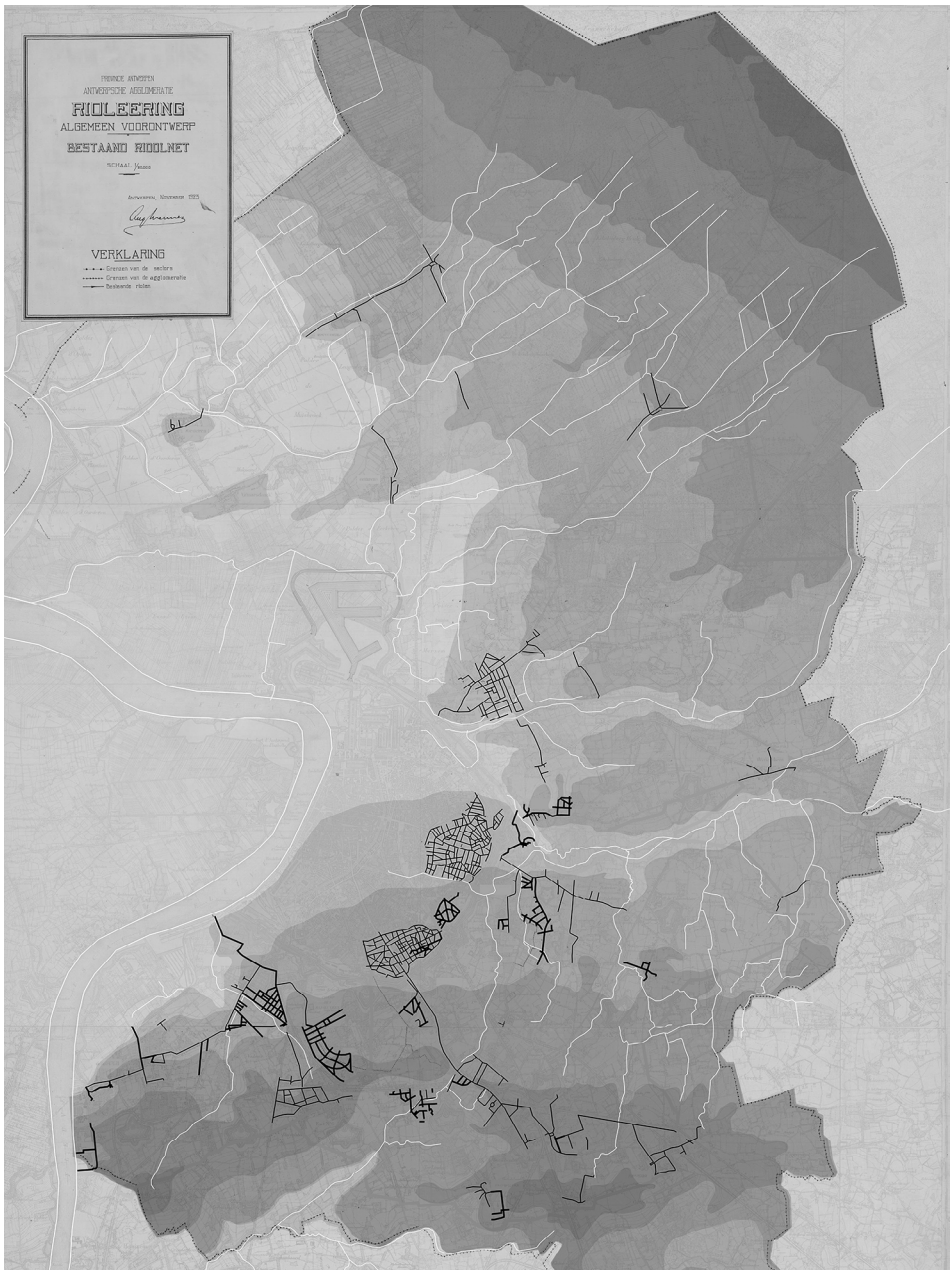


Figure 2.2 Exploratory mappings by August Mennes (ca. 1919), traced by the author. Topography (grey), natural waterways (white), and existing sewage infrastructures, to maintain (thick black) and to replace (thin black)—at the scale of the entire agglomeration. Mennes drew similar, very detailed maps for each of the agglomeration's municipalities.

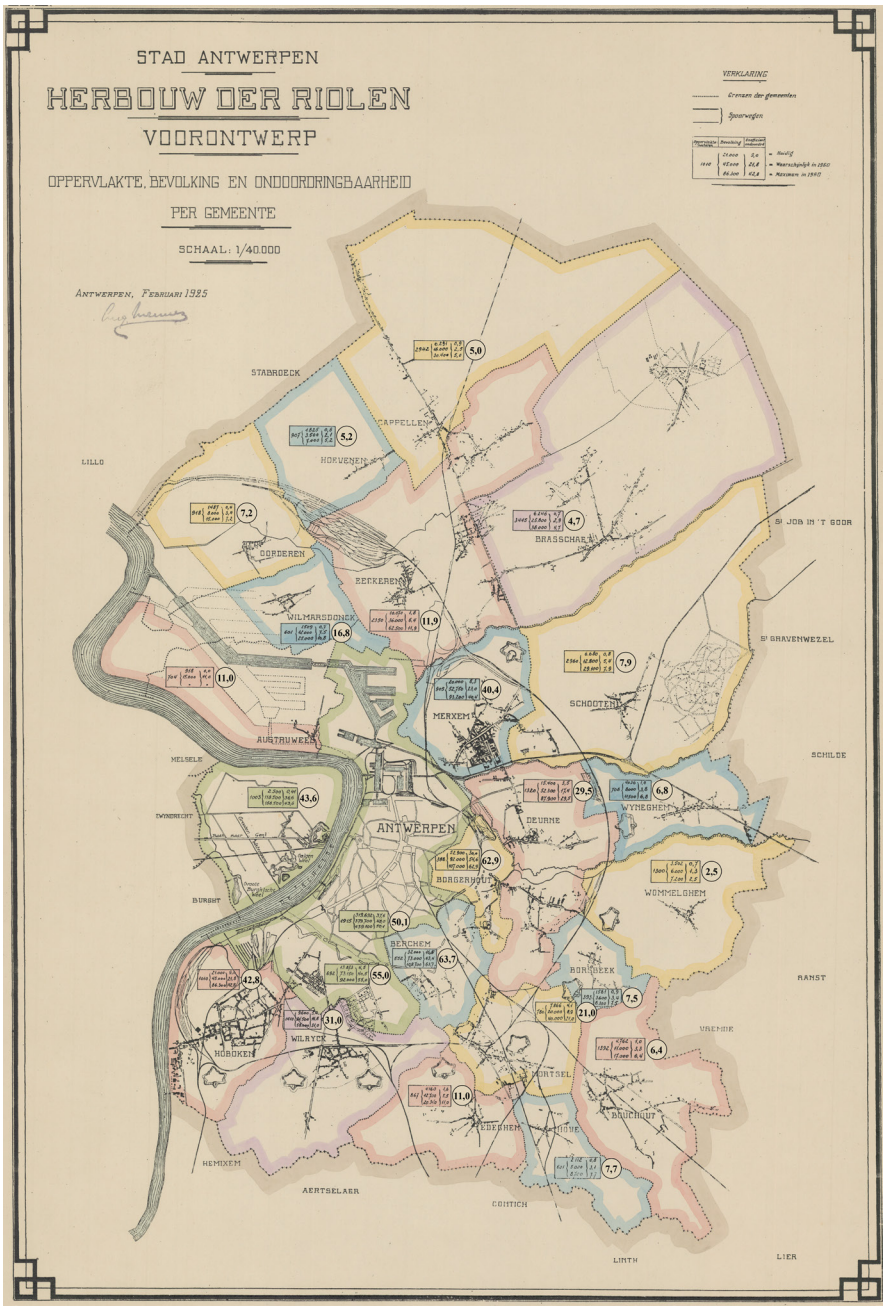


Figure 2.3 Map of Mennes depicting the relationship between the sewerage system, expected population growth, and maximum permissible coefficients of soil impermeability by 1960, on top of emerging patterns of urbanization around 1920.

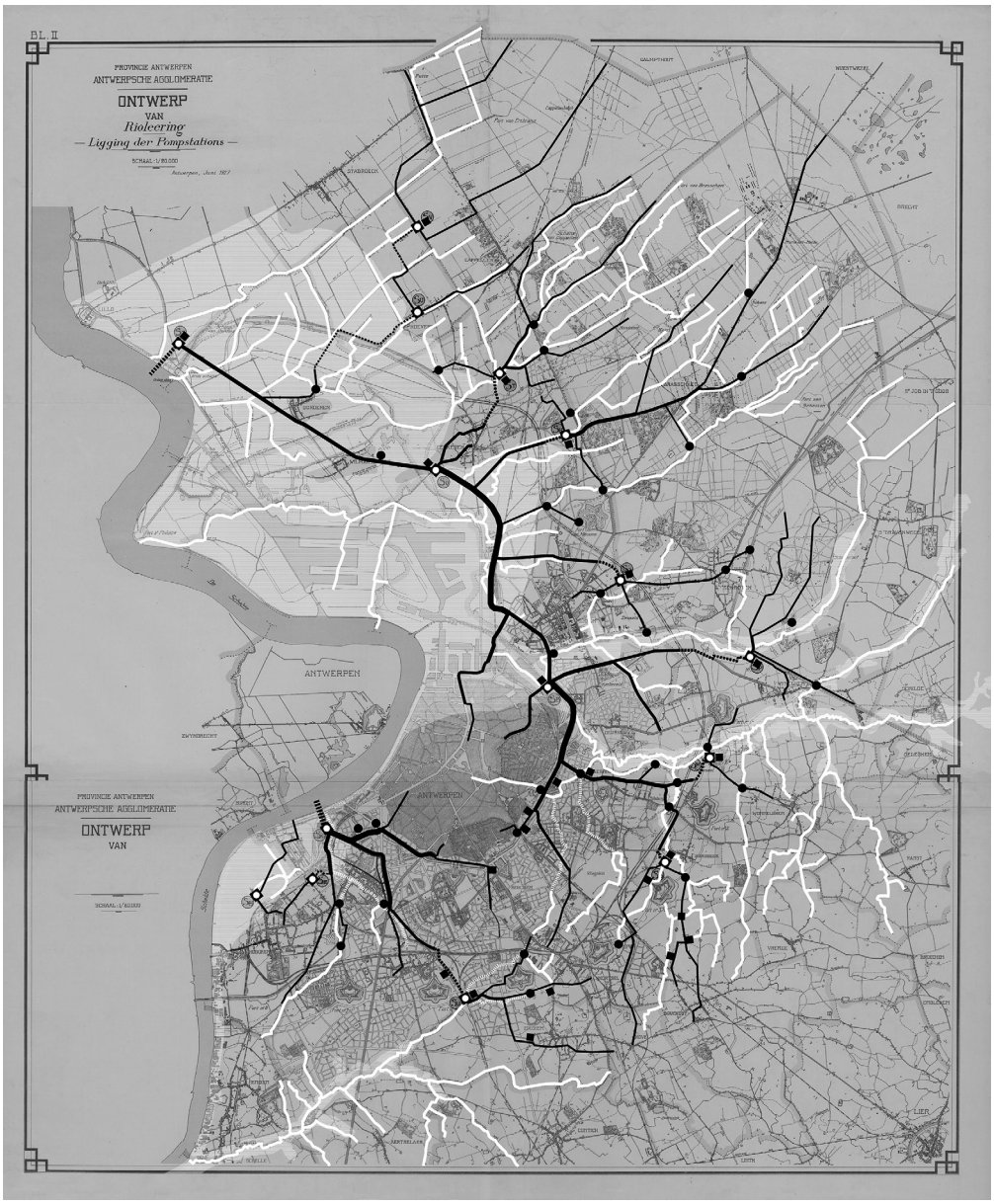


Figure 2.4 Map by Mennes depicting the remarkable congruence between the sewerage system (black) and the agglomeration's natural watercourses (white), traced by the author. The sewerage system includes flushes (black dots), overflows (black squares), and pumping stations (white dots), interconnecting natural and artificial water systems.

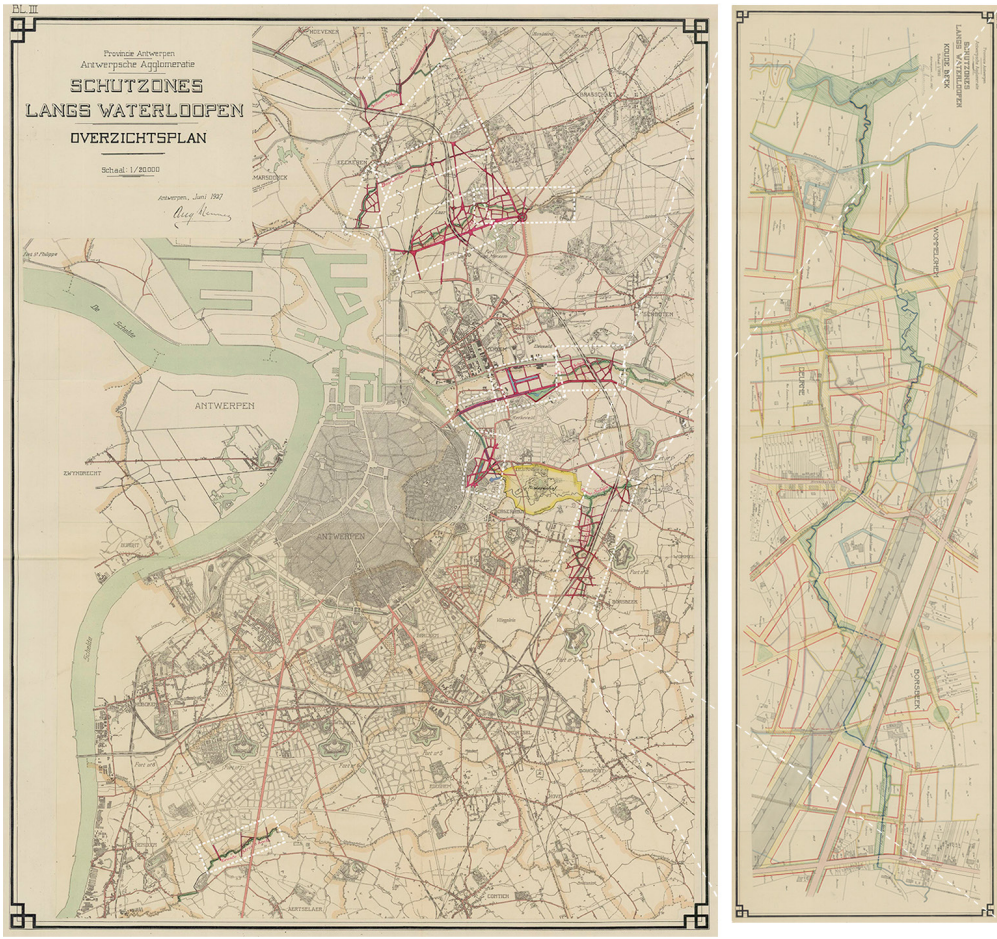


Figure 2.5 Maps by Mennes (ca. 1927) depicting the preservation and incorporation of watercourses into the urbanizing fabric. All white dotted boxes indicate more detailed subplans, one of which is shown.

Wherever "rivers and little streams [were] still unaffected by urbanization," the discharge of waste-waters was avoided at all cost, in order to develop a system of "parks and walks along the waterways' banks."[40] From this point of view, Mennes was very much opposed to the idea of incorporating the river Schijn into the sewerage system, channeling, rediverting, siphoning, and pumping the river more than ten miles further up north, all the way around the harbor. Instead, he advocated to restore and drain it more or less naturally, following its former natural bed toward the River Scheldt, right through the historic city. This solution

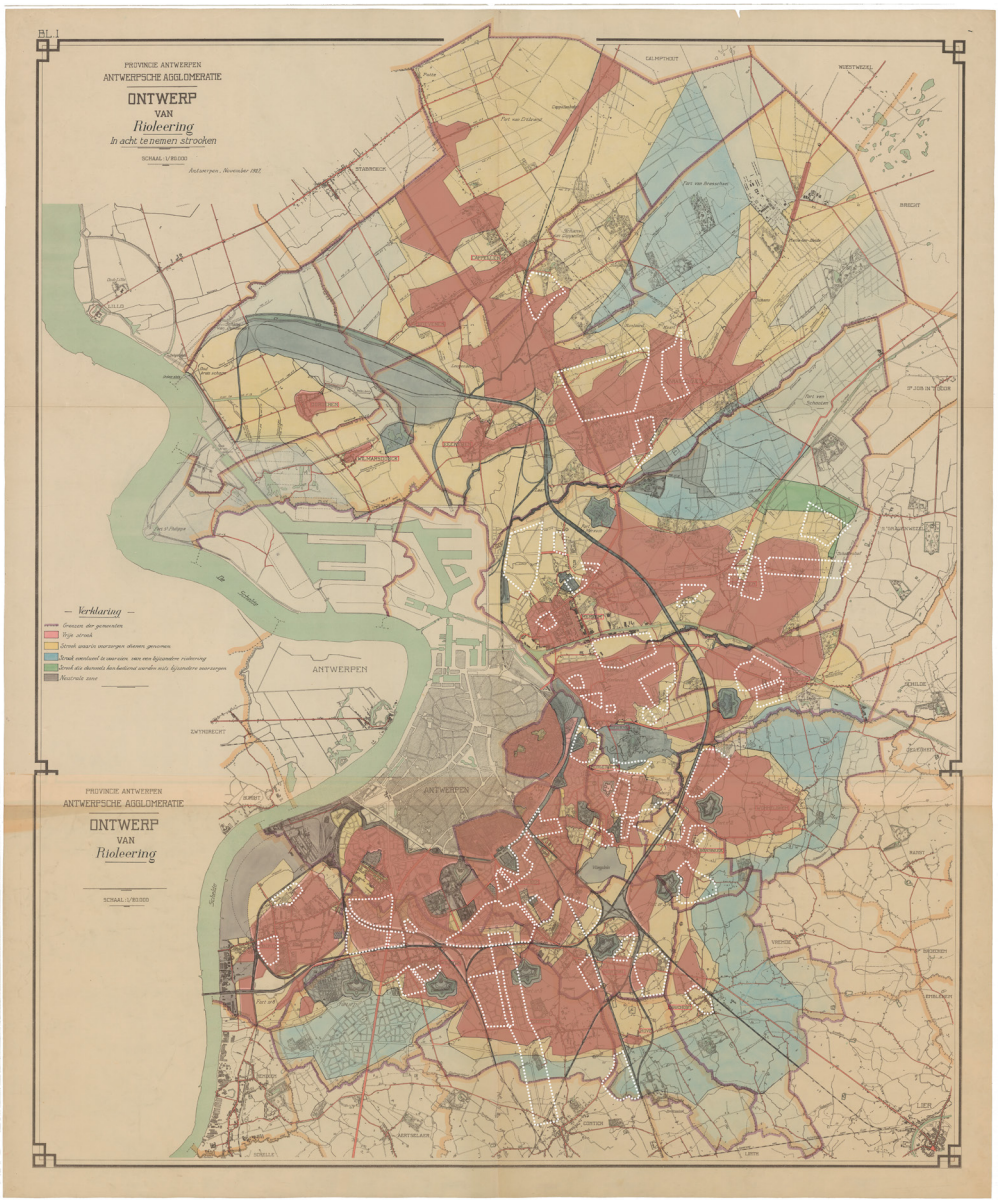


Figure 2.6 Map by August Mennes (ca. 1923) showing the degree of additional precautions needed in terms of sewerage before development. Only the red patches (dark) were 'freely developable', whereas the yellow, blue and green patches (bright) indicate areas that were less suitable for development and in need of 'precautions' such as 'special sewerage systems'. The white dotted contours, added by the author, indicate where Mennes drafted development schemes on behalf of private landowners.

necessitated both the construction of collectors and natural flood plains in the Rivierenhof park. "When the lovely river Schijn will no longer be tainted by sewage, Antwerp will have a jewel that few cities in the world have," Mennes argued, "and the Rivierenhof will transform into a beautiful park, with vast ponds fed by the winding river Schijn."[41] By 1927, Schobbens confirmed that "the need to dig a pond in the lowest part of the Schijn valley [was] widely recognized [...] to catch floods, while adding to the charm of the landscape."[42] He added that "if this principle could become a tried and tested recipe, it would be possible to provide leisurely strolls"[43] throughout the entire agglomeration. And so Mennes ended up landscaping the shores of the Struysbeek, the Laarse Beek, the Kaartse Beek, the Donkse Beek, etc. as long-stretched hiking parks. (Fig. 2.5) Mennes effectively used a technological device to forge new public waterscapes out of an originally rather technical mission, turning natural waterways into public spines of the agglomeration's urbanizing landscape.

This sensitivity to the interrelationship between topography, hydrology, and urbanization gradually informed the SCAA's general urbanization principles, such as the reluctance to build on waterlogged soils.[44] In general, the SCAA's proposals for urban expansion neatly follow contour height lines, avoiding all construction on low-lying and clayish river plains. This cautious approach is well represented on an intriguing map by Mennes, which divides the agglomeration into four different categories with corresponding degrees of precautions needed to ensure safe development. (Fig. 2.6) Much more than an ecological believer per se, Mennes appears as a persistent yet cautious engineer-plumber, respecting the territory's main hydrological features and patiently trying to find a sound balance between the agglomeration's urban expansion and its natural water system.

The necessity of incremental implementation

Although Mennes's plans symbolize the progress of science at the turn of the twentieth century, they must not be mistaken for rigid blue-print plans awaiting instant implementation. Just like Schobbens, Mennes himself was well-aware of the fact that his plan's main branches were only drafted in 'estimative detail'. In 1922, when his study was coming to an end, Mennes said:

> Of course, there can be no question of building the extensive network of this sewerage system all at once. That work will require a lifetime. The immediate aim of the present study is to allow municipal authorities—when sewers need to be built for new or existing districts—to conceive these works in such a way that they become part of a predetermined and coherent whole in the making. In this way, a major plan will be implemented gradually, according to prevailing needs, contingencies and available resources.[45]

Clearly, Mennes was open to politicizing and socializing his scientific principles, and it would indeed be politics that mostly compromised the plan's systematic implementation. As the SCAA was not in the position of imposing and financing the whole plan, it proposed to unite all involved municipalities into an intercommunal association responsible for one-third of the total costs of the main scheme's construction. The remaining two-thirds would be paid by the state and the province. Individual municipalities were free to connect local neighborhoods to the system's main branches on their own initiative and at their own expense. Although the SCAA managed to reach an agreement with twenty-one municipalities, the city of Antwerp was not willing to cooperate.[46] Between 1923 and 1925, Mennes worked on a sewerage plan for the city, but its existing sewers made the implementation of the new design unfeasible. The city engineers, who were "rather envious of Mennes' exuberant honorary fees,"[47] dismissed the plan as a phantasm of "a top-engineer for unrealizable plans."[48] In the end, the city did not want to participate in the costs of the urgently needed sewerage system—even if the city itself would greatly benefit from the plan, and even if its cooperation was crucial for discharging cleansed water into the Scheldt. The game of arm wrestling between city and province wouldn't be solved until the 1960s—long after Mennes's death in 1953.

Confronted with its own limited executive powers and financial clout, the SCAA soon switched to its incremental strategy. Mennes was put in charge of a committee that watched over the compatibility of all development applications with the preconditions imposed by his general plan.[49] As a consequence, Mennes became a regular SCAA member, which enabled him to implement his plan incrementally and from the bottom up,[50] ensuring that "sewers were constructed in such a way that they could later be connected to the large system."[51] Moreover, Mennes's in-depth survey between 1920 and 1923 had put him in touch with a whole host of landowners and tract developers in the agglomeration (see chapter 4). A multitude of small assignments for municipalities and landowners

allowed Mennes to start building the contours of his sewer network all by himself—for a period of more than twenty years. (Fig.2.6) Of course, this incrementalism had its drawbacks. On several occasions, wastewater was still being discharged into watercourses, and it regularly happened that streets with open trenches were developed, pending the construction of sewers.[52] But at least some pieces of the general scheme were getting built—preparing the grounds for the system's full implementation in the 1960s. The sewers got built-in from below, fused within the territory following local initiative.

All the features of Mennes's sewerage plan are also reflected in the plan he developed on behalf of the province for the agglomeration's drinking water supply. Again, he managed to seamlessly relate hydrology, topography, sociopolitics, and urbanization. Mennes's plan proposed to pierce the sandy plains of Moll-Lommel, some sixty kilometers east of Antwerp, with a grid of pumping installations to obtain naturally filtered drinking water of the highest quality. Somewhere in-between the plains and the Antwerp agglomeration, Mennes used the so-called *Beersel Hill* to accommodate a massive storage basin—a "dreamed topographical feature for the development of a general water supply system."[53] Mennes again stressed that the plan was incrementally realizable and that the piecemeal participation of rural municipalities was needed to make the scheme feasible. Furthermore, it was "obvious that the urban poor should be totally or partially relieved from paying subscription fees." suggesting that "municipal authorities could pay for them" or that "subscription rates at the other end of the social spectrum could be increased."[54] Mennes's sanitary plans may readily be regarded as strong examples of social engineering, characterized by the "ambitions of regenerating society, or better, of correcting and perfecting 'human ecology', by means of technical intervention, combining methods of cartography and calculation with works in the name of the public good."[55] The engineer thus deeply acknowledged that sociopolitical arrangements should accompany his sanitary engineering endeavors, while the agglomeration's natural features had to be taken into account. Mennes and the SCAA practiced urbanization as a project of socio-natural transformation in which the social and the natural were, at times, inextricably intertwined.

TOWARD A METROPOLITAN GRID: THE MODERN ROAD AS URBAN PROJECT

As Antwerp expanded as a transit-harbor city, the improvement of its accessibility to motorized traffic was high on the national agenda at the turn of the twentieth century. Antwerp's poor accessibility was vividly addressed by Auguste Delbeke in the SCAA's early years:

> Those who have traveled the winding roads bending through the twelve exit gates of Antwerp's fortification walls, know all too well how inconvenient they are for the urban population.[56] What the public authorities need to do without delay, is to build new roads, and to widen and straighten the old ones, in order to accommodate both incoming and outgoing traffic (…) In order to achieve this common goal, all the municipalities concerned, the Province of Antwerp and the Department of Public Works, need to combine their efforts.[57]

The SCAA's mission was to coordinate national, provincial, and local road works to develop a joint road project for the agglomeration. As a servant of the Ministry of Public Works placed at the head of a provincial department concerned with the agglomeration's roads, engineer Paul De Heem became the main spokesperson for province and state. City engineer Lemeunier (later Roelandts) represented the city of Antwerp, while engineer August Mennes ended up helping the agglomeration's municipalities.

Les 'Hommes de la route'

Obviously, the modernization of Antwerp's road network was part of a national agenda. As mentioned, Peleman has argued that modernizing the Belgian road became a project of a wide group of people, referring to themselves as 'les Hommes de la route,' who made "a considerable contribution to the urbanization of Belgium."[58] They did so not simply by virtue of building roads, but "by creating the context for this road to exist as a part of a rapidly [urbanizing] society."[59] Arguably, SCAA protagonists such as president Delbeke, engineer De Heem, city-engineers Lemeunier and Roelandts (after 1924), and even Schobbens can all be regarded as so-called Hommes de la route. All of them participated in the (inter) national road conferences or published articles in Belgium's *Annales des Travaux Publics.* The second Belgian Road Congress in Antwerp, in 1933, was organized by several SCAA members such as Schobbens, De Heem,

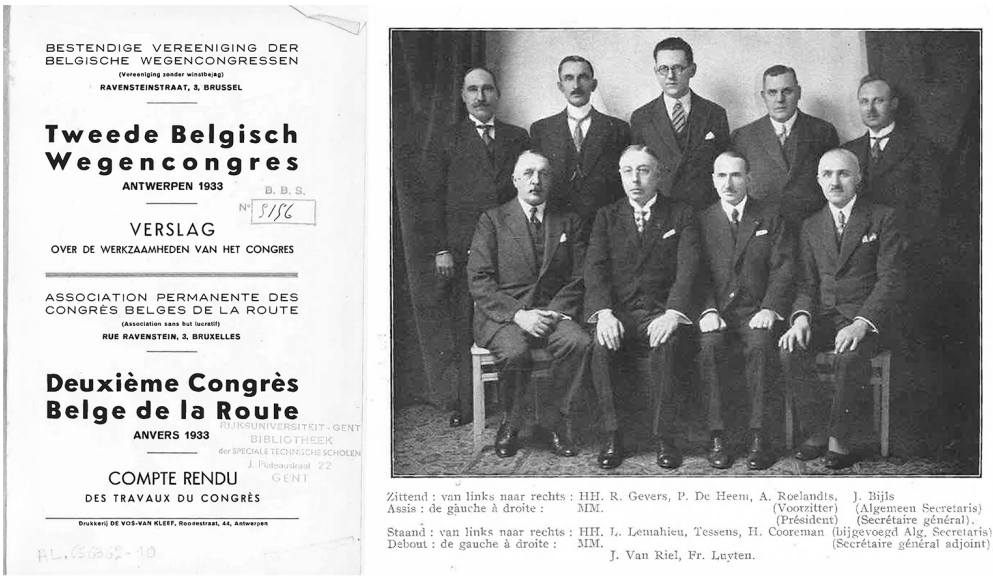


Figure 2.7 Several SCAA members (engineers De Heem, Tessens, Cooreman, Roelandts, etc.) cohosted the second Belgian Road Conference in Antwerp in 1933.

Tessens, and Antwerp city engineer Roelandts, and was hosted and presided by then governor and SCAA president Baron Holvoet.[60] (Fig. 2.7) The excursion organized by De Heem on the last day of the congress drove the participants along immaculately asphalted and concrete roads in the province, with a stopover at the picturesque country house of Mr. Speth, mayor of Kapellen, where they enjoyed a walk through the park-like garden while Mrs. Speth served a delicious cup of tea. Events like these are exemplary of the repositioning of the modern road in Belgium, bringing the most remote places within reach of an urbanizing society, propagating a certain 'culture urbaine' far beyond the traditional city.

The following paragraphs, however, suggest that the SCAA's road works contributed to a much more explicit urbanization project—one that was not just an implicit side-effect of infrastructural engineering. The Belgian territory is generally understood as "a project initiated by engineers but brought to fruition by 'gardeners' who continue to cultivate with great care and attention the possibilities that have been injected into the territory."[61] The SCAA's road project, however, must be understood as an exceptional moment in which the Hommes de la route "acted as gardeners themselves, cultivating their infrastructure project as a basis for further urbanization."[62] The SCAA's road project did not just passively give

rise to post hoc urbanization, buth rather structured urbanization upfront and became an integral part of it. Its engineers attended both road *and* planning conferences, in Belgium and abroad.[63] Two early publications of the SCAA's main protagonists testify to the ambition of 'urbanizing the modern road', turning it into a prime tool for urban development.

In a first publication, "Mode d'Exécution de voirie, d'eclairage et d'adduction d'eau," engineers De Heem and Lemeunier investigated "the most suitable lay-out of the [agglomeration's] new boulevards, while taking into account the most efficient methods for constructing underground pipelines for lighting, electricity, gas, water supply and sewers."[64] The article presents the outcome of the work both engineers had done in the SCAA's fourteenth subcommittee focusing on underground utilities.[65] As a city engineer, Lemeunier had become familiar with the requirements of modern urban amenities such as water, gas, electricity, sewerage systems, urban tram lines, and their impact on *la voirie urbaine*.[66] As a chief engineer of the Department of Bridges and Roads, De Heem, in turn, brought his knowledge of constructing *Grand'Routes* to the design table, having a sense of the scale of the future agglomeration—"about 7800 ha, whereas the present city covers only 1930 ha"[67]—that city engineer Lemeunier lacked. The modern exigencies of *la voirie urbaine* merged together with the scale of the agglomeration's *Grand'Routes*. The engineers' proposals did not stem from scientific considerations alone but were informed by in-depth conversations with local companies supplying gas, electricity, and water. Road engineering in the agglomeration included practical experience and knowledge in the organization of an underground world that 'urbanized' the promise of a modern urban lifestyle throughout the entire agglomeration.

The second publication, Schobbens's *Des Plantations routières et des constructions en recul le long de la grande voirie* (1908) started from the observation that the prospect of urbanization beyond historical cities gave "a new impetus to everything concerning the *Grand'Routes*."[68] As the 1836 legislation on large roads had not given the central government or the provinces any tools to control building activity or plantations along the country's *Grand'Routes*, they could not be devised as the backbones of an urban project. The lack of legislation lead to haphazard construction impeding possible road enlargements in the near or distant future, and to an impoverishment of the road's visual qualities in terms of plantations.[69] In search of a viable solution, other than large expropriations the cost of which would be "madness,"[70] Joseph Schobbens scrutinized Belgian legislation and case

law to find solace in a specific instrument that the legislator had assigned to municipal administrations regarding *la voirie urbaine*: the general alignment plan. These alignment plans did not only mark "a property's perimeter, (…) defining the boundary between public and private" but equally "regulated a property's inside (…) by defining areas for 'legal servitudes.'"[71] Even if part of a private property, these servitudes could not be built nor planted and remained free of expensive indemnities in case of future expropriation in the public interest. At the same time, they allowed orderly construction and lush public planting strategies in the long run, while keeping future road widenings feasible. Schobbens proposed to empower the Departments of Bridges and Roads and the Provinces to "develop alignment plans for the *Grand'Routes* throughout the entire country," a strategy that in the long run would "be as effective as large-scale expropriations, yet much less intrusive to the national treasury."[72] On May 28, 1914, a new law incorporating most of Schobbens's suggestions was voted, effectively granting the King and the provinces' permanent deputations the right to install servitudes *non-aedificandi* and control building activity along Belgium's *Grand'Routes*.[73] Drawing inspiration from municipal legislation on urban roads, Schobbens thus managed to 'urbanize' the mentality of the *Grand'Routes* which turned out to became a very powerful tool to urbanize the agglomeration.

Both publications demonstrate how the SCAA's mission of 'urbanizing' the agglomeration stimulated an 'urban take' on *La Grand'Voirie.* Large roads were not only pieces of infrastructure that had to meet traffic requirements; they became a fundamental layer of urbanization, carrying amenities for the promise of a modern urban lifestyle and offering some tools for the urban development of adjacent land. The SCAA again created a context in which road engineers were eventually able to claim a role as urban engineers.

Building a one-mile metropolitan grid, a work for the long haul

Historically, the SCAA's project of crossing the river Scheldt with a modern road may have appealed most to the imagination. From the early twentieth century onward, a series of bridges was proposed, one even more spectacular than the other, exemplifying many road engineers' deep fascination with the technological sublime. The tunnels that were eventually built from 1933 onward, both for motorized traffic and pedestrians, were prime examples of technological excellence at that time—and remained etched in the

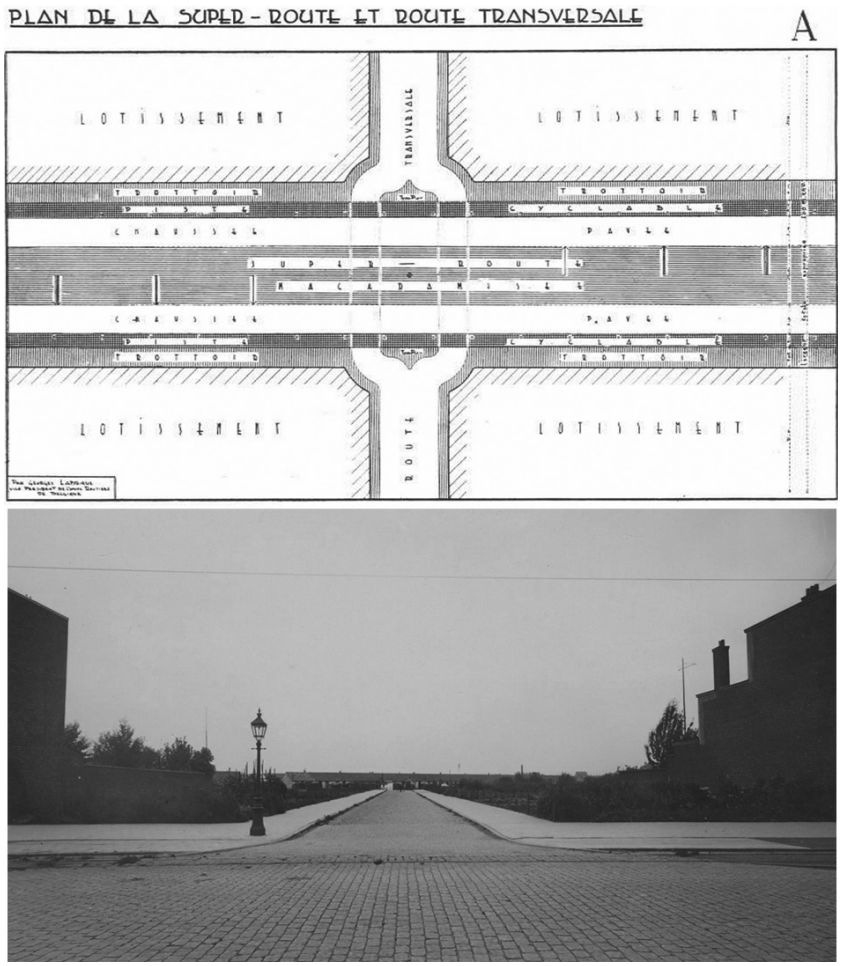


Figure 2.8 Georges Labrique's 1935 schemes for urban 'super-routes' remarkably correspond to contemporary pictures of urban development in the Antwerp agglomeration.

collective memory.[74] However, this section aims to recollect the contours of yet another and probably more important road project that was largely forgotten: between 1907 and 1939, the SCAA succeeded in patching up a one-mile grid out of a motley collection of national, urban, and intermunicipal *Grand'Routes*—both radial and tangential, and in cooperation with many different tiers of government and stakeholders. Moreover, the SCAA managed to build these major roads not as mere traffic infrastructures but as true boulevards unlocking many new urban addresses—an approach very close to the imaginary of the 'super-routes' forwarded by 'Homme de la

route' Georges Labrique. (Fig. 2.8) The separate steps of this project were, in themselves, not memorable, and even hardly noticed.[75] But after thirty long years, these fragmented and seemingly banal initiatives amounted into a consistent project, co-shaping the contours of an urban agglomeration.

Radial roads

The SCAA began its road mission by straightening and enlarging the agglomeration's existing state roads that, according to Schobbens, were all "in urgent need of re-evaluation and new alignment plans."[76] The issue was mainly tackled throughout the 1910s in SCAA subcommittees 4 to 8, each dealing with a specific *Grand'Route*, the state roads Antwerp-Brussels, Antwerp-Turnhout, Antwerp-Breda, and Antwerp-Bergen-op-Zoom respectively. Consequently, spectacular breaches in the city's old ramparts first appeared in those places where straightened and enlarged state roads connected the city to its hinterland, and ultimately, the entire nation.[77] These works initially fell under the direct supervision of Minister of Public Works Delbeke, who directly commissioned Paul de Heem to draw up plans that were all established by royal decree.[78] Occasionally, large expropriation plans were prepared—and while expenses were for the account of the state, eventual profits from the resale of land were left to the municipalities. "Can one dream of a more beautiful gift?"[79] Delbeke wondered in 1910. The SCAA, however, avoided expropriations as much as possible, and wherever possible preferred to "decree an alignment plan which was realized incrementally, as urbanization progressed," a more feasible strategy that was also much more considerate of existing communal life.[80] (Fig. 2.9)

In addition to widening and straightening national roads, the SCAA also extended some of the city's municipal arteries deep into the agglomeration's urbanizing territory, such as the Plantin-Moretuslei (subcommittee 11) and the Jan van Rijswijcklaan (subcommittee 12). Although these roads were not of state importance, they nevertheless fulfilled a similar traffic function. "One of the major advantages of extending the Plantin en Moretuslei," De Heem said, "is that it will relieve pressure on the state road Antwerp-Turnhout."[81] The trajectories of these prolonged city avenues were mainly discussed by engineers De Heem and Lemeunier and were built at the city's expense.[82] Once finished, the Jan van Rijswijcklaan was handed over to the state to become a national road, while the city got the land of the abolished railway line Antwerp South-Wilrijk in return, to develop yet another urban exit road with the Jan De Voslei.[83]



Figure 2.9 Map by August Mennes, traced by the author, indicating enlarged radial state roads (full white lines), extended urban exit roads (dashed white lines), and new intermunicipal radial roads proposed by Schobbens (dotted white lines). Paul De Heem drafted numerous sub-plans for arterial road projects around Antwerp—mostly at the request of Minister of Public Works Auguste Delbeke. Three different kinds of plan recur: (a) detailed expropriation plans, (b) reallocation plans for the resale and redevelopment of land, and (c) alignment plans.

In 1925, Joseph Schobbens created subcommittee 36 to make a general study of the city's radial arteries. He claimed that in its zeal to adapt existing roads, the SCAA hadn't paid "enough attention to creating new ones" and that "when looking at a general scheme of arteries radiating from the city to into the Province, one could not be but struck by the large gaps."[84] Schobbens elaborated his own sketch with about ten new "intermunicipal radial road connections."[85] (Fig. 2.9) He was not after "the immediate construction of costly road works"; rather, he sought to implement "general alignment plans, in order to keep random building activity from compromising the agglomeration's future development."[86] Stressing the provinces' right to launch intermunicipal road works in the event of the municipalities' reluctance, Schobbens had De Heem develop his preliminary sketch further before it was presented to several municipalities in a series of plenary meetings in January 1926.[87] It was during one of those meetings that the municipal secretary of Hove stated that "developing such an inter-municipal grid [would] only be effective if it was conceived by one single technician."[88] All mayors soon agreed to "entrust engineer August Mennes with the commission of planning their territory."[89] In the French context, a 1919 law obliging municipalities to hire architects to design municipal plans curtailed the urban ambitions of sanitary engineers. In Belgium such a law was never instated, which allowed August Mennes to become the principal urban designer of nearly all the agglomeration's municipalities—a position he maintained until his death in 1953.[90] (Fig. 2.10) It brought Mennes into a position to project new intermunicipal arteries in the agglomeration, such as the Prins Boudewijnlaan in the south of the agglomeration and the Noorderlaan in the north. (Fig. 2.11)

Whether state, urban, or intermunicipal in nature, the average width of these roads was invariably set somewhere between forty and fifty meters, including *zones de recul* in the form of front gardens.[91] Or in the words of president Delbeke: "What seems too big today will be considered small tomorrow."[92] Provident road widths were ensured even at bottle necks, such as bridges. Schobbens argued, for instance, that it "made no sense to connect a 16-m-wide bridge over the Campine canal with the 50-m-wide state road leading up north to Merksem."[93] Wherever possible, main roads were even widened right through the heart of the historical city. Exemplary is the case of the Meirbrug and the Schoenmarkt, where the state demanded that their roads be enlarged as one of the preconditions for the competition that the SCAA organized for the reconstruction of this

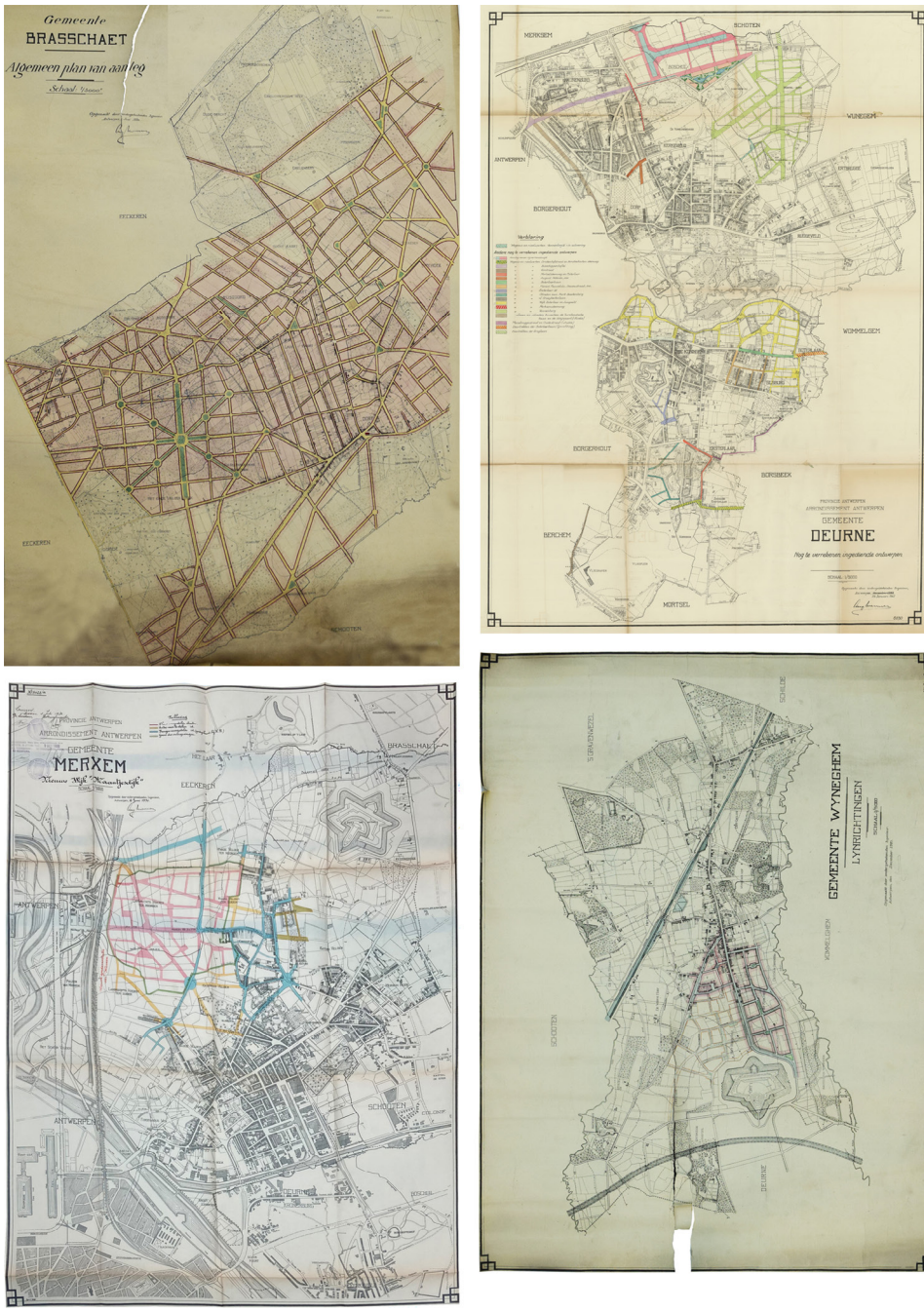


Figure 2.10 Municipal development plans by August Mennes for Wijnegem (1925), Merksem (1929), Brasschaat (1930), and Deurne (1942).

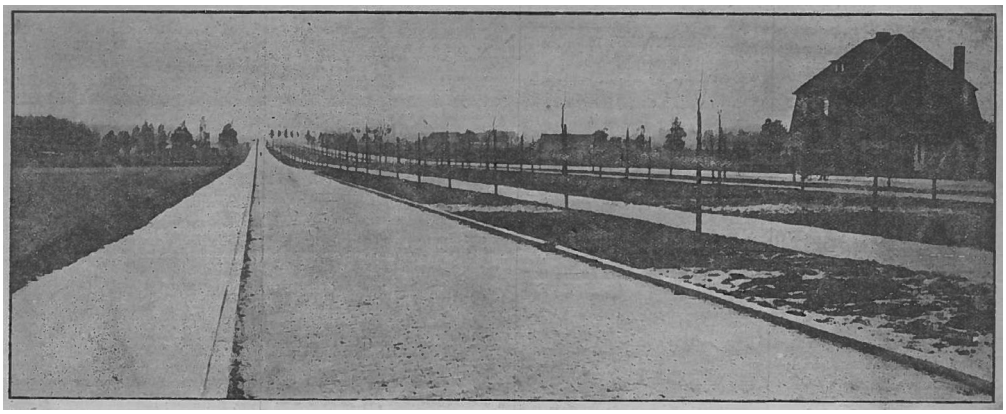


Figure 2.11 Picture of the Prins Boudewijnlaan (ca. 1932), right after completion, including some of the first houses.

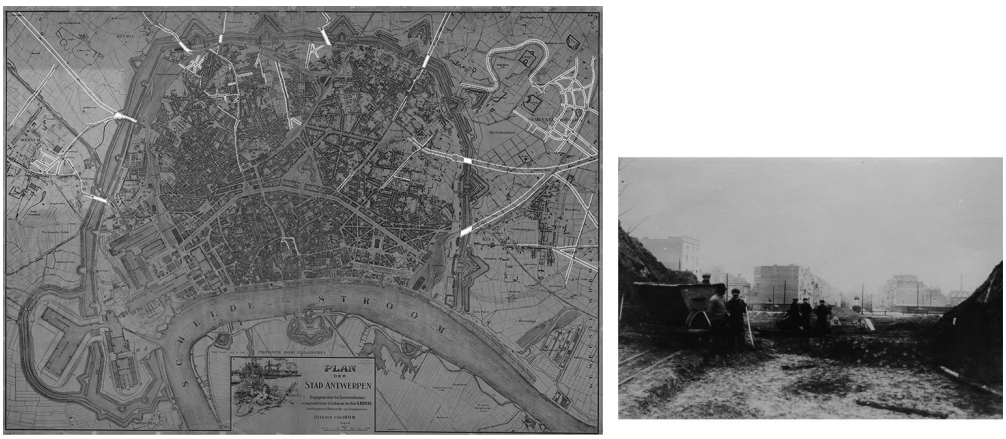


Figure 2.12 1908 map, traced by author, indicating the SCAA's breaches in the city walls and widening of state roads throughout the historic center. Picture of new breaches at the Jan van Rijswijcklaan, 1914.

bombed district in 1919.[94] (Fig. 2.12) Yet the SCAA was not too dogmatic either, and places where valuable street life had developed were saved from expropriation and demolition, as were historically or economically valuable buildings.[95] Shortly after the Great War, the unfavorable economic climate urged Schobbens and De Heem to persuade the state to keep investing in the Antwerp road grid.[96] Even if the prewar momentum did not return, sporadic expropriations and alignment plans throughout the 1920s and 1930s managed to further improve the conditions of the

exit roads. Building the agglomeration's radial roads was an ever-ongoing project that required permanent care and evaluation.

Four circular roads

Several SCAA meeting reports reveal how Joseph Schobbens repeatedly pleaded in favor of new transversal connections between different municipalities from the mid-1920s onward.[97] Arguably, it was in complementing the path-dependent radial development logic of urbanization with a much less self-evident transversal development logic that the SCAA's urban ambitions for the agglomeration's road project became most explicit.

The committee cooperated with the Ministry of War to seize the opportunities of the urban reconversion of the former bulwark (subcommittee 13) and the construction of a new military belt further afield (subcommittees 28 and 30) to build the first two ring roads. Although the grand urban boulevard on the former fortification walls was never realized as planned by Prost, a less formal road emerged that provisionally started functioning as a first circular road (CR1) around the city.[98] (Fig. 2.13) At the same time, the SCAA investigated whether a second intermunicipal road (CR2) could accompany the new fortification belt planned between Hoboken and Wijnegem. In 1912, the SCAA formally asked the Minister of War whether this road could be opened to the public, instead of reserving it for strictly military purposes. When he replied that "nothing was against opening it up for urban appropriation and inter-municipal traffic," the road was conceived as a "large ring road for the future agglomeration," with a total width of about 50m. Expropriations were avoided, because "a simple alignment plan would do the trick,"[99] both to plan the road and to steer adjacent construction activity. Schobbens suggested turning the CR2 into a *Grand'Route* under supervision of De Heem's provincial department, to guarantee "well executed and maintained paving, sidewalks and plantations."[100] As soon as agreements were made with the respective ministries, the SCAA communicated to all mayors that the new military route had become a public intermunicipal road.

Later on, two additional intermunicipal bypasses were built under the SCAA's auspices. A third circular road (CR3) ran from Antwerp, over Wilrijk, Berchem, Mortsel, and Deurne all the way to Schoten. A fourth one (CR4), a little further afield, was envisioned to connect Hemiksem, Wilrijk, Edegem, Hove, Boechout, and Wijnegem.[101] Although these bypasses had been on the SCAA's agenda from the onset, and bits and pieces had here and there been approved by royal decree,[102] their development did not gain momentum



Figure 2.13 Informal radial road (CR1) emerging along the former ramparts, as shown on a picture of the Wilrijkse Poort in Berchem, 1934.

until the mid-1930s, when then–Minister of Public Works Hendrik De Man established the "Office for Economic Recovery" (OREC), allocating state funds to public works as a countercyclical strategy in times of severe economic crisis.[103] The SCAA immediately installed subcommittee 37 regarding new intermediary ring roads, on Schobbens's note that swift action was needed to profit from the "OREC's temporary loan policy that might not last very long."[104] Schobbens urged every municipality to "develop alignment plans incorporating the circular roads on their territory"[105]—all designed by Mennes. (Fig. 2.14) After sending an overview plan to the minister of public works, Schobbens managed to elicit an agreement that the state would pay for the construction of the new boulevards on the condition that all municipalities freely ceded all needed land.[106] When subsidies gradually dried up in the course of 1938, Schobbens assured his colleagues that "state aid [would] come back," urging them not to "let this cyclical dip slow down our work."[107] De Heem added that in Brussels "intermunicipal roads had been planned for years and that whatever difficulties were encountered, a viable solution had always been found."[108] Arguably, he referred to practices as described in Dumont's 1918 *Etude de la voirie intercommunale du Grand-Bruxelles*.[109] Intermunicipal road development was a known recipe to structure urbanization in Belgium's agglomerations.[110]

That doesn't mean negotiations were always smooth. In 1937, for example, the municipality of Wilrijk decided to approve a dense development scheme right on the spot where it had previously promised the SCAA to build the CR3.[111] Governor Holvoet fulminated that Wilrijk "only reasoned from its own point of view (…) completely neglecting the common interest of federated and solidary municipalities."[112] When the SCAA realized that it had no legal grounds to overrule Wilrijk's plans, it moved on to negotiate an alternative trajectory for the CR3—which testifies to the committee's pragmatic approach and adherence to the relative ideal.[113] The CR3

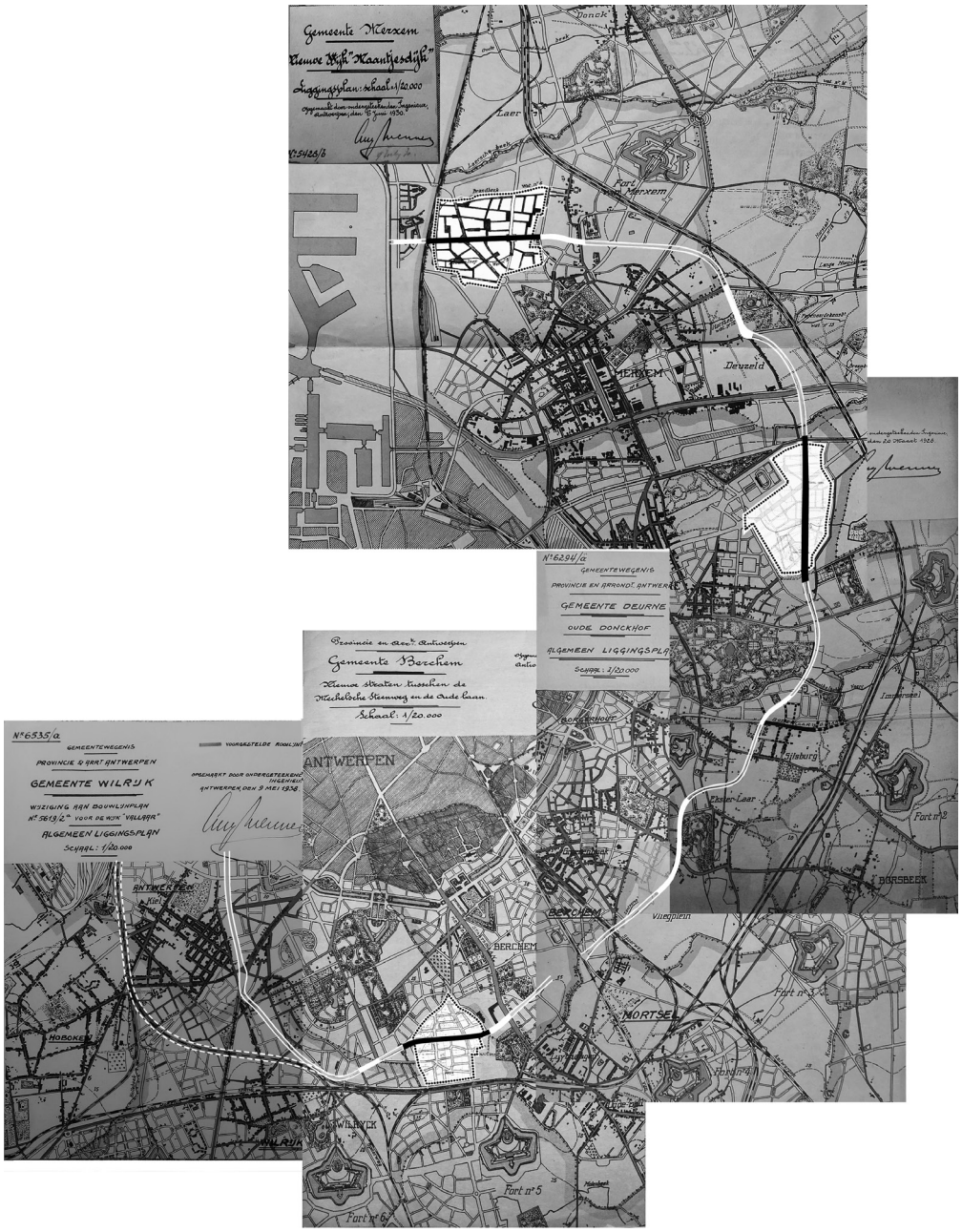


Figure 2.14 Collage by author of municipal development schemes and (some of the) local development projects by August Mennes incorporating a third intermunicipal ring-road (CR3).

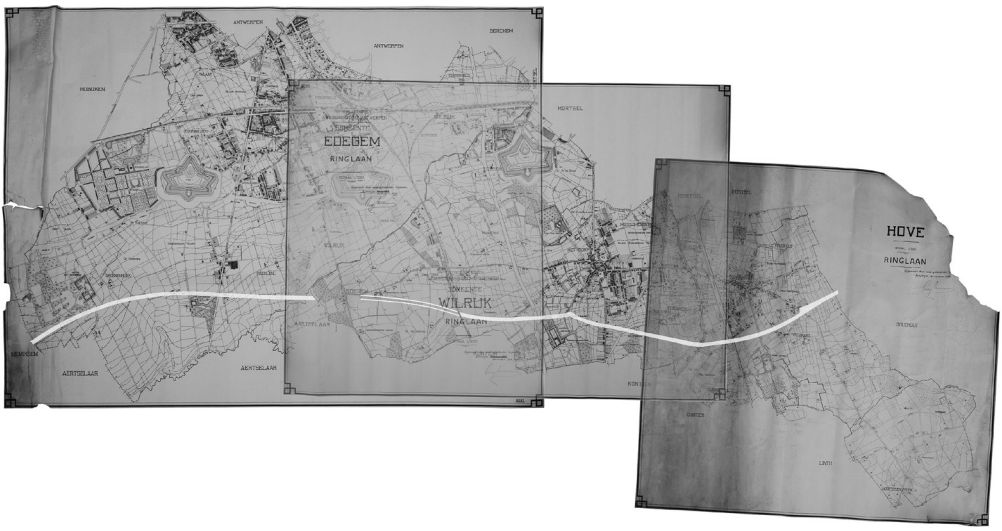


Figure 2.15 Collage by author of municipal plans by August Mennes for Edegem, Wilrijk, and Hove, incorporating the fourth intermunicipal ring-road (CR4).

averaged widths of 30 to 40 m, depending on municipal treasuries and the amount of state subsidies actually obtained.[114] Several projects for bridges or tunnels were begun to cross national infrastructures such as canals or railways. Most of these initiatives were put on hold when World War II broke out, leaving the CR3 running dead on national infrastructures rather than on municipal boundaries. Plans for a fourth ring (CR4) took more time and effort to develop. After the municipalities of Wilrijk and Boechout incorporated the CR4 in their municipal plans, the SCAA also managed to convince Hove and Edegem to join in, arguing that the new road would cause a significant increase in land values.[115] Several maps by engineer August Mennes announce this final circular road, but its execution was largely thwarted by the war. (Fig. 2.15) Although some parts of the CR4 were realized, they lie somewhat lost in today's agglomeration, and it has long been forgotten that they were once conceived as segments of a metropolitan road project.

Piecing together a metropolitan grid

The agglomeration's large roads grew incrementally, spread over the course of many years, and consisted of state, city, and intermunicipal arteries. The SCAA made use of multiple instruments, ranging from

straightforward expropriations, to general alignment plans and municipal development plans, to repurposing military into public roads, etc. Several ministries, provincial departments, municipal services, local hamlets, and even private individuals were involved in the process. Apart from technological innovations, the agglomeration's roadscape was also a manifestation of some institutional ingenuity, catering to different urbanization dynamics and scales, yet coordinated and patiently assembled by the SCAA's policy-entrepreneurs into a metropolitan road grid at the scale of the entire agglomeration.

This grid was not master-planned but gradually emerged wherever opportunities arose. Schobbens stressed that it was by no means necessary to "await some final urban development plan for the entire agglomeration" before "new alignment plans could be developed." Instead, he argued that the SCAA developed its proposals "as surveys progressed and plans were drafted, always taking into account the existing situation and future possibilities of diverting, splitting or de-doubling major arteries."[116] To the question whether the "SCAA wouldn't run the risk of making mistakes regarding the respective importance of major roads," Schobbens replied that such a thing "was unlikely, since most of the members were very well acquainted with the historical evolution and needs of Antwerp and its surroundings."[117] This situatedness and long-term commitment turned the SCAA into an ideal platform for road engineers such as Lemeunier, De Heem, and Mennes to become fully fledged 'urban' engineers. They did not just build roads but reassembled existing municipalities into a new metropolitan configuration that established a typically 'urban' ecology of choice: fringe municipalities were no longer exclusively connected to the mother city but became new centralities in a polycentric, laddered, and isotropic network.[118] The latter bears many resemblances to a typical one-mile grid, a reference that even explicitly surfaced in the SCAA's rhetoric. In 1926, SCAA president Baron Georges Holvoet stressed the importance of two new roads that "obviated the traffic problems that would result from a distance of more than one and a half kilometers without intermediate connection."[119] Building a one-mile grid became an explicit urban objective for the SCAA. (Fig. 2.16) It reassembled both the historical core and its preurban hinterland into one urbanized agglomeration—clearly showing that urbanization is not a process spreading like an oil patch but a project transforming both city and countryside alike.

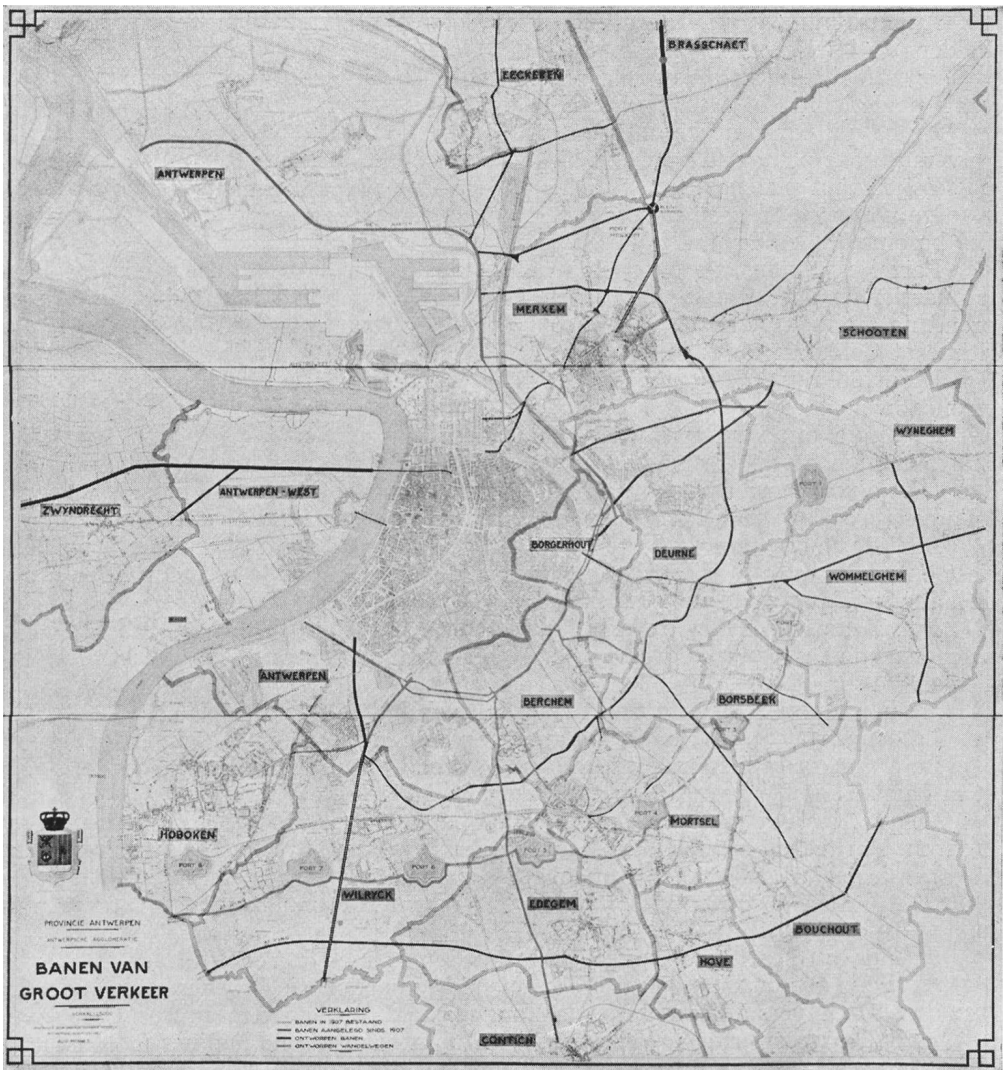


Figure 2.16 Map of 1932 by August Mennes showing the SCAA's incremental one-mile grid for the Antwerp agglomeration.

An urban profile for the modern road

The SCAA's urban approach was expressed not only through piecing together a metropolitan network out of separate roads but also by its efforts to give these *Grand'Route*s a distinctly urban profile as soon as they entered the agglomeration. First and foremost, "five-meter-wide sidewalks were not considered exaggerated along the major arteries" that were part of the agglomeration.[120] So-called *terre-pleins* in the middle of the roads provided some extra space that was often turned into "wide and beautiful promenades"[121] or was at times appropriated by horse riders or cyclists, in concert with the Union de la Cavalerie and the Cyclo Club d'Anvers.[122] On a few occasions, the construction of separate bicycle paths was discussed.[123] The *Grand'Routes* were clearly conceived as multimodal urban spaces. (Fig. 2.17) As mentioned earlier, engineers De Heem and Lemeunier cooperated with Antwerp's many water, gas, and electricity providers to integrate the services and methods of all these companies more intelligently into the road profile—especially for the construction of new avenues in the outer agglomeration.[124] The SCAA, to be sure, was



Figure 2.17 Multimodal urban profiles for the agglomeration's *Grand'Routes*: Bredabaan, Merksem.

not in charge of developing all these networks, but its particular attention to integrating these utilities into the *Grand'Routes* profiles boosted their development and gradually 'urbanized' the promise of comfort and a modern urban lifestyle.

Using expropriation plans, reallotted sale plans, and alignment plans, the SCAA had a number of tools at its disposal to control construction along these roads. Alignment plans were a preferred means to regulate private land, by establishing *zones de recul* for front yards and having roadside houses built in a more or less orderly fashion. Where land was in public ownership, a more integrated approach was proposed, such as for the Antwerp neighborhood Luchtbal along the Noorderlaan, where the "design of an overall silhouette together with clear guidelines determined the modalities of road-side construction."[125]

Much attention, finally, went to landscaping the modern road in the urbanizing agglomeration. In 1914, Verwilghen argued that "preserving roads including trees in today's countryside was essential for the construction of tomorrow's urban boulevards."[126] Trees were regarded as both natural and urban assets, a view that became common at the turn of the twentieth century, for instance in publications of the Royal Society for Nature and Urban Beauty or the Touring Club de Belgique, with which Schobbens maintained close ties.[127] More than once, Schobbens proposed to buy trees that residents had planted along the *Grand'Routes* on their own properties, in order to "enjoy nice plantations from the beginning, instead of starting anew with small trees with all the risks that entails."[128] And in virtually every SCAA meeting regarding the *Grand'Routes'* profiles, Schobbens pleaded for the preservation of sufficient space for the planting of sturdy trees.[129] The SCAA's attention to planting strategies undeniably increased the road's sojourn qualities. Some of the images read as if the nineteenth-century 'city flaneurs' were unleashed from their enwalled historical cage, freed to explore the landscapes of twentieth-century urbanization. Rather than a mere technological feature dealing with traffic, the SCAA's roads became a means to make the agglomeration and its society more 'urban'.

THE URBANIZATION OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURES

From its origin in 1830, the Belgian state had promoted the construction of extensive infrastructure networks as a preferred means to establish a unified economic space. Railways were an important part of that policy,

and many authors have described how exceptionally high degrees of railway mobility stimulated and perpetuated the dispersion of both the commuting workforce and the industrialization process itself.[130] This industrial railroad project clearly left its mark on the Antwerp agglomeration, as can be inferred from the *Plan Industriel de la ville d'Anvers et des communes environnants* from 1914. It clearly depicts the rather hazardous sprawl of industrial activity along national infrastructures such as railways and canals that did not anticipate any idea of urban growth. The only connection between the industrial shunting yards to the north and south of the city ran straight through the city center, along the quays of the River Scheldt, cutting the city off its river bank. According to Auguste Delbeke, the major railways formed "a kind of second wall" around the city—an outdated configuration that "[seemed] to be of little rational use in the context of an urbanizing agglomeration."[131] Delbeke referred to "the South Station that [blocked] the passage to Hoboken and Wilrijk; the Borgerhout station that blocked the future Plantin-Moretuslei; the 1200m long station of Stuyvenberg and the Antwerp Docks (called station of 1000 wagons), which [prevented] urban expansion to the North, and the direct line from Antwerp-South to Mechelen (Muizen) that impeded all extensions of the future road network."[132] Urbanizing the agglomeration, was, to say it in the words of Schobbens, impossible without "the adaptation of the current railway infrastructures, which are an undeniable obstacle to the city's rational expansion."[133] Whereas the history of the railroad has been discussed before in the context of Antwerp,[134] the specific role of the SCAA in *urbanizing* these railway infrastructures remained underexplored.

From ambitious plans to local porosity

From the very moment the SCAA started working, it convened a number of meetings with the National Company of Belgian Railways (NMBS) on how to reconcile national railway policies with its mission. On November 16, 1908, engineer Van Bogaert presented the outlines of the NMBS's railway plan for the urbanizing agglomeration, suggesting the removal of a number of large railway yards along the city's former ramparts. A new circular railway connected the riverside yards to the south of the city with a gigantic new yard in the northern polders, right next to the expanded port. This new circular railway was supposed to be built at height, so as not to impede the urbanization process, and included local *gares de marchandises* that

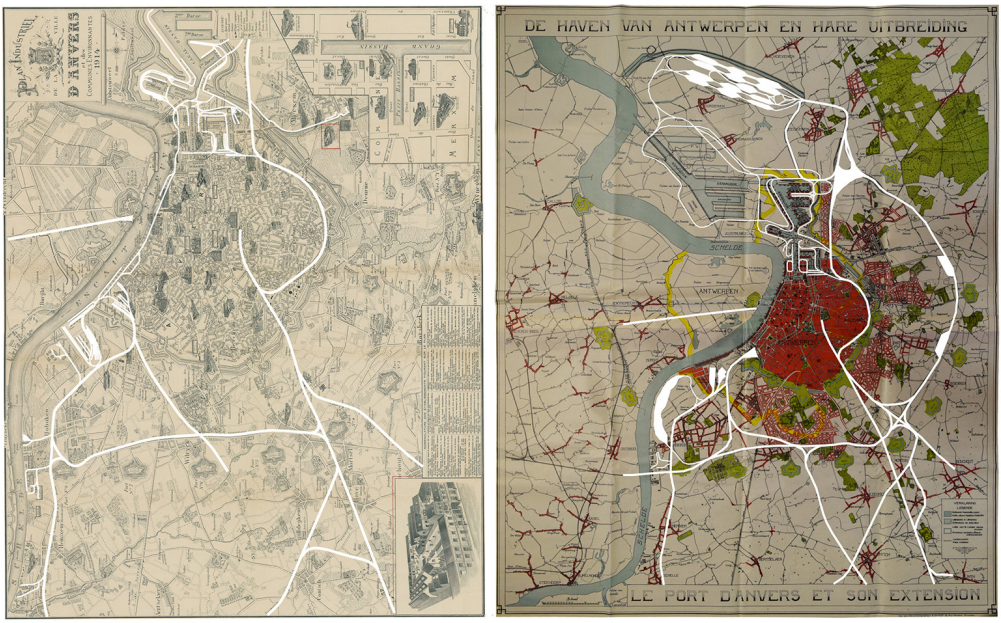


Figure 2.18 Railway infrastructures as a relic from a nineteenth-century industrialization policies, indicated on the *Plan Industriel d'Anvers* from 1914 opposed to *urbanized* railway infrastructures on a 1930 map by August Mennes (1930).

allowed municipalities such as Merksem, Deurne, Borsbeek, and Mortsel to take part in the agglomeration's economic activities. The unfortunate position of the south station was reconsidered so that it would not impede the city's outward urbanization any longer. This implicated the abolition of the direct line to Wilrijk-Mechelen that cut right through planned city districts, even if it had only just been inaugurated in 1907.[135] The SCAA embraced the main characteristics of these proposals without hesitation, and engineers Lemeunier and later Mennes consequently integrated them in their many plans. (Fig. 2.18) In 1912, Schobbens convinced the city of Antwerp to proceed with large expropriations along the railway line Antwerp South-Wilrijk-Mechelen that was to be suppressed. Whenever the closure of this railroad was questioned in the following decades, the SCAA wrote to the relevant minister stating that this decision could not be reversed, because otherwise a "large investment by the city to develop a new 60ha neighborhood would be lost."[136] The SCAA's provisional strategy finally paid off in 1937 when the line disappeared for good.[137] Yet this case also testifies to the very difficult negotiations with an unwieldy institution

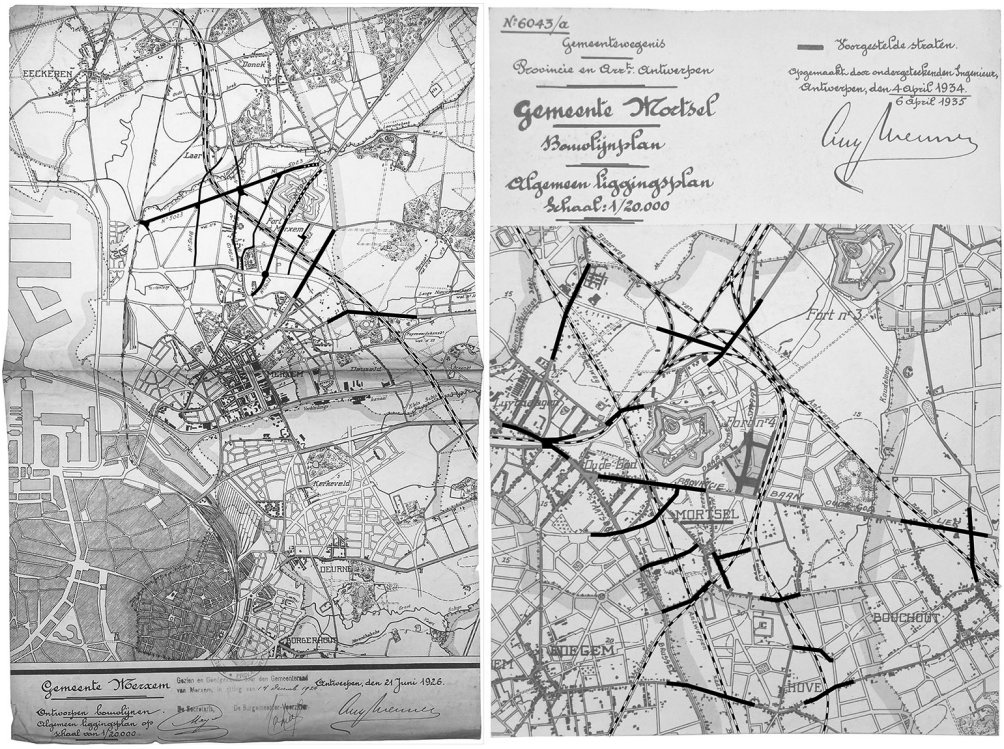


Figure 2.19 Maps by August Mennes (ca. 1926), traced by author, advocating multilevel crossings and high levels of urban porosity to the north of Merksem and throughout Mortsel.

such as the NMBS. Schobbens complained that at least until 1913, the SCAA had "only received partial and unofficial plans, only just before actual execution, at scales too small to decently assess the impact of pending railway works."[138] Tinkering with national railroad infrastructures proved much more difficult than expected, and most of the 1908 plan remained unimplemented.

With little leeway, the SCAA devoted itself to much more localized interventions. It frequently urged the NMBS to provide more grade-separated intersections, to avoid the splintering of the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric. The committee consistently took a stand when existing crossings were in danger of getting suppressed, watching over the porosity of the railroad infrastructure, without making any distinction between the historical core and the outer agglomeration.[139] Schobbens didn't hesitate to compare a situation in Merksem with one in Antwerp center, advocating similar solutions, even if the respective degrees of urbanization were still

incomparable at that moment.[140] Schobbens reproached railway representatives for taking "too much account of the current situation," whereas all the rail works should instead "anticipate a more urban future."[141] This fore-sighted attitude facilitated the development of several underpasses and overpasses in municipalities that were still barely on the threshold of urbanization; these constructions were utterly necessary to mitigate the isolating effects of hard infrastructural railway infrastructures on the urban and social fabric in the long run.[142] (Fig. 2.19)

After World War I, August Mennes pushed the SCAA to take on a more organized and proactive stance regarding the railway question. His role as a spatial planner for many municipalities gave him a very good overview of all the tunnels and overpasses that all local administrations were advocating in the agglomeration.[143] Mennes's survey inspired the SCAA to send an extensive overview of all desired crossings to the NMBS.[144] Schobbens argued that it was the state "that had imposed many railway barriers upon the agglomeration and that is was therefore the state that had to bear all the costs of adaptations needed to develop an uninterrupted road network and urban fabric."[145] This train of reasoning was appreciated by municipal mayors, who added that "municipalities of the Antwerp agglomeration had no choice but to bear the heavy burden of national railway infrastructures, but by no means could be expected to bear the related costs."[146] The state was expected to assume its responsibilities, and from the mid-1930s onwards, engineer Paul De Heem again managed to draw OREC funding to the Antwerp agglomeration to realize a number of railway crossings.[147] Playing a mediating role between the national railway company and local municipalities, the SCAA at times managed to *urbanize* the NMBS's railway policies, adapting them to local exigencies and requirements, increasing permeability and porosity, alleviating the negative effects of social segregation in the long run, etc.[148]

RADICALLY CAREFUL INFRASTRUCTURES FOR AN URBAN ECOLOGY?

The SCAA became a platform where different forms of engineering and technological knowledges converged. It created a context in which sanitary, road, and railway engineers from the state, province, and city could internalize the specific prerequisites of urbanizing the agglomeration. The SCAA nurtured an idea of engineering that was not merely devised as a way of solving particular technological issues but also produced urban

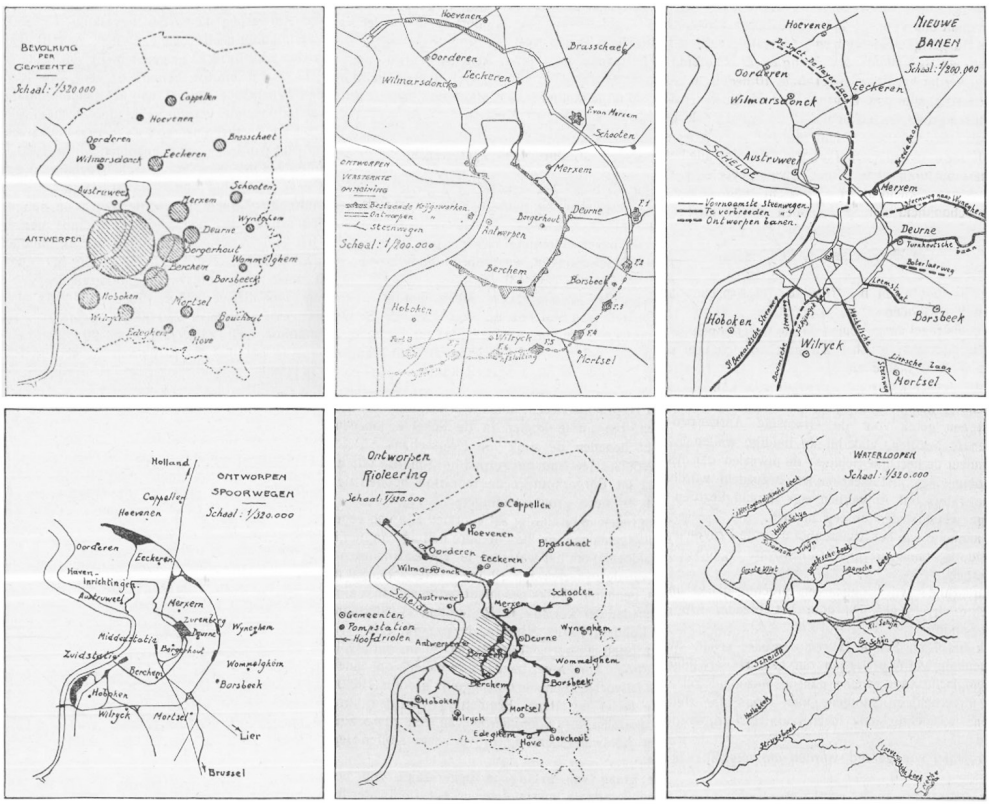


Figure 2.20 Sketches from August Mennes's pamphlet *De Grootstad Antwerpen [The Antwerp Metropolis]* from 1922, showing multiple layers of his urban engineering approach.

potential. Relying on various institutional techniques, engineering and technology were socialized and politicized, growing into a more mature form of urban and social engineering. Arguably, August Mennes is the personification of the kind of urban engineering that developed and flourished under the SCAA's reign. Backed by the committee's mission, he was able to irrigate the agglomeration's territory with urban potential by way of integrated engineering and infrastructures, an approach explicitly present in his 1922 publication *The Antwerp Metropolis*. (Fig. 2.20)

Remarkably, all the infrastructural layers simultaneously transformed both the historical core and the larger agglomeration, strongly nuancing the stereotypical idea of urbanization as a systematically expanding oil patch. City and hinterland needed each other to modernize their infrastructures. The need for better connections between the nation and its

port city also resulted in modernized city roads, the new sewage network in the agglomeration had a major impact on the livability of historical city, the expansion of drinking water supply for city and agglomeration was not feasible without the participation of many more rural municipalities, etc. Arguably, these technologies and infrastructures became socio-spatial equalizers ensuring comparable degrees of modern comfort both within and beyond what was considered to be the city at that time. In that sense, the SCAA's project of urbanizing the agglomeration may indeed be regarded as a radical example of social engineering—a typical brainchild of the heroic phase of the Promethean Project of Modernity.

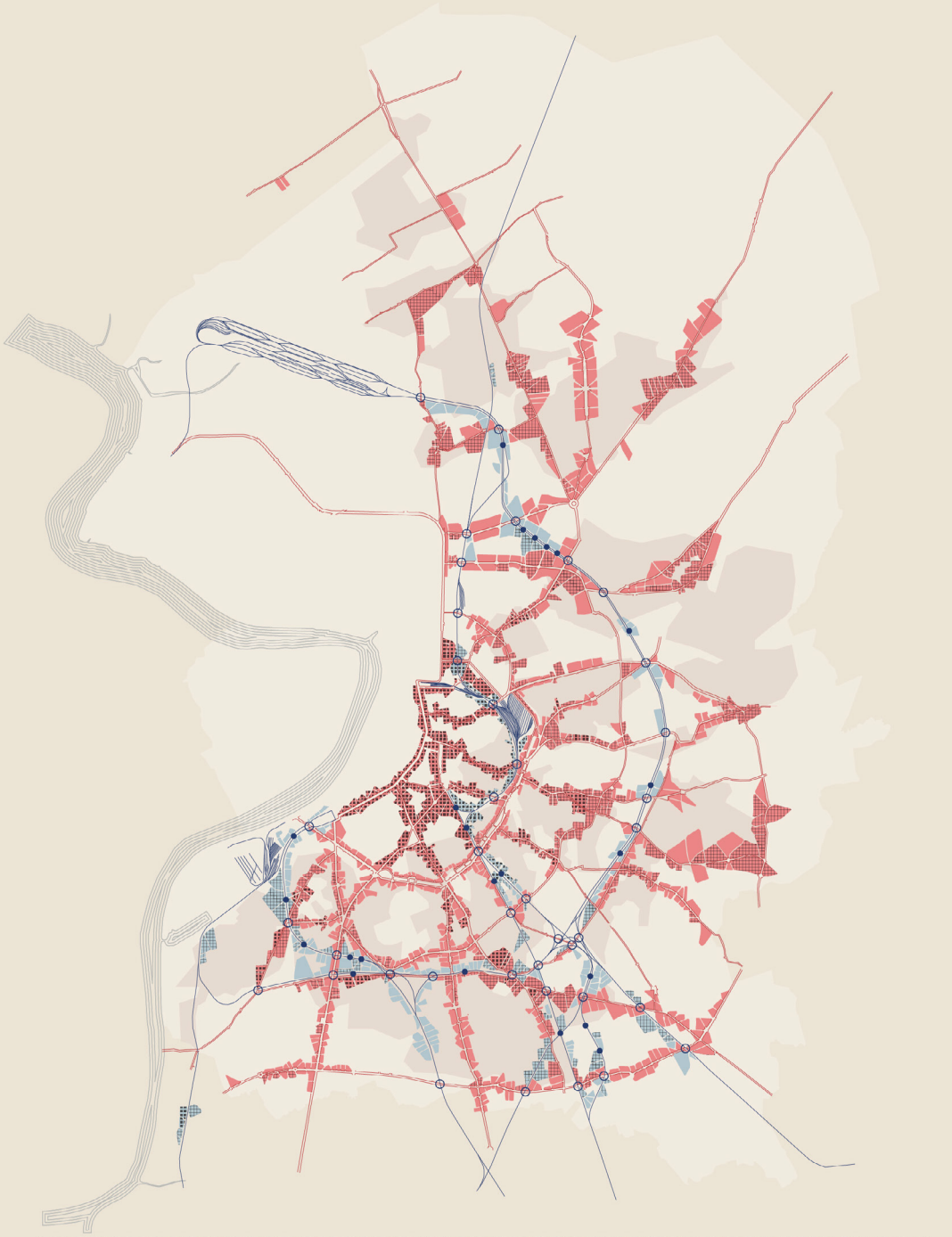
That does not imply, however, that the SCAA's project can be typecast as an ultimate example of bold, top-down or state engineering. As a provincial body, operating in-between state and municipality and coordinating intermunicipal cooperation, the SCAA was very much in touch with some of the more grounded, socio-ecological features in the agglomeration. The urbanization of large-scale infrastructures at a regional scale took place with sincere consideration of several local sensibilities, peculiarities, and contingencies—ranging from geo-morphological features to hydrology to the agglomeration's social fabric. The SCAA's position between the abstract statecraft and the grounded reality of municipal pragmatism protected them from the pitfalls of both universal determinism and local parochialism. The committee was in the perfect position to define concrete settings within which variously scaled dynamics could be made the object of concrete and locally supported actions. Distinct interventions were always implemented within a disposition formed by a (limited) number of rules that considered collective imperatives of the agglomeration as a whole. This patient attitude led to the incremental development of socio-ecologically aware infrastructures, which may not always have been flawless from a rational or scientific point of view but nevertheless launched the agglomeration on a contemplated path of steady progress. It was an achievement that held the middle between engineered continuity and practical contingency, between dirigisme and path-dependent evolution, adhering to the SCAA's philosophy of the relative ideal.

The SCAA's engineers may have operated in what has been described as the Promethean Project's heroic phase, but engineering the agglomeration was patient, incremental, slow, largely invisible, quite unpopular, and at times a somewhat clumsy work over the long haul. If there was anything 'heroic' in the committee's engineering projects, then it was its perseverance and unwavering engagement in addressing, pursuing, and enhancing

basic public needs for more than thirty long years in considerate, prudent, and evolutive ways. Perhaps, the work of the SCAA's engineers can be interpreted as an answer *avant la lettre* to Bruno Latour's recent call for more modest and hybrid engineering practices in order to build more ecologically sound infrastructures: "It is as though we had to combine the engineering tradition with the precautionary principle; it is as though we had to imagine Prometheus stealing fire from heaven in a cautious way! (…) We have to be radically careful, or carefully radical!"[149] Unraveling the three primordial infrastructural layers of the SCAA's project, this chapter revealed the radically careful role infrastructural engineers played in urbanizing Belgium's larger agglomerations. Their practices were not necessarily grounded in ideological ecological beliefs per se. But they did not deploy their engineering skills from the presumption that they could simply project new laws upon the territory, imbued with "an impious disregard of the limits governing men's actions in an orderly universe."[150] Technology was not projected upon the territory (from the outside) to conquer, overcome or alter the natural course of events; rather, it was fused into the territory (from within) taking socio-ecological contingencies into account. As such, this chapter contributes to framing contemporary concepts such as ecological infrastructures (as the expression of socio-nature) in a broader critical-historical perspective.[151]

Map 2: Urbanizing Infrastructural Policies

This map layers data from Mennes' sewer plans (Fig. 2.4), with a representation of the metropolitan grid (Fig. 2.16), and the general railway plan (Fig. 2.18). The adjacent urban blocks, their degree of development, and the indication of graded crossings are based on a detailed redrawing of an overall map summarizing the SCAA's work, produced by Mennes on the occasion of a large exhibition in 1932 (Fig. 6.7). The result depicts the extent to which different infrastructural layers were employed as intentional design tools shaping the contours of an urban agglomeration in the making. A hodgepodge of state roads, urban roads, and intermunicipal roads did not only manage traffic flows but altogether defined the contours of large metropolitan blocks structuring the territory. With their distinct profiles—aligned with large sidewalks, provident *terre-pleins*, and mature trees—the major avenues in the metropolitan grid provided the agglomeration with congenial urban addresses, undergirding rather than infringing upon communal life. Even heavy rail infrastructure was designed in view of creating urban address and was constructed at grade where possible, safeguarding urban porosity and preventing socio-spatial segregation, even in more remote places. The sewerage system de-duplicated and strengthened the logic of natural hydrology, primordially encouraging the development of high-lying land, while avoiding marshy valley areas. The SCAA's careful urban engineering, in short, made urbanization a practice that shaped the agglomeration as a socio-natural ecology.



METROPOLITAN GRID
URBAN BLOCK FULLY DEVELOPED
URBAN BLOCK IN DEVELOPMENT
URBAN BLOCK: PLANNED

RAILWAYS
URBAN BLOCK FULLY DEVELOPED
URBAN BLOCK IN DEVELOPMENT
URBAN BLOCK: PLANNED

PRIMARILY SERVED BY SEWER SYSTEM
MULTI-LEVEL CROSSING MAIN ROADS
MULTI-LEVEL CROSSING LOCAL ROADS

“ It is undeniable that the opening up of these streets is requested for the sole purpose of intensive exploitation. The plans take no account of the general common interest at all. ”

Joseph Schobbens, *Plans d’Alignement de diverses rues à Wilrijk (Suite)*, SCAA meeting minutes 04/09/1910

“Why should municipal authorities immediately accept the very first proposal to subdivide a rural property? For the time being, there is no need for new building plots in Berchem (…). The issue goes far beyond simply opening two new streets. Previously, the wish was expressed that the municipality of Berchem would purchase the Troyentenhof as a public park. What does the municipality then think of the plans now presented?”

Joseph Schobbens, *Aanleg van nieuwe wijken te Berchem en Wilrijk*, SCAA meeting minutes 06/27/1932

Chapter 3
The Question of Collective Consumption
Generative urbanization and spatial differentiation securing the right to the city

GENERATIVE URBANIZATION RATHER THAN PARASITIC URBANIZATION

In a 1912 speech, SCAA president August Delbeke stated that the agglomeration's future residents needed "abundant space, to breathe and live, to build a pleasant home, and to enjoy a sweet tranquility, once their day job or work week was finished."[1] Such a statement seems imbued with the classical ideal of subjecting urbanizing societies to what urban reformers on both sides of the Atlantic referred to as 'the moral influence of the suburbs' at the turn of the twentieth century.[2] Contemporary pamphlets, such as *Le Nouvel Anvers, Cité-Jardin* breathe a paternalistic belief in the disciplining effects of suburban life.[3] Yet the SCAA's project was not just about building private dwellings in suburban neighborhoods that completely depended on the 'mother city' of Antwerp for their daily functioning. On the contrary, for the SCAA urbanization was all about generating new forms of urbanity beyond the historical city. Rephrased more theoretically, the SCAA practiced a 'generative' kind of urbanization, rather than a 'parasitic' one, forging urban fortunes out of capitalist accumulation, such as public parks, sports infrastructures, squares, an optimized public transport network, etc. Urbanizing the agglomeration was, once again, all about making the agglomeration urban.

Parasitic urbanization and uneven development

In urban theory, urbanization under capitalism has been described as a process that mainly revolves around the accumulation of (private) capital, as a spatial vehicle for growth politics, or as capitalism conquering space itself.[4] Throughout the twentieth century, urbanization gradually developed into an idealized system, supported by so-called growth machine

politics, led by land-based business interests, converting cropland into large aggregations of housing, enabled by (sub)national state infrastructure investments.[5] Although this kind of urbanization under capitalism effectively helped expanding and stabilizing national economies,[6] it has been argued that it generally produced sprawling environments that were 'lesser' than urban, i.e. sub-urban.[7] The viability of suburbanization, as a depreciated and degenerate form of urbanization, was said to be "flawed from the start [because] the lower-density pattern of development didn't yield enough tax revenue to pay for the infrastructure needed to support them."[8] Suburbanization, then, is unable to produce "viable settlements in their own right."[9] In combination with the assertion that the suburbs proved rather resistant to processes of densification,[10] it has been said that the very nature of suburbanization thus inevitably becomes a barrier to its own continued accumulation.[11] Suburbanization, then, can only survive if it feeds off a central or mother city. Yet the more suburbanization leans on the city, the more difficult it becomes for that city to maintain a sufficient level of amenities, putting its viability, hence the viability of suburbanization itself, under pressure. From that point of view, the nature of suburbanization, and urbanization under capitalism more generally, has been described as parasitic and extractive from the early 50s onward.[12] With this evolution, the meaning of urbanization curiously shifted from a process that creates the city to one that obliterates it. Moreover, several scholars have pointed to the unequal distribution of positive and negative externalities that capitalist suburbanization tends to produce, an effect that urban geographers began describing with the term 'uneven development.'[13] Capitalist urbanization was thus linked to aspects of social injustice and inequality at different scales,[14] and to the accumulation of capital through lucrative "tract building rather than comprehensive community building."[15]

Generative urbanization and spatial differentiation

The lack of urban amenities under capitalist urbanization became so pertinent that Manuel Castells, in 1968, wrote that *La question urbaine* revolves around the provision of collective consumption needs that underpin the reproduction of labor in particular. Pointing to the structural undersupply in the suburbs, Nicholas Phelps later stated that "it could be argued that this urban question was never strictly an urban

question at all but most often a *sub*urban question."[16] This explains why scholars ranging from Masotti to Dunham-Jones to Phelps referred to "a rounding out of traditional suburbs into cities in terms of functions,"[17] as a means of 'retrofitting' or 'urbanizing' the suburbs. This transition was to be achieved by the injection of industry, offices, retail centers, and collective functions such as education, public transport, fire stations, etc., geared mostly toward the social reproduction of labor.[18]

Several sociologists, however, argued that the reproduction of labor alone is insufficient to produce a meaningful urban life.[19] They stressed the importance of reproducing the "social needs" of urbanizing societies, such as "the need for creative activity, for *oeuvre* (not just products and consumable material goods), symbolism, imagination, play, physical activities such as sports, etc."[20] Framed as such, the urban question revolves not only around supporting people in their daily work routines but also around enabling them to unfold a 'second life' as Marx called it—a life outside of the stranglehold of the workplace, in which people do not only do what is necessary to survive (to make a living) but are able to do what they love (giving meaning to their life).[21] It is this right to a 'second life' that underpinned debates on the 'Right to the City.'[22] Originally coined as a geographical right to access the urban core, it was later increasingly reframed as the right to live a full life in any geography of urbanization.[23] Practices of urbanization, then, should "first and foremost revolve around the social reproduction of the city as a collectively produced use value, and subsequently around the struggle over the unequal capacity of individuals and groups to appropriate this collectively produced advantage."[24] Merrifield has recently termed this kind of practice 'generative urbanization,' after Hoselitz's definition of 'generative cities'[25]—a concept that leans on the understanding that the city and urbanization are, historically, the locus not only of private capital accumulation but also of the development of all kinds of redistributive welfare economies.[26] Framed as such, the 'urban question' becomes a question of 'generative' urbanization, or a question of preventing urbanization from becoming 'parasitic' in the first place. Generative urbanization, in sum, is the practice of making sure that new environments are born urban.

This does not mean that generative urbanization necessarily produces completely 'even' or 'homogeneous' urban landscapes. Rather, generative urbanization creates a 'differentiated spatial ecology' adapted to different collective consumption needs and aspirations,[27] producing patterns of spatial specialization and differentiation. It establishes an ecology of

choice and the necessary means to access that ecology of choice through "a patient search for the physical and concrete dimensions of individual *and* collective well-being (…) with the conviction that well-being, welfare exactly, is an important aspect of individual *and* collective freedom."[28]

The SCAA's approach to generative urbanization

This chapter builds the argument that the SCAA practiced generative urbanization as a balancing act of both individual and collective interests. Acknowledging that "individuals had their rights, just like the state,"[29] the SCAA was not fundamentally opposed to aspects of private accumulation. But private accumulation, for the committee, could not come at the expense of what it recurrently called the 'public interest' or the 'common good'. In terms of road development, for instance, the SCAA systematically refuted "the opening of streets for the sole purpose of intensive exploitation,"[30] which "only satisfied private needs,"[31] with "no use whatsoever for overall urban traffic,"[32] completely disregarding "the general interest of all municipalities."[33] The SCAA developed the agglomeration's street network as an undividable asset that could not be individually appropriated.[34] In a similar vein, the committee made sure that not all land was privately subdivided and allocated. At times, the pace of urbanization was purposely slowed down to avoid speculation on land,[35] or put on hold "not to jeopardize future development."[36] It became the SCAA's explicit mission to safeguard strategic plots for the development of "large parks or extensive public forests," for the creation of "public gardens, ponds and lawns accommodating the growing need of public sports facilities."[37] It set out to "reserve space for public squares and buildings" and to keep an eye on the development of an efficient public transport network.[38]

The committee's mission not only revolved around managing private tract development but equally aimed at implementing all the public infrastructures necessary to support the needs and aspirations of the agglomeration's urbanizing society. It certainly helped that the SCAA didn't have to start from a blank canvas, dotted as the agglomeration was with small municipal centers, noble estates, pleasure gardens, some stray industry, etc.[39] Moreover, with the early development of the illustrious neighborhood Sint-Mariaburg, the SCAA had a reference case that became a true *image-guide*. Originally built for the employees of the Société d'Assurances Antverpia in the woods north of Antwerp, the neighborhood's



Figure 3.1 The neighborhood Sint-Mariaburg as image-guide for generative urbanization in the agglomeration: swimming, playing tennis, attending spectacular cycling events, etc., in a casual 'housing plantation'.

rapid population increase soon made the "the need felt for the most indispensable things in life, and all of a sudden, shops, boutiques and manual professions settled in, a church was built, attracting small retailers, innkeepers, hotels etc."[40] A swimming pool, spa, and velodrome soon followed, attracting visitors from all over the region. (Fig. 3.1) It became an objective for the SCAA to turn this kind of generative neighborhood development into a standard practice of urbanization.

PARKS AND SQUARES AS A PUBLIC BACKBONE FOR CONTINUED ACCUMULATION

When the SCAA began its work in 1907, Antwerp had only two real urban parks: the City Park and the Warande.[41] In addition, a number of inner-city gardens were rapidly parceled out under growing population pressure.[42] Based on a comparison with prominent European cities, the SCAA concluded that the amount public parks in Antwerp was "ridiculously insufficient."[43] The committee warned that this "problem was becoming more pressing

every day because of the agglomeration's rapid population growth."[44] It was estimated that a 1000ha of extra parks were needed to catch up with cities abroad, for which there was no space in the historical core.[45] Somewhat counterintuitively, the prospect of 'urbanizing' the agglomeration offered a unique opportunity to develop vast new public parks for the city. The provision of public greenery increasingly became part of the planning profession at the turn of the twentieth century,[46] and much more than all other SCAA members, Joseph Schobbens turned this particular urban question into a primary concern in the Antwerp agglomeration.

Saving public parks from private subdivision

Many provincial governors, and thus SCAA (vice) presidents, belonged to Antwerp's close-knit network of landed aristocracy.[47] Most of these families owned large noble estates in the agglomeration, of which the SCAA had a good overview thanks to the knowledge of members like François Destryker, chairman of a committee charged with the acquisition of landed properties in the Antwerp region. This explains the SCAA's swift understanding that targeting these private estates as ready-made urban parks could be an effective strategy.[48] From the very first meeting in 1908 until the very last one in 1939, the SCAA considered the reconversion of these *lieux de mémoire*—with their age-old trees, idyllic ponds, and winding pathways—into "public parks much more important than the opening of some more streets!"[49] Not all municipal councils were equally convinced of what they saw as the SCAA's expensive "lust for parks."[50] Yet it helped that Antwerp's local elites had an ear for saving parts of their estates as public parks themselves.[51]

Parks for the city of Antwerp

The SCAA's very first realization, the Nachtegalenpark, inaugurated on May 7, 1911, became a true reference for all the committee's later park strategies. Overall, two major problems had to be overcome. First, there was the problem of the many different conflicting initiatives that needed coordination. In 1905, a group around the della Faille de Waerloos family had proposed to sell some 80ha of their estates to the city for the modest price of 3 Fr/m^2 in order to develop the Nachtegalenpark.[52] The city, however, had more ears for a plan of a consortium associated with the tradesman Plissart offering 375ha of land at a fair price, of which some

125ha could be turned into a free public park, fully financed by the resale of the other 250ha as building plots.[53] When rising land values, following the demilitarization of the ramparts in 1906, prompted many different groups to engage in real estate transactions, so many contradictory plans saw the light of day that it was not entirely clear if and where a public park could ever be developed. (Fig. 3.2) A second problem was that most of the plans proposed parks that stretched across the municipalities of Antwerp, Berchem, and Wilrijk—the latter two of which were not very interested in developing a park. The constitution simply did not allow the city of Antwerp to expropriate land on other municipalities' territories and attempts to annex the area to the city ran into practical objections at the level of the central government.[54]

In this uncertain context, the SCAA started a campaign "that lasted for four years without which the Nachtegalenpark would've never existed."[55] First, the committee had to reverse a 1906 permission that the municipality of Wilrijk had already given to the della Faille family to subdivide their entire domain of den Brandt.[56] At the same time, it hosted negotiations with the municipalities of Wilrijk and Berchem to convince them to cede parts of their territories to the city of Antwerp. For this purpose, finally, it had to renegotiate the central government's prohibition of intermunicipal land swaps. In the end, the SCAA's arduous political 'in-betweening' started to pay off. On December 30, 1909, a royal decree overruled all pending development requests in the area as contrary to the public interest, while in parliament "the Gordian knot was finally cut" by allowing the incorporation of all land needed for a future park entirely within Antwerp's territorial boundaries.[57]

On February 17, 1910, the city of Antwerp exchanged land with the municipalities of Berchem and Wilrijk and finally bought its 80ha of land for a new public park for about 12 million francs.[58] The deal was finalized following a plan of the Société Immobilière du Nouveau Parc d'Anvers, a real estate company that the della Faille family had founded together with wealthy entrepreneurs such as the Grisar family.[59] Both Schobbens and SCAA president de Baillet Latour maintained close relations with Paul della Faille de Waerloos, whose own actions and lobbying were remarkably aligned with the SCAA's moves.[60] Nevertheless, Schobbens made the critical observation that "less than five years earlier, these same 80ha had been on offer, by the very same party, for 2,4 million only,"[61] arguing that urbanizing the agglomeration was all about farsightedness and the anticipation of speculation.

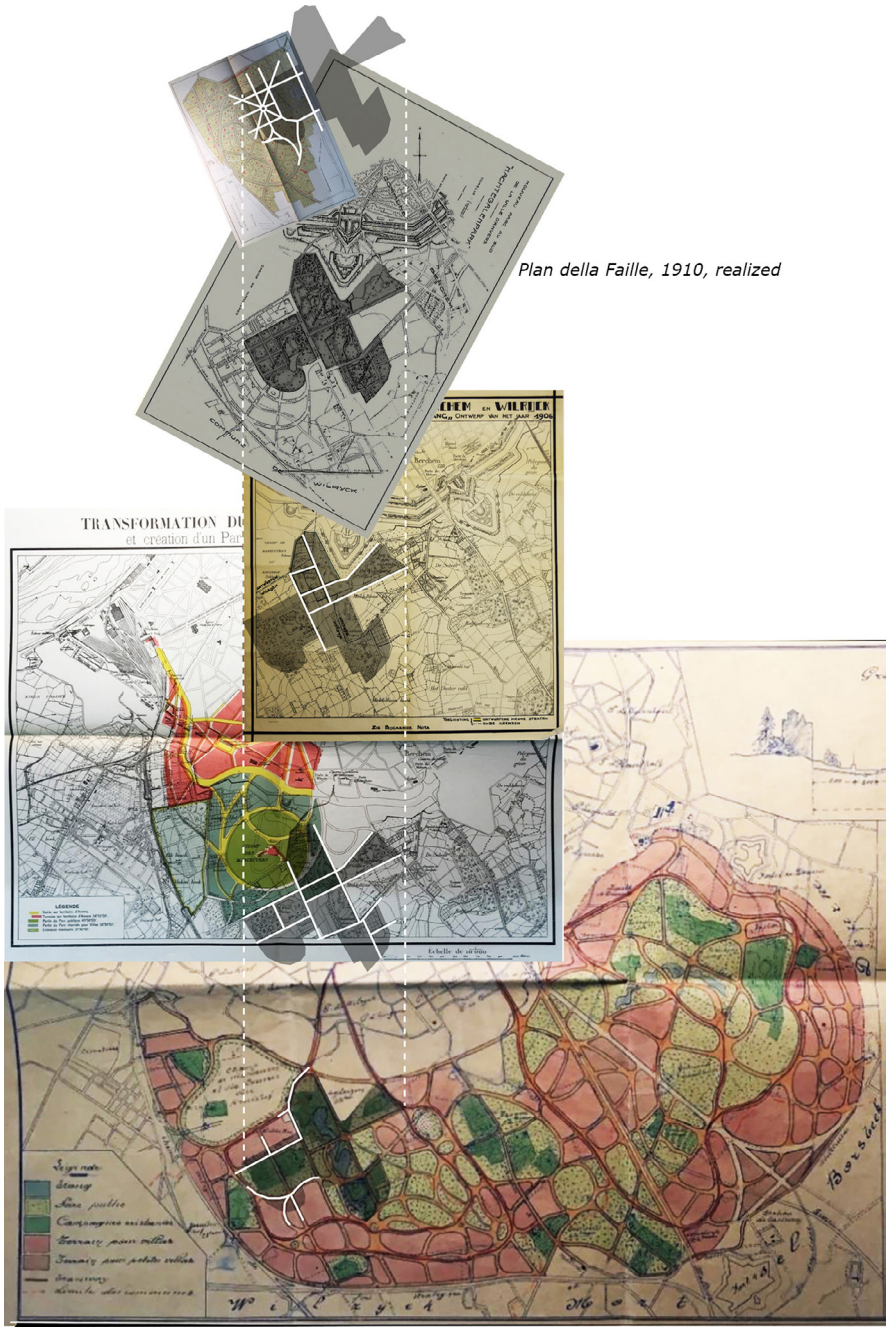


Figure 3.2 Author's collage of all the various development schemes (white lines) threatening the safeguarding of Nachtegalenpark (dark spot). The 1910 scheme by della Faille prevailed.



Figure 3.3 Map by August Mennes depicting the old Boekenberg estate as future park (1923), and sketch by Paul De Heem incorporating a pocket park in the city's urbanizing fabric (ca. 1920).

Anticipating is exactly what city secretary and SCAA member Geyselinck did in 1911, when he bought the beautiful domain Schoonselhof (85ha) for only 0,85 million francs. Situated a bit further afield, on the territories of Wilrijk and Hoboken, it was transformed into a large public cemetery-park for the city of Antwerp (see chapter 6). Furthermore, Geyselinck convinced his municipal council "not to make a golden deal [...] but to look after the public interest instead,"[62] on a large property within the historical core, where a beautiful pocket-park was created known as the Hof van Leysen. (Fig. 3.3) Finally, the SCAA urged the city of Antwerp to open up 155 ha of forest, owned by Antwerp's committee for public welfare, to the public.[63] From July 1, 1935, onward the Peerdsbos was officially leased to the city of Antwerp for a symbolic rent of 1 franc per annum for a total of ninety-nine years, under the strict condition that it would become a public recreation area. Thanks to the persistence and legal-administrative inventiveness of the SCAA, the city of Antwerp obtained 350ha of additional parks, which, however, were largely located outside its own (original) territorial boundaries.

Parks for the agglomeration's outer municipalities

Immediately after solving the "difficult case of the Nachtegalenpark" the SCAA was faced with "the question of the Boekenbergpark and the Te Boelaerpark in Deurne."[64] After "Deurne had sufficiently demonstrated its lack of interest in turning these noble estates into public parks (...) the idea came to the SCAA to approach the neighboring municipality of Borgerhout."[65] When Borgerhout confirmed its interest, the SCAA turned to the central government again, to negotiate the modification of administrative boundaries between both municipalities in the public interest. The municipal council of Deurne had to learn "unofficially that the land, on which the future park properties were located, was to be handed over to Borgerhout."[66] The public opinion feasted on this story and the newspapers highlighted: "If this doesn't teach [the councilors of Deurne] a lesson, then we might as well divide the entire territory of Deurne among the surrounding municipalities."[67] In the end Borgerhout saved the Park Te Boulaer (15ha), and in order not to lose too much of its territory, Deurne agreed to buy the Boekenbergpark (10ha) after all.[68] (Fig. 3.3) Arguably, the municipal council of Deurne would not completely agree with the assertion that the SCAA only had a strictly advisory role.

The tone was set and in the following decades, the SCAA continued to preserve beautifully planted estates as public parks throughout the

entire agglomeration. At strategic locations, the SCAA ensured that these domains were not subdivided "solely on the basis of a valorization of private interests."[69] The tried and tested tactics of adjusting administrative boundaries were applied wherever necessary. In addition, from the mid-1920s onward, the provincial authorities granted substantial subsidies to municipalities to buy parkland. Under the SCAA's reign, balancing tract development with the provision of public parks became a standard practice—even in the agglomeration's most remote municipalities.

A provincial park

By the early 1920s, "the only public authority that hadn't contributed anything to the park question yet, was the province itself."[70] As a true policy-entrepreneur, Schobbens took his chances when the Bosschaert de Bouwel family told him personally that they were thinking of selling 7ha of their 87ha estate Rivierenhof on a public auction on the morning of April 22, 1921. In the greatest secrecy, "to avoid all competition and speculation,"[71] he approached the landowners with the question of the price for which they would be inclined to sell the entire 87ha. The 5 million Frs. that were asked for strongly divided the permanent deputation. Provincial authorities purchasing land for the purpose of developing a park was unprecedented in Belgian history, and the permanent deputation was still undecided on the eve of the public auction. In a final attempt, Schobbens invoked 'urgent reasons' to call a special session of the deputation right before the auction. Schobbens "managed to plead his case with so much fire and with so much love that he finally managed to persuade the permanent deputation."[72] "At last," Schobbens wrote, "fifteen minutes before the public auction was supposed to start, the vote was taken," and it was the very last vote, from SCAA president Governor van de Werve de Schilde, that tipped the balance in favor of purchasing the Rivierenhof.

This decision was, however, not uncontested, as several deputation members did not consider it the task of the provincial authorities to finance parks from which only a relatively limited number of municipalities in the province could benefit. The park was bought on the explicit condition that, in return, the provincial authorities would also finance the electrification of the entire Campine region in the north of the province.[73] The episode demonstrates the ambiguous position of the provinces as suspended between a project of urban agglomeration and processes of dispersion. Nevertheless, saving the large estate is widely remembered as one of Schobbens's greatest achievements—one for which he received a

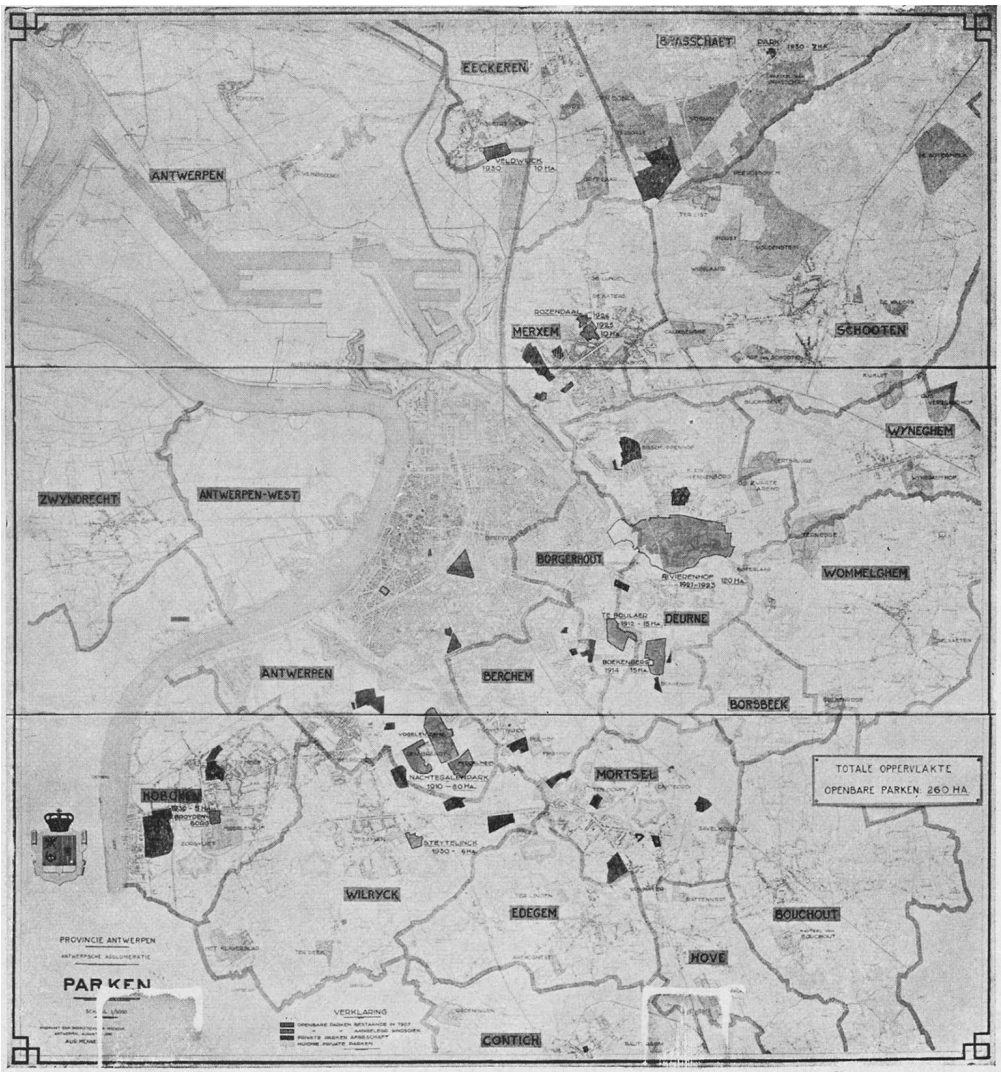


Figure 3.4 Map by August Mennes (1932) showing the large amount of public parks that the SCAA succeeded in developing, well-spread throughout the entire agglomeration.

bust at the entrance of the Rivierenhof in 1941.[74] The total amount of park hectares the SCAA managed to produce the first decades of the twentieth century, and the different tactics and levers it developed to do so, is nothing less than impressive.[75] (Fig. 3.4)

Weaving parks into the urban fabric

Developing the agglomeration's parks was not only a matter of saving estates from development. According to Schobbens, "the establishment of large parks, [was] in fact a matter of public works in more than one respect: they [were] works of art, comprised of hydraulic works, sanitary works, road works, etc."[76] Public works such as the demilitarized bulwark were considered possible linear parks in themselves, appearing "as a crown of greenery, only in need of some small adjustments to make it beautiful and loved."[77] Likewise, the new military belt with its forts further afield, was considered a future "park structure, very well planted, with beautiful ponds etc."[78] Turning former estates into useful public parks, in turn, required public works such as the supply of utilities and new access roads, embedding them within the urban fabric. Schobbens made sure breaches were made in the former ramparts to enhance the new parks' accessibility,[79] and the trajectories of major roadways were generally aligned with new park initiatives,[80] so that most large boulevards ended up "meandering in between the agglomeration's parks."[81] The parks were incorporated into the urbanizing fabric as important public places and green counterparts to the iconic mineral squares in the historic center. (Fig. 3.5) Initially, Schobbens advocated the construction of what he called *Rues de verdure*, a concept imported from Germany, allowing pedestrians to "jump from one park to the other, using shadowy tree-lined paths, protected against all the inconveniences of heavy traffic."[82] Even if this imaginary was clearly present in the agglomeration, few of these greenways got built. (Fig. 3.6) Schobbens in turn pleaded that "all the arteries leading from the city center to the parks, should be planted."[83] Several beautiful plans suggest how lushly planted roads weaved the parks into the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric. (Fig 3.7) Even if many of these parks were not strictly speaking located on city territory, they were repeatedly promoted as "new jewels to Antwerp's crown,"[84] testifying to their easy accessibility from within the city.

Originally, most of the former noble estates only had one real entrance and many people had to walk long detours to access them.[85] Once they were turned into public parks, the SCAA insisted on providing as many park entrances as possible along all sides, often necessitating additional expropriations.[86] In the case of the Rivierenhof, an additional 34ha was expropriated to make the park accessible all around.[87] In general, streets bordered the parks to highlight their public character, and the SCAA

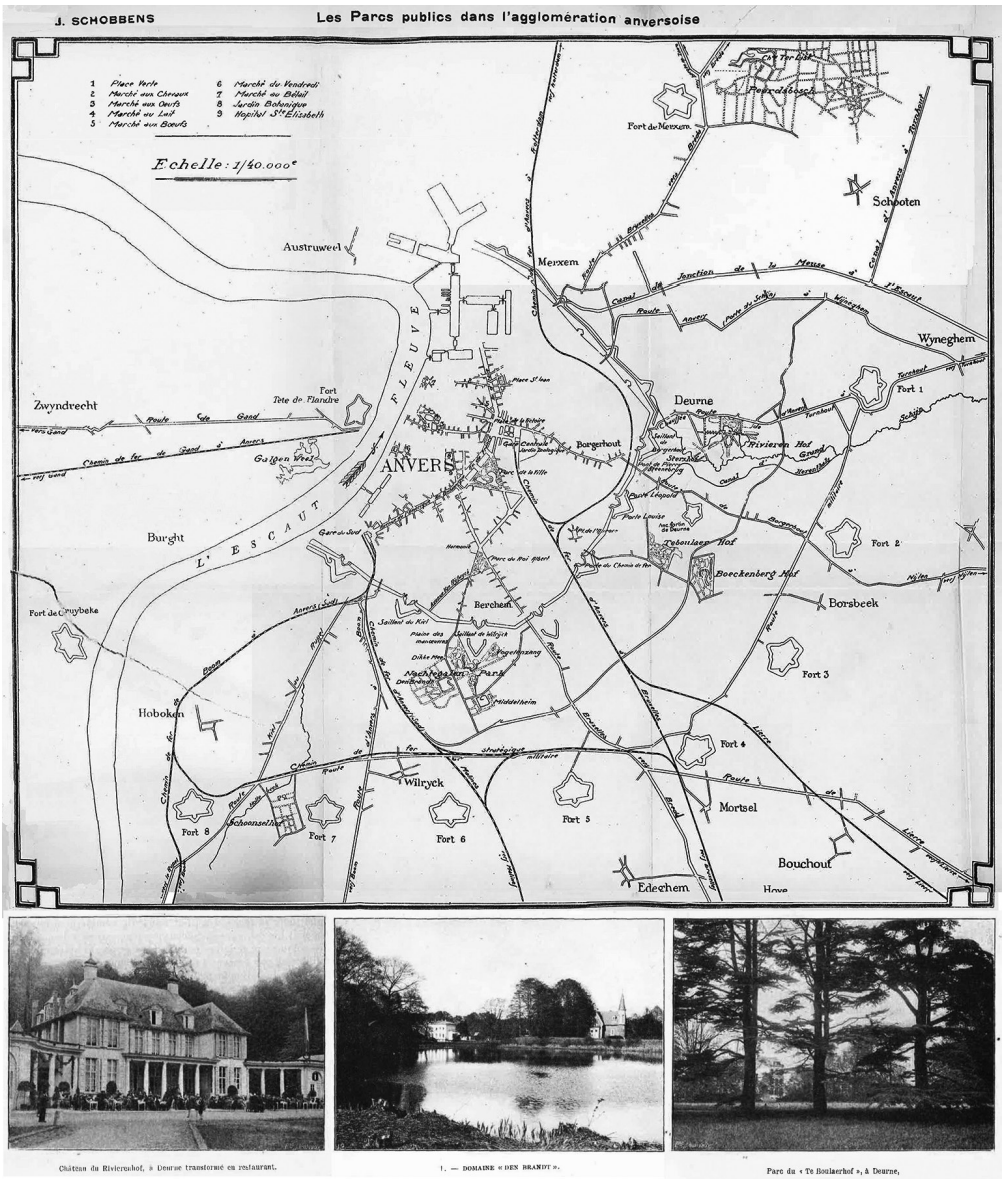


Figure 3.5 Map and pictures from Schobbens' *Les Parcs publics dans l'agglomération anversoise* (1924) showing how parks were woven into the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric, as counterparts of the city's mineral public squares.

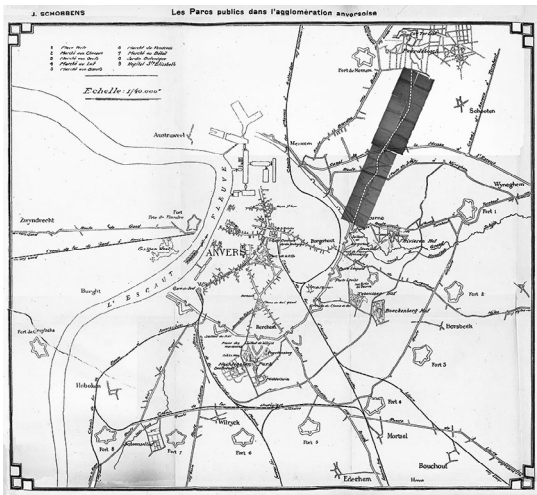




Figure 3.6 Map of a so-called *Rue de verdure* connecting the inner city to the forest Peerdsbos, some 10 km further afield. The picture suggests that the imaginary of 'green streets' was far from a distant utopia in the early twentieth century.

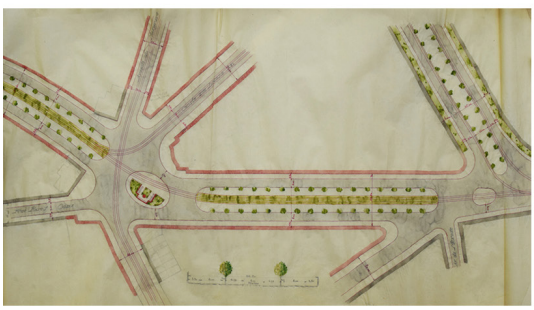




Figure 3.7 Map from an early 1910s series titled *'Development of new streets around the Nachtegalenpark and connections to the historic city'*. Picture of an existing *'terre plein'* as planted walkway through the city.

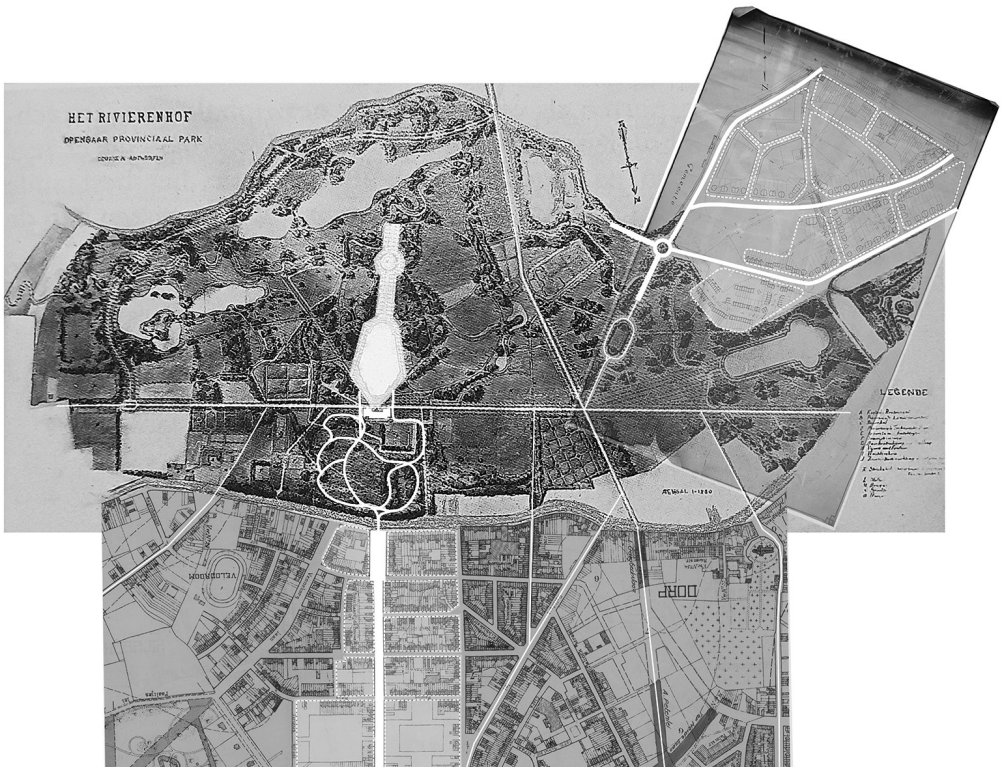


Figure 3.8 Collage by author showing how entire new neighborhoods were grafted on the new park Rivierenhof. Top right: map by Mennes (1928) titled '*Rivierenhof: Design for enlargement and entrance roads*'. Below: part of map by Mennes (1932) showing the development of Deurne-North.

avoided the construction of private houses bordering parks with their backyards.[88] Surrounding street patterns were continued as much as possible within the parks themselves, adding to territorial permeability. The Ter Rivierenlaan in Deurne, for instance, grafted a whole new neighborhood onto the Rivierenhof by extending the access road to the park's castle deep into the urban fabric. (Fig. 3.8) Both at the scale of the agglomeration, and at the neighborhood scale, optimizing park accessibility became a genuine matter of concern.

In some cases, landscape architects were involved in redesigning and reprogramming the former noble estates. Antwerp landscape architect Guillaume de Bosschere, for instance, redesigned the park Te Boulaer in Borgerhout and later the Rivierenhof in Deurne after winning an international design competition, organized by the SCAA.[89] His designs were

imbued with the bourgeois ideals of nineteenth-century parks, hosting quiet strolls in a staged natural setting, turning former castles into restaurants or hotels, surrounded by terraces with a view on idyllic ponds.[90] De Bosschere's vision perfectly "met the expectations of the upper and middle classes, but was at odds with certain ideas that had been put forward in the provincial council and the deputation about the destination of the park."[91] The question for whom these parks were intended exactly, and how they should be programmed, increasingly became the subject of class struggle.

Urban parks and the right to the city

The point of saving so many parks from private development was the subject of two opposing points of view at the turn of the twentieth century. On the one hand, there was a strong tendency to consider the development of public parks as a means to protect nature and rural aesthetics. This perspective, in the Antwerp context, was mostly defended by the Royal Association for Natural and Urban Beauty (KVNS, 1910), which fulminated against any form of human intervention in the 'natural' parks around the city.[92] The organization, for instance, heavily criticized the intention of using the ponds of park Boekenberg as a public swimming facility, surrounded by pop-up bars and the occasional Flemish fair.[93] (Fig. 3.9) Likewise, several councilors stressed that the Rivierenhof was bought "with the sole aim of preserving centuries-old trees and ponds" so that "the poor could go there for a quiet stroll and some fresh air."[94] On the other side of the spectrum, park activists accused these rather conservative voices of safeguarding parks as mere picturesque settings—mostly serving the needs of affluent villa builders and real estate speculators—and not as 'urban fortunes' for society at large.[95] Among these park activists was Joseph Schobbens, who went down in history as a man who "considered trees as his friends and parks as his lovers,"[96] to which he nevertheless allocated important social functions:

> In the end, public parks are so close to my heart because they have a critical social role to play. The rich have their own gardens, their own country estates; they visit seaside resorts; they travel wherever they want to—and so it will always be. The public park fills a gap: it is the garden of the poor, and of the worker, and of all humble and disenfranchised people—it is the garden of the anonymous crowds. To create parks, to make them more available to the

> people, is not a sumptuous expense, but a democratic work (…) To create parks and gardens is to do good to one's fellow human beings, and for me it is a target, a steady pursuit, to which I want to dedicate my best efforts.[97]

Schobbens aligned with people who did not see the benefit of a park that didn't satisfy workers' real desires and who claimed that "in order to satisfy the people, we have to turn the park into a center of attraction, [a place where] everyone should be able to find the pastimes they desire, and so we have to tolerate a layout that includes many different uses."[98] Under Schobbens's impetus, this vision ultimately prevailed, and the Rivierenhof became one of the very first mixed-use parks in Belgium, with facilities for hikers, tea drinkers, gymnasts, seesaw shooters, swimmers, fishermen, rowers, model yacht clubs, theatre clubs, and more sports and soccer clubs than the park could actually cope with.[99] A provincial committee, chaired by Schobbens, even organized a competition for an outdoor swimming pool.[100] The success of the Rivierenhof was so overwhelming that, from the early 1930s onward, a management committee, again presided by Schobbens, had to coordinate the simultaneity of multiple activities in the park. A similar shift toward a more diverse palette of experiences and uses occurred in most of the SCAA's other parks, and the appropriation of the parks by the widest possible audience was increasingly defended and politicized in provincial and municipal councils.[101]

Once the epitome of private accumulation, inherited from the ancien régime, many of the agglomeration's old noble estates were turned into pure places of collective consumption. Under the SCAA's reign, the parks became exemplary urban reservoirs that "foregrounded use-value over

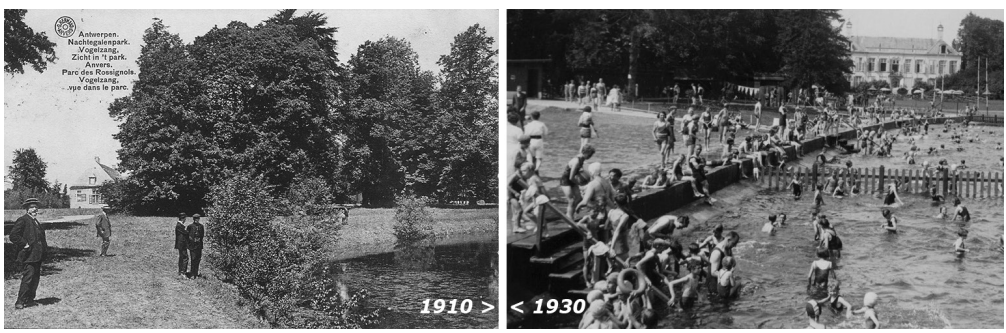


Figure 3.9 Shifting park use: from carefully looking at the pond (Nachtegalenpark, 1910), to splashing into the pond (Boekenbergpark, 1930s).



Figure 3.10 Simultaneity of different uses: the Rivierenhof as a place of reunion expressing the urban population's 'right to the city'.

exchange value,"[102] accommodating people's 'second lives' outside the dictates of 'production'. These were *lieux de résistence* that challenged the capitalist domination of space through the social struggle over space, constituting radically shared spaces of simultaneity, based upon the "collective management of space,"[103] expressing the right to the city for all. The parks were marked by a certain 'otherness' and became worlds within the world, mirroring yet upsetting what was outside.[104] Serving a hodgepodge of different needs and desires, the parks became 'differential spaces of simultaneity and encounter' par excellence.[105] Or, as Schobbens himself put it in his manifesto *Les parcs publics au point de vue social* from 1939, the parks were meant to be "places of reunion for the population."[106] (Fig. 3.10) The SCAA not only used these parks to 'preserve' parts of the agglomeration but to 'urbanize' it, turning it into a testing ground where long-established sociocultural relations and identities were reinvented and recalibrated.

Squares as communal spaces or civic centralities

The SCAA was very well aware that not every planning request could give rise to the development of new parks. In a very early 1909 SCAA meeting on a small development request, participant Van Kuyck used a telling one-liner that aptly summarizes the committee's stance: "If we are not able to

make a park here, let us then at least make a square!"[107] At the SCAA's very last meeting in 1939, concerning the layout of a new quarter, engineer De Heem reasoned as follows:

> A general width of 15 meters, as a uniform width for all streets is exaggerated. One could economize on land and road costs by reducing the average street width to 12 meters. In return, the building society could develop a square filled with nice plantations. This will not cause them any losses, but the municipality on the contrary will gain a lot, both in terms of aesthetics and use value.[108]

Throughout its entire existence, the SCAA turned the development of squares into a standard component of urbanization, even in the remotest of corners. Throughout the entire agglomeration, they advocated the construction of two sorts of squares, 'internal' and 'external' ones, each of which served different purposes.[109] (Fig. 3.11)

The 'internal' squares were small intimate spaces, hidden in the urban fabric, intended for locals to commune in and children to play. This type of square was crucial in districts where houses had rather small private gardens.[110] On several occasions, Schobbens clarified that such spaces were intended to give "children the opportunity to play outside, together on a square, surrounded by trees and greenery,"[111] especially in workman's districts. To this day, these squares are home to a wide variety of basketball courts, playgrounds, and small sports facilities. The 'external' squares, in turn, were situated "along important passageways and traffic arteries, from which as many people as possible could benefit"[112] and which had the potential "to accommodate markets and public gatherings."[113] These squares generally had "considerable dimensions and were destined to become new civic centers for the municipalities."[114] Fully acknowledging Mennes's assertion that "not many shopkeepers were likely to start their business in a villa neighborhood,"[115] the SCAA considered these external squares ideal locations to trigger the development of small shops meeting residents' everyday needs. Mennes argued that these squares could "later be used, according to the needs of the moment (…) safeguarding the future in this respect."[116] The committee explicitly planned row houses around its squares and alternated villa districts with urban blocks and terraced housing, offering more opportunities for the development of everyday commercial functions.[117]

Several squares, finally, were used to mark distinctive places in the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric.[118] The SCAA saw these prominent

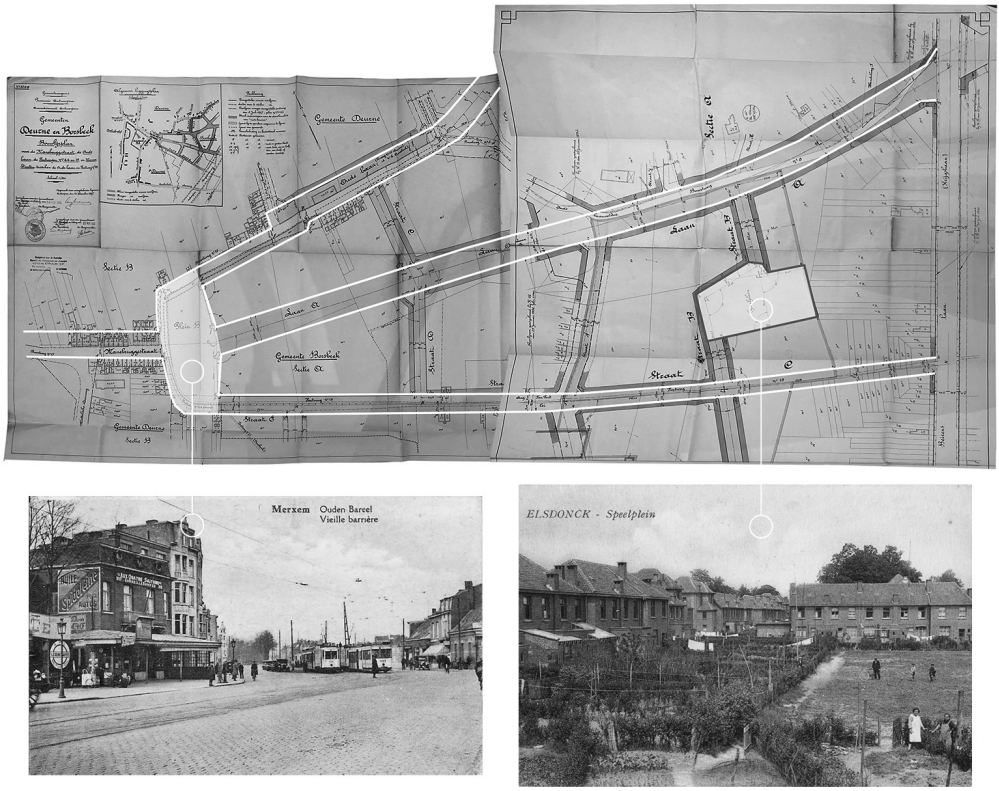


Figure 3.11 Development scheme by August Mennes between Deurne and Borsbeek, featuring a typical external traffic square (left) and internal communal square (right). Pictures of the 'Oude Bareel' in Merksem and the square 'Amand Preud'homme' in Wilrijk as prime examples of both square typologies, providing urban amenities and playgrounds respectively.



Figure 3.12 Large buildings such as the Hydraulic Lab (Borgerhout) or the Sint-Augustinus Hospital (Wilrijk) produce their own public spaces in the urbanizing fabric.

squares as ideal places for the organization of "various public services, such as a hospital, a fire station, a police station, a post office and all sorts of other public buildings."[119] The SCAA helped develop important public functions on prominent public sites, such as many schools, a joint intermunicipal hospital in Wilrijk, and the Hydraulic Lab in Berchem, including spaces for giant scale models and test basins for a detailed study of the agglomeration's water management (see chapter 2). (Fig. 3.12) At times, the external squares housed new churches, which became social centers cultivating parish life,[120] often in direct connection with new cemeteries that the SCAA incorporated into the public domain of various municipalities.[121] The agglomeration, in sum, was certainly not urbanized in view of residential development alone.

Positive externality and continued accumulation

Despite the SCAA's efforts, it remained difficult to keep collective consumption in pace with private accumulation, with the level of collective provisions systematically lagging behind private growth. In a 1931 speech, City Secretary Geyselinck, for instance, stressed that "the municipal tax burden per head of dwelling was 412 francs in Antwerp, and only 200 francs in Berchem and 135 francs in Borgerhout,"[122] even though they all more or less enjoyed similar services, mostly located in Antwerp. He concluded that the city of Antwerp was giving "free education to about 5,000 children whose parents are living in Borgerhout or Berchem."[123] In 1937, SCAA president Holvoet acknowledged that Antwerp's fringe municipalities remained dependent on Antwerp's emergency services, such as policing, firefighting, and health care services to a certain extent.[124] Yet as we have seen, many peripheral municipalities invested in public parks, including sports facilities, from which Antwerp citizens could benefit in return—pointing to an understanding of urbanization as the organization of reciprocal benefit and place-based solidarity. In addition, the public space built by the SCAA provided structural conditions for the post hoc expansion of public facilities.

It seems useful to invoke the intriguing reasoning of Belgian sociologist Jean Remy on the socioeconomic meaning of urbanization in advanced societies to substantiate this argument.[125] Remy stated that ever since the industrial revolution, welfare had been conceived primarily in terms of "materials goods that were individually appropriable," as opposed to

preindustrial societies in which welfare was primarily thought of in terms of "the common good"—a transition that explained the relative "poverty of urban achievements born of the industrial revolution."[126] Yet, Remy saw chances in the patterns of capitalist urbanization for the "redevelopment of collective goods," which no longer had to be thought of as "substitutes for rare individual goods but were a valorization of the accumulation of individually appropriated goods." These new collective goods did not "imply a regression to the pre-industrial stage and its authoritarian orientations"; rather, they held the promises to engender "a step forward in increasing freedom for all."

These new collective goods were referred to as "positive externalities" or "urban surplus values," supplementary benefits of urbanization that can only arise out of private accumulation, albeit outside of or beyond the economic logic of singular private enterprises. These externalities are very diverse, undetermined, and address different social aspirations, engendering "a condition that increases the possibilities of autonomous and creative responses," establishing an urban ecology of choice. Remy portrays a milder reading of the shifting meaning of the urbanization process under capitalism: from a process in which private accumulation was structured around preexisting and highly symbolic collective goods, into a process in which new sorts of collective goods only emerge afterward, as positive externalities enabled by private accumulation. In this reading, increased individual welfare creates extended and liberating chances for collective welfare.[127]

This makes sense, but only on the condition that the socio-spatial framework within which these positive externalities can emerge is carefully constructed. In this light, it is revealing that many of the collective 'externalities' that emerged in the Antwerp agglomeration throughout the entire twentieth century made good use of the public backbone of parks and squares that the SCAA developed in the agglomeration. In the postwar period, ever more hospitals and sports facilities clung to the metropolitan grid, small shops and pubs continued to settle around the SCAA's squares, and many of the safeguarded public parks became the home of music and theatre schools, public administrations, circles for local history and local amateur associations, etc.[128] In a way, the SCAA structurally provided the spatial preconditions in which these positive externalities could be captured and consolidated long after the committee had ceased to exist in 1939. In that sense, it did practice a generative kind of urbanization, providing urbanization with sufficient oxygen and perpetuating it as a social project of continued accumulation.

SPORTS FACILITIES FOR A NEW URBAN IMAGINATION

Sports, as a social phenomenon and urban program, gained momentum from the late nineteenth century onward. The boom of popular sports clubs and associations at the turn of the twentieth century was remarkable in Antwerp.[129] Many of these new clubs initially sought refuge at the Wilrijk Fields, some 40ha of military training grounds just outside the city walls. These grass fields became the home for horse racing, flying experiments, golf tournaments, soccer games, polo competitions, etc. The infrastructure was rather primitive, and the fields were soon overused—causing frustration among the different sportsmen. Cavalry horses got injured stepping in temporary golf holes,[130] while golf cadies regularly damaged the polo club's provisional fences in their overzealous search for lost golf balls.[131] It were such conditions that prompted several sports clubs to jump on the SCAA's urbanization wagon to find and develop better infrastructures a bit further afield in the agglomeration. As in other metropolitan regions, sports became an urban program par excellence to imbue the urbanization process with sociocultural meaning.[132]

Polo and golf clubs: Playgrounds for Antwerp's high society

Alfred Grisar, heir to the famous Grisar&Co trading company, became a pivotal sports entrepreneur in Antwerp at the turn of the twentieth century. Grisar imported typically British sports such as soccer, tennis, hockey, rugby, cricket, polo, and athletics into the Beerschot Athletic Club (BAC), which was founded in 1900, on the outskirts of the Antwerp neighborhood Kiel.[133] Helped by investments from prime Antwerp entrepreneurs such as Edouard Bunge,[134] Grisar was able to develop the BAC into a full-fledged sports club, including a modest soccer stadium, some tennis fields and a provisional athletics track. When the Antwerp Polo Club, founded by Grisar in 1905, moved from the Wilrijk Fields to the BAC, its infrastructures became too small to accommodate all activities. Interestingly, Grisar was close to several of the SCAA's most prominent members. As mentioned earlier, he was part of the della Faille group that cooperated with the SCAA on the park issue from 1906 onwards. Moreover, the Grisars were frequent business partners of SCAA president Baron Auguste Delbeke.[135] The most personal link to the SCAA, however, was Grisar's friendship with Count Henri de Baillet Latour, son of SCAA president Ferdinand de Baillet Latour.[136] (Fig. 3.13)

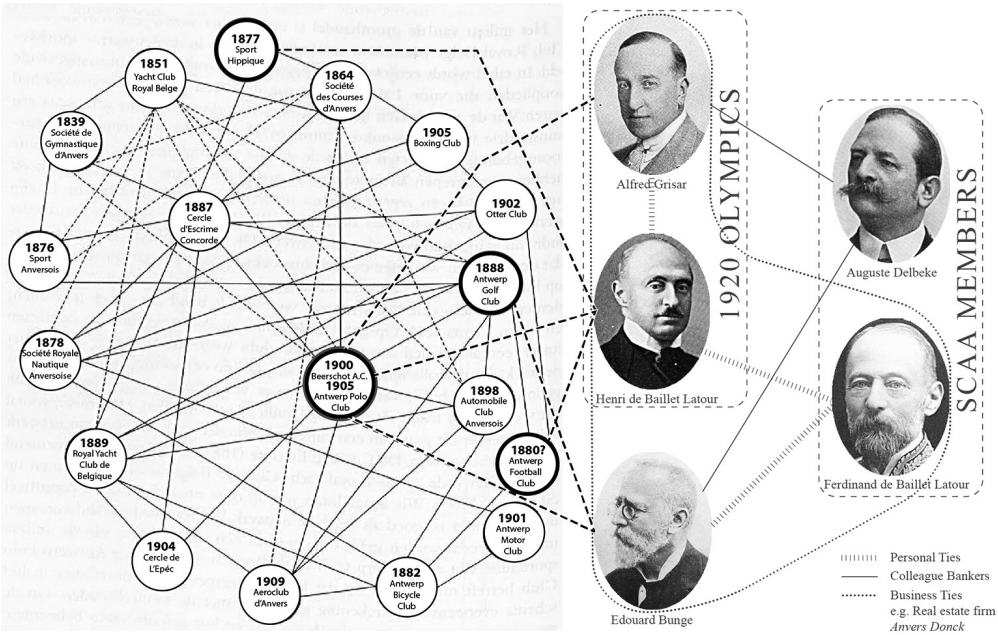


Figure 3.13 Mapping important sports figures, and their relations to SCAA protagonists, into a scheme of Antwerp's early twentieth-century sports network that was replicated from the work of den Hollander.

It is no surprise, then, that Grisar, in his search for new sports grounds, latched on to the SCAA's urbanization mission. In 1913, right after the committee's first real initiatives and expropriations to optimize and widen the city's arterial roads running up north (see chapter 2), the polo club was relocated in Hoogboom, a small hamlet near Brasschaat, hometown of the de Baillet Latour family. Edouard Bunge, one of Grisar's financiers, made a site available right next to a large estate that he had just bought.[137] After World War I, the idea of a developing a direct 'road to Hoogboom' appeared on top of the SCAA's agenda.[138] A remarkable plan by August Mennes from 1925 featured a brand new Avenue Ferdinand de Baillet Latour, crossing the agglomeration and connecting the new polo club to the historic city. (Fig. 3.14) Interestingly, the de Baillet Latour, Grisar, and Bunge families had joined interests in the companies Société Anonyme d'Anvers Donck[139] and the Consortium Immobilier de Brasschaat-Hoogboom[140]—real estate firms that owned most of the land on which the new avenue, unlocking new urban districts, was planned. It seems as if a 'northern coalition' was forming that seized the prospect of urbanization



Figure 3.14 Map by August Mennes (1925), traced by the author, depicting the de Baillet Latourlaan, making the polo club and golf club more directly accessible from the city, while unlocking new land on the properties of the firm Antwerp Donck, owned by the same de Baillet-Latour-clan.

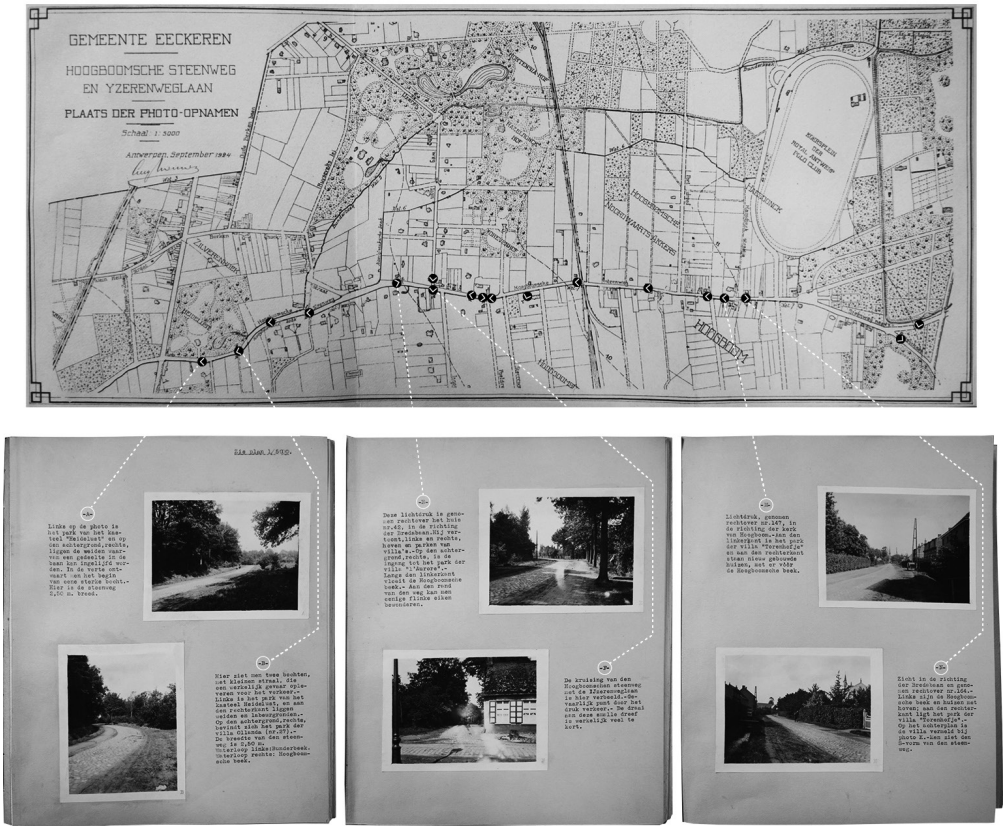


Figure 3.15 Exploratory study from 1924 by August Mennes to upgrade the Hoogboomse Steenweg running up to the polo field into a modern road: map, pictures, and short descriptions form a preliminary exploration.

as an opportunity to organize their own leisure and business activities in their backyards.

Moreover, Mennes's projected avenue also ran up to the Royal Antwerp Golf Club (RAGC) a little further up north. Founded in 1888, and initially playing on the Wilrijk Fields, the RAGC had actively been looking for a more appropriate site since 1904.[141] In 1910, the club managed to buy land from the Société des domaines de Capellenbosh, again with Edouard Bunge as major investor.[142] As a result, the golf and polo clubs practically became neighbors. (Fig. 3.14) On some grassy plains between coniferous forests, the RAGC commissioned renowned golf course architect Scot Willie park Jr. to design the club's eighteen-hole course. It was

inaugurated in September 1912 and meant a new start for the club, which would again expand considerably in 1928, when it had the opportunity to buy some adjacent lands. Both clubs soon hosted clubhouses, dairies, and even hotels, turning the sports clubs into popular resorts for Antwerp's high society, hosting activities such as clay pigeon shooting, tennis, and a horse racing club.[143] Moreover, Bunge insisted on making the polo field's "beautifully maintained and perfectly elastic 800m grass track"[144] available to Kapellen's more popular athletics club, to host regional, national, and even international days of athletics. Hoogboom and its surroundings thus became a sports center that attracted ever larger "processions of athletes and supporters (…) coming from all over the agglomeration."[145] In that sense, it is somewhat surprising that the avenue de Baillet Latour was never built. However, a study by Mennes, exploring road infrastructure between the Kapelsesteenweg and the golf and polo clubs, bears witness to the extent to which sports programs triggered the incremental development of the SCAA's metropolitan grid. (Fig. 3.15)

Antwerp's major stadiums: Sports for the common man

In 1919 Alfred Grisar and Henri de Baillet Latour managed to get the organization of the VII Olympics to Antwerp.[146] As the Olympics' epicenter, Grisar's very own BAC was given a thorough facelift, with a new stadium, some brand-new fields, athletic tracks and a tennis club, all with the financial aid of the Olympic committee. The organization of the Olympics fell under the supervising authority of governor and SCAA president Gaston Van de Werve de Schilde,[147] and the organizing committee soon asked for the SCAA's help with the "flawless organization of public transport and the development of new traffic connections."[148] It was with this purpose that the *Boomsesteenweg* was widened and the *VII Olympiadelaan* built, as "the most important roads leading all traffic to the Olympic stadium."[149] (Fig. 3.16) Schobbens and De Heem seized the major sports event as an "opportunity to reconsider the development of the entire district,"[150]—a known and tested recipe in urban planning.[151] The upgraded sports facilities "played a significant role in the later development of the Kiel district."[152] Ever "larger crowds were attracted, provoking the emergence of commercial shops and groceries," which in turn convinced newcomers to "gradually settle in the neighborhood, finding everything for their daily needs on the spot."[153] The Olympics and the SCAA's urbanization mission clearly reinforced one another.

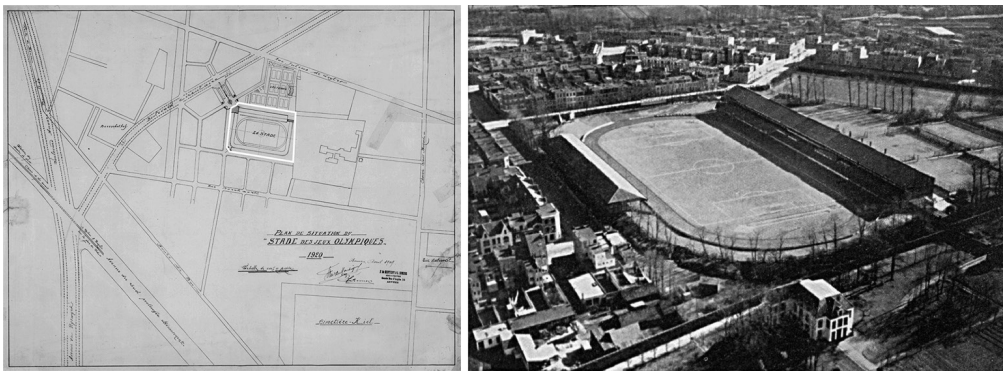


Figure 3.16 Map from 1919, showing how Beerschot's new Olympic stadium was grafted upon a 'Boulevard Circulaire' later renamed into the VII Olympiade avenue, directly connected to the state road Antwerp-Brussels.

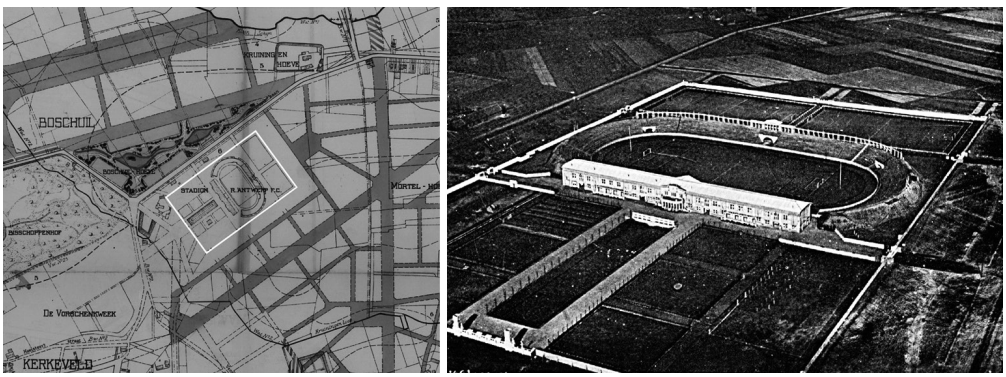


Figure 3.17 Map by August Mennes from 1934 showing the urban embedding of the Antwerp F. C. stadium and sports cluster that was first built in the empty fields.

After the Olympics, the BAC's new stadium especially boosted the successes of the Beerschot Football Club.[154] The new infrastructruce was a thorn in the side of the rivalling Royal Antwerp Football Club (RAFC)—the oldest Belgian club, founded in 1880 when it started playing on the Wilrijk Fields.[155] After 1920, RAFC started looking for a location to build its own sports temple. At first, RAFC was interested in the Rivierenhof, which had just been purchased by the province, but the SCAA and province preferred to preserve the park for amateur sports and denied a private club like RAFC access to the public park.[156] In the course of 1922, however, the club managed to buy 8ha of land right next to the Rivierenhof, in the vicinity of working-class districts in full development. Out of nowhere,

a brand-new stadium, practice fields, tennis, and hockey facilities emerged as an enwalled sports enclave against a rural background. In January 1923, the board of RAFC, with Henri de Baillet Latour among its honorary members,[157] approached the SCAA, asking for better access roads for the stadium.[158] The SCAA seized this request as an opportunity to develop a few new arteries it envisioned in the area and agreed to cooperate on the condition that the club would develop a plan for the entire neighborhood. Together with a few RAFC board members, architect Gerard De Ridder (who had designed the stadium) became a shareholder in the N.V. Ter Rivieren, a real estate company that had managed to buy and developed a plan for 22ha of land right next to the stadium.[159] De Ridder's overall design was finally approved by the SCAA in the course of 1926 and immediately incorporated in the general development plans Mennes was making for the municipality of Deurne. Accessible by major radial and tangential roads, the stadium was firmly embedded within the committee's metropolitan grid. (Fig. 3.17) Once more, a sports venture gave traction to the urbanization of new neighborhoods, this time in the northern part of Deurne.[160]

In 1929, the SCAA contributed to the realization of a third and final soccer stadium, that of the soccer club Berchem FC, founded in 1908, as part of the sports club Berchem Sport. When the club learned it could no longer play on its meadow leased from the state along the road Antwerp-Brussel, it approached nearby landowner Nottebohm to buy part of his estates Fruithof and Pulhof a little further along the road.[161] The latter was not interested in a sale, as he had just founded the Compagnie Immobilière et Financière to develop his lands. His real estate venture, however, was heavily criticized by Schobbens and the SCAA, because the "planned exploitation was too intensive" and "did not serve the public interest sufficiently."[162] The SCAA had always hoped that some seven ha of Nottebohm's estates could be saved as a pocket park and urged the municipality of Berchem to develop plans for its entire territory extra muros.[163] A few new avenues of this plan opened up formerly inaccessible land, allowing Berchem FC to buy land from the Family Neefs for its new stadium—on a prime location next to Berchem Station. (Fig. 3.18) The brand new sports temple, including athletics track and tennis facilities was inaugurated on August 25, 1929, and allowed Berchem Sport to increase its membership significantly.[164] Moreover, the SCAA's prewar efforts anticipated the contours of the municipal sports park Het Rooi, developed after the war, right next to Berchem's stadium, establishing a

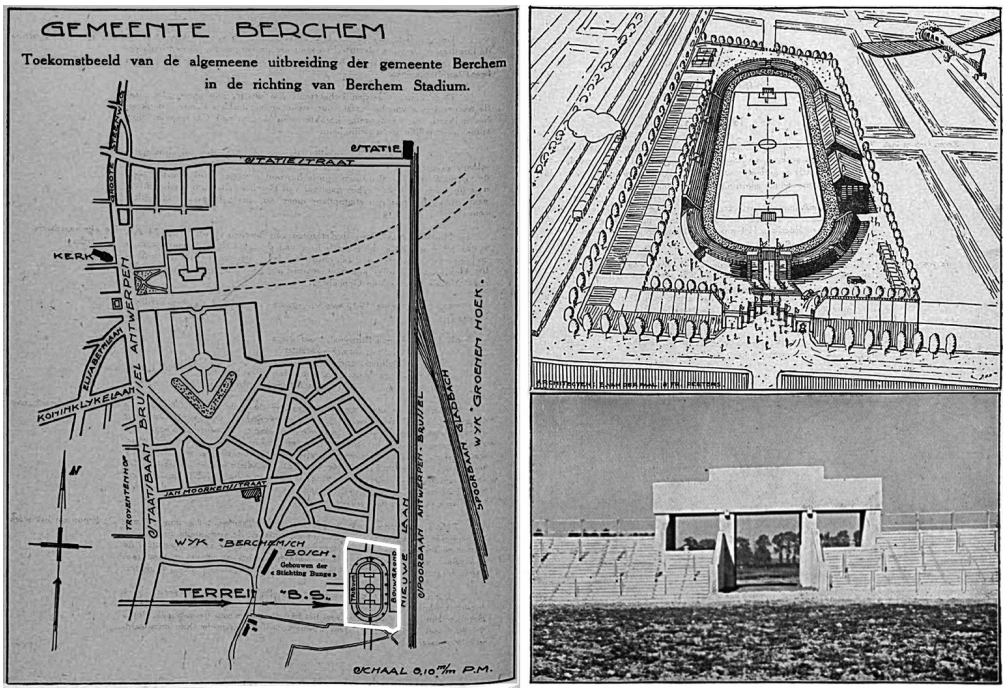


Figure 3.18 Around 1928, the SCAA urged the municipality of Berchem to draft a general development plan that offered new possibilities for Berchem FC. Urbanization 'serving' local initiative.

sports hub of regional importance along the metropolitan grid. The SCAA's urbanization mission remained generative for a long time, even long after the commission ceased to exist.

A sports dome and aviation plains for a new metropolitanism

In 1883, the very first cycling race was organized in Antwerp, right in the heart of the historic city.[165] The SCAA's project for the modern road, however, stimulated the urbanization of Antwerp's most important cycling clubs. This cycling-urbanization nexus is nicely illustrated by the many races that were organized to inaugurate renewed roads realized under the SCAA's auspices (see Chapter 6). Soon, many of the agglomeration's municipalities organized their own local races and championships. In addition, building temporary velodromes became a tried-and-true recipe for stimulating the development of new neighborhoods. A first velodrome was

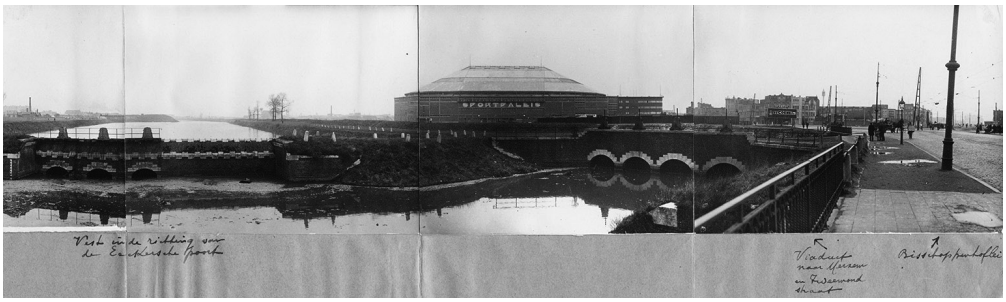


Figure 3.19 The Sports Palace emerges along the Bisschoppenhoflei and the new viaduct over the canal toward Merksem, boosting the development of the Lackbors neighborhood in the back.

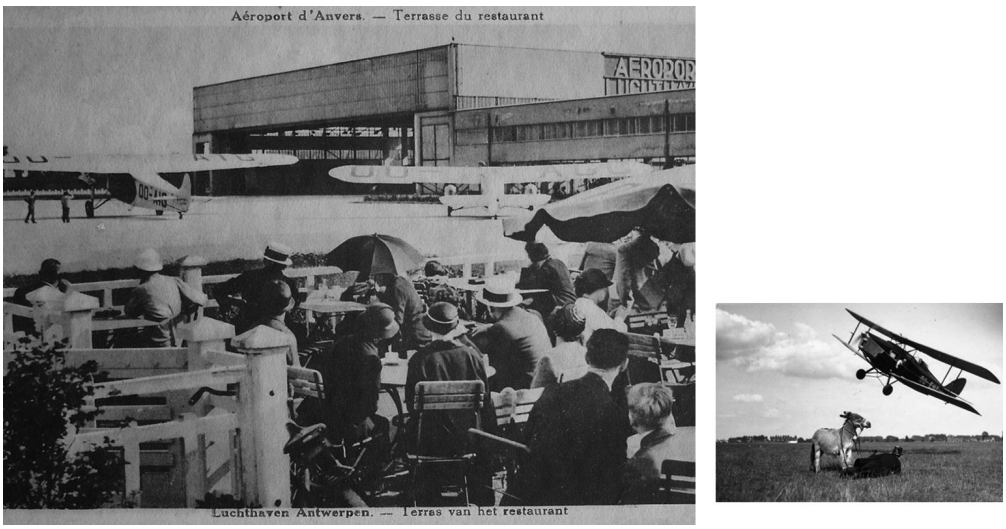


Figure 3.20 The Antwerp Airport first emerged as a leisure haven for aviation enthusiasts and adventurers in a field along the metropolitan grid and attracted many urban spectators.

built in the inner-city neighborhood *Zurenborg* (1894),[166] and later moved to the *Gitschotel* quarter in *Berchem* (1911),[167] just outside the city walls. Subsequently, several real estate companies started building velodromes to speed up urbanization in Wilrijk (1914–1924), Sint-Mariaburg (1923–1926), and Deurne (1931–1937). In the early 1930s, a much more permanent velodrome project "that many had dreamed of, but no one had dared to do" saw the light of day,[168] when two sports friends, Van Gastel and De Winter, had the so-called 'Sports Palace' built. Conceived as a gigantic circus tent of 132 by 88 meters without any internal columns, covering the largest indoor cycling track in Europe at that time, it was proudly referred to

as Antwerp's Madison Square Garden. (Fig. 3.19) The services of engineer August Mennes were hired to study the palace's best possible location, resulting in an SCAA-approved scheme that provided a triangular square in front of the new building, along the intermunicipal junction between Deurne and Merksem.[169] Joseph Schobbens was officially invited to the solemn inauguration of the new "sports temple" for "greater Antwerp,"[170] on Sunday October 1, 1933. Hosting a whole series of popular (sports) events, the Sport Palace grew into a mythical hotspot of popular culture and a true "incubator for the urbanization of the surrounding neighborhood Lackbors," which was perceived as a "real creation of sports."[171]

A final metropolitan program that grew out of Antwerp's proliferating sports culture was the airport in Deurne. Established in 1909, on the occasion of the very first Antwerp flying week, the Aéro Club d'Anvers long used the Wilrijk Fields as a provisional air base.[172] When there was talk of turning the military grounds into an urban district in the early 1920s, the aviation adventurers managed to convince the central government to convert a few meadows in Deurne into an official airport, which was inaugurated on May 25, 1923.[173] (Fig. 3.20) From 1925, however, the Ministry of Defense grew interested in the airfield's potential, and a zone *non aedificandi* of some 400m was set around the airport. The municipality of Deurne complained to the SCAA that this decision seriously hampered its future development. Schobbens replied that the committee "hadn't been consulted either," and that "it would have discouraged the government from choosing this location (…) in the middle of a built-up agglomeration."[174] He concluded that "the only hope for the municipality of Deurne, was that in a not too distant future, this airfield would more than likely be abandoned and moved elsewhere."[175] It was from this conviction, which history has shown to be in vain, that the SCAA continued to develop new neighborhoods that gradually built the airport into the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric.[176]

Private capital stimulating public welfare?

The preceding section by and large confirmed Charlier's earlier assertion that "sports in general (…) greatly contributed to the urban development of the Antwerp agglomeration."[177] A close reading of several cases, however, reveals an ambiguous nexus between these sports initiatives, landed interests, infrastructure works, and urbanization. In the run-up to the 1920

Olympics, the journal *L'Anversois* published a remarkable article stating that "the creation of the roads and the provision of amenities such as gas, water and electricity caused a steep rise in land values in the vicinity of the BAC."[178] At the same time, the journal claimed that "a surprising discovery could be made when comparing the names of these landowners with a list of the BAC's fervent partisans."[179] The article concluded that the executive committee of the games consisted mainly of "keen financiers, not sportsmen."[180] The increase in land values often reverted to the sports entrepreneurs in one way or another, and motives of private accumulation were always lurking around the corner.

On the other hand, the SCAA cleverly used these sports capitalists as a lever to piece together crucial parts of their road project. Often, the entrepreneurs ceded, free of charge, crucial pieces of land that ensured the continuity of the metropolitan grid (see chapter 4). Private accumulation, to a certain extent, co-undergirded the emergence of the agglomeration as a collective good. Moreover, these sports programs imbued the urbanization process with genuine use values, answering to the emerging aspirations of experiencing and practicing sports, heralding a marked democratization and socialization of sports in Antwerp. The first jubilee books of Royal Antwerp Football Club, Royal Beerschot Athletic Club, and Royal Berchem Sport all suggest that new infrastructures boosted membership in many sports disciplines, professionals and amateurs alike, from all walks of life. Antwerp's three major football clubs steadily added new layers to urban social life, issuing joint sports magazines such as *De Supporter* that regularly announced downtown dance evenings, balls, and festivities enlivened by bands with such names as the Joyfull Jazz-Boys. The polo and golf clubs frequently organized charity matinees supporting local initiatives. The airport was not used exclusively for military purposes but started offering commercial flights from 1928 onward.[181] The sports stadiums were used to organize banner parties, singing sessions, ice skating spectacles, folk festivals, the workers' Olympiad for both men *and* women,[182] and even manifestations of workers' strikes. These early sports initiatives, in sum, grew into genuine assets for social urban life.

The SCAA's urbanization mission gave these 'Antwerp' sports initiatives, for which the historic city had no place, a new home in the agglomeration's outer municipalities. Most clubs found a place along the metropolitan grid and, as will be discussed further on, were soon provided with public transport. In retrospect, the balanced spatial distribution of all sports facilities across the agglomeration stands out. Judging by the

SCAA's active role in determining the most optimal distribution of new swimming facilities, providing the widest possible audience with chances to swim,[183] this is probably not entirely coincidental. Distributed remarkably well over the agglomeration, the sports facilities became pacesetters of generative urbanization, spreading a certain *culture urbaine* throughout the agglomeration, preventing it from turning into a suburban dormitory.

THE URBANIZATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In the Belgian context, the rise of public transport has generally been identified with the emergence of an extremely dense network of (vicinal) railways, undergirding Belgium's dispersed industrial realm.[184] This section, on the contrary, looks more closely at how the SCAA tried to use public transport as a means to reinforce processes of metropolitan development. It thus affirms public transport as a prime tool for the development of collective consumption and generative urbanization at a regional scale.[185] After all, it made little sense for the SCAA to facilitate the development of a whole host of urban fortunes without also making them generally accessible to the urban masses, far from all of whom had access to personal transportation at the time. When Schobbens learned that the National Railway Company NMBS did "not economically provide short distance passenger transport,"[186] the SCAA turned to different local Antwerp businesses to 'urbanize' different layers of the agglomeration's public transport system in different ways.[187]

Vicinal railways penetrating the historical city

Belgium's vicinal railroads were generally conceived as a complement to the national rail network, to refine the range of local connections. Built under the supervision of the National Company for Vicinal Railways (NMVB), most lines were exploited by different local companies. In the Antwerp agglomeration, the somewhat haphazard construction and expansion of the vicinal rail network was the result of the activities of companies such as De Antwerpse Maatschappij voor den Dienst van Buurtspoorwegen (1885); S.A. Tramway d'Anvers (1886); De Kempische Stoomtram Maatschappij (1890); and the company Vicinaux et Tramways (1908).[188] Operating these lines was a financially cumbersome business,

and in general, the companies only defended the interests of their own lines, leaving little room to work toward an integrated network.

The SCAA's main contribution toward a more urban exploitation of the vicinal railways was made in the course of 1924. Around that period, the NMVB expressed its wish to prolong some of their vicinal railways into the historical city, which, until then, had all stopped at the city walls. Wary of the competition, the president of the urban Compagnie Générale des Tramways d'Anvers (CGTA) stated that "there was no reason for the vicinal services to claim part of the urban traffic."[189] To keep the vicinal railways out of the urban core, the CGTA proposed to develop better interchanges on the outskirts of the historical city, for instance at the Ouden Bareel in the north and at the Turnhoutsepoort in the south, where travelers could switch from one system to the other. The SCAA and Schobbens in particular rejected the CGTA's proposal and demanded that the vicinal lines would be extended "directly and straight into the city center" to keep "corporate rivalry" from harming "the public interest and travelers' comfort."[190] NMVB engineer Belpaire quickly added that the vicinal railway company merely wanted to improve its own customer service and did "not wish to extend their lines with the aim of tapping into the CGTA's urban clientele."[191] On the SCAA's recommendation, the two companies met with the relevant ministries, and even if negotiations proceeded with great difficulty, a final agreement was reached in 1937. The NMVB, which by that time was exploiting all Antwerp lines all by itself, was allowed to enter the city with three lines—provided that it did not organize explicit urban services. (Fig. 3.21)

Historians of the Antwerp railway works generally agree that "the penetration of the vicinal railway lines into the center of Antwerp undeniably meant a considerable improvement, first and foremost for the hundreds of workers on their daily commutes to the harbor."[192] Of course, it also worked the other way around, and many popular countryside destinations, such as the Rivierenhof, Schootenhof or the golf and polo clubs in the north became more easily accessible for urbanites. It shows how, in the context of the agglomeration, the vicinal railways were not just a means of transporting workers but actually catered to the needs of a much more diverse urban public. Arguably, the early seeds of this undeniable increase in use-value were sown by Schobbens during the SCAA's meetings.



Figure 3.21 Map by Stappaers (1945) traced by the author. Existing vicinal railways around 1907 (black lines) and SCAA-driven extensions into the city (dashed black lines). Existing urban tramlines around 1907 (white lines), SCAA-driven extensions beyond the city (dashed white lines), and SCAA-planned extensions (dotted white lines). Note how public transport unlocks all the newly projected urban assets.

Urban trams breaking out of the historical city

Antwerp's urban tram company CGTA was founded at the turn of the century, following a merger of several companies that ran horse-powered trams in the historical center.[193] In 1905, the CGTA and the Compagnie Electrique Anversois (CEA) co-founded the Société de l'Electricité de l'Escaut (SEE, 1905) with the explicit aim of developing electrified tram lines beyond the former city walls as a means of urbanizing the electrification process itself.[194] Remarkably, SCAA president Auguste Delbeke was one of the CGTA's founders, chairmen, and shareholders.[195] In his 1901 pamphlet *L'affaire des tramways anversois*, the radical socialist Modeste Terwagne criticized the "outsourcing of this public patrimony" to private companies,[196] because he feared that private profits and growth would always outweigh public needs proper.

Yet Delbeke's dual position seems to have had its advantages, as collaborations between the SCAA and the CGTA were remarkably smooth in the early years. Wherever the SCAA built new roads or parks, urban trams appeared in no time, such as along Jan van Rijswijcklaan to the Nachtegalenpark all the way to Wilrijk (March 17, 1912), or along the Karel de Preterlei, all the way to Borgerhout extra muros (September 30, 1911), where the SCAA opened the Boelaerpark barely a few months later. The SCAA heralded a period in which municipalities were eager to become part of the CGTA's electric tram network, which was perceived as a much more modern urban facility than the NMVB's older steam network.[197] These early successes were followed by a standstill of more than ten years, partly explained by the interruption of the Great War. In January 1924, however, CGTA president Delmez presented the company's planned development and extensions of no less than ten new tram lines. The SCAA was not impressed and lamented the complete lack of "overall conception or design."[198] According to Schobbens, "the plans ignored new neighborhoods in the making (…) failing to meet the needs of the outer municipalities."[199] In sum, the CGTA's proposal was dismissed as "completely insufficient (…) and unworthy of the name public service," because lacking of "some thirty new lines needed to establish an adequate tram network."[200] Delmez replied that "that the CGTA asked no better than to follow the SCAA's advice and suggestions," because the "public authorities [were] better informed about future extensions, planned boulevards, etc."[201] The SCAA asked the CGTA not to simply follow haphazard demand with their tramlines, but to actively steer urban development by means

of public transport, which, according to Schobbens, was a "*conditio sine qua non* to successfully urbanize the agglomeration and to systematically relieve pressure on the housing market in the historical city."

By March 1924, the CGTA resubmitted a more comprehensive proposal, incorporating most of the SCAA's remarks. In consultation with the municipalities, an overall tram network was defined and divided into three levels of priority.[202] It gave the urbanization of the public tram network a new impetus, at least until the SCAA ceased its activities in 1939. A considerable number of new lines unlocked many of the urban programs discussed before in this chapter, such as the new airport, the Sports Palace, the Olympic Stadiums, the new Schoonselhof cemetery, and so on. Two tramlines were also "extended (…) in order to bring the thousands of spectators to the Royal Antwerp football club stadium" and "quite exceptionally, these tramways, preceding human settlement, strongly encouraged the a-posteriori development of the new Lackbors district."[203] The SCAA, in other words, successfully deployed public transport as a means of steering urbanization. (Fig. 3.21)

In addition to adjusting lines, however, the SCAA also questioned the CGTA's pricing policy. Long journeys within the city's administrative boundaries were much cheaper than short rides just across the city borders,[204] which lead to socially uneven situations for workers living just outside Antwerp's municipal borders.[205] To reach its full urban potential, the SCAA urged that the CGTA's ticket rates should be levelled throughout the entire agglomeration.[206] Whether causal or not, fact is that price differences for journeys inside or outside the city flattened out over the SCAA's active period, next to the introduction of reduced rates for the working class in general.[207] Similar policies were developed for a subsidiary company like Les Autobus Anversois that increasingly operated along the agglomeration's metropolitan grid. The SCAA thus contributed to making the agenda of a private company serve the public interest and the agglomeration's urban agenda in many different ways, which in practice resulted in much more rhizomatic networks than the radially concentric patterns that were still being advocated by the urban theorists of that time.[208]

PRACTICING GENERATIVE URBANIZATION

This chapter reconstructed how and in which ways the SCAA tried to practice a kind of urbanization that involved more than just the spatial crystallization of private accumulation or growth machine strategies.

At times relying on public resources, and sometimes curbing private initiative, the committee was able to establish a context in which all sorts of positive externalities and urban use values became available. The vantage point seems to have been to conceive of the agglomeration as a self-sufficient urban milieu, an environment, even, in which new urban functions were created that the historic city needed but could not produce itself. Large parks, squares, and plazas, sports clubs, a decentralized commercial apparatus, a socialized public transport network etc., were gradually developed. These functions both supported the agglomeration's inhabitants in their daily lives, and at the same time gave them the opportunity to escape their daily routines, enabling the right to a meaningful urban life—far beyond the historical city.

In that sense, the SCAA practiced a 'generative' kind of urbanization, underpinning the development of an urban milieu that was never really suburban but was "born post-suburban"[209] from the onset—to use Phelps's contemporary phrasing. Indeed, the SCAA at least tried to keep the provision of collective consumption needs in pace with the pursuit of private accumulation and economic growth throughout the agglomeration. At all times, the SCAA built a spatial framework in which sufficient space was safeguarded to accommodate current, future, and evolving collective consumption needs, giving urbanization enough oxygen to grow into a project of continued accumulation. Systematically pursuing these goals at a metropolitan scale, Phelps argues, requires a certain "in between-ness of political relations" merging local, regional and national dynamics.[210] As demonstrated in the previous chapters, such a political in between-ness was pretty much the SCAA's raison d'être, making it all the more plausible to suggest that the SCAA conceived the agglomeration as an instant 'independent neo-city' rather than as a 'dependent suburb' from the very onset.

In retrospect, the spatial distribution of externalities across the agglomeration is remarkable. That does not mean that similar environments were created everywhere. The urbanizing agglomeration was marked by "the appearance of new, very different neighborhoods, with divergent occupations, sometimes with opposing aspirations, but nevertheless all born of the same irresistible current."[211] In the north, villa parks arose around polo and golf courses; in the south, working-class neighborhoods grew around the football stadiums and new parks. Yet the quality of these working-class neighborhoods wasn't "any less good, with its spacious and well-paved streets" and their "many shops, turning them self-sufficient."[212] The SCAA, in sum, was wary not to let the patterns of differentiation

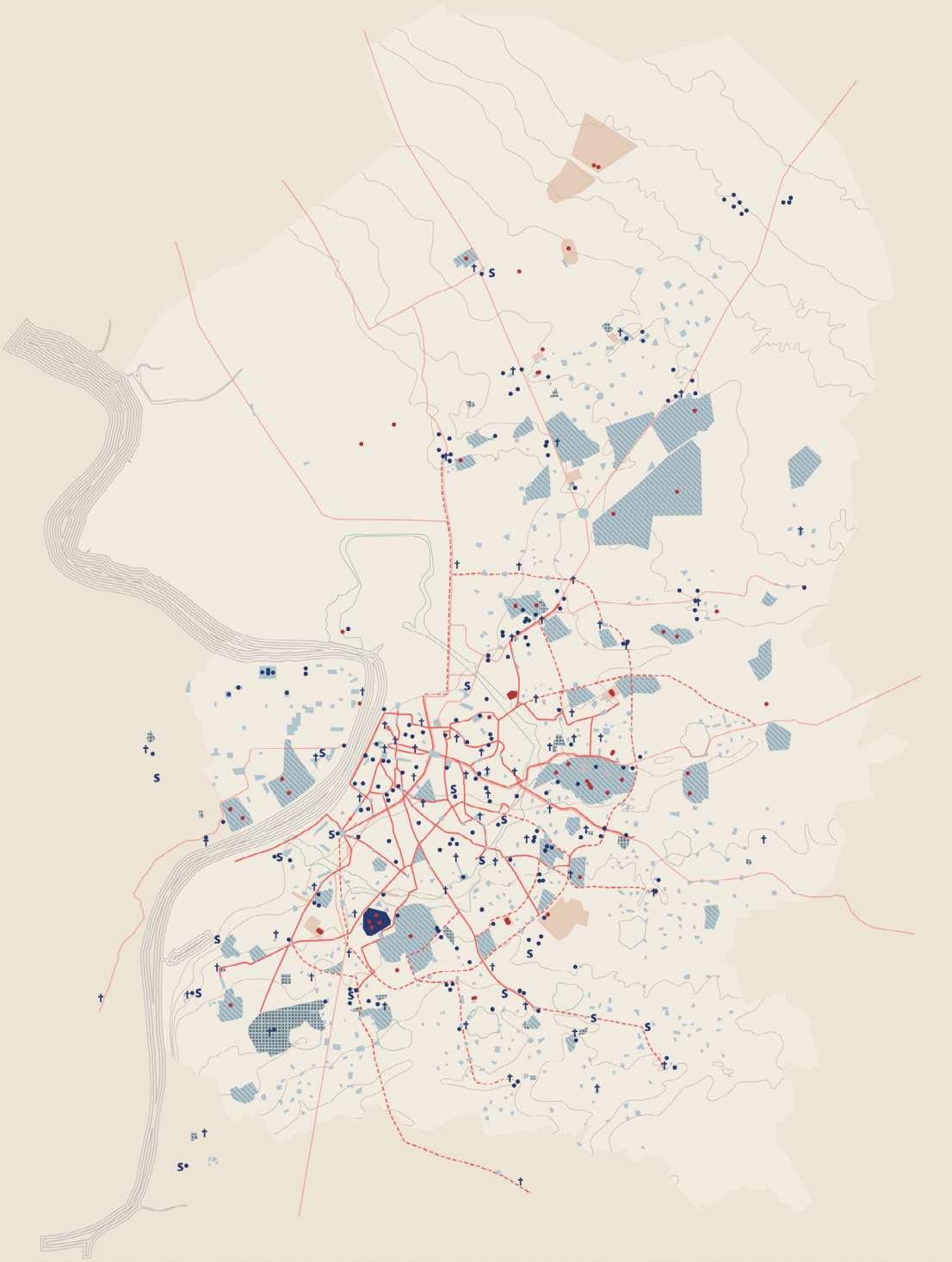


Figure 3.22 Urban trams connecting the inner city to the agglomeration at the Jan van Rijswijcklaan, 1930. Urbanization was not about contiguous urban expansion at the city's edges, but about organizing a vast horizontal mosaic of urban potential, pieced together by public transport.

become excessively uneven. Arguably, it was making "an effort to reduce the gaps between housing conditions and make them lower than the gaps between the income levels" of the respective communities.[213] The roots of this primary principle on which the whole idea of the welfare state was built, were clearly present in the early twentieth-century agglomeration.

Navigating in-between different political levels, private entrepreneurs, and companies, social dreamers, etc., the SCAA developed what Remy refers to as a "an urbanization politics conscious of the objectives to be pursued" and inspired by "a profound appreciation for the collective benefits linked to living in the city."[214] The SCAA practiced a form of urbanization that generated shared added values that no individual actor, not even the state itself, could have single-handedly produced. Urbanization became a broad social practice, geared toward turning the agglomeration into a collectively produced and appropriable urban good. Whether in the sports palace, on a local square, in a large park, in the sports club, or simply on the urban tram to the city cemetery, the possibilities for social participation and encounter significantly increased. This is not to say that the agglomeration urbanized homogeneously and in a contiguous way from the historic core outward. Rather, a horizontal field of urban potential emerged, an ecology of choice made accessible by different means of (public) transport. (Fig. 3.22) Arguably, all of this allows for an interpretation of the Antwerp agglomeration as an historical antecedent or early manifestation of what has recently been described as the 'horizontal metropolis'.[215]

Map 3: Urbanizing Collective Consumption.
This map shows the Antwerp agglomeration as a kind of horizontal metropolis, consisting of a large number of public programs spread all over the territory, yet pieced together by extensive public transport systems. The map features realized public parks including cemeteries; a vast number of public squares; public buildings such as town halls, schools, care facilities, parish churches, and railway-stations; sports grounds, stadiums, and clubs; served by public transport systems consisting of vicinal railway lines and urban tram lines. All information was carefully layered and redrawn from the overall park map (Fig. 3.4); the detailed survey maps for the sewerage system (Fig. 2.2) the 1932 map summarizing the SCAA's work (Fig. 6.7); the overall plan for the left bank (Fig. 5.18); added with punctual data encountered in the architectural magazines *De Bouwgids* and the *KMBA Maandschrift* (see chapter 5); and information retrieved from the SCAA's many meeting minutes (see appendix). The map thus symbolizes the SCAA's painstaking and piecemeal effort of turning urbanization into a 'generative' project, producing a self-sustaining 'urban ecology of choice' that could be collectively lived and consumed—rather than a privatized suburban dormitory feeding off the historical core. On the contrary: with the development of large parks, numerous sports clubs, swimming pools, or aviation plains the urbanizing agglomeration returned new urban functions to the city that could not be accommodated in its historical core.


REALIZED URBAN TRAMLINES
PLANNED URBAN TRAMLINES
VICINAL RAILWAYS
PUBLIC SQUARES
PUBLIC PARKS
PUBLIC CEMETERIES
POTENTIAL PUBLIC PARK
WILRIJK FIELDS
PARISHES
RAILWAY STATIONS
PUBLIC BUILDINGS
SPORTS CLUB
SPORTS TEMPLE
SPORTS ACTIVITY

"The closer one gets to Antwerp and the vast agglomeration that surrounds the metropolis, the more valuable the land becomes, and the greater the split between property and labor is accentuated."

Emile Vandervelde, *La propriété foncière*, 1900, p. 122.

"The increase in the value of bare land is purely for free. It is not the result of any effort on the part of those who benefit from it. (…) I fully support the principle that when land is sold, the community should get its share of the increase in value."

Camille Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière dans les communes belges*, 1909, pp.29–30.

"From a financial point of view, even when local authorities resorted to expropriations, they were never sure of the consistency of revenues, an uncertainty that had an unfavorable impact on the annual budget. These were the main reasons why municipalities did not take the initiative in building new roads, or approving comprehensive development plans. Municipalities simply wait until private property owners take the initiative. To facilitate the development of new neighborhoods, created from scratch by public authorities, we'll have to resort to another means, i.e. taxing real estate gains and urban rent."

Joseph Schobbens, *Discussion de la taxe de plus-value*, SCAA meeting minutes, 7/12/1909.

Chapter 4
The Housing Question
Real estate agency and the urbanization of taxes on urban rent

THE CONSOLIDATION OF REAL ESTATE AGENCY

Once the state announced its plans to expand the city's harbor, population growth skyrocketed in the Antwerp agglomeration. Louis Franck opened his bill regarding the agglomeration's urbanization by stating that "the population of Antwerp [was] growing every year by 6,000 to 7,000 inhabitants for whom houses had to be built, streets had to be created" that would "soon be invaded by new inhabitants."[1] Such rates were unprecedented in Europe, and it was expected that the population of the agglomeration would "exceed 1 million inhabitants before a quarter of a century had passed."[2] In reality, the population boom was less explosive. Nevertheless, between 1907 and 1932, some thirty thousand houses were built in the city's fringe municipalities alone, where the number of inhabitants rose from 185,514 in 1907 to 337,083 in 1931, representing an impressive growth of 80 percent despite the interruption of the Great War. (Fig. 4.1) These statistics raise a straightforward question: Who was able to build all these houses at such short notice? This is a pertinent question, since the SCAA was neither mandated nor had the means to finance that much housing all by itself.

Real estate and urbanization

In retrospect, the overall climate of exaggerated expectations constituted the perfect breeding ground for the consolidation of real estate agency as a fully-fledged sector in the Antwerp agglomeration. Real estate, to be sure, was not a new phenomenon. Think of Gilbert Van Schoonbeke's legendary endeavors in seventeenth-century Antwerp, or the companies Engetrim or the Société Immobilière de Belgique that built the nineteenth-century neighborhoods Zurenborg and Het Zuid respectively.[3] Yet the SCAA's efforts of 'urbanizing the agglomeration' became a fly-wheel

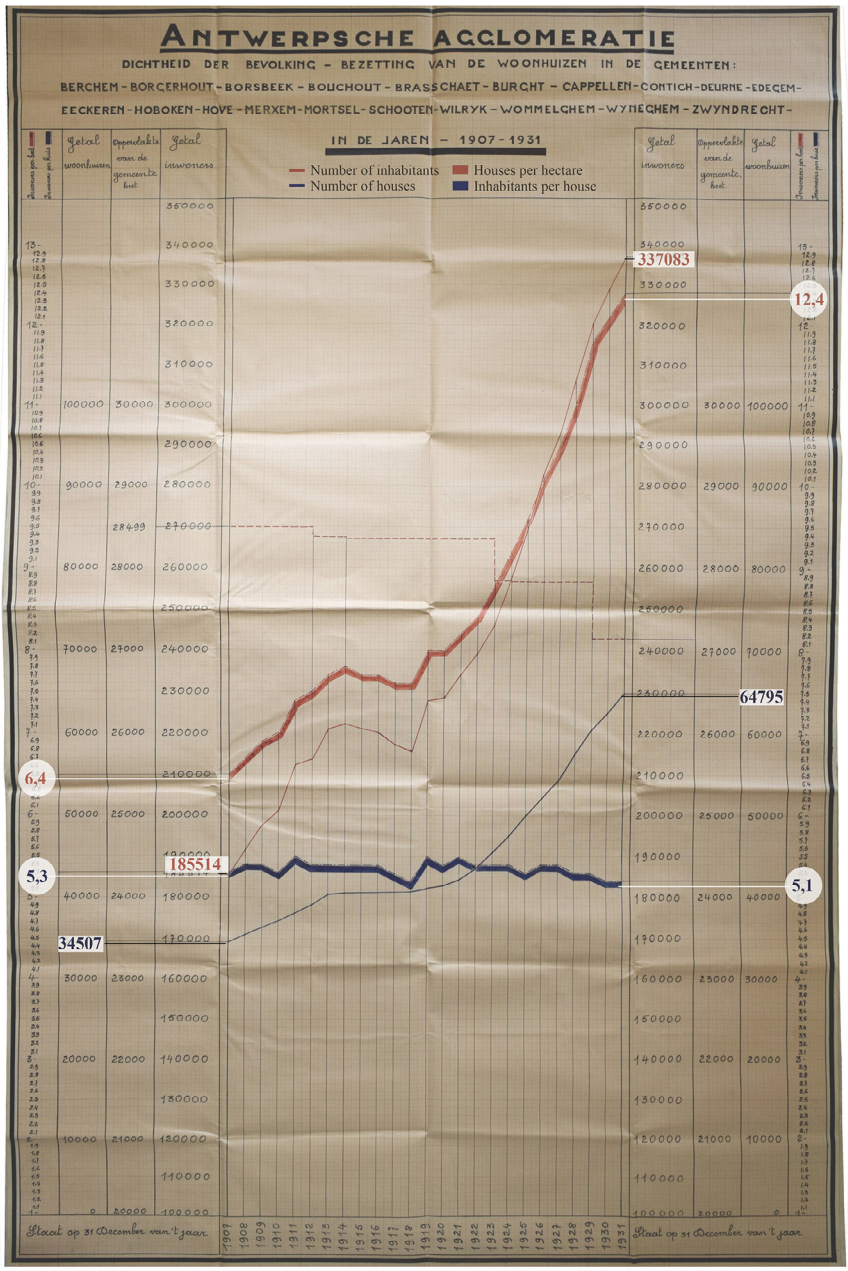


Figure 4.1 SCAA infographic from 1932, traced by author. Between 1907 and 1932, the number of houses rose from 34,507 to 64,795, the number of inhabitants from 185,514 to 337,083, and the number of houses per hectare from 6.4 to 12.4. The number of inhabitants per house slightly decreased in the same period, from 5.3 to 5.1.

for the consolidation of real estate as an autonomous sector. In 1910, Joseph Schobbens wrote that "real estate speculation had started" as soon as the "bill for the declassification for the military bulwark had been submitted," immediately leading to "a considerable number of development requests, in the most diverse and remote places of the new agglomeration."[4] Real estate agency became a component inherent in the urbanization process at large, a traveling phenomenon beyond singular projects, which settled in the larger agglomeration in particular. New workers in support of the expanding harbor were not very welcome in the city center, and even the existing workforce was increasingly relocated from their overcrowded urban quarters to the agglomeration's more aerated outskirts.[5] A succession of hygienic crises had fostered an anti-urban sentiment that also drove the elites and upper classes out of the city.[6] On top of that, inner urban quarters were increasingly subjected to a process of commodification in which housing made way for offices, banks, insurance companies and commercial centers.[7] The growing number of employees working in this emerging service sector targeted the outer agglomeration as their preferred habitat as well.[8] In order to meet the different aspirations of this urbanizing society, the emergence of a diverse real estate scene was simply indispensable.

The professionalization of real estate agency

The foundation deeds of every new real estate company were all reported in the *Belgian State Gazette*, together with the names of all investors and shareholders. Leafing through these sources brings a variegated landscape of residential real estate companies to light that can roughly be categorized in two groups that each promoted distinct housing typologies: whereas tract developers paved the way for the (detached) cottage, a second group of property developers mainly focused on the (urban) apartment building.

The first group was active from the moment it was decided to demolish the ramparts in 1906—a period when the cottage was proliferating in Belgium.[9] Initially, a considerable number of planning requests were made by individuals accidentally possessing a strategic piece of land. Some of them founded relatively small companies that were devoted to the development of one specific district.[10] Some more professional companies were devoted to the urbanization of entire municipalities.[11] The most

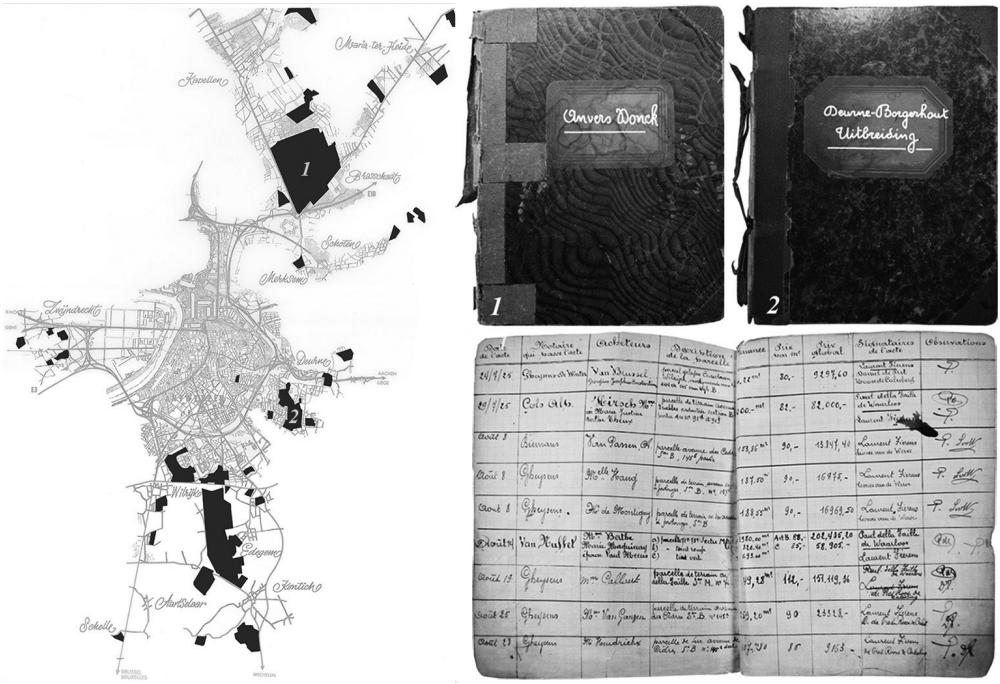


Figure 4.2 Map showing all realizations of the firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises (founded in 1910, renamed into Extensa in 1953) between 1910 and 1970. Members of Antwerp's landed gentry founded 'land companies' entrusting their estates to Extensa to be developed and marketed as building land. Deed booklets contain all these land companies' sales acts between 1910 and 1985.

ambitious agents, finally, targeted the agglomeration as a whole.[12] The S.A. Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises (Extensa) was by far the most dominant player on the market. As touched upon in the previous chapter, it had been founded by the aristocratic family della Faille de Waerloos in order to develop the Brandt neighborhood on one of their noble estates in 1910. Following this success, many members of Antwerp's landed aristocracy founded so-called land companies that all trusted their land to the firm Extensions et Entreprises in order to develop and sell it. On top of that, the firm itself significantly expanded its land holdings, and managed to urbanize considerable parts of many municipalities in the agglomeration. What had started as project for a single neighborhood soon became a practice grounded in the process of urbanizing the agglomeration at large. (Fig. 4.2)

The second group didn't really flourish until a 1924 law defining the legal modalities of co-ownership invigorated the apartment business in

Belgium. In the Antwerp context, apartment building swiftly became a preferred investment market for many bourgeois and industrial entrepreneurs with some spare capital. But apart from these adventurous individuals, a more professional scene of real estate agents was in the making. From the 1920s onward, a growing number of companies provided the agglomeration's main arteries with stately apartment buildings.[13] Some of these companies existed only briefly and built one or two buildings. Others, such as S.A. Amelinckx or the Société Belge Immobilière quickly expanded their activities, building an increasing portfolio of apartments in several of the country's cities. Again, these large companies managed to turn apartment building into a standard component of urbanization, both within and beyond the historical cores—often in partnership with developer-contractors emerging from the turn of the century onward, such as the N.V. Van Riel & Van den Bergh (1905) and the N.V. Vooruitzicht (1905).[14]

This broad landscape of real estate agents consisted of people of various backgrounds, ranging from landed aristocracy, bankers, industrialists, merchants, and contractors to bourgeois individuals. It seems as if the real estate sector in the agglomeration was evolving from "*un système de places à dominante petite-bourgeoise*" toward "*un système de places à dominante monopoliste*."[15] The sector evolved from serendipitous entrepreneurs collecting differential rent to more structural speculators collecting monopoly rent.[16] The more advanced stages of this professionalization would only be reached in the postwar era in Belgium.[17] Nevertheless, in the Belgian context, the episode of 'urbanizing the agglomerations' must be regarded as the coming of age of this new breed of professional real estate capitalists who managed to turn the production of housing into their prime business. Many of the big firms that ended up monopolizing the property boom in the 60s and 70s in Belgium, such as Amelinckx, Etrimo, Extensa, or Vooruitzicht, only to name a few, all have their roots in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

An urban revolution *avant la lettre*

For theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, the rise of real estate markets was a hallmark of what he called an urban revolution, marking the shift from "a period in which questions of economic growth and industrialization predominate to a period in which the urban problematic becomes decisive."[18] Arguably, the proliferation of real estate companies in the Antwerp

agglomeration expressed a similar shift from an industrial toward an urban society. So-called *cités industrielles*, complete with roads, sewers and services, provided by the industrial capitalist next to the company (such as Moretusburg in Hoboken) were gradually replaced by workers' quarters in the urban agglomeration built by new real estate capitalists under the auspices of the SCAA.[19] The clear choice for the spatial segregation of industrial expansion in the north and urban expansion in the southwest made the model of the *cité industrielle* right next to the firm obsolete anyway and pushed the responsibility of housing provision to society at large.

This transition from industrialization to urbanization as the main process of social transformation should be understood not as an historical caesura but rather as a slow transformation process implicated in the thick of time.[20] In the Belgian context, for instance, the 1889 law encouraging individual workers to save money in order to build their own house 'wherever and however they liked' exemplifies an early stage of this shift from industrialization to urbanization, as it promoted a life outside the sphere of the factory and industrial production.[21] In practice, however, the law resulted in the self-supply of housing clinging to existing infrastructures all over the country, requiring little coordination, resulting in a dispersed urban realm, and producing a society that commuted between the factory and the somewhat densified rural village.[22] Moreover, it was argued that the law still primarily treated the housing problem as part of the question of industrialization because patronages still had a significant part in the allocation of these houses.[23] The law thus symbolizes a 'half-and-half' transition from an industrial to an urban development logic, contributing to the development of a halfhearted urban territory.[24] Imposing maximum profit margins of 4 percent, the law minimized chances of creating a viable real estate market.[25] That may have kept housing away from total commodification, but it also explains why development schemes generally remained very limited in scope.[26] This small-scale development model backed with minimal infrastructural coordination was simply inadequate to keep up with the housing question in the rapidly urbanizing agglomerations. It was exactly in this institutional gap, with no other housing laws in place, that urban real estate markets boomed in the early twentieth century agglomerations. The Belgian episode of urbanizing the agglomerations heralded an early stage of the 'urban revolution' that would rage throughout the entire twentieth century. It was a pertinent moment in history in which 'housing' explicitly presented itself as an 'urban question' and gradually became perceived, recognized, and treated as such.

Although the committee initially focused on workers' housing, it quickly found itself in the middle of negotiations with a variegated scene of real estate agents working for different social classes. Throughout its active period (1907–1939), the SCAA reviewed hundreds of building requests and planning applications by a diverse group of landlords, property developers, home-builders, and speculators throughout the far corners of the agglomeration. This chapter reconstructs the way in which the SCAA implicated these real estate speculators in their urban project, opening up the possibility of theorizing the nexus between urbanism and private real estate capitalism.[27] How did the SCAA deal with these capitalists turning to the production of space itself? How exactly did the committee try to redistribute surplus capital and urban rent over society at large? These questions unveil divergent ideological tendencies among the SCAA's members, as well as opposite attitudes toward a socially fair redistribution of the phenomenon of urban rent.

URBANIZING THE AGGLOMERATION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE URBANIZATION OF CAPITAL

Land and housing increasingly became part of a professional real estate markets at the turn of the twentieth century—not only in the city but throughout the entire agglomeration.[28] According to scholars such as Christian Topalov, the survival of real estate capitalism on such an important scale depends on the establishment of two conditions that escape direct control of real estate capitalists themselves: (1) the rise of an autonomous circuit of real estate capital and (2) a permanent flux of 'urbanizable land'.[29] This chapter demonstrates how several prominent SCAA members played key roles in facilitating both these conditions, paving the way for the exponential growth of real estate capitalism and the urbanization of capital in the Antwerp agglomeration.

The rise of an autonomous secondary circuit of capital

Many authors describe how real estate functions as a secondary circuit of capital, running parallel to the primary circuit of industrial production, which serves the nondurable assets market, or at least those that are less durable than buildings. The features of this secondary circuit of real

estate production are quite specific, such as exceptionally long circulation terms, a very slow return on investment, etc., which explains why the rise of an autonomous circuit of real estate capital became indispensable for a normal rotation of industrial capital, especially in times of industrial crisis.[30] In that context, urbanization has within neo-Marxist urban theory, and in particular in the work of David Harvey, been interpreted as the spatial crystallization of the circulation of capital, as the physical manifestation of the switch of capital flows from the primary to the secondary circuit of capital.[31]

In the Antwerp agglomeration too, urbanization was accompanied by the emergence of an autonomous secondary circuit of capital. It is hard to quantify this secondary circuit accurately.[32] Nevertheless, the work of economic historian Erik Buyst suggests its growing (relative) importance in comparison to the global index of industrial production in the first decades of twentieth century Belgium. Given the fact that Buyst's national approximations are based on an extrapolation of one hundred random municipalities spread throughout the entire nation, it seems more than reasonable to assume that this growing relative importance was even more prominent in the urbanizing agglomerations.[33] Moreover, it is revealing to interpret Buyst's findings against the background of the banking boom in Antwerp around the turn of the twentieth century. The number of Antwerp banks rose from six in 1893 to thirty-six in 1914, representing an increase by tenfold of the total amount of registered capital in barely two decades. Eight of these new banks explicitly targeted real estate as their prime business, six of which were founded between 1906 and 1913, when the ideas on urbanizing the agglomeration were becoming part of the public sphere in Antwerp.[34] In the following decades, the number of financial institutions with a registered office in Antwerp only increased, and by the early 1930s seventeen banks with a particular interest in real estate were active in the agglomeration, with telling names, such as, for instance, the Banque pour l'Extension du Grand-Anvers.[35] As private individuals could not yet obtain credits from these new institutions, it seems safe to assume that this transformation of Antwerp's financial institutions mainly catered to the activities of professional real estate players. Yet how were these institutions able to find their way into these new investment markets of real estate and urbanization so easily, and vice versa? To answer this question, it proved useful to move beyond a mere institutional analysis and to find out who these bankers were exactly, and what ties they had with each other and with a number of eminent SCAA members.

In his historical reconstruction of Antwerp's banking elites, Pieters argues that the uncertain economic climate at the turn of the twentieth century urged Antwerp's most important bankers to maintain a close-knit social network to share information.[36] These bankers consisted of a mix of industrialists, aristocrats, merchants etc., who all somehow managed to turn banking into their prime business and became pioneers of finance capitalism in the port city.[37] It is revealing that some of Antwerp's top-ranked bankers maintained close relations to some of the SCAA's members. Edouard Bunge (rank 1), for instance, was an acquaintance of Louis Franck, one of the SCAA's earliest advocates.[38] The daughter of Louis Vandeput (rank 4) was married to Paul Schobbens, brother of provincial clerk and SCAA secretary Joseph Schobbens. More importantly, however, several SCAA protagonists themselves were part of Antwerp's banking elite. Members such as Baron Delbeke (rank 28), Count de Brouchoven de Bergeyck (rank 47), Baron Cogels (rank 53), and mayors Alphonse Ullens De Schooten (rank 31) and Willy Friling (rank 73) were all bridging figures between the worlds of (spatial) policy and finance. The fact that they didn't belong to the absolute top of the banking network doesn't necessarily mean they were unimportant. Whereas the major players in the banking network were mostly involved in 'business as usual,' more peripheral members were usually looking for innovative markets to strengthen their position.[39] Arguably, the circumstances were just right for the more peripheral SCAA bankers to introduce the investment potential of urbanization to the world of Antwerp's *haute finance*. As a banker, business man, founder, and president of the SCAA, Auguste Delbeke in particular had an important role to play.

In his speech at the SCAA's inauguration in 1908, Delbeke openly warned the public that "colossal urbanization works" as those in the Antwerp agglomeration inevitably came with "certain dangers."[40] He referred to many fraudulent enterprises that "had no other purpose than to go after their fellow citizens' money [...] on the basis of false or unapproved certificates."[41] However, he also hastened to say that many companies were "not to be blamed and [...] should be respected because they could be a powerful help" in realizing the SCAA's urbanization mission. Delbeke stressed to always bear in mind and make sure that "new streets could not be opened without prior royal decrees or royal approval."[42] It was, of course, Delbeke himself, as SCAA president and right-hand man of King Leopold II, who was on top of this information. His reading of the nexus between real estate and urbanization spread quickly. As soon as

1907, Antwerp's first-ranked banker Edouard Bunge, for instance, wrote a letter to his brother pointing to the "large increase in the value of real estate in and around Antwerp."[43] It didn't take long before most Antwerp financiers had business interests in urbanization—not only in the commodification of land and the production of housing but also in supporting industries. Delbeke's bank Le Crédit Anversois, for instance, indicated the brick industry of the Rupel region next to Antwerp as a prime sector to secure rapid economic recovery in Belgium after WWI.[44] Banking elites and shareholders of the company Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises, for example, started to invest in the brick industry—which only increased their commercial interests in urbanizing the agglomeration.[45] If the nineteenth century in Belgium was marked by the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy,[46] the early twentieth century contained the germs of a transition from an industrial to an urban economy—at least in the subspace of the large agglomerations. Just as Hausmann's Paris would never have been built without a radical transformation of the city's financial institutions,[47] urbanizing the Antwerp agglomeration depended on a revolution of Antwerp's capital circuits and financial sector.

Providing a permanent flux of 'urbanizable land'

The permanent flux of 'urbanizable land' that real estate relies on mainly consists of two types of land: fallow, developable land and already cultivated but redevelopable land. Without a consistent flux of (re-)developable land, the sector simply ceases to exist. Researchers such as Richard Harris have argued that the transition from nonurbanized to urban land is particularly lucrative for real estate agents.[48] Yet in the very transition from nonurbanized to urbanized land, the real estate capitalist runs into the obstacle of a condition that is indispensable for his survival, but that he cannot reproduce or monopolize by himself. A property developer may turn a piece of land materially constructible, but he will never be able to solely reproduce the system of roads that open up his building site, nor the ensemble of agglomerated activities and use-values that he relies on to market his product.[49] To secure its continued activities, any professional real estate developer, in some way or another, needs to exercise control over the places and milieus where the conversion of land into urbanized land is legally determined.[50] In Belgium, professional real estate associations with the explicit aim of securing such control mechanisms were only founded in the postwar period.[51]

Such a professionally organized lobby was not yet necessary in the case of the Antwerp agglomeration, simply because the realms of spatial policy and real estate agency were intimately intertwined and naturally converged.

Most of the provincial governors (thus SCAA presidents or vice presidents) and some of the agglomeration's mayors themselves belonged to Antwerp's landed aristocracy that maintained close ties with large and up-and coming tract development companies. Governor Baron Cogels himself belonged to Antwerp's landed nobility—which also involved his eventual son-in-law and SCAA governor Baron Holvoet.[52] Upon his appointment as SCAA president, the latter even indicated that his father-in-law's land ownership might constitute a conflict of interest with his new post.[53] Branches of Governor Baron Van de Werve's family, in turn, were related to the della Failles who had founded the firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises.[54] Governor Count de Baillet Latour was the heir of vast estates next to Brasschaat in the north. He ended up founding the land-company Anvers-Donck, trusting his lands to the firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises. Several mayors, thus SCAA members, such as Willy Friling (Brasschaat), Alphonse Ullens de Schooten (Schooten), and Gonzague Moretus (Wilrijk) held a considerable amount of acres as well. Unsurprisingly, all these SCAA-related names appear as shareholders of real estate firms.

This nexus between policy and real estate circles is further exemplified in the activities of August Mennes. His comprehensive surveys for the agglomeration's new sewage system included the mapping of all the agglomeration's large properties and noble estates. He knew perfectly who owned which land, and it is no coincidence that Mennes services were later solicited by a large amount of these (aristocratic) landlords and real estate agents to draft development plans. (Fig. 4.3) Mennes considered negotiations

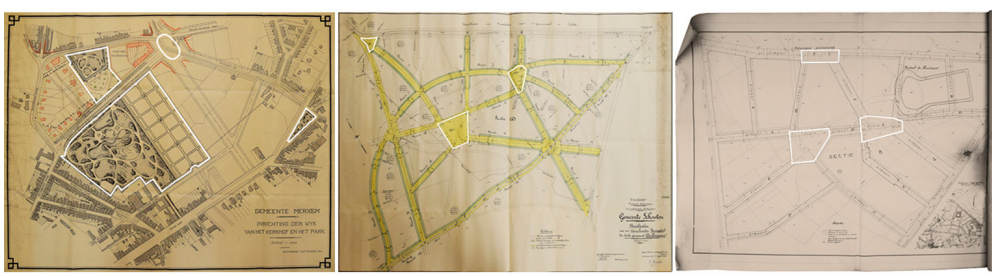


Figure 4.3 Plans developed by Mennes for private stakeholders in the context of Merksem (1924), Schoten (1926), and Mortsel (1928). Note how also these kind of plans generously incorporated different kinds of public spaces.



Figure 4.4 Collage by author with an overview of Mennes's development schemes for private landowners, projected on top of a selection of his municipal development plans. Mennes's role in urbanizing the agglomeration cannot be overrated.

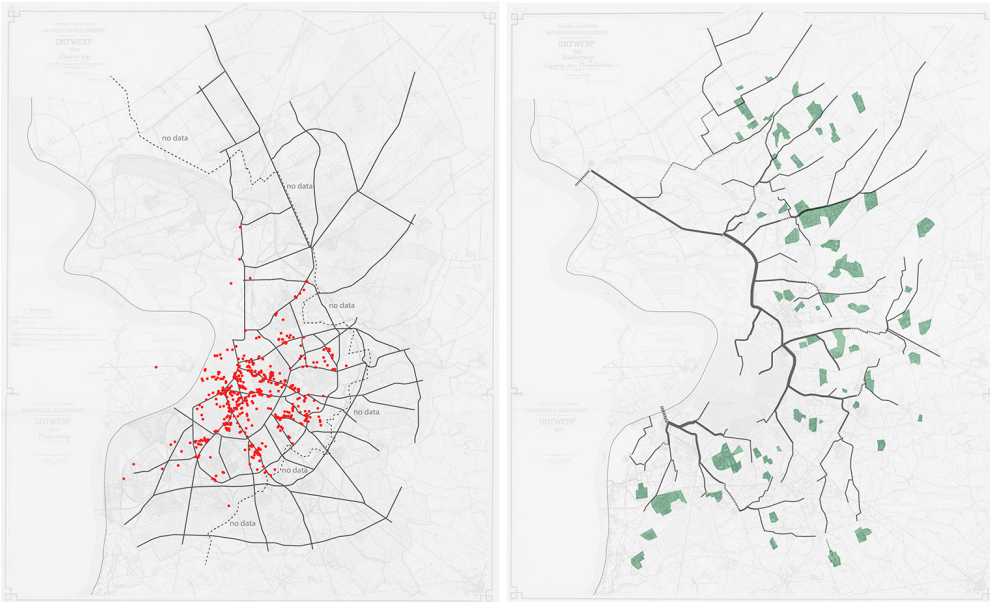


Figure 4.5 The SCAA's sewerage system and metropolitan grid as a prerequisite for the urbanization of capital. The sewerage system systematically unlocks all noble estates for tract development. The road grid attracts capital from industrial entrepreneurs in the form of tall apartment buildings.

with most of these large landowners an integral part of his mission to design the municipal development plans that he started drafting after 1925.[55] Moreover, due to his role as a confidant of the SCAA and the provincial authorities, hiring Mennes's services was almost a guarantee to success, a direct path to permit approval. His private practice boomed, and at its peak, his 'Office for a Metropolitan Antwerp' employed more than forty people.[56] Remarkably, Mennes himself owned strategic patches of land.[57] In his treatise *The Most Beautiful Country in the World*, Renaat Braem later recalled that Mennes at times proposed the development of new arteries and circular roads in-between municipalities that were 'accidentally' unlocking his own properties.[58] The anecdote is highly symbolic of the blurring boundaries between urbanization policies and real estate capitalism in the Antwerp agglomeration. Mennes's total production was anything but insignificant and ended up covering almost the entire agglomeration. (Fig. 4.4)

These close ties between the SCAA and real estate circles is expressed in some of the large infrastructural layers executed by the committee. Public investment in infrastructure literally caters to those locations

where some of the SCAA's aristocratic 'friends' owned land. Apart from serving existing municipalities, the new sewage plan designed by Mennes, for instance, systematically unlocked nearly all the agglomeration's noble estates, including those of the provincial governors, thus enabling the urbanization of their properties and the commodification of their land. (Fig. 4.5) The SCAA's metropolitan road grid, in turn, became a magnet for the rising apartment business that capitalized on inflated land values and development rights along modernized and enlarged road sections. (Fig. 4.5) Finally, large pieces of land between the metropolitan grid and the noble estates were taken on by local speculators, who sought to turn these leftover lands into new urban quarters. The SCAA in other words provided the hardware for different spatial frameworks that allowed capital to spread and urbanize across the agglomeration.

A pertinent critique of capitalist urbanization

The urbanization of the Antwerp agglomeration was yet another example of the deeply rooted overlap and conflict of interest between political and economic elites in early twentieth-century Belgium.[59] This reading of the SCAA's work matches the neo-Marxist interpretation of the urbanization of capital, particularly in the analysis of David Harvey, in which ruling elites devise collective strategies to consolidate their own financial interests, social status, and claim to power.[60] The SCAA's efforts to transform virgin into urban land raised land values and aristocratic, industrial, financial, and political elites extracted profit from it. The process strongly resembles what Harvey defined as the emergence of class-monopoly rent—i.e., the monopoly certain social classes exercise to extract rent from the production of housing and urbanization, often at the expense of lower social classes.[61] The SCAA's urbanization endeavours can indeed be regarded as a key moment when capital owners in pursuit of profit moved beyond industrial production and the workplace straight into the 'social factory' of everyday life. They turned housing into a commodified investment product, backed by the circulation of a secondary circuit of capital and the continuous provision of urban land by a state apparatus. Urbanism, in that sense, is nothing less than "the expression of the controlled power of finance capital, backed by the power of the state, over the totality of the production process."[62]

In neo-Marxist circles, and in the work of Lefebvre in particular, urbanism is thus confronted with the fierce criticism of being an ideologically

compromised project, underpinning and sustaining capitalist regimes, in which the urbanist is cast as a questionable figure, who is either compromised too or naïvely unaware of the fact that "space harbors an ideology (or an ideo-logic to be more precise)" and that all "urbanism is, although unwittingly, class-urbanism."[63] In such a context, urbanism's legitimacy is questioned, "because it masks a situation, because it conceals operations and blocks a view of the horizon, a path to urban knowledge and practice."[64] And when the urbanist realizes all this, "when he attains this level of knowledge, he becomes cynical or simply resigns."[65] The analysis so far confirms that some of the SCAA's more eminent (aristocratic) members were indeed compromised by the conflict of many interests. But what about other members, such as Joseph Schobbens and Paul De Heem, or Richard Lemeunier, who turned urbanizing the agglomeration into their arduous daily job and profiled as devoted policy-entrepreneurs rather than opportunistic financial entrepreneurs? Were they ideologically compromised too? Or naïvely unaware of the machinery they were part of? The remainder of this chapter will argue they were neither of the two. These men at least tried to (and sometimes managed to) walk the path to a more profound urban knowledge and practice, actively curbing the extractive nature of capitalist urbanization, redistributing class-monopoly rent over society at large.

AN URBANISTIC TURN: REDISTRIBUTING CLASS-MONOPOLY RENT

"Anywhere capitalism emerges," David Harvey wrote in *Social Justice and the City*, "urbanism follows in its footsteps."[66] In order to imagine forms of urbanism beyond capital's dominant directives, many scholars have explored concepts such as the everyday, lived space, the social poetics of appropriation, nonmercantile principles of auto-gestion, grass-root politics, self-governance, etc.[67] All these concepts allow for the definition of alternative urbanisms the rationale and meaning of which do not (fully) coincide with logics of capital accumulation. Most of these concepts, however, move beyond the realms of institutional politics and public governance—which were, after all, the institutions from which the SCAA operated. Yet the SCAA had other escape routes, other possibilities to explore alternative urbanisms, that lie dormant in political discussions on the concept of 'urban rent' that were part and parcel of political debate at the beginning of the twentieth century in Belgium.

Urban rent in Belgian politics

The 'concealed' mechanisms in capitalist societies that writers like Harvey, Lefebvre, Castells, Topalov, etc. 'rediscovered' and 'unveiled' through a rereading of Marx in the '60s and '70s seem to have been out in the open and in the middle of the political debate at the turn of the twentieth century. Volumes 2 and 3 of Marx's *Capital, a Critique of Political Economy*—in which he criticized the institution of private property in land and (urban) land rent—had just been published in French, between 1900 and 1902.[68] In the Belgian context, these translations seem to have (re-)inspired radical thinkers to question the legitimacy of private landownership and the inherent difficulties that principle posed for the building of socially just societies.[69] Yet these ideas appeared just as much in the rhetoric of a broad spectrum of mainstream politics and policymakers. Leading socialists like Emile Vandervelde and Camille Huysmans both referred to Marx's theories on urban rent in their works *La propriété foncière (1900)* and *La Plus-value immobilière dans les communes belges (1909)*—which was an early and thorough study on urban rent in the Belgian context. (Fig. 4.6) The work of Huysmans in particular is interesting here, since he later became an SCAA vice-president in his position of Antwerp mayor throughout the 1930s.

In their respective studies, Vandervelde and Huysmans both strongly distinguished between the use value of rural land and the exchange value of urban land. The city was, after all, the place where "the mercantile Bourgeois economy brings the value of land [*terre-valeur*] into the general circulation of capital."[70] The typical Marxist response to such an analysis is to dismiss the city and urbanism altogether.[71] Vandervelde, for instance, started to pursue a 'policy of avoidance', pleading for a *Retour aux champs* (1903), where he believed people were more able to live their life out of the stranglehold of capitalism. Obviously, such anti-urban policies weren't very useful for an organization such as the SCAA that was asked to urbanize an entire agglomeration. Huysmans's book, on the contrary, offered a more forceful urban perspective. He identified two main drivers of the increase of land value in Europe's early twentieth-century cities: population growth and public investment. Population growth inevitably caused scarcity resulting in increased land values, turning land into a "commercial asset" and investment product.[72] Concerning public investment, he fiercely criticized the situation in which "ever more public money was spent on leisure, hygiene, schools, public transport, etc.," whereas the

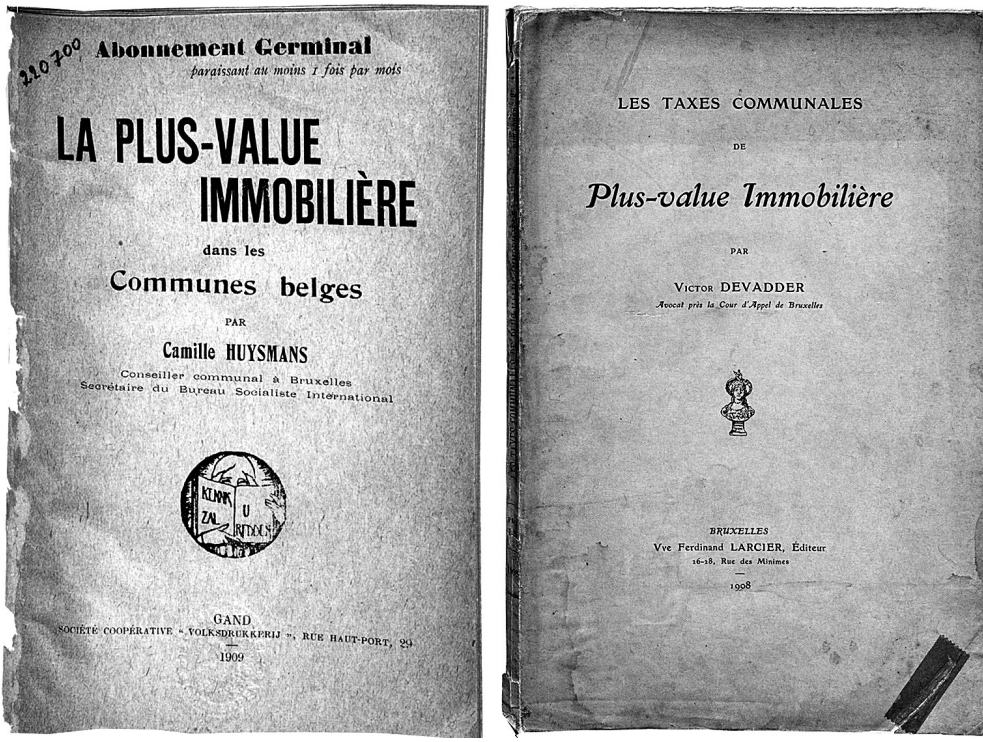


Figure 4.6 Victor Devadder (1908) and Camille Huysmans (1909) as two important, and opposing voices in the emancipated debates on the principle of taxing urban rent in the Belgian context.

"added value resulting from all this work enriched only the few private people who owned the adjacent land."[73] Yet rather than renouncing urbanism altogether, Huysmans explored alternative urban practices that he claimed were being implemented by "many municipalities that understood that it was necessary to put an end to this deceitful game, clearly saying to all property owners: 'Split the money, comrades'!"[74]

Huysmans referred to an amalgamation of municipal tax regulations all adhering to the principle that society and the urban community deserve "[their] fair share of the increase of land values."[75] He made sure to stress that municipal authorities of *all* political persuasions (conservative, liberal, socialist) had introduced such taxes, both in Belgium and abroad. Taxing urban rent, Huysmans suggested, was not some radically Marxist idea but a matter of common sense among all those who were familiar with urban policymaking. Nevertheless, these municipal taxes

on urban rent became the subject of heated debates in the chamber of representatives and in parliament.[76] At the center of the debate was the difference between (one-off) indirect taxes and (annually recurrent) direct taxes, as summarized in Devadder's *Les Taxes communales de plus-value immobilière*.[77]

Indirect taxes were levied by municipalities to cover the expenses of public works that had been executed and from which local roadside residents [*riverains*] enjoyed the benefits. These taxes were paid just once, when private individuals built their house, as a kind of indemnity to get access to urban amenities that had already been put in place. Such a tax existed, for instance, for the construction of pavements and utilities and was usually levied per running meter of facade. Another example were so-called taxes on 'constructions et reconstructions' in which municipalities categorized all their streets into several categories: the better a street was equipped and the higher it's category, and the larger the built-up volume, the more tax was due. Such taxes were perfectly legal and became widely accepted. Direct taxes were much more problematic. They were annually levied in advance to cover municipal loans for *planned* public expenses and were based on the sizes of as yet unbuilt properties. Minister of Interior Affairs Schollaert, however, argued that "a tax on the physical parameters of a property instead of on its actual revenue went against the basic principle of the direct tax system."[78] Moreover, the 'revenue' of unbuilt plots was perceived as nonexistent, or at least highly hypothetical as long as they were not built and not generating any 'real' income.[79] Finally, Devadder argued that the accumulation of several direct and indirect taxes at times lead to "blatant injustices" or "vindictive exactions"[80]—an opinion reiterated by Belgian planner Raphaël Verwilghen in the context of the SCAA's project.[81]

This careful reading of the historical discussions on urban rent yields three observations. First, the proliferation of many different taxes caused resentment. Second, only taxes on added value related to public investment were considered, whereas taxes on surplus values caused by population growth and growing scarcity over time completely remained out of scope. And third, tax regulations neatly followed the distinction between urban land and rural land: levying post hoc taxes on built property in a context already urbanized was acceptable (indirect taxes), while levying annual land-based taxes in order to prefinance the urbanization of virgin territories was heavily criticized (direct taxes). Huysmans's 1909 bill on urban rent tried to settle the discussion regarding the first two observations.

He suggested one single indirect tax principle on urban rent, to be levied each time a building switched owners, and which would address the added value of both public investment and increasing scarcity.[82] Yet, even a straightforward figure like Huysmans left the question of levying direct taxes on unbuilt land unaddressed in the end, an omission that shows how much the typical urban-rural divide prevailed in thinking about the city, exemplified here in the rather artificial opposition between the use value of rural and the exchange value of urban land. This left the SCAA in a difficult starting position, as the committee experienced firsthand that urbanizing the agglomeration would mainly revolve around capitalizing on the transition from rural to urban land. Moreover, although the question of urban rent remained a recurrent topic in political debates up until World War II, it never resulted in a cohesive law.[83] Huysmans's bill never passed, either. As a consequence, taxes on urban rent remained an ad hoc, local, and contested matter of concern.

Uniform tax regulations for the agglomeration?

As a doctor of law, Joseph Schobbens was very well read into social debates on urban rent, which he put on the SCAA's agenda as early as 1909.[84] The epigraph to this chapter clearly shows that Schobbens knew municipalities needed direct land-based taxes to take the lead in urbanization. Moreover, Schobbens understood that "it would be a great advantage (…) if all municipalities in the Antwerp agglomeration could agree to adopt one and the same system." Municipalities "not setting taxes at all to avoid delays in building activity" would severely "harm their budget," whereas municipalities setting taxes too high "would put a halt to the expansion and embellishment of their territory."[85] Schobbens was very much aware that the "the Ministry of the Interior had never admitted this (direct tax) system and even condemned it as unconstitutional" but added that "the Court of Cassation in turn had recognized it as legal."[86] Schobbens found a way out of this ambiguous situation in two circulars from the Ministry of the Interior allowing "municipalities to levy a (direct) annual charge (…) in anticipation of payment of indirect taxes (as soon as residents had built along realized streets)—i.e., a tax equivalent to the amount of interest and depreciation the municipalities themselves owed to their lenders."[87] The SCAA modelled a *Règlement-Type* after these guidelines, comprising a direct tax on as yet undeveloped land—paid annually to cover the annuities of

municipal loans for public works—and an indirect tax on built-up parcels, levied once to settle outstanding amounts.[88] When Schobbens submitted his proposal to the Ministry of the Interior for approval, Minister Schollaert himself replied that the "excellent draft for tax regulations [did] not raise any objection from the point of view of administrative case law."[89]

Few mayors, however, accepted the SCAA's invitation to a collective discussion on the joint *Règlement-Type*, and by 1912, it became clear that "few municipalities had considered it a good momentum to adopt these regulations."[90] A number of municipalities started to introduce their own regulations, but in general, these regulations only considered the more common indirect taxes.[91] In the early 1920s, Schobbens tried to put the idea of a joint regulation back on the table.[92] However, a shared approach toward taxing urban rent as an integrated instrument for urbanizing the agglomeration was never adopted, not even after a 1935 law empowered provincial governors to settle municipal taxes.[93] Perhaps, the close ties between local mayors and aristocratic landowners complicated the implementation of direct land-based taxes. Nor was the interwar economic climate very favorable, as construction taxes were thought to slow down postwar reconstruction.[94] Yet this setback wouldn't stop Schobbens and his companions. It just prompted them to come up with more ingenious strategies at project level. The following sections recollect three different methods the SCAA devised to collectivize the profits of urban rent, turning the urbanization process into something more than the sum of private real estate interests and class-monopoly rent.

The municipalization of land

In volume 3 of *Capital*, Marx wrote that "from the point of view of a higher economic form of society, private ownership of land by single individuals would, over time, appear quite as absurd as private ownership of one man by another."[95] In the Belgian context similar views surfaced in proposals for the 'municipalization' or even 'nationalization' of land at the turn of the twentieth century.[96] These radical ideas also trickled down into the rhetoric of people like Huysmans, who explained that a city had "the greatest interest in holding on to and developing its own land, to be able to benefit itself from the added value of urban land."[97]

The SCAA's rhetoric and actions breathed a similar activism. As soon as the fortification walls were demilitarized, the SCAA urged the

municipalities of Antwerp, Berchem, and Borgerhout to acquire as much land as possible just outside the ramparts, because it would yield a guaranteed added value once "the former bulwark was being urbanized."[98] The eventual resale of these lands after development would by and large cover all expenses and the public costs of urbanization. Antwerp secretary Geyselinck frankly admitted that it was only thanks to the committee's timely advice that the city succeeded in acquiring important stretches of land outside its former walls, a vast "*opération immobilière* exceeding 200 million francs."[99] Although the urban reconversion of the bulwark never really materialized, these high expenditures didn't do the city any harm in the long run. Following a plan that engineer Lemeunier had drafted for the expropriated land already in 1912, the city successfully developed and resold these lands at a great profit after they had hosted the 1930 World Fair. (Fig. 4.7) The Tentoonstellingswijk (exhibition district) became a residential neighborhood with terraced houses of two to three floors, built on plots averaging 175m² that were offered for sale by the city at the price of 250 Fr./m².[100] This was a multiple of the rates the city had once paid itself, but were nevertheless considered "extremely low prices."[101] A bit further, along the Jan van Rijswijcklaan, for instance, prices went a lot higher. Large apartment buildings up to eight floors were erected on plots ranging from 350 to 700m² that were for sale between 400 and 600 Fr./m². The SCAA's keen advice had put the city in an ideal position to invoke private real estate capital in covering the public cost of urbanization, and what initially seemed an insane expense became a very profitable investment twenty-five years later.

With land in its own possession, the city also had a lot of control over the diversity of the realized housing supply: low-, middle-, and high-class; for rent or for sale; private, collective, or cooperative, etc. The Kiel neighbourhood was "inhabited by the working class, for whom the municipal administration built large complexes of 4 to 5 floors" much appreciated for their "sanitary conditions at low rents."[102] The terraced single family houses in the Tentoonstellingswijk, just around the corner, were "inhabited by the prosperous bourgeoisie consisting of municipal officials in particular."[103] Fancy apartments were a "much wanted" purchase among the upper bourgeoise along the Jan van Rijswijcklaan a bit further afield, where it "never took long before occasional 'for rent' signs disappeared."[104] The detached villa's in the high-end Brandt district across the street, in turn, became the home of "Antwerp's high society, of big traders, importers, exporters, financiers, etc."[105] Antwerp's high-society,

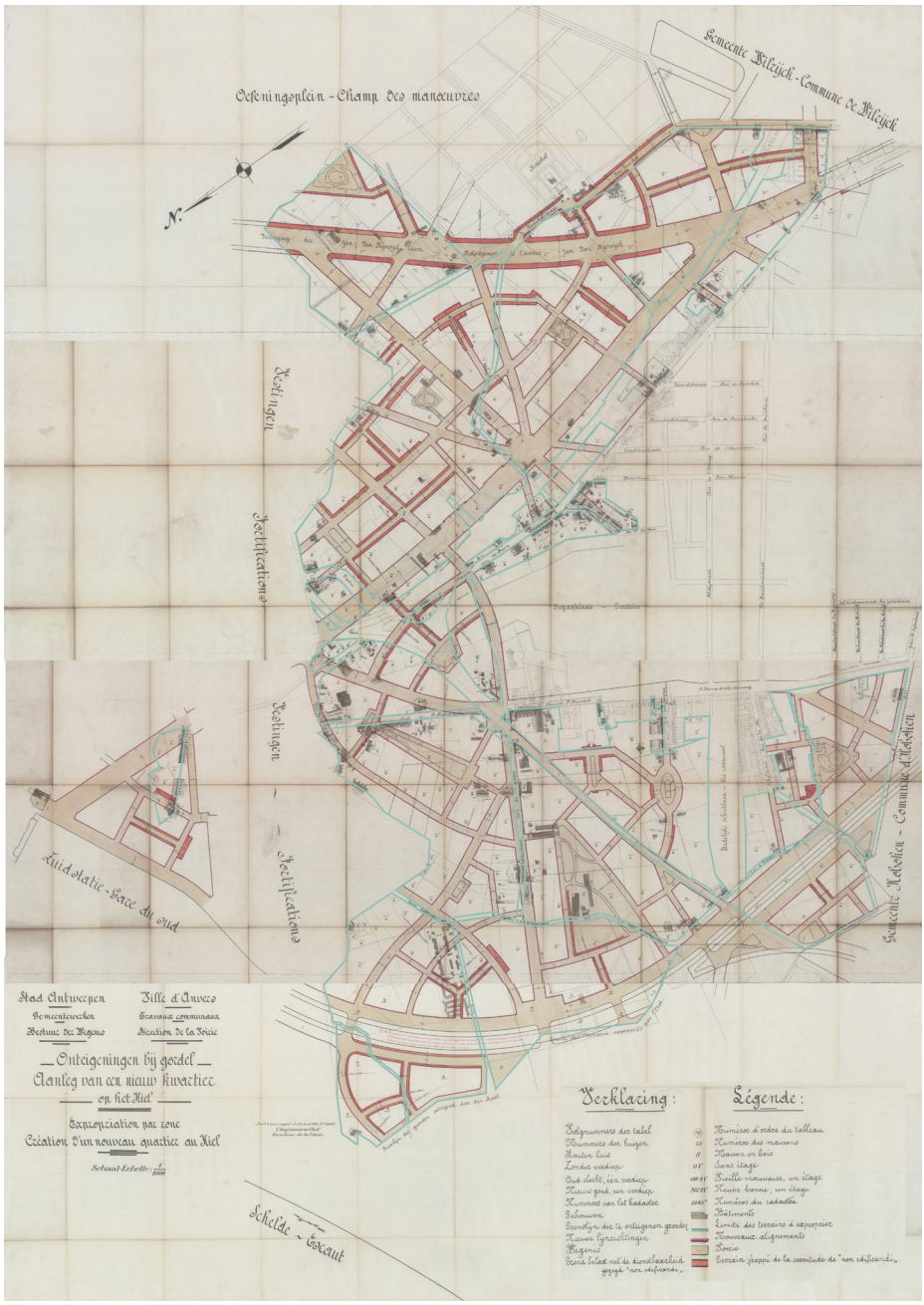


Figure 4.7 The municipalization of land: swift and large-scale expropriations in Antwerp extra muros at the SCAA's instigation. It allowed city-engineer and SCAA member Lemeunier (1912) to develop fragments of a comprehensive neighborhood.

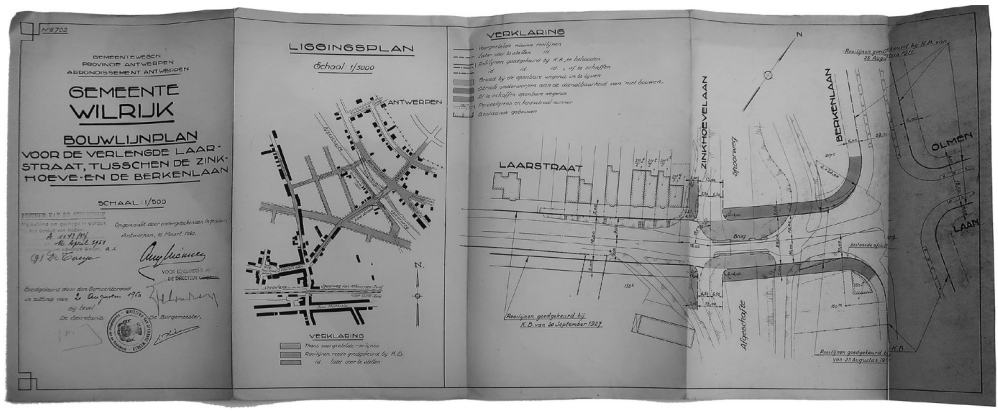


Figure 4.8 Typical municipal alignment plan by Mennes for the municipality of Wilrijk.

bourgeoisie, middle, and working classes virtually lived side by side on municipalized land, a strategy that successfully mitigated the effects of urbanization as a process of uneven development.[106]

In retrospect, it is a pity that the city eventually resold its urbanized land, renouncing the possibility to cash in on the continued increase of urban rent over time. But it must be acknowledged that the far-sighted intervention of the SCAA put the city at the helm of urbanization. The SCAA—and Joseph Schobbens in particular—advised other municipalities to expropriate strategic patches of land as well.[107] Such large-scale expropriations, however, remained a costly affair that municipalities other than Antwerp, such as Berchem and Borgerhout, simply could not afford.[108] Alternatively, alignment plans were devised in smaller municipalities to allow them to exert some control over municipal land without reverting to costly expropriations. (Fig. 4.8) But the SCAA's main strategy was in developing different tactics that engaged private capital in covering the public costs of urbanization.

Negotiating urban fortunes

Initiatives to urbanize the agglomeration usually came from private landowners who were keen on valorizing their landed property.[109] The SCAA's mission was not to let the agglomeration slip into an amalgamation of private claims but to forge a number of collective urban layers or fortunes out of them. To achieve that goal, the committee had to engage in

continuous negotiations with major real estate players, convincing them to safeguard parts of their estates for collective use or to contribute to the building of urban infrastructures as prerequisites for development. The long-term cooperation between the SCAA and the private firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises exemplifies the committee's modus operandi well. As explained earlier, the SCAA convinced the firm to sell 80ha of their estates to the city of Antwerp as a public park for 12 million francs—a considerable amount, but still a fraction of the land's potential value as building plots. The SCAA, however, gave permission to the firm to develop the remainder of their land as a *parc habité*, stressing that "the added value yielded by the preservation and creation of public parks" would effectuate "a considerable increase in the value of all adjacent plots."[110] (Fig. 4.9) Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises indeed managed to sell 1000m² plots around its first park at an average price of 100 Fr/m² in the 1920s, 200 Fr/m² in the 1930s—and 1500 Fr/m² in the 1960s—realizing sales prices up to three hundred times the original land price of 5 Fr/m² in 1910.[111] The SCAA urged the city to "reserve vast spaces near the park,"[112] so that Antwerp too would be "able to combine its purchase with a real estate transaction that enabled it to recoup the bulk of its expenses."[113] Both on the landowners' side, and on the city's side, the park paid for itself to a certain extent.

For the development of Boekenbergpark in Deurne, Schobbens, and De Heem worked out more sophisticated, if controversial, legal modalities. They convinced Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises to cede 20ha of their 60ha estate to the municipality of Deurne for free. The municipality, in turn, would then expropriate 20ha of adjacent land from landowners who would otherwise unduly benefit from the new park. This was an expropriation in the 'public interest' yet at the expense of the real estate company that could use it to keep its original 60ha of developable land, but now all lying around a new park, the added value of which covered the costs of expropriation. The municipality was to coordinate public works, which were nevertheless financed by the real estate group. Municipality and firm then agreed on average lot sales prices that would cover all costs and provide an acceptable profit margin. In the case of unforeseen circumstances or disappointing sales, the municipality could always develop an additional piece of the park to restore financial equilibrium—serving as a buffer against potential risks.[114] Even if Schobbens worked out a legally sound model contract that would yield a free public park, several members of the municipal council distrusted his construction and voted

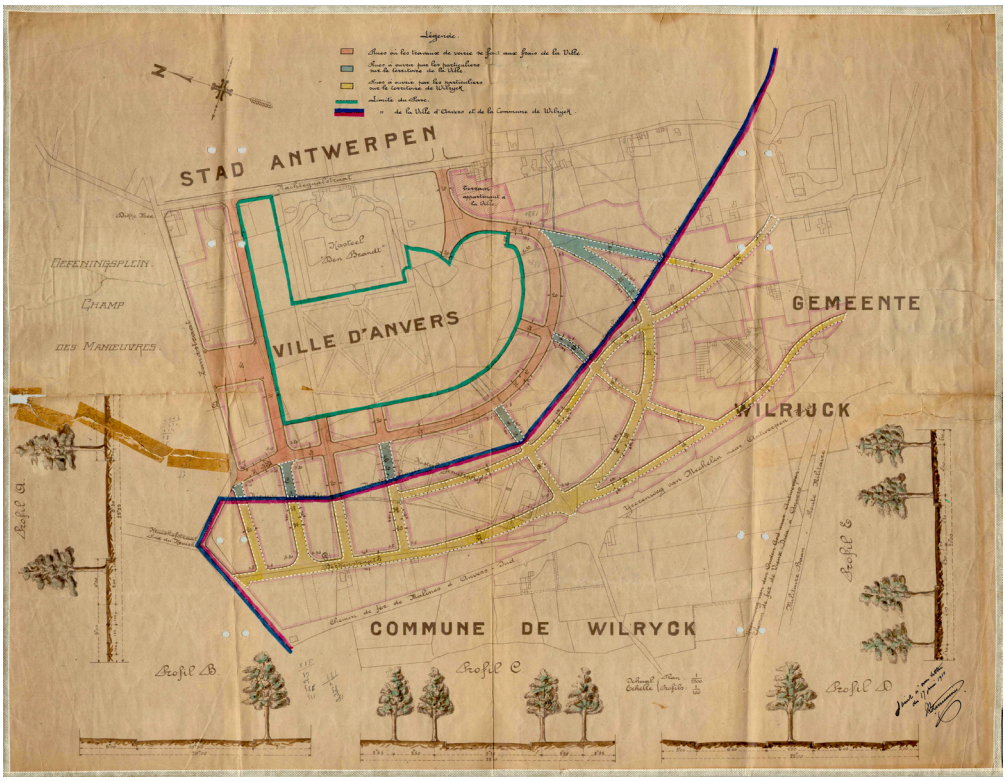


Figure 4.9 Map by city engineer and SCAA member Lemeunier (1910). The streets bordering and giving access to the park were at the expense of the city. All other streets (traced with white dotted lines), were at the expense of the private developer—including utilities and trees.

against it—to the SCAA's great discontent.[115] Instead, Schobbens and De Heem reverted to the familiar recipe behind their early success of the Nachtegalenpark, which by then already started to prove that the development of parks generated so much added value that the landowners in Deurne and Borgerhout were willing to sell large portions of their estates as future parks to the municipalities for a soft price. Even of the park Te Boulaer, which was eventually bought for a record sum, De Heem said he did "not believe that 13 Fr/m² [was] an exaggerated price" and that on the contrary, he was "convinced that the real estate company could have gotten more cash out of its land by exploiting it to the fullest."[116] This statement shows how much developing parks always remained a difficult financial balancing act, in which the merits of the SCAA cannot be overemphasized, especially given the context of fierce land speculation.

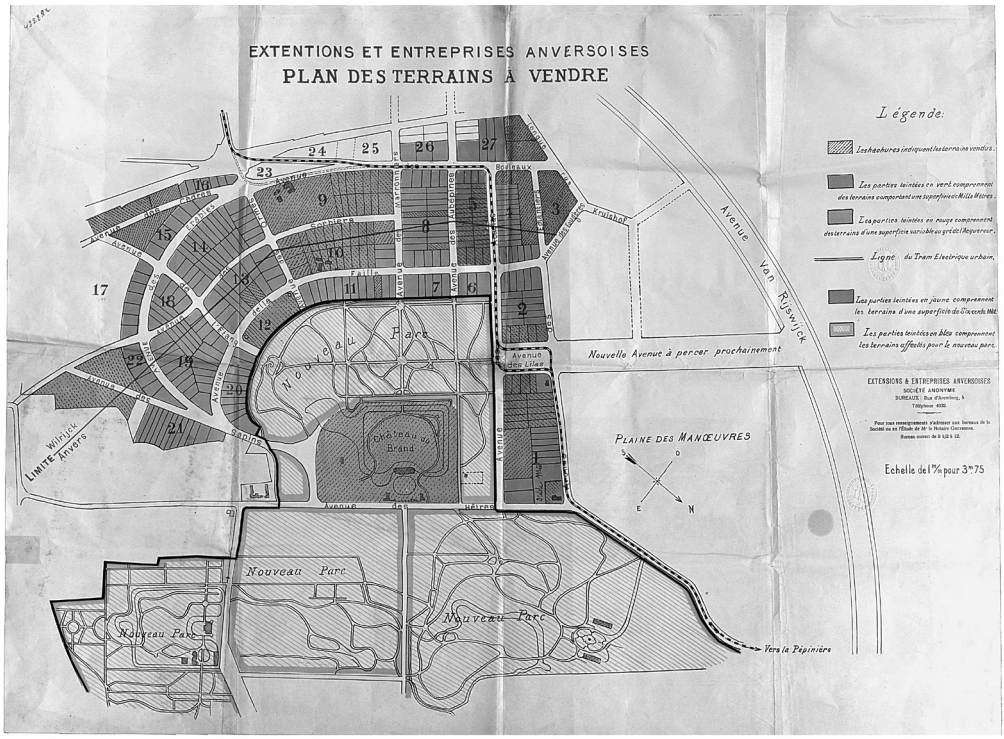


Figure 4.10 A sales plan of the Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises shows how the urban park and tram, running through the right side of the plan, are 'sold' along with the private parcels.

To ensure public accessibility to the new parks, the committee also had its say in the design of the surrounding housing estates. In general, public streets bordered the new parks which greatly benefitted their visibility and publicness. Radial streets opened onto park entrances as much as possible, a strategy that was continued in the more distant developments—guaranteeing optimal permeability to the new parks from the wider surroundings.[117] Interestingly, the SCAA passed part of the expenditures for these public street layouts on to private developers. In case of the neighborhood Brandt, Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises was responsible for the construction of most of the roads, including tree plantations, sewage systems, utilities, public lighting, etc.[118] In this way the SCAA steadily worked toward a permeable and shared urban fabric with the help of private capital. (Fig. 4.10) Over the years, the SCAA steadily finetuned conventions on what could reasonably be expected from real estate developers and homeowners.[119] Even in the remotest of places,

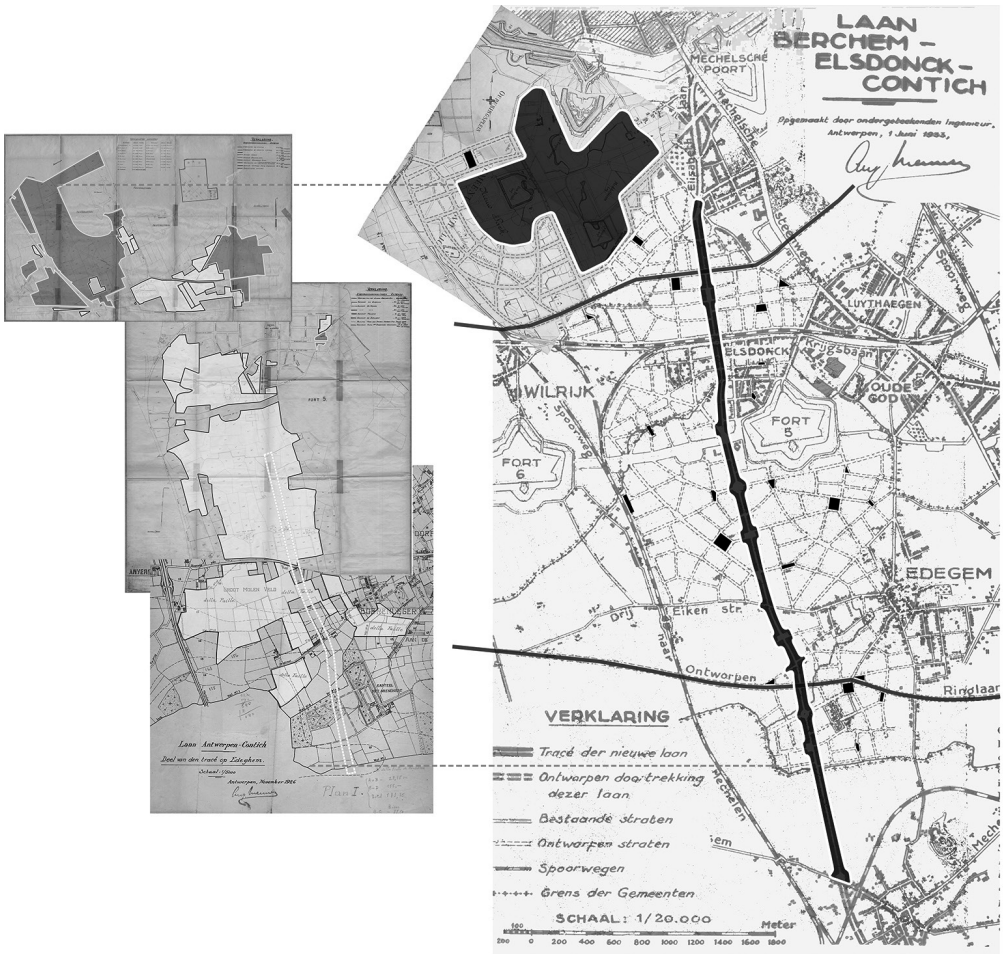
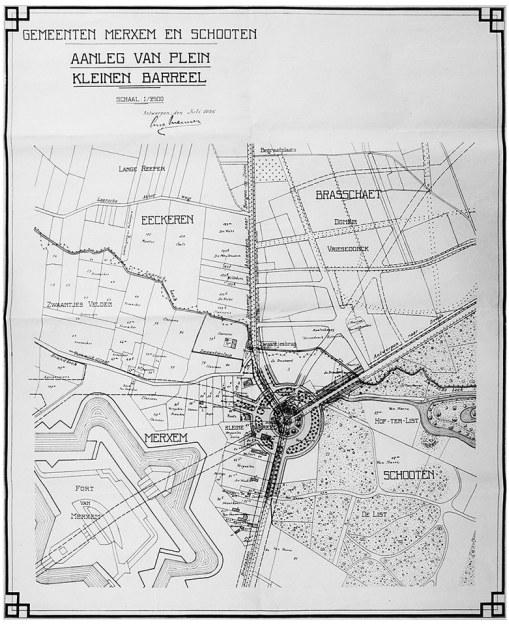


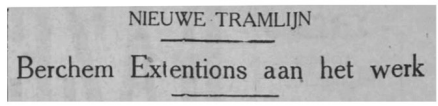
Figure 4.11 Left: collage by author of various notarial plans, showing the initial land ownership of the della Faille family (Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises, dark spots) and the later expansion of their landed empire between Antwerp and Kontich (whitish spots) along a projection of the future Prins Boudewijnlaan (white dashed line) on a Mennes map. Right: collage by author of August Mennes's development plans for the firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises (ca. 1930) between Antwerp and Kontich. The designs include parceled plots (dashed lines), and negotiated urban fortunes such as the Nachtegalenpark (dark cross-shape), the Prins Boudewijnlaan (running north-south), two circular boulevards (running east-west), and numerous public squares (black spots).

private landowners were forced to cede land for the construction of public roads and squares. They were expected to finance the costs of road construction, including pavements, roadside plantations, public lighting, etc.[120] The SCAA even advocated financial contributions for the construction of sewers, including treatment and pumping stations.[121] But the lack of an overall standard tax system also remained somewhat of a problem. Stakeholders who felt disadvantaged because of inconsistent regulations were making their voices heard, contested overly heavy indemnities, and tried to bargain on their development charges.[122] It remained a constant struggle for the SCAA to negotiate private contributions over and over again in each and every project.

The SCAA even managed to leverage private capital to build major roadways on a metropolitan scale. After its first few projects, the firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises, for instance, managed to assemble an impressive acreage of land that reached from the city of Antwerp, over Berchem, Wilrijk and Edegem, all the way down to Kontich. (Fig. 4.11) To unlock and develop this land, the firm commissioned Engineer August Mennes to design a large boulevard in 1926, which eventually became the Prins Boudewijnlaan that gave access to many new neighborhoods. All municipalities involved endorsed the importance of this new road that would firmly connect them with each other and with the historic city of Antwerp.[123] Local residents had long been campaigning for the avenue as it would put an end to lengthy detours to surrounding villages, for daily groceries and commutes to school and work. Even the priest of Edegem was in favor, as a lot of his parishioners showed up too late in church because they had to walk 45 minute detours every Sunday.[124] As the municipalities themselves did not have sufficient funds, the SCAA invoked the help of the private firm Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises to fulfill these public needs. The committee and its engineer August Mennes chaired "thousands of meetings involving more than 20 administrations"[125] to agree upon a final trajectory that met everyone's wishes. Mennes asserted that the new artery would give "an extra value to adjacent properties" and he had little doubt he could get the "landowners to make sacrifices corresponding to this added value."[126] The firm ended up ceding a total amount of 22ha (!) of land for free to ensure the new road's right-of-way. The avenue's total construction cost of nearly 18 million Frs., including utilities, was fully financed by the Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises and its associated companies. Municipalities only contributed the exact amounts they could later recover through state subsidies. The whole operation can best be




Wat privaat initiatief vermag
De nieuwe laan Berchem-Elsdonk
Kontich


NIEUWE TRAMLIJN
Berchem Extentions aan het werk


Een reusachtig ontwerp in de uitbreiding van Groot Antwerpen
De algeheele aaneensluiting van Antwerpen, Hoboken en Wilrijck. — Wat privaat initiatief zelfs in vollen crisistijd vermag.

Figure 4.12 What private capital can achieve when cleverly deployed in the public interest: the private financing of new tram lines (Berchem Extensions, 1930), a giant inter-municipal development scheme on the borders of Antwerp, Hoboken and Wilrijk (1931), the construction and embellishment of large new avenues and junctions (map 1933), etc.

understood as a far-reaching public-private cooperation in which private capital was solicited to fulfil the aspirations of an urbanizing society at large. The whole operation not only realized an important new branch of the metropolitan grid, but also accommodated the trajectories of two of the SCAA's most important circular roads, while yielding a public park and many local squares. (Fig. 4.11) A 1933 newspaper article "warmly congratulated (…) the promoters of the new avenue, for giving a clear proof of what private initiative is capable of achieving when cleverly aligned with the common interest."[127]

Such a large public-private cooperation was not a one-off exception. On many occasions, the SCAA involved private entrepreneurs in realizing parts of the metropolitan grid. The Société du Nouveau Garden-City du parc d'Anvers contributed to the enlargement of the right of way of the old Military Road[128]; the Société Anonyme de L'Agglomération Anversoise ceded land to ensure the passage and building of new intermediary ring road; or the company *Deurne Extensions* contributed to the building of the radial Avenue Antwerp-Wijnegem, only to mention a few.[129] A company

like Berchem Extensions in turn co-financed the tram service on the Diksmuidelaan connecting the city to the Airport in Deurne. In the north of the agglomeration, where the SCAA planned majestic infrastructures, banker and former mayor of Brasschaat Willy Friling stated that landowners from the Antwerpen-Donck consortium all had "a vested interest in having beautiful new arteries and that, recognizing the added value it would give to their land, most of them would even be prepared to intervene in its creation, for example by freely ceding all the land needed for the works."[130] He had no doubt that "all landowners [would] be easy-going and generous towards the public authorities to help them achieve their goals."[131] (Fig. 4.12) Wealthy landowners did not seem to bother to save some capital for the agglomeration's splendor—boosting the value of their own habitat, but also that of an urbanizing society at large. The SCAA thus managed to capture private resources for the development of public fortunes such as parks, large planted avenues or junctions and picturesque residential streets including all necessary utilities. It were the committee's tireless coordination efforts, that in the long were able to curb speculative urbanization into something more than the spatial manifestation of the circulation of capital.

A socially fair redistribution of urban fortunes

In the 'Housing Question', Engels wrote that "the building industry—which is offered a much better field for speculation by more expensive houses—builds workers' houses only by way of exception."[132] A general truth that also prevailed in the Antwerp agglomeration. Around the public parks, for instance, private developers usually built housing for the upper classes. Despite the SCAA's pioneering efforts to promote housing and comfortable garden districts for the working class well before World War I, many private developers and municipalities were reluctant to build them.[133] Exceptionally, private companies, such as Conforta, did build workers' houses, but most often, the working class was left in the lurch by the private sector, explaining why the SCAA turned working-class housing into one of its explicit objectives. Despite earlier efforts, this mission would only gain traction after several public housing companies were founded in the wake of the 1919 law on social housing in Belgium. Joseph Schobbens, an early inspirer of social housing in the agglomeration, soon became a familiar face with most of the Antwerp



Figure 4.13 Social housing schemes, on well-located plots, including communal squares, granting workers' families access to the urbanizing agglomeration. Picture of 'the children of the Drossaardplein', Hoboken, 1928.

housing companies,[134] for whom the SCAA became a strategic partner in their search for well-located and affordable land.[135] The committee's precise knowledge of the agglomeration's urbanization dynamics was of crucial importance. Sometimes the SCAA advised municipalities and their public housing companies to negotiate a right of preemption with certain landowners in order to acquire strategic pieces of land over time.[136] In these cases, the lack of an overall and publicly known development plan turned out to be an advantage.

Thanks to the SCAA's keen advice, a number of working-class neighborhoods were built in the close vicinity of public parks, lush boulevards, and public transport, such as Weerstandlaan (1921), Boterlaarbaan (1921), Elsdonck (1922). It is telling that the main street of one of the best-located garden suburb developments for workers, the garden district Weerstandlaan right next to the park Rivierenhof, was named after Joseph Schobbens. After all, it was mostly *his* park (see chapter 3) and *his* concern to turn it into an inclusive urban habitat. The commission sought the fairest possible distribution of positive and negative externalities across

urban society, an essential prerequisite for achieving more socially just cities.[137] Wherever possible, the committee tried to redistribute the urban fortunes it had negotiated over society at large, defending the right to the agglomeration for the working class. (Fig. 4.13) As such, it steadily worked toward an urban and social realm that was far removed from Prost's 1910 masterplan pitting a rich South against a poor North. In general, different neighborhoods with specific socioeconomic characteristics remained rather small in size and composed a finely grained mosaic that was more or less evenly distributed over the agglomeration's urban fortunes.

A JOB WELL DONE, BUT WHAT IF?

This chapter revealed that the SCAA comprised people with different socioeconomic backgrounds, all coming with their own different personalities, convictions, and ideologies. Provincial governors and the minister of public works belonged to the same banking and real estate elites that people like Schobbens and De Heem were 'fighting' every day, in their attempt to redistribute urban rent over society at large. Unsurprisingly, these circumstances caused tensions within the SCAA's ranks, such as Schobbens's and Holvoet's public clash over the latter's landed interests in an urban development project on the Left Bank.[138] The fact that Holvoet's and Schobbens's names were given to streets in very different residential neighborhoods, built for Antwerp's high society and working class respectively, illustrates this antagonism well.

In a political context that was twisted between normalizing and reviling taxes on urban rent, the SCAA's more engaged members realized more than what seemed possible. In retrospect, their main achievement may have been their ability to reason beyond the then-prevailing urban-rural divide—and their swift understanding that the so-called use value of rural land quickly gained sky-high 'exchange value' in the context of the urbanizing agglomeration. They witnessed front row how aristocratic elites set up the urbanization of virgin land as a coordinated machinery deploying public money for the realization of class-monopoly rent. In response, Schobbens in particular scrutinized the legal context, in seeking legitimate ways to levy taxes on virgin land that was on the verge of urbanization. Despite repeated efforts, the SCAA never succeeded in imposing a general and unambiguous taxation system. Yet in many projects, tailor-made solutions of all kinds nevertheless brought about a certain collectivization

of urban rent. The members of the study committee were cunning enough to curb the capitalist motives of a growing group of real estate players. The urban fortunes thus created can best be described as 'positive externalities' creating shared social values outside the internal logic of single economic enterprises. Once obtained, the SCAA tried to redistribute these externalities evenly over the urbanizing society at large, underpinning a certain *vivre ensemble* in the agglomeration, for which it deserves credit. Arguably, the SCAA was key in balancing what Bourdieu called the state's left hand (frontline elected politicians answerable to their constituents) and right hand (a 'state nobility' of unelected, unaccountable financiers, bankers and lawyers who are not in any way answerable to the needs and desires of ordinary citizens). Whereas these 'hands' increasingly lost touch after World War II, with the left hand dwindling while the right hand gained more and more control over the political agenda, it seems that under the SCAA's reign, left and right hand were still able to fathom and balance each other's motives and strategies.

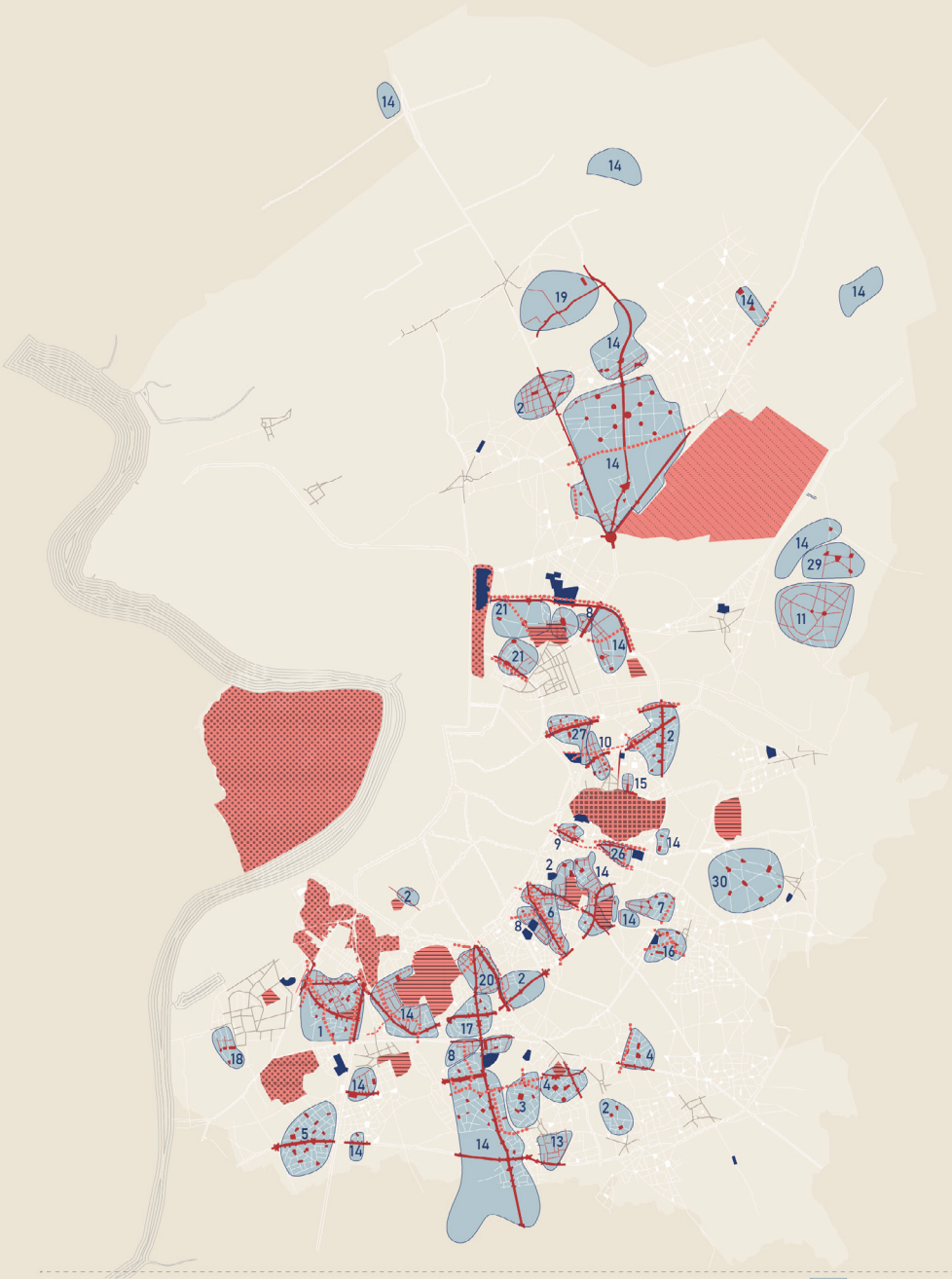
Yet it is difficult not to conclude this chapter on a critical note. As argued, Huysmans saw two main reasons for the emergence of urban rent: improvement in public infrastructures and rising population densities causing scarcity in the urban housing stock. The work of the SCAA, however, was entirely focused on levying taxes on urban rent resulting from public works, while taxing surplus values resulting from densification over time completely faded into the background. In this way, huge added value effects still remained untaxed. A firm like Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises may have paid some 18 million Fr for the construction of the Prins Boudewijnlaan in the early 1930s—a major investment indeed. But it was able to sell most of the 6km² of land that was opened up by the avenue in the postwar era, at a (prudently estimated) average price of 200 Fr/m²,[139] realizing a total income of some 1,2 billion Fr! The 'hypothetical added value' Devadder referred to when he criticized taxes "that aimed to hit hypothetical, non-realized urban rent (…) of land that hasn't been built yet and that probably won't be covered with buildings for a long time to come"[140] appeared to be very real after all. A tax policy that ignores these temporal aspects in the long run threatens to be little more than a small drop in the ocean. In the Belgian context, taxes on urban rent all in all remained rather limited in scope when compared to taxes in the realm of industrial production.[141] That is, after all, evident in the massive switching of capital from the first to the secondary circuit during the Great Depression of the 1930s—a typical response to primary economic

stagnation and a legal way to avoid so-called excessive taxes. But it is also reflected more explicitly in the criticism of the rather marginal contribution of real estate ownership to national economic recovery in the interwar period—as economist Maurice Janssens demonstrated in his 1939 book.[142]

It makes one wonder what could've happened if Huysmans's more straightforward proposal had consistently been applied in the large urban agglomerations in Belgium and in Antwerp in particular. What if levying taxes on urban rent in the agglomeration had been unhindered by the provinces' more conservative forces—by governors retained by conflicts of landed interest? What if the municipal boundaries had been redrawn not only to accommodate the industrialization process in the north but also to support the urbanization process in the south-east? What if, in short, urbanizing the agglomeration and levying taxes on urban rent had been the responsibility of a more progressive administration of the city of Antwerp under Huysmans's rule between 1933 and 1940? This series of questions confirms once more that such explicitly urban choices were, ultimately, never made in the Belgian context.

Map 4: The 'Patrimonialization' of Capital.

This map roughly depicts where (far from all, but nevertheless a significant number of) private real estate agents—assembled from various sources, such as *Belgium's State Gazette*, the State Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Extensa private archives, the SCAA's meeting minutes, occasional building applications, etc.—were active in the agglomeration. Highly aware of the mechanisms of urban rent, not only in the city itself but also on the urbanizing fringes, the SCAA managed to impose a standard list of 'urban assets' to which private capital had to contribute in the process of urbanization—as a bargaining chip for urban development rights. This list featured the development of public parks where possible and public squares elsewhere; the construction of local and supra-local roads including utilities such as the sewage system, public lighting, trees, or (occasionally) even new tramlines. Additionally, the committee made frantic attempts to 'municipalize' or 'provincialize' land, for instance by far-sighted expropriations, to allow the government (and society at large) to hold on to the value-added effects of urbanization itself. Furthermore, the SCAA helped social housing companies acquire strategic stretches of land. So although the SCAA never succeeded in implementing a general tax system on urban rent, it did manage to 'patrimonialize' capital flows in all sorts of ways—turning significant portions of (private) capital into fixed and permanent spatial assets for Antwerp's (current and future) urbanizing society.



1. AGGLOM. ANVERS
2. ANTVERPIA
3. ANV.-EDEGHEM-Exts.
4. ANV.-MORTSEL-Exts.
5. BANLIEUE D'ANVERS
6. BERCHEM-Exts.
7. BORSBEECK-Exts.
8. CAMO
9. COLLINS
10. CONFORTA
11. DOM. SCHOOTENHOF
12. DUCHATEL
13. EDEGHEM-Exts.
14. EXTENSA
15. FOYER
16. GODSHUIZEN
17. GROENENBORGER
18. HOBOKEN OUEST
19. HOOGBOOM-Exts.
20. MAYER vd BERGH
21. MERXEM-Exts.
22. TERRAINS & ENTERPR.
23. TER RIVIEREN
24. URBANA
25. VAN HAVRE
26. VERRERIES
27. VOORSPOED
28. VOORUITZICHT
29. WAUWENS
30. WOMMELGHEM-Exts.

SOCIAL HOUSING
SQUARES
REALIZED ROADS
SEWER SYSTEM
TRAMLINES
METROPOLITAN GRID

REAL ESTATE PLAYERS
NEGOTIATED PARKS
MUNICIPALIZED LAND
PROVINCIALIZED LAND
LEASED LAND

"We're all too preoccupied with administrative and financial concerns. Our work has not been sufficiently been approached from an artistic perspective, and I deeply regret it. I'm not just talking about the urban decorum borrowed from nature, put to good use in public parks, roadside plantings, flowerbeds and lawns. I'm also talking about the urban decorum resulting from architectural ensembles, perspectives and squares of a single style, sculptural motifs in public palaces and private homes, great works of art in short. Above all, I'm talking about a sense of urban beauty that dispels uniformity and mediocrity."

Joseph Schobbens, *L'exposition de la Commission du Grand-Anvers: Interview de M. Schobbens*, La Métropole, 09/12/1932.

"In reality, cost matters little, because time is the real banker, and it's inexhaustible (…) It's high time we realized, like the American merchants and traders, that Beauty is a value that will only increase over time."

D.P.S., *Exposition Anvers-Extension: principes pour guider le visiteur*, AVERTISSEMENT, 1910, s.p.

"New streets should show the double characteristic: the individual beauty of each house separately and the general beauty of all the houses combined in the street or cityscape."

Leonard Nolens, *Voor 's lands wederopbouw: korte opstellen*, 1920, p. 15.

Chapter 5
The Question of Aesthetics
Spatial agency and *L'esthétique intégrale* for an architecture of urbanization

SUBORDINATION AND SUBSISTENCE OF AESTHETICS IN AN URBANIZING WORLD

The SCAA was operating in a time when the dire consequences of the Industrial Revolution on cities and urban life challenged the idea of urbanism as a discipline primarily based on aesthetics. The figure of the artist made way for the engineer, and artistic principles were increasingly replaced by rationality and science in the pursuit of livable cities—a transition that was conceptualized as the shift from the City Beautiful to the City Scientific at the turn of the twentieth century.[1] The City Beautiful was discredited for its exaggerated preoccupations with urban aesthetics as a means used by elites to impress moral codes and civic virtue upon the urban populations—a practice that was portrayed as a constraint on real social reform.[2] In the accumulative society, designing the city no longer revolved around the idea of "apply[ing] the plausible approximation of an absolutely invariable image [of the dominant classes] to a very slow-moving reality."[3] Leading urbanists felt this transition was "justified on the one hand, to meet new social demands" but at the same time grieved the fact that it threatened to dismiss "aesthetics as a mere *'quantité négligeable.'*"[4]

Within the modern movement, the discrediting of the 'aesthetic' led to a dominant treatment of aesthetics in terms of underlying principles of a kind of formal normative framework, anchored within deeper rationality principles that transcended the superficial question of beauty and taste, allowing urban planners to circumvent a direct approach toward urban aesthetics.[5] The famous city models that came in vogue around the SCAA's reign—such as Howard's Garden City (1898), Hilberseimer's Metropolis architecture (1927), Le Corbusier's Ville radieuse (1930), or Schwarz's Stadtlandschaft only to name a few—claimed to be based on rational, functional and 'scientific' tenets, but they were certainly not free of specific

aesthetic connotations.[6] Throughout the twentieth century, authors in various fields continued to point out the importance of form-aesthetic aspects of urbanization. They stressed the pertinent correlation between aesthetically pleasing environments and inhabitants' social well-being,[7] thus portraying urban aesthetics as "one of the ethical requirements of urbanization."[8] Several authors pointed to the necessity of cultural-aesthetic imaginaries in order to launch and sustain urbanization: without tangible and accepted imaginations of urban life on as yet fallow land, new citizens are simply not inclined to settle in.[9] Others argued that in highly urbanized and networked societies, the distinctive aesthetic qualities of a place tend to be at least as valuable as most other features, such as, for example, location, accessibility, service rate, etc.[10] In *The Urbanization of Capital*, Harvey noted how aesthetically refined or memorable buildings should be considered as "a permanent improvement into the value of land," turning entire urban quarters into a "happy state" and thus desired urban habitats. Arguably, the question of urban aesthetics wasn't really dismissed; rather, it was in need of new, more democratic, and versatile approaches in the age of urbanization.[11]

The SCAA's loose ideas and efforts

The question arises as to how exactly the SCAA tried to pursue these changing aesthetic challenges in the urbanizing agglomeration. Several historical sources suggest that infrastructural considerations always prevailed over aesthetic concerns in the twentieth-century expansion of Antwerp: as one of Belgium's main economic centers, the port city simply had to be efficient rather than beautiful.[12] This assertion echoes in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter revealing that the SCAA had little room and time to be concerned with the aesthetic question itself. In the absence of architects among the SCAA's protagonists,[13] road engineer De Heem seems to have been most in touch with the aspect of urban aesthetics. His reports *L'embellissement des villes (1912)* and *La construction des villes et cités-jardins* (1921), both reflecting on international planning conferences held in London, reveal his fascination with road aesthetics and the garden city imagination.[14] (Fig. 5.1) Yet De Heem and his colleagues seem to have struggled to incorporate these ambitions into everyday practice. As critic Amand de Lattin argued in 1932, it didn't really help that there was no legal framework on building codes, so that "aesthetic supervision could not exist

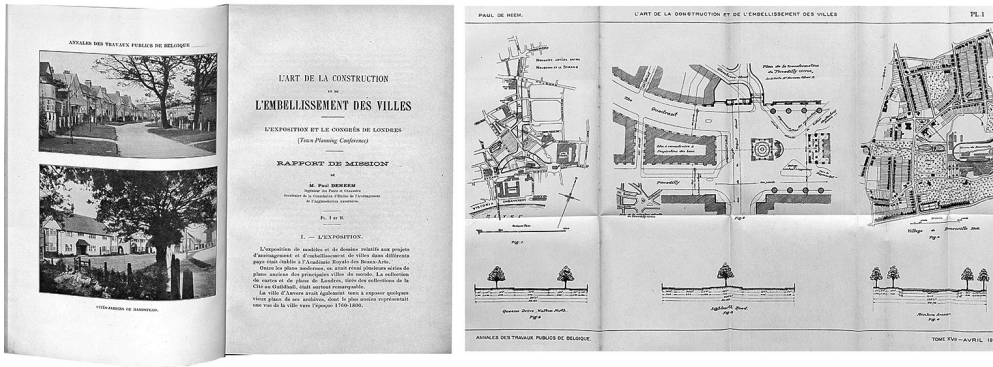


Figure 5.1 Report *L'Embellissement des villes* of Paul De Heem's visit at the 1910 international planning conference in London: the garden city and the modern road as a prime tools for urban aesthetics.

within existing regulations (...) putting the committee's most important task to an end before it could have even started."[15] If aesthetics was considered at all, it was often associated with greenery and plantations—both along avenues, on squares, and in front gardens.[16] There were occasional suggestions that a small square could enliven a neighborhood; that side garden strips of 3m would be sufficient to uphold the image of the garden city.[17] Now and then isolated development plans show how remarkable road patterns provided the urbanizing fabric with distinctive moments. In terms of architecture, the SCAA occasionally suggested imposing "something with a curved turret at the street corner,"[18] or preserving "an entire urban block for a public monument marking a beautiful entrance to the city."[19] For large buildings such as the hydraulic lab in Borgerhout, prominent Belgian architect Henry Van de Velde was consulted on the question of how such a colossal building could "add to the neighborhood's beautification rather than being a nuisance."[20] None of these initiatives, however, amounted into a consistent approach toward the question of urban aesthetics.

The persistence of the aesthetic question

However, just because the aesthetic question was not central to the SCAA's project, it did not disappear altogether. It was simply raised and discussed elsewhere, outside the SCAA's day-to-day operations. Initially, the SCAA turned to internationally renowned master urbanists to draft aesthetically pleasing blueprint plans at a metropolitan scale—mainly targeting the

urban reconversion of the fortification walls. After this short-lived moment, however, the form-aesthetic question was appropriated by a young generation of Antwerp architects. Both the international master-urbanists and the Antwerp architects proactively tried to cope with contingency[21]—i.e., with the simple fact that "things could be otherwise than they are"[22]—to get past the mediocre aesthetics that routinized urbanization procedures were producing. But we will see that they did so in diametrically opposite ways. In essence, this chapter builds the argument that the aesthetic question was not treated from the 'distant order of urbanism' and the 'liberal artistry' of international master-urbanists, but from the 'near order of architecture' and 'spatial agency' of Antwerp-based architects.

The chapter thus aims to demonstrate that there is a whole range of positions between the rhetorical stances that historically played 'the city scientific'[23] against 'city planning according to artistic principles,'[24] or alternatively pitting the practices of grand regional design against the petty architectural focus on the building. This chapter explores how a (heteronomous) image for the agglomeration as a whole was steadily built from the (autonomous) realm of architecture—and what role the SCAA played in that process. Looking at the agglomeration through the lens of aesthetics adds yet another layer to the effort to trade the study of the city in its reified forms in favor of the interpretation of the process of urbanization and its ever particular, highly diverse, and spatially differentiated historical manifestations. The aesthetic angle provides the tools to study the craft that goes into the making of urbanization. In contrast with the perspective of political economy in the previous chapter, revealing how processes of commodification are played out and surplus capital is created, circulated, absorbed, and extracted within dynamics of urbanization, the aesthetic lens shows how the production of this abstract order goes hand in hand with the creation of a lived reality upon which the very process of urbanization depends. This concrete reality is produced by an interplay of social actors, and comes in many forms, the aesthetics of which do matter in how this reality is perceived, lived, and valued.

INTERNATIONAL MASTER-URBANISTS AND THE CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL IRONY

In the SCAA's original brief, the question of aesthetics only surfaced explicitly in the context of the urban reconversion of the demilitarized bulwark around the city that had to be redesigned "according to the laws

of modern aesthetics for cities."[25] As discussed, Joseph Stübben, who had elaborated preliminary plans for the fortification walls together with De Heem, advised the SCAA to organize an international design competition for the ramparts in 1910, after the example of cities such as Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Koln, Dresden, Stockholm, etc.[26] An international jury, composed of architects, technicians, and dignitaries was asked to monitor "the requirements of aesthetics and technology" as closely as possible.[27] After two full days of deliberation Henri Prost was unanimously declared the competition's winner. The many similarities between Prost's proposal and De Heem's and Stübben's plans are striking. (Fig. 5.2) SCAA member and city secretary Geyselinck later admitted that "the competition program itself was actually a real plan already, and all that remained to be done was to bring a bit more harmony to the overall design and make sure that it could be implemented."[28]

Between October 24 and November 24, 1910, the SCAA exhibited the results of this international competition in Antwerp's city hall. Many a visitor expressed admiration for the "masterful ideas [and] and magnificent illustrations of the designs" of contemporary international 'grandmasters' such as Henri Prost, Marcel Auburtin, Emeric Forbath, and Eugène Lechner.[29] For the first time, the general public could get a picture of the urban expansion beyond the historical city. In the following years, the SCAA remodeled the winning scheme, "with M. Prost as a consulting architect, so as to condense the different ideas into one practical scheme."[30] In 1913, the SCAA revealed the final plan at a second exhibition where a hall-filling scale model left the audience in awe once more.

The beautiful plans and overwhelming illustrations of the international grandmasters were welcome promotional material for the SCAA (see chapter 6).[31] These plans were described as the expression of "a recently born science; which is called *Städtebau* in Germany and Austria, *L'art de bâtir les villes* in France and *L'esthétique des villes* in Belgium."[32] It aimed at constructing an ordered modern world and was clearly understood in terms of spatial assignments, as they were traditionally connected to the morphologies and spatial arrangements of the (historical) city. As an expression of *L'esthétique des villes*, the competition can be understood as a late remnant of the city-beautiful ideology. The entire belt was sculpted and designed as a coherent urban edifice, defined by autonomous morphological principles following the French, German, or British schools. It is perhaps symptomatic that this kind of urbanism was at the time referred to as *L'architecture des villes*[33] and more recently as *L'architecture du sol urbain*.[34]

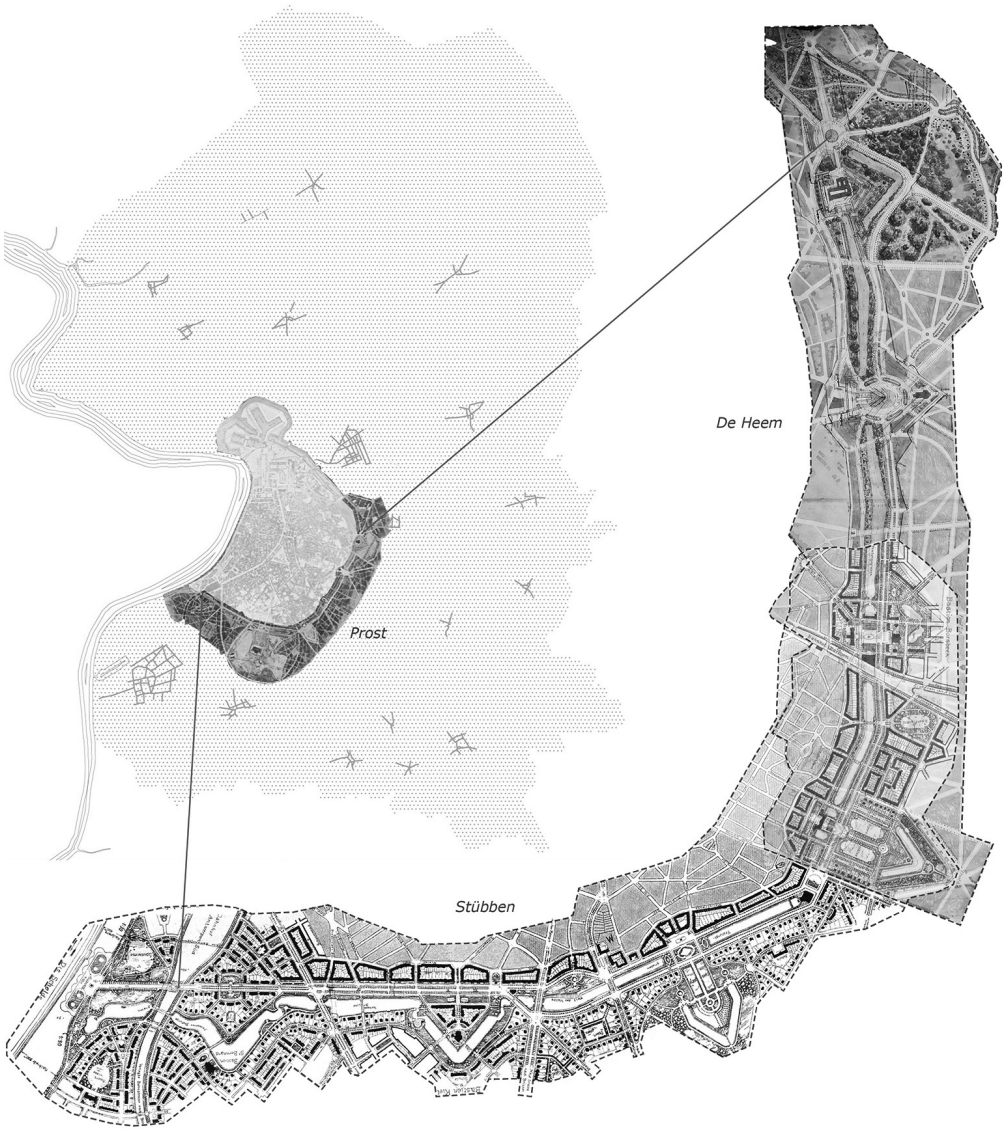


Figure 5.2 Collage by author of Prost's winning competition design (1910), showing great similarities to Stübben's and De Heem's preliminary sketches, and only covering a very small part of the agglomeration.

There is, however, a curious tension between Schobbens's 1911 plea for incrementalism and *l'idéal relatif* (see chapter 1) and the grand ideas of Leopold II and the resulting plans of competitors such as Prost and Stübben. This 'royal' take on the agglomeration soon withered away after the King's death in 1909 and gradually made way for the approach of the provincial clerk. Initially, Stübben remained an aesthetic advisor to some smaller projects, but when they came to a halt after World War I, his role had been played out. Prost also did not get a long-term role in shaping the agglomeration and left for Casablanca in November 1913.[35] Together with the retreat of these foreign grandmasters, this pronounced focus on *L'Esthétique des villes* completely disappeared. Overall urban plans at the scale of the agglomeration were no longer drafted, at least not until the mid-1930s.

A local plea for a worldly contingency

Moreover, the appointment of these international designers and the drafting of rigid master plans met with fierce criticism from local architects from the outset. On March 15, 1910, in the run-up to the international design competition, the Fédération des Sociétés d'Architectes de Belgique (FSAB), presided by Antwerp architect and Ernest Stordiau,[36] president of the Royal Society of Antwerp Architects (Koninklijke Maatschappij der Bouwmeesters van Antwerpen, KMBA) wrote an indignant letter to SCAA secretary Joseph Schobbens. The letter questioned "whether there were not enough architects in Belgium, capable of handling the assignment," adding that local architects had a far "better understanding than any foreigner of the local spirit and the many ideas latently hovering over the assignment."[37] The letter further denounced the large number of foreigners on the jury and bluntly questioned the SCAA's legitimacy, because the city of Antwerp and its neighboring municipalities would be "too concerned with preserving the integrity of their municipal powers" to let some "intercommunal committee take charge of the plans for urban extension."[38] Schobbens was not impressed;[39] he replied that the architects only had "to read the royal decree instating the SCAA to know that the municipal prerogatives [were] not at risk."[40] On the lack of respect for Belgian architects, Schobbens replied that "no Belgian architect had ever redeveloped a military compound as large as Antwerp's" as opposed to the "many specialists abroad." He admitted that local architects were indeed better informed about "the aspirations of the Antwerp

agglomeration, its needs, and its topographical situation," yet stressed that it gave them "a considerable advantage over foreign competitors." Schobbens thus advised the Belgian architects "not to waste time with questioning the rules" but to use that time well as "to emerge victorious from the competition."[41]

At first glance, the objections of the Belgian architects come across as conservative and protectionist. However, the small guide "*EXPOSITION ANVERS-EXTENSION—Principes pour guider le visiteur—AVERTISSEMENT,*" handed out at the exhibition, further elaborated their view. The guide openly questioned the 'masterly authority' of the exhibition's international heroes, arguing that the discipline of "*l' esthétique des villes* [was] still in its infancy and its patrons [were] as little in agreement as its few disciples."[42] The authors were wary of compelling compositions in which the future of the entire agglomeration was precisely drawn and fixed according to state-of-the-art principles, which were portrayed as the expression of different national customs and preferences that could not simply be projected on the Antwerp context. The guide's opening sentence stressed that "the advice of a few intellectuals [was] insufficient" to serve an "appreciative public […] willing to appropriate their new ideas."[43] The city could not be treated as an artefact in which "*l'essentiel* [was] left at the whim of more or less seductive (architectural) accessories,"[44]—*l'essentiel* being "this scheme of important internal and external communications, the large divisions, interrelationships and distinctions between different districts, the large green areas, the general harmony of the overall urban lay-out."[45]

According to the authors, the new discipline of *L'Esthétique des villes* had just arisen "not so much from a pertinent lack of beautiful neighborhoods or appropriate decorations" but rather from "the increasingly palpable vice of building in the faubourgs (…) and the growing chaos of administrative and political discord."[46] The quest for a new urban aesthetics was, in other words, not prompted by abstract preoccupations for 'beauty' per se. Rather, it was deeply rooted in everyday sociopolitical concerns, which were "more changeable"[47] than in any other art form, making "detailed and fixed plans of all future extensions" less than desirable. The *essential* scheme, then, "shouldn't be too detailed, not to prevent future neighborhoods from taking shape according to situated needs and conveniences," but at the same time "farsighted enough to spare the new districts from the chaotic blunders of current practice."[48] The guide's approach toward urban aesthetics preferred "possibilism and probabilism" over determinism.[49] The guide claimed that "the preliminary designs

of cities [had] to be refined by long observations," stressing that even "a few centuries [were] nothing in the life of a city."[50] Everything it took was "a good scheme and patience,"[51] reminiscent of what Trachtenberg defined as an idea good enough to start with and then built-in-time.[52] The guide foregrounded a versatile spatial framework in which evolving and 'dependent' conceptions of beauty would add up to an *esthétique intégrale* over time:

> Let's thus to seek this *'esthétique intégrale'*, varying solutions according to the case, balancing the abstract and the concrete, the classic and the accidental in the hope of arriving one day at the perfect fusion of reality and imagination.[53]

The local architects demonstrated a clear approach to the aesthetic question, one that was not informed by instant state-of-the-art and abstract imaginaries but pushed for strategies that could cope with many contingencies inherent in everyday urbanization processes, such as politics, economics, local culture, technological evolution, etc. Urban aesthetics could not instantly be projected on top of the agglomeration from above; it had to grow from within, through a permanent reinterpretation of what was deemed essential and of the possible and evolving architectural elaboration thereof.

The critique of the master urbanist as a liberal ironist

Even in the aftermath of the international event, the reception of the results remained ambiguous and skeptical. In a review of the competition, architect and polemicist De Vos Van Kleef wrote how Henri Prost had "managed to conjure up a new city that only a poet could dream of."[54] This poet's dream, however, never materialized, which is usually explained by the fact that the military bulwark was never released.[55] But that is far from the only explanation. In 1910 already, Antwerp trader Loquet wrote that more "circumstances should be taken into account," arguing that Prost's plan was disproportionate, turning "Berchem into a new Versailles, while Borgerhout got a new workers' quarter as large as the municipality's current size!" "Never," Loquet wrote, "will these municipalities accept that!"[56] Antwerp architect Alfred Portielje, for his part, reported that "of all the plans, very few were actually of possible execution," because "in nearly all schemes, the financial side and practicalities of realization

had been completely disregarded."[57] A city report later confirmed that "the cost of leveling all the land needed to realize Prost's plan, would far exceed revenues from the resale of resulting urban plots—even in the most optimistic scenarios." Thus, the military belt had "virtually no market value," leading to the bold assertion that it was "a utopia to think that surplus values [could] be gained there to finance the construction of new urban districts."[58]

Prost's poetic schemes turned out to be nothing less than an illusion, an impossible utopia, making complete abstraction of a number of contingent preconditions, such as politico-economic considerations, topography, land ownership, investment logics, social needs and aspirations, etc. Arguably, Prost was what Richard Rorty described as a liberal ironist: a liberal individual, trying to break free from the 'universal truth claims', 'final vocabularies', and 'foundationalist beliefs' behind the business-as-usual way of doing things by facing "up to the contingency of his or her own most central beliefs and desires."[59] Or, rephrased by Jeremy Till, "liberal ironists develop their awareness of, and response to contingency in the privacy of their own belief systems"[60]—of which the poet was, uncoincidentally, the archetype. For liberal poets such as Prost, it suffices to "do as they will (…) they escape from dealing with the contingencies of the real world *with intent*—a retreat sanctioned by [their] reliance on the individual muse."[61] In Rorty's definition of the liberal ironist, there is thus rigid separation between public and private, with the result that what is achieved in the private world, might, but only might, then affect the public realm: "Poetic, artistic, philosophical, scientific or political progress results from the accidental coincidence of private obsession with public need."[62] The optimistic hope for society, then, is to let liberal poets flourish in the hope that their private explorations will accidentally collide with public needs. It is at that point, Till criticizes, that Rorty's argument "slips from a robust critique of foundationalist beliefs into a decadent acceptance of the imaginative impulses of an intellectual elite as potential saviors of society."[63] Decadent, because "faced with the intractable contingencies of the real world, the liberal ironists' natural reaction is one of denial and the recourse to impossible ideals."[64]

Time has proven that Prost's poetic utopia didn't 'accidentally collide' with the public need in the Antwerp agglomeration. It would take a different, more enduring kind of commitment to patiently invent and implement imageries in tune with the many worldly contingencies at work in the urbanizing agglomeration.

SITUATED ARCHITECTS AND SPATIAL AGENCY

In his work, Till proposes 'situated knowledge' as the nemesis of 'liberal irony'—a term he borrows from Donna Haraway.[65] As opposed to liberal irony, situated knowledge is responsible, particular, and necessarily partial.[66] Situated knowledge encourages specific forms of publicly accountable *agency* that "work more humbly [than liberal irony], gathering the past in order to shape better (but not perfect) futures, from points of view which can never be known in advance, which promise something quite extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination."[67] In a similar vein, Awan et al. plead for a characterization of architects as spatial agents who "are neither completely free as individuals, nor completely trapped by societal structures: they are negotiators of existing conditions in order to (partially) reform them."[68] Such a venture has a chance of success only if there is a willingness to engage in the thick of time, i.e., the "time of the extended present, that avoids mere repetition of past times or the instant celebration of new futures (…) a temporal space that critically gathers the past and from there projects the future."[69] In contrast to the liberal ironist's retreat into the "contingency of the self", spatial agents face the contingencies of the real world with reformative intent. In the case of the SCAA, it was an up-and-coming generation of young architects, referring to themselves as the 'young watchmen,' who would assume this role of spatial agents—taking up a long-term and collective responsibility toward a realizable and sustainable aesthetics for the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric. This approach was, as the attentive reader will no doubt have noticed, very much aligned with the SCAA's ideologies of incrementalism and the relative ideal.

The 'young watchmen' and the practice of architecture in an age of urbanization

The 'young watchmen' were a generation of architects, born roughly around the 1880s, with Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef as their mentor. (Fig. 5.3) They had all received an utterly classical training at Antwerp's Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts, based on the fundamental pedagogical tenets of Beaux-Arts education, centered on 'liberal artistry', 'the cult of genius', 'appropriate form,' and 'good taste.'[70] This new generation, however, increasingly distanced itself from its Beaux-Arts education, as well as



Figure 5.3 Portraits of the 'young watchmen'. Next to the architects on display, Egide Van Der Paal (1891–1953), John Van Beurden (1880–1967), Hendrik Wittockx (1893–1965), Edward Leonard (1890–1981), and Gerard De Ridder (1878–1958) deserve a mention.

from older colleagues to which it somewhat disdainfully referred as the 'old guard'.[71] The young watchmen founded the Circle for Building Arts (Kring voor Bouwkunde, KVB) in 1899, in order to reeducate themselves through study trips, meetings, and publications. The circle also sought to separate itself from the more established KMBA, Belgium's oldest architectural society, where the old guard set the tone. But it wasn't until the SCAA started its mission in 1907 that the actions of the young watchmen took on a specific sense of purpose. The prospect of urbanizing the agglomeration literally opened up new territories for these young men to put their new ideas into practice, beyond the historical city that was in the grip of the old guard. Gottmann argued that in urbanizing societies, "together with the concept of the city itself, the artistic ideas of architecture should break out of the narrow confines of their traditional domain."[72] And that is exactly what happened in the Antwerp agglomeration.

The prospect of urbanizing the Antwerp agglomeration literally offered a refuge for the young watchmen to dispose of what they called the "academic tampering and toil in neo-Greek and neo-Roman styles" with which the old guard had built the historical city.[73] This "outdated assembly of conventional formal theories, taught as a dogma, without the slightest relation to the real demands, conceptions and morals of the new age" may have been in tune with the tastes of nineteenth-century urban elites, but by 1911, the young watchmen claimed that they "left the public completely indifferent."[74] The urbanizing suburbs no longer catered to the image of the city as an unambiguous 'enwalled entity' that could be shaped according to the relatively stable tastes of one dominant socioeconomic group. A 1935 article titled 'The Design of Urbanization in Belgium' claims that the old guard had been overly preoccupied with the historical city's monumental order and the design of "important buildings" at the

expense of "contributing to the solution of social issues such as cheap housing, sanitary comfort, economy in execution, etc."[75]

Authors such as Lefebvre and Gottmann indeed claim that the mundane "'building' steadily started to dethrone 'the monument'" as the main focus of architectural production in urbanizing societies. Consequently, building "for prestigious and respected functions and people" would no longer be the "main market for the talents of the architect" who would, on the contrary, "be preoccupied with a completely different market of mass consumption."[76] Rather than representing power, capital, or prestige, the architect's purpose was now to imbue the everyday urban fabric with 'meaning', 'value' and 'aesthetics'—developing an enjoyable material backdrop for everyday life.[77] The production of such enjoyable everyday space, according to Lefebvre, could only be achieved through the concrete labor and imagination of architectural practice—and not through the abstract rationality of spatial planning. This disciplinary distinction between architecture and urban planning was not so much a differentiation of scales,[78] but what Lefebvre called different modes of imagination: an opposition that comes to the fore in the distinction between the 'micro-sociological' approach and the 'near order' of architecture, as opposed to the 'macro-sociological' approach and the 'distant order' of urbanism. The near order of architecture, in short, responds to tangible aspirations of citizens, taking "its clues from the practices of habitation" from the private to a territorial scale. "By setting aside the distant order, by clearly apprehending the link to messy everyday practice," Lefebvre argued, architecture "liberates the imaginary" and is able to "approach utopian space by avoiding abstraction and underwriting in advance the concrete nature of that utopia (one that must and can reveal itself at every moment in its relation to practice and to *lived experience*)."[79] For Lefebvre, turning the urbanizing world into a concrete utopia, i.e., an enjoyable *câdre de vie* for all, "could only be based on an architectural project."[80]

Likewise, instead of theorizing an 'abstract utopia' from the 'distant order' of urban planning, as the master-urbanists had done, the young watchmen set out on a practical mission of 'building a concrete utopia' from the 'near order' of architecture.[81] Turning the agglomeration's urbanizing fabric into such a concrete utopia, providing it with a shared aesthetic imagination at a territorial scale, and effectively realizing that imaginary pushed the young watchmen to move beyond the practice of architecture as a merely artistic design discipline.

Four forms of agency for a concrete utopia

Rather than relying on the individual muse from within the privacy of their design studios, the young watchmen set out to participate in the everyday flow of socio-natural life itself in the agglomeration, building relations with different social actors, exploring forms of spatial agency beyond the confines of their own artistic expertise, thereby "abandoning the hierarchies embedded in most professional relationships and instead welcoming contributions from everyone in the spirit of a shared enterprise."[82] Four of these forms of spatial agency, and the way they underpinned the trans-professional quest toward an urban aesthetics, are briefly discussed in what follows.[83] Moreover, it will become clear how much the SCAA's overarching urbanization mission created and nurtured the conditions within which these forms of agency could flourish.

The architect as publicist

From the very moment the intentions of tearing down the fortification walls and urbanizing the agglomeration became public, the young watchmen started to publish articles, books, and journals to explore and communicate what *Le Nouvel Anvers* should look like.[84] Their two most important local journals ran remarkably parallel to the SCAA's activities between 1907 and 1939.[85] (Fig. 5.4) First, they published *De Bouwgids* (1909–1933) as the monthly journal of the KVB, later followed by the *KMBA Maandschrift* (1930–1939). The editorials of both magazines revealed the clear intention of informing the public opinion. The *Bouwgids* wanted to "reach private owners and individuals (…) in order to have an impact on the public's mind and taste,"[86] whereas the *KMBA Maandschrift* promised that reintroducing "the art of architecture in the midst of public life, as a main component and necessity of it, [was] the [journal's] ultimate goal."[87] Both magazines, however, popularized radically different, albeit complementary imaginaries for urbanizing the agglomeration: the 'Garden-City' and the 'Modern Metropolis' respectively.

The first issues of *De Bouwgids* were directly inspired by Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef's *Le Nouvel Anvers: Cité-Jardin*, published in 1907, virtually at the same time the SCAA was established.[88] The future agglomeration was envisioned as one large garden suburb grafted upon the old urban core by large avenues. In that respect, *De Bouwgids* was inspired by the garden-suburb aesthetics of designers like Unwin and Parker, rather than by the programmatic garden-city concept of Ebenezer Howard.[89] The

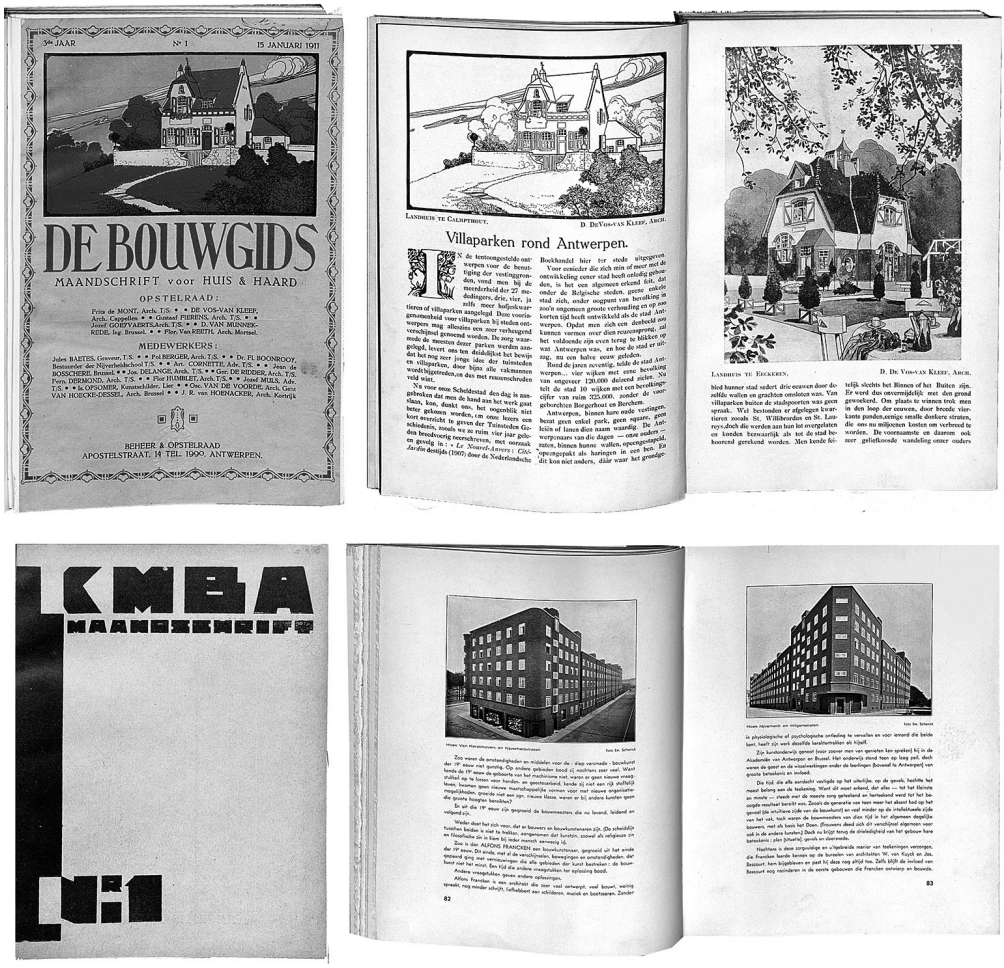


Figure 5.4 The traditionalist *Bouwgids* (1909–1932) promoting the garden city versus the more modernist *KMBA Maandschrift* (1930–1939) promoting the modern metropolis—and running remarkably concurrently with the SCAA's project (1907-1939).

KMBA Maandschrift, on the other hand, was launched on the occasion of the world exhibition in 1930 in Antwerp—a true showcase for modern architecture in Antwerp and Belgium at the time—and announced the rise of a more metropolitan architecture that would mainly find its place along the metropolitan grid, both in the inner city and the outer agglomeration.[90] The KMBA's monthly breathed the ideas of Ludwig Hilberseimer's *Grosstadt Architektur* from 1927, giving shape to the city and urbanization through the definition of a coherent architectural vocabulary of new

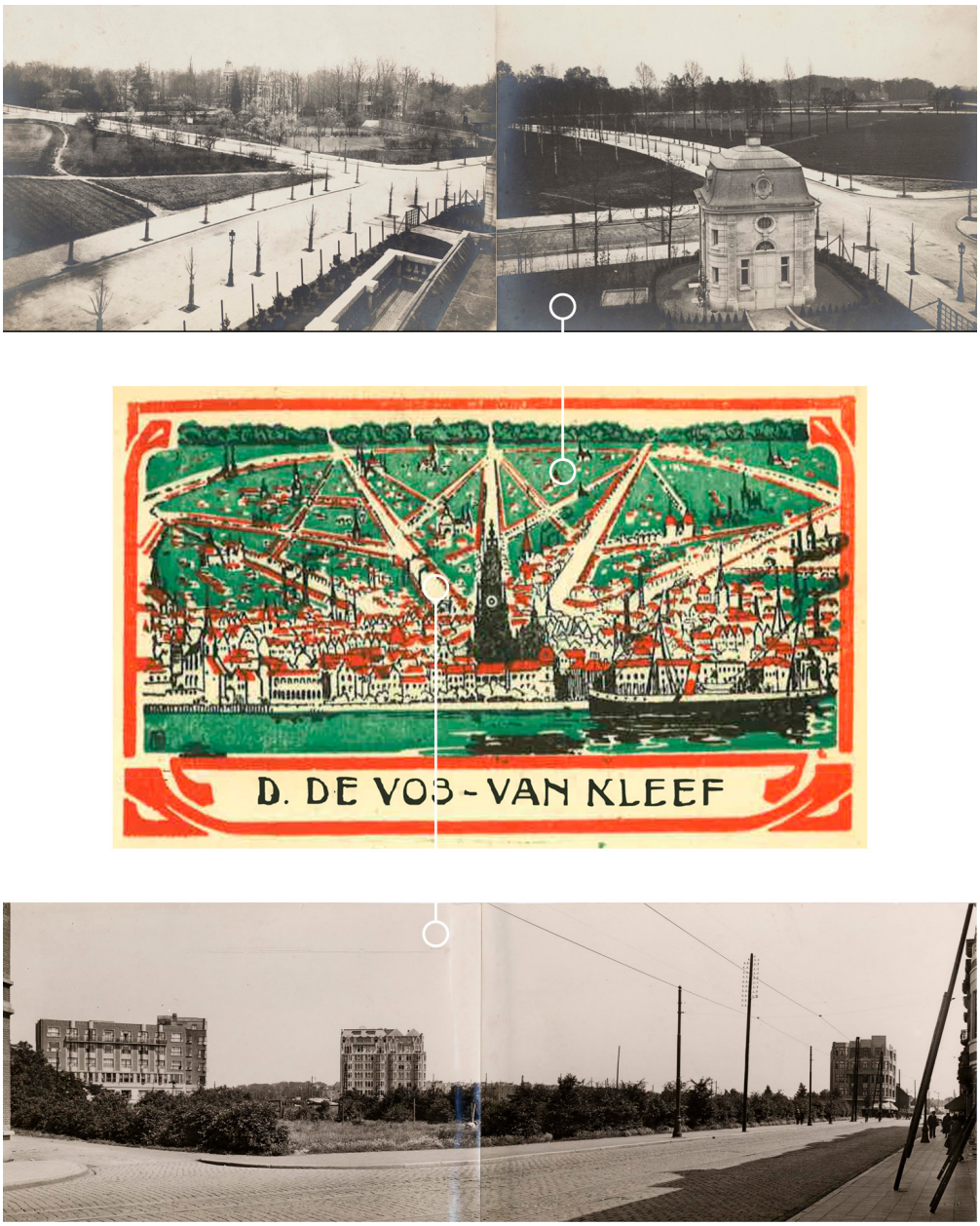


Figure 5.5 The cover image of De Vos Van Kleef's book *Le Nouvel Anvers* (1907) and additional pictures suggest a fascinating embrace of the historical city, the modern metropolis along the metropolitan grid (here: Jan van Rijswijcklaan and Boomsesteenweg, ca 1930), and the garden city around the public parks (here: Domain den Brandt, ca 1920).

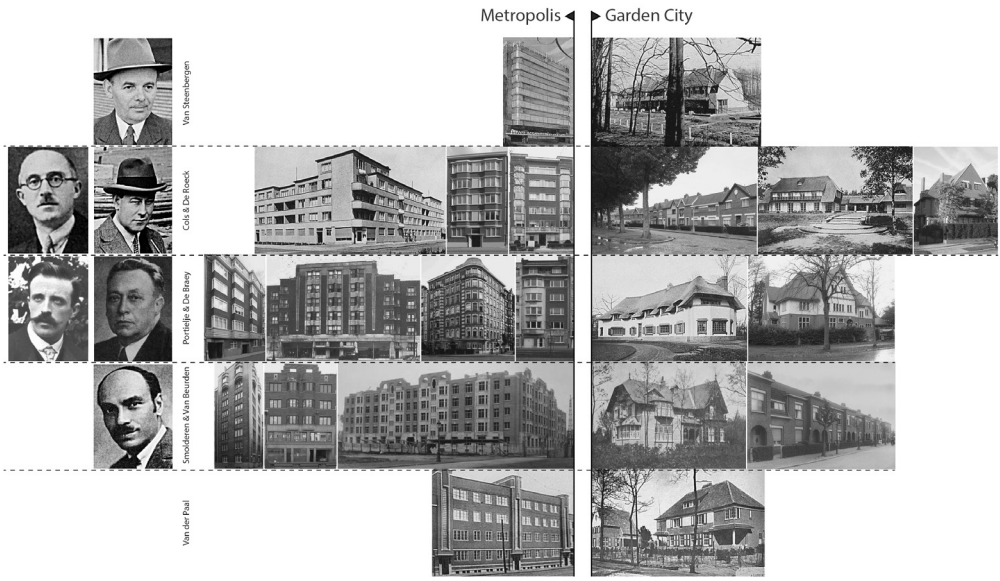


Figure 5.6 The young watchmen all contributed to designing the different, but internally coherent and complementary imaginaries of garden city and modern metropolis.

urban typologies.[91] Rather than culminating into a classical 'battle of styles', the young watchmen effortlessly combined the garden city with metropolitan architecture, corresponding to two complementary logics of urbanization practiced by the SCAA. (Fig. 5.5)

The garden-city naturally grew from the many parks the SCAA was developing. Street patterns on adjacent land were designed in picturesque ways, matching up to the traditionalist tastes of aristocratic landowners and the mostly Catholic municipalities. For the young watchmen, the garden city was "the creation of an agglomeration of villas, cottages, country houses, workers' houses etc., (...) along parks, around a square, around a lake and hidden in the middle of a mass of trees or greenery."[92] It was argued that this idea of private dwellings organized around green commons had always existed in the Antwerp agglomeration and merely needed a little push toward realization. The SCAA's metropolitan grid, on the other hand, increasingly attracted experiments in 'metropolitan architecture', answering to the need of new architectural typologies such as offices, hotels, leisure domes, sports stadiums, hospitals, swimming pools, apartment buildings, etc. These metropolitan experiments, mostly realized by industrialists or traders with a taste for art deco modernism,

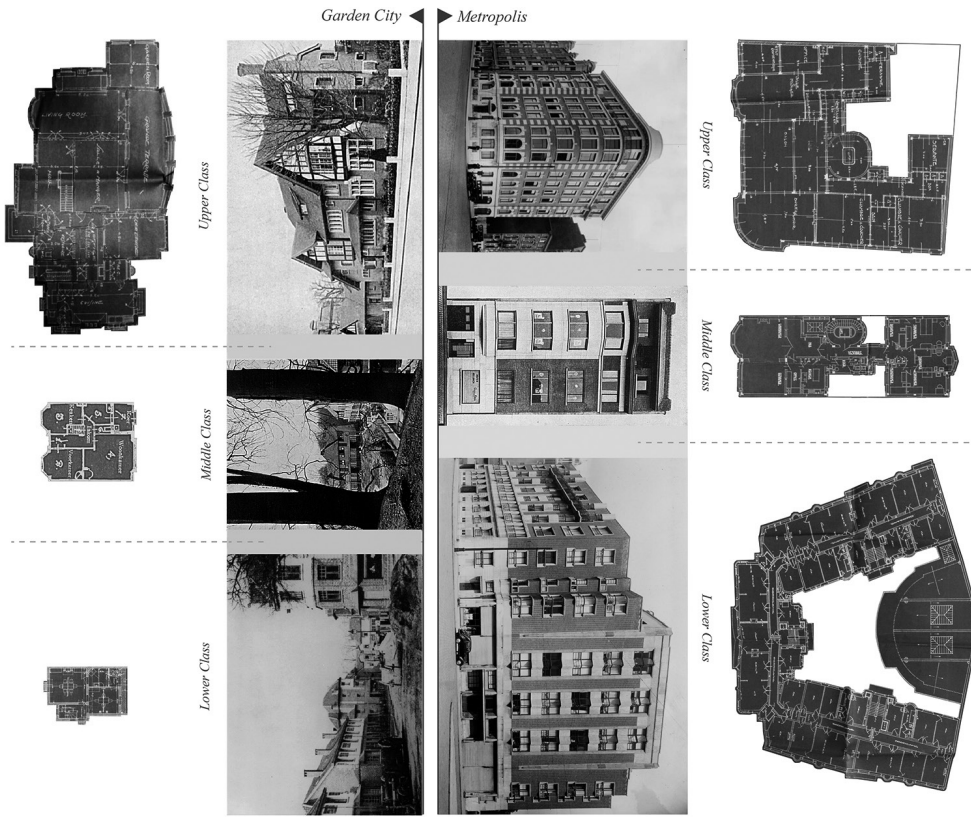


Figure 5.7 The young watchmen made both the garden city and the modern metropolis imaginaries available as shared urban realms for upper-, middle-, and lower classes.

emerged along major roads that were generally funded by the state, while the residual land value was left to local municipalities, which, in turn, maximized floor area ratios. Especially after a 1924 law regulated the legal modalities of co-ownership, tall apartment buildings gave shape to a new metropolitanism both within and outside the historic city.[93] Remarkably, many young watchmen switched freely between these imaginaries, adhering to the urbanization dynamics they were part of, developing contrasting but internally coherent imaginaries defining the physiognomy of different but complementary urban realms in the making. (Fig. 5.6) In their own words, they designed urbanization and its different fabrics at large, far beyond the selective interest in the city's mere monumental order.[94]

Commissions for cooperatives, commercial real estate firms or tract developers, social housing companies, and wealthy private clients were all

built side by side, defining the architectural contours of shared urban imaginaries and habitats. (Fig. 5.7) In the early 1920s, SCAA engineer De Heem had claimed that the idea of architecture giving shape to working class garden suburbs "[was] purely theoretical and even somewhat utopian."[95] Yet the young watchmen gradually contributed to turning the agglomeration into a 'concrete utopia', taking their clues from micro-sociological 'practices of habitation', commission by commission, while conforming to different macro-sociological dynamics of urbanization on a territorial scale. They selectively borrowed some of the aesthetic features from emerging urban models in Europe without ascribing to the modernist movement's tendency toward the "annihilation of time [...] rejection of accumulation, and oblivion of the modifications to which the new subjected itself (the new rejuvenating the old, the old attracting the new, making it part of what existed)."[96] Instead, these new urban imaginaries tied in with urbanization as a differentiated project of continued accumulation at a regional scale, developed in spatiotemporal continuity with the historical city: *L'Art de bâtir la ville* in the age of urbanization. Journal publishing was crucial to the collective development of this Leitbild, but its realization forced the young watchmen into even more transprofessional forms of agency.

The architect as builder

On the eve of the SCAA's urbanization mission, several large contracting companies were founded that all grew into reputable Belgian firms, such as Van Riel & Van Den Bergh N.V. (1904) and Vooruitzicht N.V. (1905)—later joined by the Entreprises Amelincks (1928). The emergence of these firms exemplifies the ongoing shift from of artisan-builders and craftsmen to general contractors at the turn of the twentieth century in Belgium.[97] In Antwerp, this transition was formalized by the establishment of Le Cercle des Entrepreneurs des Travaux Publics (CETP) in 1874 with a growing membership from of 75 entrepreneurs in 1874, to 160 around 1900, to more than 500 on the eve of the First World War.[98] Urbanizing the vast expanses of the agglomeration simply depended on the increase in scale in the contracting industry. Interestingly, Alphonse Hertogs, the SCAA's second vice president at its inception, was the CETP's very first secretary.[99] Jeacques van Riel, founder of Entreprises Van Riel & Van Den Bergh ended up co-organizing the Second National Road Congress together with the SCAA, as the CETP's 1933 president.[100]

General contractors like Van Riel & Van den Bergh not only played a key role in constructing the SCAA's metropolitan grid, but soon expanded

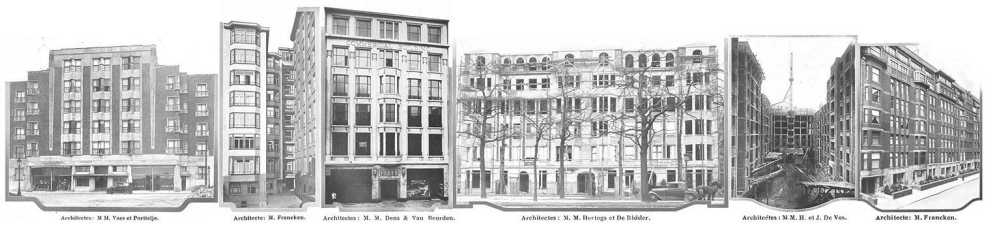


Figure 5.8 Collage by author of apartment complexes realized by young watchmen along the metropolitan grid in collaboration with general contractor Van Riel & Van Den Bergh, taken from a 1930 info-brochure.

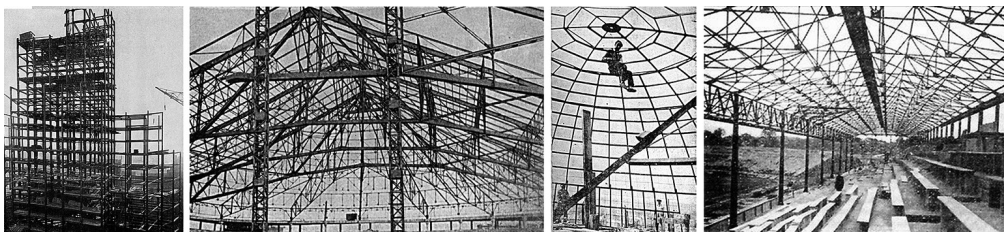


Figure 5.9 Collage by author, featuring *l'ossature metallique* as a new construction method giving shape to new metropolitan programs (Boerentoren, Sports Palace, Church Dome, Antwerp F.C. soccer stadium).

into building tall complexes along its major arteries. Whereas the KMBA's skeptical 'old guard' portrayed the general contractor as an economic aggressor elbowing himself into a position between architect and craftsman, exchanging quality for economical optimization, the younger generation seems to have been more open for collaboration.[101] In Belgium, the modern movement in general promoted "profound collaborations" between architects and the construction industries.[102] In the Antwerp agglomeration, it led to close cooperations between emerging general contractors and the new generation of architects.[103] The work of Van Riel & Van Den Bergh, for instance, was very present in the KMBA's monthly, and the general contractor even became one of the journal's main sponsors in the early 1930s. A fascinating 1930 publication of the firm reveals the close ties that had grown with many of the young watchmen between 1905 and 1930. (Fig. 5.8) This is notable, as architects were not yet required to obtain building permits, which allowed contractors to independently build the city. The engagement of young architects with large contractors was aimed at elevating construction standards, while architectural



Figure 5.10 Brickyards along the river Rupel, some twenty kilometers south of Antwerp, and the urbanizing agglomeration as 'reciprocal landscapes.' Traditional bricklaying long remained the local craft par excellence to build the garden-city imaginary in particular.

aesthetics, in turn, became less mannerist or speculative and more rooted in mastering the art of building.

Even a contractor like François Amelinckx, renowned in Belgium for his highly repetitive postwar housing slabs devoid of architectural refinement, cooperated with young watchmen such as De Braey or Van Weert in the Interwar period.[104] Both the construction of the metropolitan grid itself and the large adjacent buildings became venues for technological experimentation with (reinforced) concrete or metal framing. (Fig. 5.9) The large urban boulevards became prime sites of intense collaboration, providing the agglomeration with a new metropolitan and typological imagination.[105]

In-between the major avenues of the metropolitan grid, however, a large number of small family businesses continued to provide the lion's share of available construction labor. They devoted their 'craft' to the construction of small houses and cottages, applying traditional construction methods, mostly based on bricklaying, shaping the agglomeration as *cité-jardin*. Thus, the agglomeration appeared as the layered result of 'urbanization

through general contracting' along the metropolitan grid, and the subsistence of 'urbanization through craftsmanship' on the garden city patches in-between.[106] Interestingly, however, the young watchmen also promoted the use of local brick to build the modern metropolis.[107] They stated that "clinging to old art forms was inhibiting," while putting all hopes in new technologies "threatened to mutilate all poetry."[108] The young watchmen pursued hybrid building practices, informed by a parallel "interest in the 'good old' and quest for the 'new good.'"[109] With the abundant use of brick as a 'homegrown-material' imbuing urbanization with a vibrant 'homegrown-character',[110] the extensive brickyards in the nearby Rupel region should rightly be considered as a 'reciprocal landscape' of the urbanizing agglomeration.[111] (Fig. 5.10) The young watchmen's agency with regards to construction was multiple and versatile. Their openness to large-scale contracting gave them access to the booming scene of general contractors and helped raise its standards. At the same time, smart use of available labor—balancing general contracting with skilled craftsmanship—supported the architects' vision of an urban agglomeration blending modern metropolis and garden city. Rather than pursuing an idealized, utopian image of the modernist city that lacked the labor to be realized, the young watchmen embraced a pragmatic approach that was feasible within the existing contractor landscape. The consistent use of red brick, finally, added harmony across this 'modern metropolis' – 'garden city divide'.

The architect as developer

As discussed at length in the previous chapter, the SCAA's urbanization mission boosted Antwerp's real estate markets. In general, architects feared—not unjustifiably—that architectural and aesthetic concerns were not on top of the agenda of most real estate speculators. But, at closer look, the great variety of real estate companies also left room for architects to creatively engage. It was far from uncommon for these firms to have established architects among their members and shareholders, both in the realms of tract development and apartment building.[113] Young watchmen Max Winders, Gerard De Ridder, and Jules De Roeck, for example, were engaged in the development firms Te Boulaer Uitbreiding, N.V. Ter Rivieren, and Merksem Extensions respectively. More research is needed to clarify the exact role the architects played in those real estate companies. Yet the spatial qualities of many of their development schemes, ranging from high-end villas to workers' housing, certainly seem to have been above-average. (Fig. 5.11) Moreover, in the *Bouwgids*, the young





Figure 5.11 Young watchmen working from within real estate companies. Gerard De Ridder from within the firm 'Ter Rivieren' in Deurne, and Jules Van Hoof from within the firm 'Edegem Extensions' in Edegem.

watchmen regularly argued that architects were morally obliged to go the extra mile by setting up tract development firms themselves. In 1921, De Vos-Van Kleef engaged in such an experiment in his hometown Kapellen, where a local notary had brought him in contact with a "consortium of landowners who were keen on turning their beautiful forests into a garden city district."[114] Together with six architects, willing to take a financial interest, he founded the N.V. Tuinwijk-Vredeburg in 1921.[115] Among these architects were young watchmen Paul Smekens, Flor Van Reeth, and Egide Van Der Paal. They managed "to design a completely new street network with an accurate indication of buildings, including front gardens, squares, streets and alleys."[116] It was from such positions, they argued, that architects could get a grip on the architecture of urbanization on a larger scale. (Fig. 5.12) But it never got that far, as only the first ten houses were ever built.[117] Despite the proximity of a station directly connecting the site to Antwerp, demand in remote Kapellen was not strong enough. Arguably, the architects' Beaux-Arts education hadn't really prepared them for large-scale commercial entrepreneurship.

In the realm of apartment building, several young watchmen started acting as project developers themselves as well. Jan De Braey and Paul Smekens, for instance, developed rental apartment complexes with commercial base at the Jan Van Rijswijcklaan[118] and the Kruishofstraat respectively.[119] It was, however, a young man called Jean Florian-Collin (1904–1985)—who graduated from the military engineering school in Berchem in the early 1920s, when the first apartment complexes in Antwerp began to appear—who took the idea of the architect-developer to a completely different level. Inspired by the ways in which English building

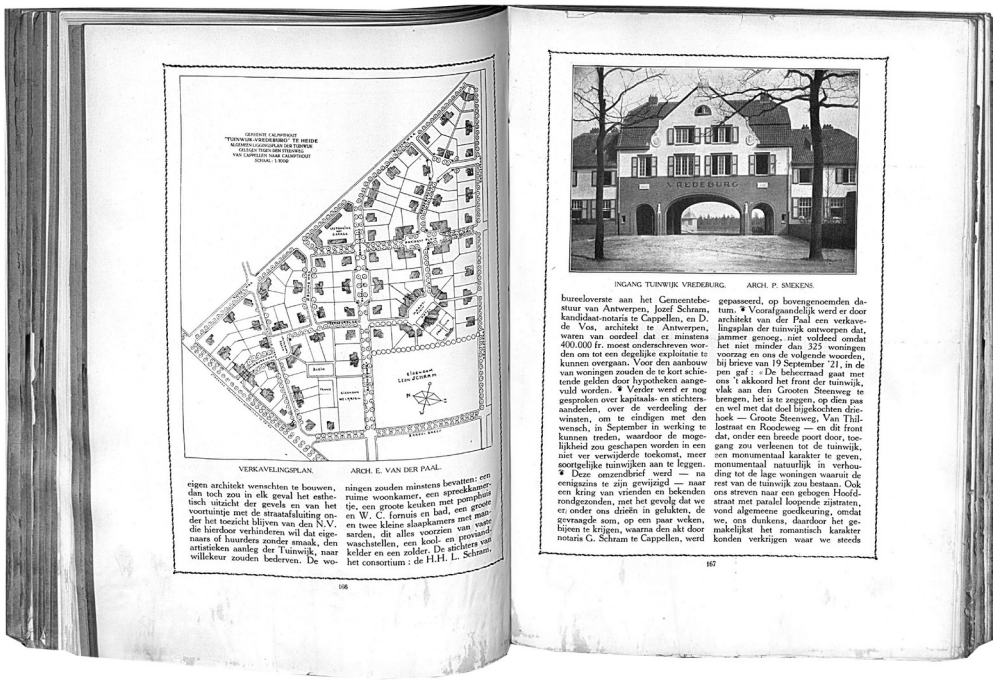


Figure 5.12 De Vos-Van Kleef, Paul Smekens, and Egide Van Der Paal, among others, founded the real estate company Tuinwijk Vredeburg in Kapellen in the early 1920s.

societies had managed to build the urbanization process at large,[120] Collin ended up penning down his views in his 1938 book *L'Epargne immobilière et sa fonction sociale.* Large savers' cooperatives were to allow citizens to pool sufficient capital to have building societies build their future habitat. One of Collin's major inventions was that these 'building societies' became 'open structures' attracting ever new participants and investors, undergirding the rise of a rolling fund. In this way, building societies didn't necessarily cease to exist after a project was finished—but were enabled to start over and over again. "What has been done in England without general plan and by chance," Collin wrote, "could be done more profitably for the country as a whole, this time based on an harmonious urbanization plan—unique in the world."[121] In order to curb speculation, he suggested that municipal and regional urban design competitions be organized requiring the coordinated efforts of local political boards, architects, planners, and engineers.[122] Collin's urbanization plan was not meant to be a fully developed blueprint, but "schematic, and realized in

a very short time, to be detailed and elaborated only during execution."[123] The plan, in other words, was again an 'idea good enough to start with', which "tens of thousands of architects and urban planners across the country"[124] would elaborate over time according to evolving and situated contingencies.

Collin's utopian plan was never systematically implemented on a large scale but may be regarded as a representative sublimation of the experimental climate and of actual practices in the interwar period.[125] It is indeed striking how close Collin's vision mirrors the incrementalism, relative ideal, and daily operations of the SCAA, which functioned as a platform where policymakers, financiers, entrepreneurs, and planners met to negotiate the modalities of real estate development within a global, but not totalizing, vision for the urbanizing agglomeration. Within this overall climate, several committed architects maneuvered themselves into a position that allowed them to co-design the architecture of urbanization by starting real estate companies themselves, or by engaging in structural collaborations with a wide range of firms and financiers.

The architect as policymaker

As already mentioned, the SCAA could not rely on any legislative framework for building codes when it was established. A 1914 law later allowed municipalities to include formal and aesthetic considerations in refusing building permits,[126] but it was so seldom applied that "aspects of good layout and beauty in cityscapes still had such limited significance that never too much attention was devoted to it by public administrations."[127] After the interruption of the First World War, the focus on economic recovery pushed the aspect of urban aesthetics to the background. Several architects of the young watch warned that "the harmonious development of Greater Antwerp was threatened by the lack of proper building codes."[128] (Fig. 5.13) Initially, the young watchmen sought to infiltrate public administrations to deal with the issue from within, for instance as members of a provincial building council. In a 1932 opinion piece, they even offered to share their expertise regarding "architecture, hygiene, aesthetics, building styles, etc." with the SCAA with "in order to allow the committee to take more broadly-informed decisions."[129]

As the SCAA was mandated to assess every planning application in the entire agglomeration, the young watchmen's involvement could have engendered interesting practices on monitoring what critic Leonard called the "wholeness with which singular buildings [were] set in their

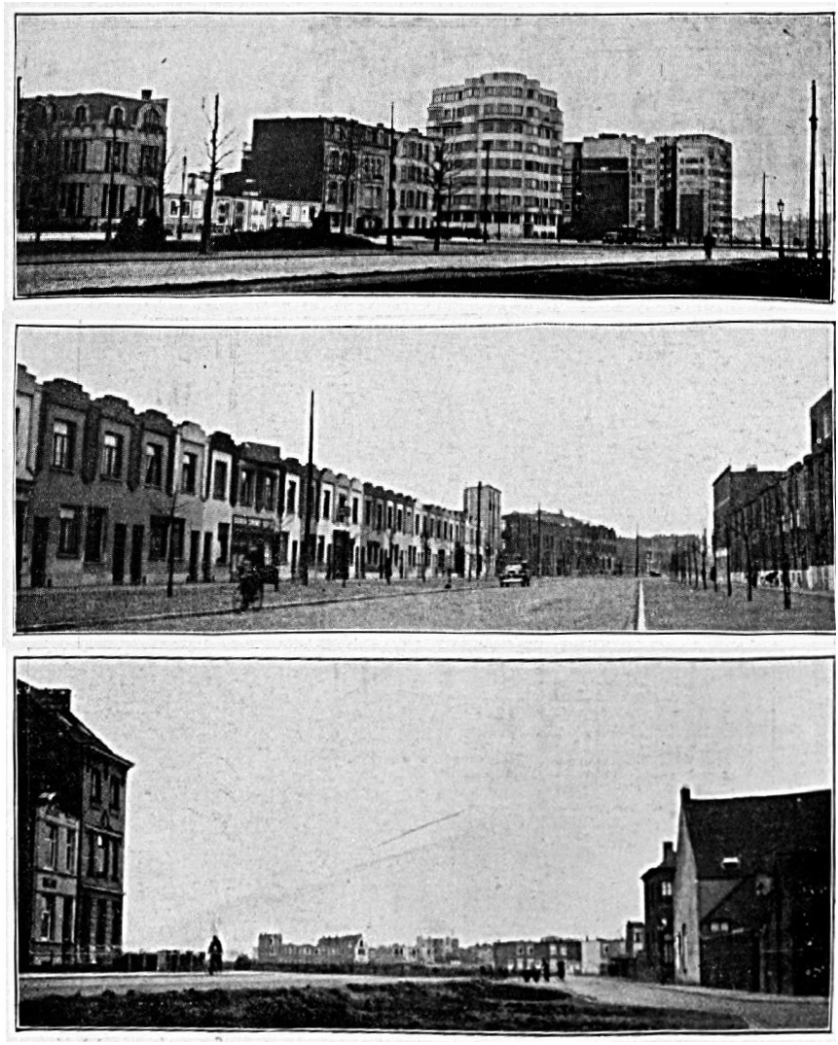


Figure 5.13 Series of rare pictures of the agglomeration's haphazardly urbanizing skyline, taken from a *KMBA* article titled 'The Development of Urbanization in Belgium' pleading for better building regulations (1935).

overall surroundings [...] grown from the site rather than built on it [...] making the most wonderful compositions mature into beauty."[130] Although very much in keeping with the SCAA's incremental methods, Leonard's 'medieval' approach faced increasing opposition. In a 1936 opinion piece, young watchman Van Der Paal asserted that "consideration should now be given to other things, such as well-considered compositions in light of

financial possibilities, technical ingenuity, professionalism."[131] In a world that was increasingly permeated with rationality and science, urban beauty became a matter of predefined "street and building profiles (…) based on order, fixed arrangements and the stringent application of ordinances embedding a modern sense of beauty in urbanism."[132] Rather than becoming daily members of aesthetic committees, architects ended up rendering the reciprocal relationships between standard building codes, ordinances, and urban space.

From the early 1930s, building regulations steering urbanization outside historic cities became a clear matter of concern for the provinces.[133] In 1934, SCAA protagonist Joseph Schobbens chaired a provincial committee charged with developing building codes to counter the "insane speculation on land that made many buildings fall far short of what could reasonably be expected in terms of public health, morality and beauty."[134] Three young watchmen, Jan De Braey, Jos Ritzen, and Hendrik Wittockx, were appointed to codevelop a provincial model code for "orienting municipal building policies."[135] The ordinance, published as a manual in 1937, became an amalgamation of generic rules, mainly aimed at prohibiting new constructions from tarnishing the built environment's harmony and beauty.[136] In general, detached single-family houses with a maximum height of two thirds of the width of adjacent roads (yet with a maximum height of 10 meters) were promoted, with saddle roof and side-gardens of at least 1.90 but preferably 3 meters wide.[137] Ideal lots had a minimum depth of 30 meters, with a rear building line of 15 meters, and front gardens of 4 meters. Contiguous construction was possible on the sole condition that one architectural composition was formed. These standards guaranteed a degree zero of the garden-suburb imaginary, while allowing a (not inconsiderable) maximum density of thirty dwellings per hectare. (Fig. 5.14) Lush villa neighborhoods were expected to give a bit more luster to the garden cityscape, with lavishly planted lots of at least 1000sqm and minimum plot widths of 20m.[138] Apartment buildings were only allowed where soaring land values justified dense development schemes,[139] when explicitly "designated in municipal development plans," along "roads that were sufficiently wide and spaciously conceived."[140] In practice, this translated into the selective construction of apartments of six to eight stories with a maximum standard height of about 27 meters along the agglomeration's metropolitan grid. (Fig. 5.14) The curious marriage between the traditional garden city and the modern metropolis thus became legally embedded. The most important material prescribed was red brick.

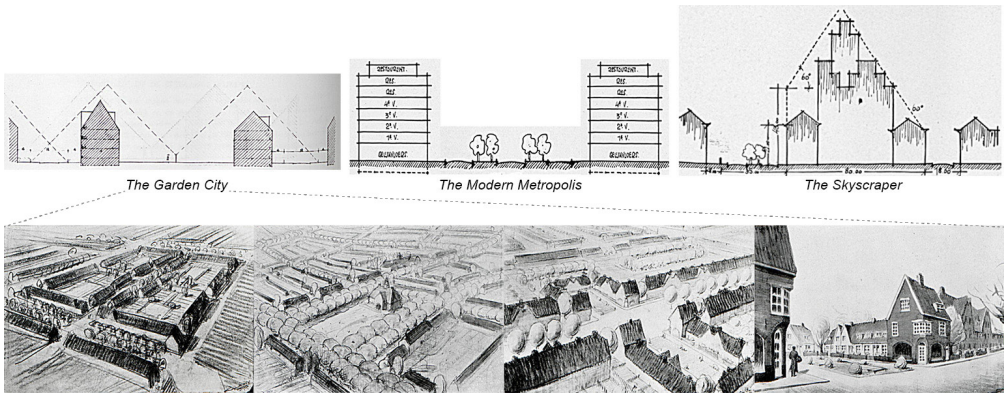


Figure 5.14 The imaginaries of the garden city, the modern metropolis, and the skyscraper were embedded within emerging discussions on building regulations. The garden city sketches are by Van Der Paal, the modern metropolis sketch was originally published by Horta, and the skyscraper sketch by Maertens. All footage, however, was taken from KMBA monthlies from the 1930s.

In the early 1930s, the up-and-coming skyscrapers entered the debate. In a series of letters to Antwerp's City Council, which were all published in the KMBA's monthly magazine, Schobbens deplored that after iconic high-rise precedents such as the Boerentoren and the Century Hotel, "maximum heights were no longer respected anywhere, with tall buildings rising up along large boulevards and narrow streets alike [causing] all kinds of nauseating conditions [...] devaluat[ing] the aesthetic and cadastral value of entire urban areas, while slowing down development in the outer agglomeration."[141] Schobbens referred to two "excellent studies"[142] from M. Maertens and Victor Horta to turn the lamentable situation around. Maertens's 'Projet de réglementation de la hauteur des bâtiments' prescribed standardized and somewhat random regulations. Horta's study 'Le Problème de la réglementation de la hauteur des bâtiments' lamented Maertens's overly simplistic contribution and pleaded for a more conditional approach, in which the specific situation, circumstances, and many contingent parameters—ranging from architectural style over interior comfort and orientation to public interest and land value—were to be taken into account.[143] This approach relied on interpretative judgment of aesthetic committees rather than on drafting passive model codes that were mostly aimed at preventing and prohibiting, but offered little constructive levers to actively work toward an *esthétique intégrale.* It is in that sense telling that the very same regulations that were coproduced by

interwar architects were ultimately held co-responsible by the architectural guild for having turned Belgium into ugliest country in the world.[144]

THE SCAA'S ENABLING ROLE

Apart from designing buildings, the young watchmen engaged in all kinds of economic activities to get a grip on the agglomeration's architecture.[145] Interestingly, many of them took on several roles at the same time, thus blurring the strict boundaries between the positions of the *architecte-polemiste*, *architecte-commerçant*, *architecte-entrepreneur*, *architecte-constructeur*, or the *architecte-artiste* that were not always as clear-cut as is often presumed.[146] It allowed the young watchmen to promulgate a shared architectural culture among themselves and various agents in the production of space. Yet the architects themselves did not always seem to have realized, or were reluctant to admit, that their activities were highly conditioned by the SCAA's urbanization project.

A small exhibition featuring villas of the Brandt neighborhood and apartments along Jan van Rijswijcklaan, for instance, was completely silent on the SCAA's preparatory role. Yet it was the SCAA, and city engineer Lemeunier in particular, who had designed the neighborhood's development plan (see chapter 4). Together with De Heem and Schobbens, Lemeunier visited the estate to attune the picturesque street pattern to the site's topography—an approach adopted by the SCAA in several cases.[147] The exact modalities for the quarter's development were negotiated by SCAA member and city secretary Geyselinck, resulting in a sophisticated notarial deed full of preconditions to ensure the image of a picturesque *parc habité*.[148] Trees were maximally safeguarded, built up volumes and densities limited, and the architectural details and materials of each and every cottage had to be approved by the city administrations before a private client could even buy a plot from the della Faille family.[149] Framed in this manner, urban aesthetics was the outcome of a collective process involving many people, skills, and knowledges. Similar stories can be told for many different places. The construction of the Boerentoren, symbol of the modern metropolis, would not have been possible without the SCAA's 1919 competition for the reconstruction of the Schoenmarkt.[150] (Fig. 5.15) None of the metropolitan apartments could have been built without the SCAA realizing the metropolitan grid. And the Donck area in Brasschaat greatly benefited from the fact that engineer August Mennes incorporated

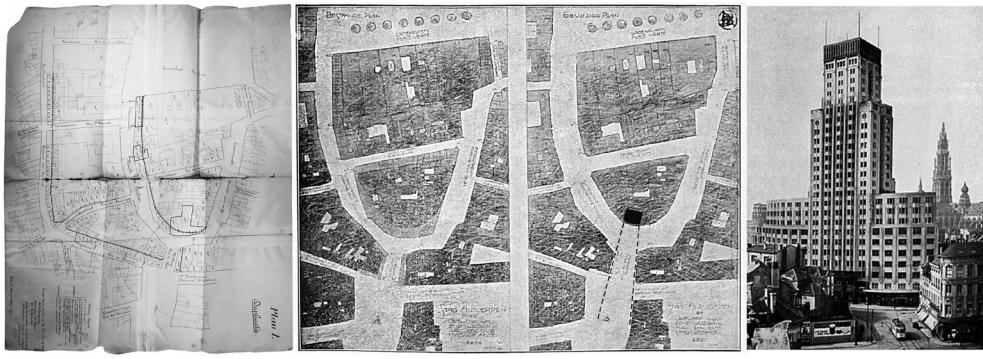


Figure 5.15 The iconic Boerentoren by young watchmen Smolderen, Van Hoenacker, and Van Beurden (1930) could not have been realized without preparatory plans for widening roads by De Heem, and the 1919 SCAA competition for the reconstruction of the Schoen- and Eiermarkt.

preliminary ideas of Parisian *architecte-paysagiste* Eugène Touret in his final development plans.[151] (Fig. 5.16)

This collective approach reflects a way of thinking about aesthetics that was not uncommon. It featured, for instance, in Louis Van Der Swaelmen's contribution 'Le Problème de l'esthétique dans la vie municipale' to the 1913 conference in Ghent—on the basis of which he substantiated his *Préliminaires d'art civique* in 1916.[152] The intriguing text suggested that committees composed of different professional profiles were more likely to achieve enduring conceptions of urban aesthetics than the "tyranny" and "singular expertise" of the individual artist.[153] Arguably, the SCAA embodied such a transition toward a collective and social approach of an *esthétique integrale.* This coauthorship, however, was hardly recognized by the architects, who didn't always seem to have realized that the role they were able to perform was largely due to the bigger piece the SCAA was directing—and that their role could only be as good as the play they were part of. (Fig. 5.17)

Ironically, the Antwerp architects themselves put increasing pressure on this collective approach. The international competition organized by the SCAA for the development of Antwerp's Left Bank largely reaffirmed the architect-urbanist as a liberal ironist operating from the distant order of urbanism. The fact that no winner was declared, and that SCAA engineer Paul De Heem was designated to draft the final plans, caused resentment, both among local and international participants.[154] (Fig. 5.18) The architects' 1932 proposal to join the SCAA made way for fierce criticism. They denounced the fact that almost all development plans

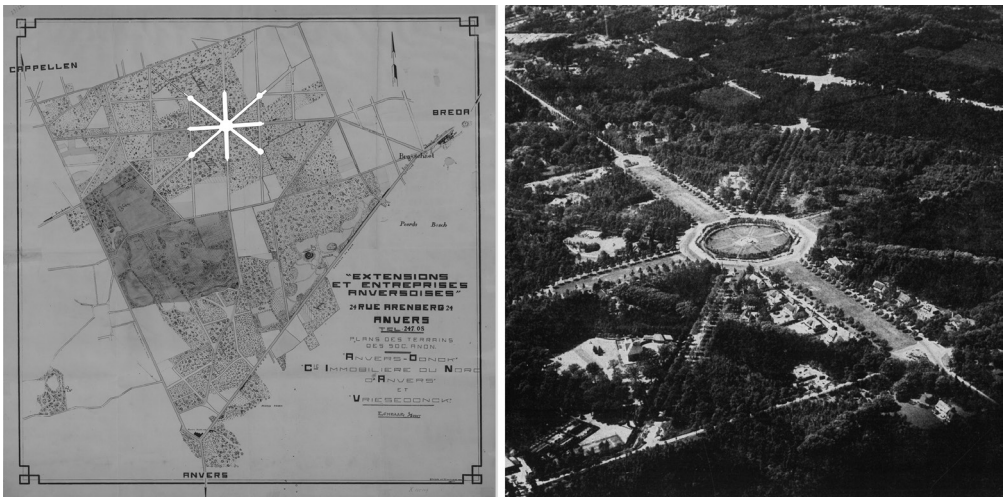


Figure 5.16 Plan by Mennes for the Donck area in Brasschaat by Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises (1933), based on preliminary sketches by Parisian landscape architect Eugène Touret, and aerial view of realized road works and emerging villas.

for agglomeration's municipalities were drafted by a 'single engineer' [August Mennes] "who keeps all the plans, coming out of the office of a private architect, from arriving in safe harbor."[155] The architects claimed "that such urbanization plans were (...) a work of art that only the architect [was] really able to create" and concluded that their absence only amounted into "failed urbanization!"[156] This was an opinion shared by the renowned Belgian planner Raphaël Verwilghen, who barely a few years later hired the services of architect-urbanist Constant Hanekroot to draft plans for Antwerp's surroundings.[157]

By the end of the 1930s architects had reclaimed their "sole legal authorization to design,"[158] which was incorporated in the 1939 law on the protection of the architectural profession. The law was part and parcel of a long process of professionalization and the increasing social and juridical division of labor.[159] Just about all actors involved in the production of space, from engineers to architects and real estate agents to general contractors, obtained their 'own' legal framework around the middle of the twentieth century—neatly delineating responsibilities and expertise, while prohibiting hybrid positions. Such strong demarcations were aimed at putting an end to dubious practices that most certainly occurred. At the same time, however, it could be argued that these laws undermined the principles of mutual knowledge, mutual enterprise, and

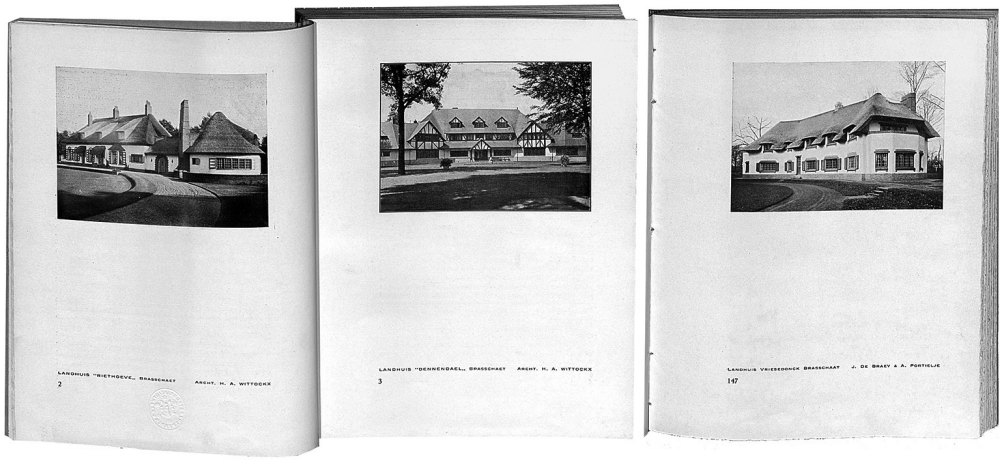


Figure 5.17 Villa designs by young watchmen Wittockx, Portielje, and De Braey for the Donck area in Brasschaat, as part of a KMBA exhibition that failed or refused to mention the importance of the SCAA's preparatory and 'enabling' activities.

spatial agency that had underpinned a collective approach toward an *esthétique intégrale.*

L'ESTHÉTIQUE INTÉGRALE FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF URBANIZATION

This chapter reconstructed how situated Antwerp architects worked toward a coherent but diversified image for the agglomeration as a whole from small and individual projects, culminating in the fascinating embrace of the imaginaries of the historical city, the modern metropolis, and the garden city. This approach leaned very much on the SCAA's own working methods and largely depended on the shared planning culture that the committee managed to establish in the Antwerp agglomeration. A young generation of architects engaged in this collective quest toward an incremental *esthétique intégrale*, practicing the architecture of urbanization as a "social practice" rather than as an "art, a technique, or a science."[160] Their field of possibilities was delineated by dependencies and synergies with other practices, institutions, and agents in the production of space, an approach that sought to move design agency from the privacy of the individual muse and the design studio right into the flow of socio-natural life itself. It prompted architects to start questioning the tenets of their traditional Beaux-Arts education, in a way that is very

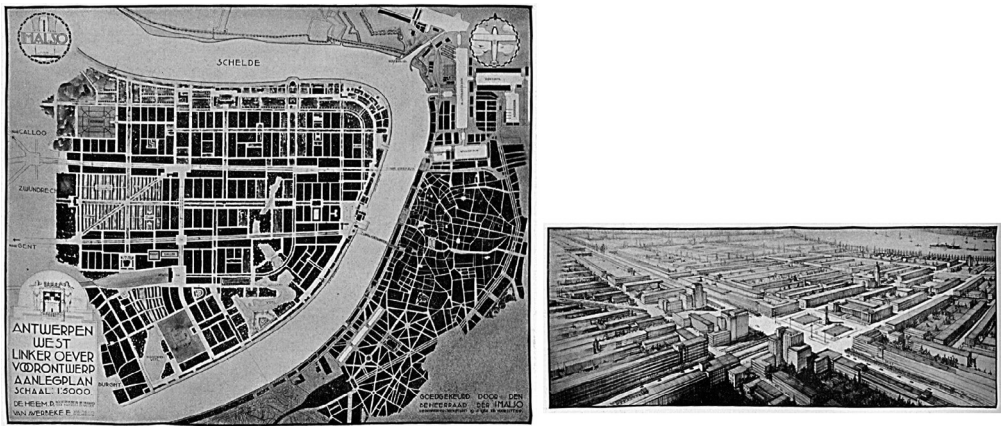


Figure 5.18 Design by engineer Paul De Heem and city architect Emiel Van Averbeke for the Left Bank area (1936).

much in line with the analysis made by Gottman in his reflection on the aesthetics of urbanization:

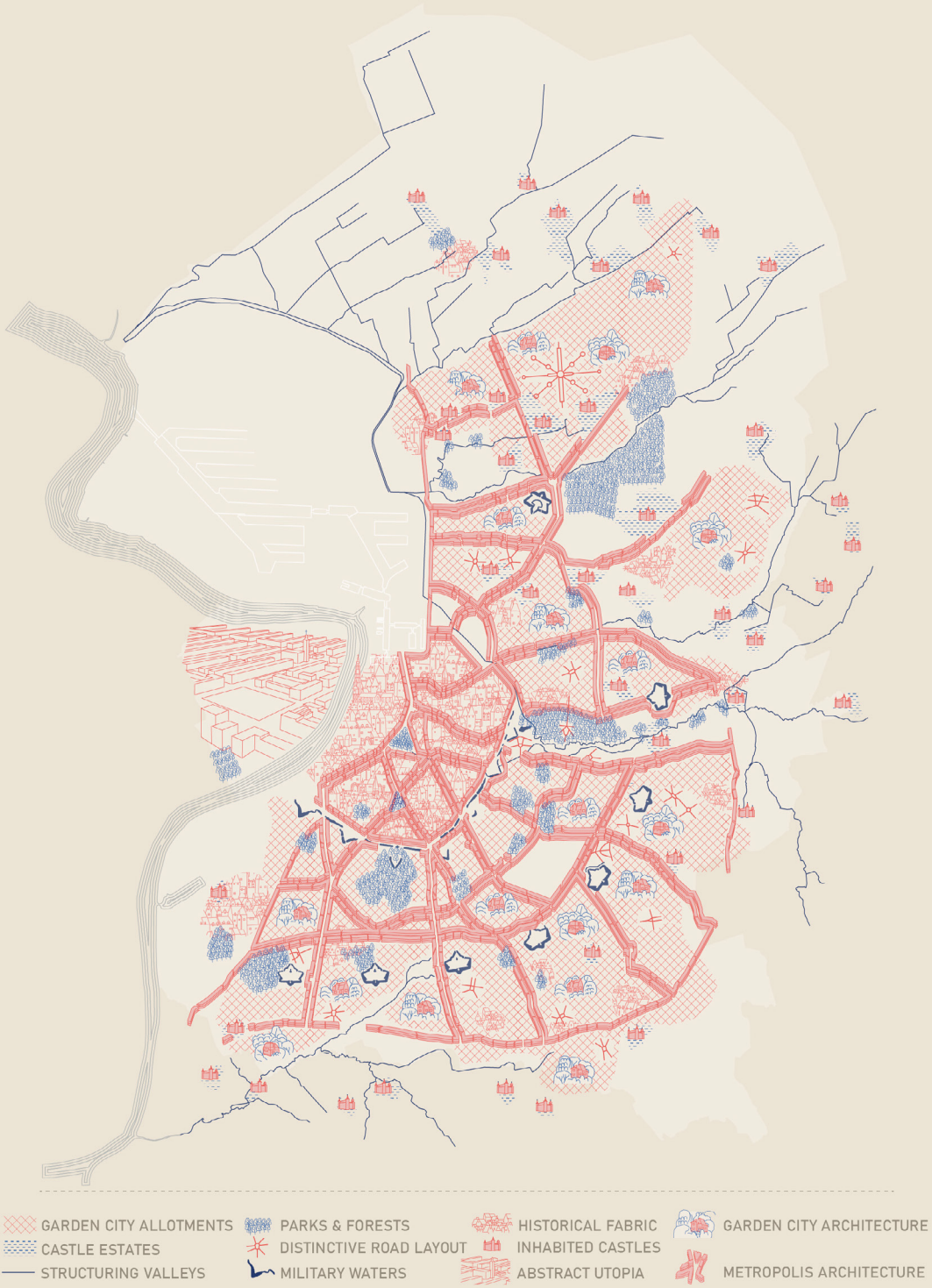
> The profession of city planner and architect should certainly not renounce their artistic formation; but their training needs to include some competence in many fields they rather despised in the past: the financing of the construction; the economics of the area that they will build; the geography of a wider region around it; the social needs and habits of the users (…) All this needs to be taught in every good school of architecture, and taught in a way that would not conflict, but could be harmonized with aesthetics.[161]

The approach to urban aesthetics as a sociocultural process from the near order of architecture assured a certain integrity of the image of the urban landscape across plot boundaries, without dogmatically imposing that image. Under the SCAA's auspices, questions of form and aesthetics became a pertinent feature of urbanization, yielding a permanent improvement into the (economic, social, experiential, spatial, etc.) value of land.[162] This improvement was achieved through the tangible and concrete contributions from architectural practice, yet conditioned by and serving complementary urbanization dynamics on a territorial scale. Engaging in mutual knowledges and enterprises, the Antwerp architects became brokers of spatial and aesthetic capital in the process of everyday urbanization. Many of the urban quarters they helped building between 1907 and 1939 remain among the most valued and sought-after to this day.

Practicing an architecture of urbanization, then, depended on the development of what cognitive scientist Margaret Boden defined as 'Historical Creativity', which dwells on ideas that are "novel with respect to the whole of human history" requiring "shared knowledge and shifting intellectual fashions"—in addition to 'Personal Creativity' drawing on the individual muse and ideas that are novel "with respect to the individual mind which had the idea."[163] In the context of the Antwerp agglomeration, the SCAA consistently mounted a context that encouraged "the working together of many hands and many minds to secure common ends which are quite unattainable by the unaided efforts of isolated individuals or small groups of people."[164] This notion of an architecture of urbanization moves away from an interpretation of urban aesthetics or architecture as absolute or autonomous practices[165] and sides with notions of relative autonomy, which refers to an investigation of possible (better but not perfect) futures from within the affordances and limitations of given situations. This hybrid position remains suspended between "radical interdependence and autonomy" necessary for the making of enjoyable and plural urban life-worlds.[166]

Map 5: The Architecture of Urbanization.

This map shows the agglomeration as a fascinating embrace of three distinctive urban imaginaries: the historical city (continued accumulation in and around the old urban cores); the modern metropolis (metropolitan architecture along the main road grid); the garden city (traditionalist architecture blending in with parks and castle estates). The appearance of the agglomeration was not projected from the 'abstract order of planning', but gradually appeared from an accumulation of concrete projects from the 'near order of architecture,' tailored to different urbanization dynamics. Based on a close-reading of the overall map summarizing the SCAA's work from 1932 (Fig. 6.7), this map meticulously reconstructs where the 1937 provincial building codes principally allowed large (metropolitan) buildings such as apartments and offices (Fig. 5.14); where garden-city-like development was envisioned, including occasional highlights in the roadscape; and where existing historical cores were being absorbed into the general scheme. In the Antwerp agglomeration, urban aesthetics was never a matter of individual muse or authorship, but the outcome of parallel socio-spatial processes integrating the mutual knowledges and skills of architects, civil servants, construction laborers, contractors, engineers, local politicians, land-owners, etc. The plans for the Left Bank, developed on a largely blank canvas during the famous 1933 international design competition, and represented here by a redrawing of a bird's-eye view by Paul De Heem (Fig. 5.18), are a clear exception to the SCAA's dominant modus operandi.


GARDEN CITY ALLOTMENTS
CASTLE ESTATES
STRUCTURING VALLEYS
PARKS & FORESTS
DISTINCTIVE ROAD LAYOUT
MILITARY WATERS
HISTORICAL FABRIC
INHABITED CASTLES
ABSTRACT UTOPIA
GARDEN CITY ARCHITECTURE
METROPOLIS ARCHITECTURE

"Mr. Schobbens held the position of General Secretary of the Study Committee of the Antwerp Agglomeration since its creation. The role he fulfilled defines the committee's entire history; all its versatile activities developed under his enthusiastic driving force; he had a hand in all its initiatives and every one of us is aware that its achievements were always largely due to its General Secretary (…). Mr. Schobbens fought a restless battle against the deterioration of urban and landscape beauty and against the disorderly expansion of our municipalities, not only within our committee, which provided him with fertile ground for this purpose, but also outside of it (…) We all know with what unshakeable willpower and what tenacity he put his talent at the service of the cause which he had chosen as his life's task."

H. Debaedts, *Merksem: openen van een straat ter streke "Katersvelden"*, SCAA meeting minutes, 07/03/1939.

"By the way, I resolve to seek the advice of some actual urbanists."

Paul De Heem, *Nieuw ontwerp tot het bouwen van het definitief waterbouwkundig laboratorium*, SCAA meeting minutes, 08/21/1936.

Chapter 6
The Sociocultural Question
Urbanization as the work of city-amateurs

URBANIZATION AS A SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICE

Today, one hundred years later, it is clear that the SCAA operated in an era in which the meaning of the city and urban society were subject to profound changes. The stable connection of men's cultural evolution to "the development of the compact city" that had marked "the past 5000 years"[1] became ever more questionable around the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time, it was not very clear yet what kind of urban realm would replace this millennial-old way of ordering the world. Urbanizing the large agglomerations was the Belgian contribution to an international quest for an "alternative *cadre bâti* for the 'new man' and his 'new society.'"[2] As argued throughout this book, the SCAA grafted shared imaginaries in the many minds of committee members from different municipalities, administrations, departments, ministries, etc., gradually developing a common culture among the agglomeration's municipalities—aptly described in French as "une culture commune" by Leloutre in the context of Brussels.[3] In that sense, the SCAA's members formed a technocratic and bureaucratic elite that embodied the proliferation of professional planning in the early twentieth century. Yet urbanizing the agglomeration did not remain a matter for professionals only. The SCAA made concrete efforts to make Antwerp citizens conscious of the meaning of their urbanization project, enabling them to imagine and debate in concrete terms about what it could mean to co-inhabit the emerging urban realm.[4] Urbanization, in that sense, was about cultivating shared imaginaries that can carry a common vision for the territory, even if the initial formulation of that vision, at first, lacks a clear project.[5] This chapter investigates the ways in which the SCAA involved citizens in its project and tried to introduce them to new ways of imagining, reading, interpreting, and appropriating the urbanizing city-territory. It argues that this aspect of the SCAA's project was driven by some members' *amateurism*—their love for Antwerp and its agglomeration—rather than by their desire to professionalize.

Urbanization and public opinion

In the Antwerp context, the early novels of Lode Baekelmans are an excellent source for understanding that the outer agglomeration was still somewhat of an 'exotic outside' for many citizens at the turn of the century—a place they occasionally explored on Sunday afternoons to have cheese-spread sandwiches with radishes and coffee in some country inn—but which otherwise had little meaning for their everyday lives.[6] A small hiking guide from 1910 confirms that, even if Antwerp citizens were fond of walking the city's immediate surroundings, they "didn't dare" to explore the agglomeration's more remote corners, because they "didn't know their way around, couldn't orient themselves, and were simply afraid of getting lost."[7] For the agglomeration to be urbanized, the population simply had to be familiarized with this uncharted territory, which had to become their plausible habitat in due time. Even if most Antwerp citizens agreed that the demolition of the city walls was more of a liberation than a loss of safety, the SCAA's mission initially met little enthusiasm. Citizens were "very disillusioned [for not] immediately seeing the city and its agglomeration turned into a giant construction site,"[8] thought the committee was "badly progressing," and claimed it was only "slowing down Antwerp's construction industry."[9] The SCAA, in sum, began its mission "amid quite a bit of hostility."[10] From the very beginning, the SCAA recognized the need to inform citizens, in order to turn unrealistic expectations into shared enthusiasm for its mission.

This observation aligns with the growing conviction around the turning of the twentieth century that educating the greatest numbers was a fundamental key to solving social and urban problems of the industrial era—an aspect that surfaced in the work of a figure like Patrick Geddes in particular.[11] Educating people about their environment actually meant "involving them, as a crucial part of their own individual development."[12] As a convinced Darwinist, Geddes considered the urban process as the continuous expression of sociocultural evolution. Yet Geddes's notion of urban evolution was far from deterministic or path-dependent, because urbanization processes were driven by consciously acting individuals who could incessantly be educated and reeducated. According to Geddes's idea of 'urban civics', the city—this cultural text that was constantly being rewritten and reinterpreted by each successive generation—could be 'learned' by communicating, exhibiting, and interpreting the evolution

of cities.[13] Geddes's insights were part of a nineteenth-century positivist intellectual tradition "shared by many thinkers at the beginning of the twentieth century."[14] In that sense, it may be regarded as symptomatic of the zeitgeist and intellectual fashions that an organization such as the SCAA soon started communicating its project to a broad audience as well. This chapter recollects a number of cultural initiatives the SCAA launched to develop new and common ways of 'reading' the urban condition—at a time when it was completely being rewritten.

Amateur readings of urbanization

Urbanization, as a process of constant socio-spatial transformation, continuously creates new ruptures between the word 'city' and the material reality associated with that word. Throughout the twentieth century, the city gradually turned into a territorial "hypertext" that became much harder to read and understand than the clearly delineated urban core against a feudal background.[15] Curating the readership of the city at the very moment it started to become a hypertext became a genuine concern for the SCAA. Roland Barthes's article "Urbanisme et sémiologie"—a semiologist intellectually engaged in dealing with the rupture between *'les mots et les choses'*, or '*signifier and signified*'—offers clues to understanding that this specific aspect of the SCAA's work largely unfolded beyond the bureaucratic and technocratic scope of its official task.[16]

Like other authors, Barthes argues that, next to a material realm, the city is also "a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city talks to its inhabitants, we talk about our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, walking through it, by looking at it."[17] In order to overcome the ruptures that urbanization incessantly creates between the city as object and as discourse, it was, according to Barthes, "not the most important thing to multiply research and functional studies on the city, but to multiply different readings of the city."[18] For new ways of understanding the city, "the best entrance is to be found in a certain naïve attitude of the reader [the citizen]."[19] Such an entrance depends on "personal commitment and involvement,"[20] which is not to be found in the more distant nature of professional expertise. In line with these arguments, Barthes considered his own attempts to make sense of the city as "the musings of an amateur, in the etymological sense of the word: (…) a city-amateur

is someone who loves cities."[21] Constructing a common readership and language of the everchanging city, Barthes seems to argue, depends on amateurism and love for the city—rather than on the multiplication of professional jargon.

Amateurism in this context should be interpreted as a critical concept, mobilized as the nemesis to professional expertise, as explained at length by Andy Merrifield.[22] It is essential to stress, however, that amateurism and professionalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories, and the argument here is not that the SCAA was opposed to the professionalization of urbanism and spatial planning. Rather, introducing amateurism allows to explore different dimensions of the committee's work—beyond the rigid spheres of technology, expertise, and institutional bureaucracy. The hundreds of meeting minutes testify as much to a difficult search for shared ways of looking, thinking, and talking about the urbanizing agglomeration as to ready-made professional answers. Their tentative and provisional tone suggests that the SCAA's protagonists were just as much immersed in the urbanization process as amateurs themselves, together with society at large, exploring the best possible ways to urbanize their beloved city. Several characteristics that Merrifield attributes to amateurs come remarkably close to those of Kingdon's policy-entrepreneurs, such as, for instance, their "perseverance and willingness to invest large amounts of personal time in order to pursue a higher cause," their preference for "risky fulfillment" over "safe routine,"[23] or their adherence to "more open-ended, more uncertain and more adventurous pathways" rather than to the "ideologically driven world of professionals."[24] The SCAA's policy-entrepreneurs were, in sum, just as much full-blooded amateurs. Paraphrasing Edward Said, Merrifield describes how intellectual amateurism is "organized around two central pillars: a *sensibility* to de-professionalize reality and a political *allegiance* to ordinary folk."[25] In the same spirit, this chapter argues that some of the SCAA's professionals moved beyond the "specialization, technical formalism and narrow expertise" of their professional mandates,[26] by organizing numerous sociocultural events, mostly in their spare time, to educate the population on their urbanization mission. It was in this hobby-ism, in this amateurism, imparting a "sense of active involvement that no professional bureaucracy could ever hope to achieve,"[27] that a certain allegiance to ordinary folk emerged together with a genuine love for the city.

RECITING AND EXHIBITING URBANIZATION: THE SCAA IN SEARCH OF AN AUDIENCE

The lack of media coverage in peripheral territories is sometimes cited as one of the reasons explaining the utterly banal nature of extended urbanization processes: what remained unknown and uncovered just passed by.[28] The SCAA, on the contrary, built excellent relations with Antwerp's assembled press from the onset; the latter covered the committee's activities in newspaper sections with titles such as 'From the Province' or 'City and Surroundings.' Additionally, the SCAA published many pamphlets and booklets in its own name, while its protagonists regularly gave public lectures. The SCAA actively turned urbanization into a project that took place under the public eye. Next to publishing strategies, the SCAA used the emerging format of the exhibition as a "tool for the dissemination of knowledge and popular education."[29] The committee organized three major exhibitions (1910, 1913, and 1932) that shuttled between two dominant concepts that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century: exhibitions that portrayed urbanism as a new artistic technique on the one hand, and exhibitions that emphasized the longue-durée of the socio-spatial evolution of cities on the other. Before detailing the significance of the committee's versatile exhibition practices, however, the SCAA's proactive publishing attitude is briefly recollected.

Exploring communication channels

Already in 1909, the SCAA started sending "announcements to (…) all the Antwerp newspapers" to get the press on their side.[30] Urbanizing the agglomeration was never meant to remain some secretive activity hidden from the public eye. Arguably, the expertise of chairman Auguste Delbeke, a former journalist and editor in chief of the *Journal d'Anvers et de la Province*, came in handy.[31] Delbeke had been confronted with the hard rules of media himself in 1910, when a series of slanderous articles in the popular *Gazet van Antwerpen,* regarding his attitude on the abolition of compulsory military service, put his political career as minister of public works in danger.[32] In his own defense, Delbeke published and spread several activist pamphlets in which he openly wondered which other minister of public works, not coming from Antwerp, would "keep an eye on the interests of Antwerp and its agglomeration"[33] with the same passion and zeal as he did. Listing all of the committee's early



DE WAARHEID
OVER DE
WERKEN VAN ANTWERPEN
en het Omliggende
en MINISTER DELBEKE.

DE
Gazet van Antwerpen

heeft niet opgehouden Minister DELBEKE te bekampen met eene echte razernij. Tot lof onzer katholieke vrienden moeten wij bekennen, dat geen enkel wedijverend mensch dien veldtocht heeft goedgekeurd van een katholiek dagblad tegen een katholieken Minister.

Integendeel de kwade trouw is hier zoo klaarblijkelijk geweest ; en wij vragen aan al of de Heer Minister die GAZET niet moet bedanken voor haar bevijdend. In zijne plaats schouten wij haar uit erkentenis, en om den vrede te sluiten eene decoratie der Leopoldsorde.

't Is ten andere de eerste maal niet, dat dit blad zulk proper ! ! werk verricht. M^r Ryckmans, de leider der katholieke partij, aan wie de beheerraad van dit blad vroeger een bronzo schonk uit erkentenis voor beweezen diensten, moest over eenige jaren ondervinden, wat haar vanwege die menschen vermag.

En iedereen vraagt zich af aan wie thans de beurt zal zijn.

Immers een groep vrienden van Minister DELBEKE verdedigt hem for.

En reeds vraagt het blad : Wie zijn de verdedigers ?

Naamloos en Co !!! roept het uit.

Zou het misschien nieuwe slachtoffers zoeken ?

Op onze beurt stellen wij met heel de deftige bevolking van Antwerpen de vraag :

Wie is de ingever van dien walgelijken strijd tegen Minister DELBEKE ?

't Was door het toedoen der « GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN », dat op de laatste algemeene vergadering der meeting, te Berchem, eene dagorde tegen Minister DELBEKE in de hand werd gestopt ; dagorde die noch gestemd noch verworpen werd.

Te Merxem heeft men beloofd, dat het op verzoek der GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN was, dat de jonkheid getracht heeft eene dagorde tegen Minister DELBEKE te doen stemmen ; maar 't is heur slecht bekomen.

Te Cappellen profiteerde een uitzendeling derzelfde gazet van de afwezigheid van M. Biart, volksvertegenwoordiger, en van M. Geelhand, eersvoorzitter, om HET BESTUUR een dagorde te doen stemmen tegen M. DELBEKE. En de gazet ging te werk alsof die drie man en een poerdenkop hoc! Cappellen vertegenwoordigden.

Den Meister alle dagen aanvallen in hun dagblad was dus niet genoeg. Total die kleingeestige middeltjes nam dat blad zijnen toevlucht, om toch maar te doen gelooven, dat Minister DELBEKE moest afreden ! En 't is al niets gelukt; want, vele katholieken zijn het eens om te verklaren : 't Kan er niet meer door ! 't Gaat over zijn hout !

Wij laten dus de « GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN » aan de schande over van beuren lasterveldtocht, en hebben volle betrouwen in den gezonden zin der inwoners van **Berchem. Borgerhout, Merxem en Deurne !**

Wij hebben de zekerheid dat Minister DELBEKE gekozen wordt !

Groote werken rond Antwerpen.

Het schijnt ons volstrekt noodig, al de werken op te sommen, die op dezen oogenblik uitgevoerdigd zijn, of zullen zijn uitgevoerdigd worden, door Minister Delbeke. 't Zal het beste antwoord zijn op de aanvallen zijner belagers die beweren dat hij niets heeft gedaan.

TE BERCHEM

De groote staatsbaan gaat verbeterd worden van 15 meters tot 25 meters binnen de omheining en tot 50 meters buiten de omheining.
(Koninklijk besluit van 19 Januari 1904.)

De plans zijn onderworpen aan het Gemeentebestuur.

Voor deze werken doet de Staat al de onteigeningen ; zijn er winsten dan zijn die voor de Gemeente Berchem.

Kan men een schooner geschenk droomen ?

TE BORGERHOUT.

De Turnhoutsche baan moet op heel de leugte verbreed worden op 22 meters.

Voor de Carnottstraat is een plan opgemaakt en reeds goedgekeurd door de staat, om ze te verbreeden tot 22 meters van de statieplein tot aan de Wortelpan.

De voorwaarden zijn nogmaals dezelfde als voor Berchem !

TE DEURNE.

Bij Koninklijk besluit van 24 Meert 1900 werd de verbreeding der Turnhoutsche baan beslist.

Evenzoos zal de verbreeding en rechtmaking van de baan tusschen Antwerpen-Dokken en Wijneghem over Deurne komen, evenals de verbreeding der Herentalsche baan.

TE MERXEM.

Over de werken te Merxem spreken wij niet meer !

Heel de bevalling inbelt over hetgeen daar gebeuren gaat.

TE MORTSEL.

Wordt de baan verbreed op 30 meters, op voorwaarde dat de provincie de Liersche baan verbreede langs Mortsel en Boschoot tot Lier.
(Koninklijk besluit van 21 Februari 1903.)

OP HET KIEL.

De Staat heeft den Boomschen steenweg overgenomen en den St. Bernardsteenweg. Deze wordt verbreed van 18 tot op 28 meters van Antwerpen tot Hemiem, over Wilrijck, Aartselaar, Reeth en Schelle.
(Koninklijk besluit van 9 September 1902.)

De Nieuwe Laan

aan de Warande 40 meters breed BINNEN, en 30 meters breed BUITEN de vest wordt verbonden met den buiten.

Tusschen

MERXEM EN BRECHT

wordt de steenweg door den Staat overgenomen.

—o—

Ontworpen Werken.

Steenweg van de Biet naar Esschoren.
Steenweg Lille — Santhoven — Pulderbosch.
» Kiissenhoek naar Zoersel.
» Kiissenhoek naar Vorselaer.
» Zoersel naar Westmalle.
» Zoersel over Halle naar Oelegheem.
» St Leonards naar Rijckevorsel.

Drij nieuwe bressen in de Antwerpsche omheining.

Is het dan te verwonderen dat de buitenlieden roepen :

Behoudt toch onzen Minister van Openbare Werken !

GROOT PARK

tusschen Antwerpen, Wilrijck en Berchem.
Transbordeur te Hoboken.
Tunnel Antwerpen-Zuid.
Antwerpsche Suikerrui : **groote ascenseur,** te St Anna : **nieuwe vindsrug.** Overeenkomst merielijk vermeerderd en verbeterd.

Nu spraken wij niet van de miljoenen die verwerkt of besteund worden tot verbetering en uitbreiding der havenwerken ; onder andere de groote Havendokken die 13,000,000 frs. kosten.

De Sluis aan de Kruisschans frs. 5,000,000.

Voor de lasteraars en belagers van Minister DELBEKE telt dat allemaal niet.

Oiwel is dat het werk van Graaf de Smet de Nayer.

Oiwel.... een andere had dat gekonnen !!!!

—o—

Uitgevoerde Werken.

1. — Buitengewone herkassering van de baan Coppelen — Esschen over Calmpthout.
2. — Herkassering en velioweg hergboren den weg Wuestwezel — Brecht.
3. — Herkassering en velobaan tusschen Calmpthout en Wuestwezel.
4. — Verbetering aan den steenweg van Turnhout naar Oostmalle.

WERKEN IN UITVOERING :
Aanleg of Vernieuwing.

Steenweg te Esschen.
» Mechelen — Mortsel.
» Deurne — Oostmalle.
» Oude Barrel — Ikxaschaet.
» Lier — Oostmalle.
» Oostmalle — Hoogstraeten (verbreeding).
Nieuwe baan te Antwerpen.
Voor bruggen in de Wallen der Antwerpsche omheining.

Kwade trouw.

Herhaaldelijk daagde de GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN Minister DELBEKE uit voor den Kantonalen Bond te komen.

Woensdag 9 dezer, worden niet alleen die afgevaardigden bijeengeroepen, maar ook de besturen der politieke korpsen dier 4 gemeenten.

Meent gij nu dan dat de GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN eerlijk gehoeg is om een oogenblijdig verslag te geven ?

Gelijk zij zou handelen tegenover hare ergste vijanden trekt zij die vergadering in het belachelijke. En zochtans daar was aanwezig het puik der katholieke werkers op het politiek gebied. Zij hebben den Minister met aandacht en eerbied aanhoord en diepper toegejuicht, en zijn voldaan naar huis gekeerd.

Waar zijn dien dag de uitzendelingen der gazet gebleven ? Waarom kwamen zij daar niet ?

Achter den rug, in de afwezigheid aanvallen, lasteren en liegen, dat wel. Maar vlak in 't gelaat, dat durven zij niet.

Wij laten die handelwijs ter beoordeeling van al de deftige katholieken !

Nochtans, algemeen is de verontwaardiging tegen de GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN ; bedroevend is het, dat in eene partij menschen gevonden worden, die om hun persoonlijken haat te koelen voor niets achteruit deinzen.

Hoe die menschen zoo iets overeenbrengen met hunne conscientie dat gaat alle gedacht te boven !

—o—

Minister Delbeke VALT niet !

De **Bond der gemeentebelangen van Borgerhout**, na tweemaal te hebben gestemd over de Kamiliatuur-DELBEKE, heeft eindelijk zijn reglement gemaakplegd, en bevonden :

Dat die bond geen recht had zich daarmede te bemoeien !

Het is de KANTONALE BOND ALLEEN, die zich daarmede bemoeien mag.

Bijgevolg vallen de dagorde van den **bond der gemeentebelangen** in 't water, en de afgevaardigden bij den KANTONALEN BOND herkrijgen hun volle vrijheid.

Nu zeg een verstandige beslissing te Berchem ; en dan vermemen wij Zondag : Minister DELBEKE MIJN Eendidaat tot groote vreugde van al de oprechte Antwerpenaren.

En dan :

Vrede ! Vrede ! Vrede !
Eendracht ! Eendracht !
Ten Strijde
Tegen den Vijand !

B
250719
985

Figure 6.1 The pamphlet 'The Truth about the Works in Antwerp and Surroundings' in defense of Minister Delbeke reads as a publicity campaign for the SCAA's mission, listing all its early achievements in many of the agglomeration's municipalities.

achievements and stressing the prosperity they had brought to agglomeration's citizens, Delbeke's pamphlet was a true promotional campaign for the SCAA. (Fig. 6.1) Although Delbeke eventually had to resign in 1910, he nevertheless stayed on as the committee's president. Even if he was officially no longer entitled to that position, he continued to serve the interests of the agglomeration until his death in 1922, as an amateur, or in the words of the newspaper *La Métropole*, as an "interpreter of the entire agglomeration."[34]

Throughout its existence, the SCAA was especially close with the French-speaking press, its activities extensively covered by newspapers such as *Neptune et Lloyd Anversois* and *La Métropole*, which were published by and for the same elites to which the SCAA's notables themselves belonged.[35] In fall 1929, *La Métropole* devoted a series of twelve full articles to the SCAA under the title *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise*. They gave a full account and appraisal of the SCAA's first 20 years of hard work, based on on-site visits with SCAA protagonists and illustrated with numerous plans and tantalizing pictures.[36] (Fig. 6.2) The more the years

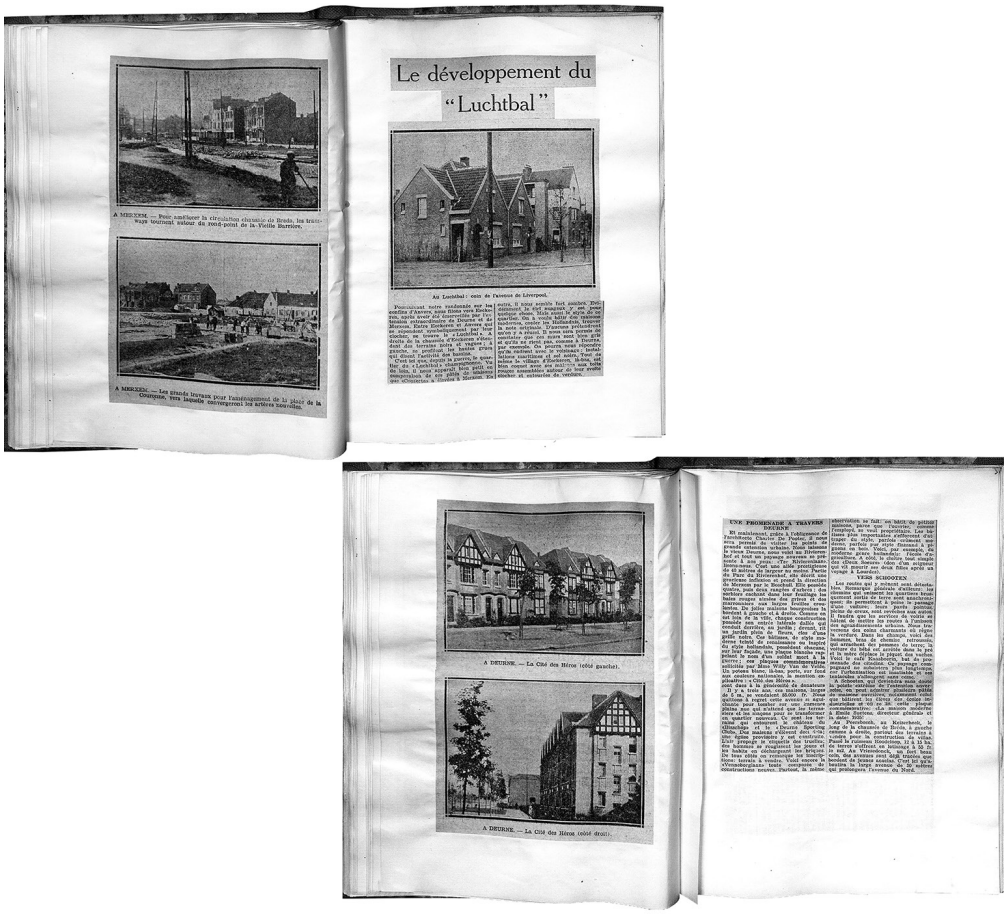
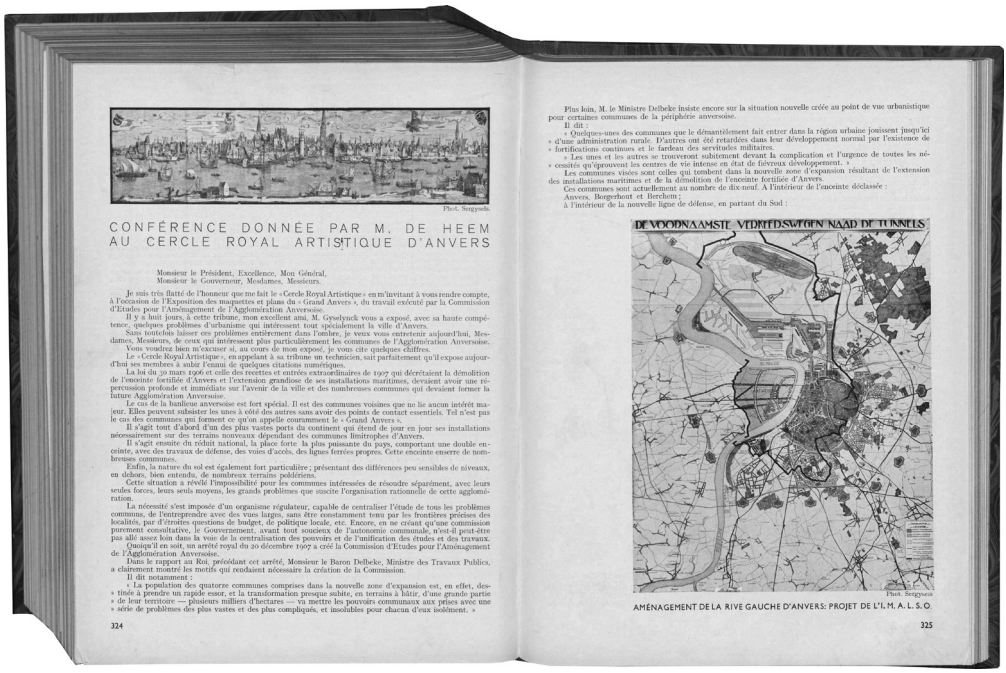


Figure 6.2 Excerpts from the scrapbook *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise* compiling a series of articles on the SCAA's work from the newspaper *La Métropole* in the fall of 1929.

progressed, the more the SCAA gained visibility in newspapers for the middle classes (e.g. *De Gazet van Antwerpen, De Morgenpost,* or *De Nieuwe Gazet*) and working classes (*De Werker*, *De Volksgazet*), reaching an ever larger spectrum of the Antwerp population.[37] Through the many articles in these different newspapers, the 'Inter-Communal Study Committee for the Development of the Antwerp Agglomeration'—a.k.a. 'the inter-communal committee' or simply 'the study committee'—came to be a household name among Antwerp citizens.

Apart from the regular press, the SCAA soon cultivated its own publishing culture. Joseph Schobbens and August Mennes in particular



CONFÉRENCE DONNÉE PAR M. DE HEEM
AU CERCLE ROYAL ARTISTIQUE D'ANVERS

Monsieur le Président, Excellence, Mon Général,
Monsieur le Gouverneur, Mesdames, Messieurs,

Je suis très flatté de l'honneur que me fait le « Cercle Royal Artistique » en m'invitant à vous rendre compte, à l'occasion de l'Exposition des maquettes et plans du « Grand Anvers », du travail exécuté par la Commission d'Etudes pour l'Aménagement de l'Agglomération Anversoise.

Il y a huit jours, à cette tribune, mon excellent ami, M. Gyselynck vous a exposé, avec sa haute compétence, quelques problèmes d'urbanisme qui intéressent tout spécialement la ville d'Anvers.

Sans toutefois laisser ces problèmes entièrement dans l'ombre, je veux vous entretenir aujourd'hui, Mesdames, Messieurs, de ceux qui intéressent plus particulièrement les communes de l'Agglomération Anversoise.

Vous voudrez bien m'excuser si, au cours de mon exposé, je vous cite quelques chiffres.

Le « Cercle Royal Artistique », en appelant à sa tribune un technicien, suit parfaitement qu'il expose aujourd'hui ses membres à subir l'ennui de quelques citations numériques.

La loi du 30 mars 1906 et celle des recettes et entrées extraordinaires de 1907 qui décrétaient la démolition de l'enceinte fortifiée d'Anvers et l'extension grandiose de ses installations maritimes, devaient avoir une répercussion profonde et immédiate sur l'avenir de la ville et des nombreuses communes qui devaient former la future Agglomération Anversoise.

Le cas de la banlieue anversoise est fort spécial. Il est des communes voisines que ne lie aucun intérêt majeur. Elles peuvent subsister les unes à côté des autres sans avoir des points de contact essentiels. Tel n'est pas le cas des communes qui forment ce qu'on appelle couramment le « Grand Anvers ».

Il s'agit tout d'abord d'un des plus vastes ports du continent qui étend de jour en jour ses installations nécessairement sur des terrains nouveaux dépendant des communes limitrophes d'Anvers.

Il s'agit ensuite du réduit national, la place forte la plus puissante du pays, comportant une double enceinte, avec des travaux de défense, des voies d'accès, des lignes ferrées propres. Cette enceinte enserre de nombreuses communes.

Enfin, la nature du sol est également fort particulière ; présentant des différences peu sensibles de niveaux, en dehors, bien entendu, de nombreux terrains polderiens.

Cette situation a révélé l'impossibilité pour les communes intéressées de résoudre séparément, avec leurs seules forces, leurs seuls moyens, les grands problèmes que suscite l'organisation rationnelle de cette agglomération.

La nécessité s'est imposée d'un organisme régulateur, capable de centraliser l'étude de tous les problèmes communs, de l'entreprendre avec des vues larges, sans être constamment tenu par les frontières précises des localités, par d'étroites questions de budget, de politique locale, etc. Encore, en ne créant qu'une commission purement consultative, le Gouvernement, avant tout soucieux de l'autonomie communale, n'est-il peut-être pas allé assez loin dans la voie de la centralisation des pouvoirs et de l'unification des études et des travaux.

Quoiqu'il en soit, un arrêté royal du 20 décembre 1907 a créé la Commission d'Etudes pour l'Aménagement de l'Agglomération Anversoise.

Dans le rapport au Roi, précédant cet arrêté, Monsieur le Baron Delbeke, Ministre des Travaux Publics, a clairement montré les motifs qui rendaient nécessaire la création de la Commission.

Il dit notamment :

« La population des quatorze communes comprises dans la nouvelle zone d'expansion est, en effet, destinée à prendre un rapide essor, et la transformation presque subite, en terrains à bâtir, d'une grande partie » de leur territoire — plusieurs milliers d'hectares — va mettre les pouvoirs communaux aux prises avec une » série de problèmes des plus vastes et des plus compliqués, et insolubles pour chacun d'eux isolément. »

Plus loin, M. le Ministre Delbeke insiste encore sur la situation nouvelle créée au point de vue urbanistique pour certaines communes de la périphérie anversoise.

Il dit :

« Quelques-unes des communes que le démantèlement fait entrer dans la région urbaine jouissent jusqu'ici » d'une administration rurale. D'autres ont été retardées dans leur développement normal par l'existence de » fortifications continues et le fardeau des servitudes militaires.

» Les unes et les autres se trouveront subitement devant la complication et l'urgence de toutes les né- » cessités qu'éprouvent les centres de vie intense en état de fiévreux développement. »

Les communes visées sont celles qui tombent dans la nouvelle zone d'expansion résultant de l'extension des installations maritimes et de la démolition de l'enceinte fortifiée d'Anvers.

Ces communes sont actuellement au nombre de dix-neuf. A l'intérieur de l'enceinte déclassée :

Anvers, Borgerhout et Berchem ;

à l'intérieur de la nouvelle ligne de défense, en partant du Sud :

Phot. Sergysels

AMÉNAGEMENT DE LA RIVE GAUCHE D'ANVERS: PROJET DE L'I. M. A. L. S. O.

324

325

Figure 6.3 Printout of one of Paul De Heem's lectures to Antwerp's Royal Art Circle, 1932.

became prolific writers aspiring to a readership far beyond the professional technocrat-expert.[38] *De Grootstad Antwerpen* by August Mennes, for instance, was published by the *Katholieke Vlaamse Hogeschooluitbreiding*, a cultural forum for the broad socialization of evolutions in the fields of art and culture, philosophy and religion, economy and politics, science and technology.[39] Mennes was convinced that it was "up to us [i.e., the SCAA] to educate all fellow-citizens, from all walks of life," for instance on the fact "that major sanitation works were to the twentieth-century citizen what the cathedral had been to the medieval citizen."[40] The cover of Huysmans's pamphlet on the phenomenon of urban rent tellingly read: "Knowledge will save you!" (Fig. 4.6) In the same educational spirit protagonists such as Schobbens, Mennes, and De Heem wrote several articles for periodicals of local associations, such as the KMBA and the KVNS, explaining the true guises, meaning, and consequences of urbanizing the agglomeration to a wide audience.[41]

Several of the SCAA's members became prolific lecturers on the agglomeration's urbanization, "with the aim of keeping the public informed about this contemporary issue of general interest."[42] Some gave talks as part of

their daily jobs, often in the House of the Province, to inform political decision-making.[43] Yet many members lectured to lay audiences in their free time as well. SCAA members Geyselinck and Paul De Heem, for instance, explained the SCAA's urbanization mission in full detail to the Cercle Royal Artistique et Scientifique d'Anvers,[44] founded in 1852, as a social platform for Antwerp's art, literature, and science amateurs. (Fig. 6.3) Engineer Mennes, who confessed to have little talent for the spoken word,[45] regularly lectured about the SCAA's plans and visions, richly illustrated with "light images" at "completely free" public venues of all sorts, open to "all citizens."[46] Several public lectures were given in the context of the SCAA's three major exhibitions, in 1910, 1913, and 1932 respectively, which were all organized in the impressive City Hall, Antwerp's beating cultural heart, situated along the renowned boulevard De Meir, the city's main public backbone. For each of these three events, the extent to which they were announced in the press—both in the elite press (*La Métropole*), in the mainstream press (*De Gazet van Antwerpen*), and in the workers' press (*De Werker*, later *De Volksrant*)—was examined in detail. This analysis reveals that the SCAA managed to expand its audience with each successive exhibition, while the 'relative ideal' and the 'longue durée' of its urbanization project was exhibited ever more unapologetically.

The 1910 exhibition: Publicity campaign for the urban elites

A small article in the *Gazet van Antwerpen* from October 23, 1910, reveals that the SCAA had invited "all representatives of the daily and weekly newspapers and magazines"[47] to a general press meeting including guided tour on the morning of its first large exhibition, showing the results of the international design competition to the public. *La Métropole* paid particularly close attention to the exhibition. As soon as the jury came to its final verdict after three full days of deliberation (October 17–19, 1910), a short article titled 'L'extension d'Anvers: Résultats du concours' announced that more than 250 plans of "admirable execution" would be exhibited in Antwerp's City Hall, as part of an "exposition, loaded with ideas and full of grandiose possibilities."[48] On October 24, a small front page article reminded the readers that Minister of Public Works Helleputte would solemnly open the public exhibition the following day, and on that day an article covering the exhibition's opening filled the newspaper's entire front page. According to the article, many plans, sections, aquarelles, bright

white plaster models and bird's-eye perspectives would allow the average citizen to appreciate the military belt's urban reconversion, with its wide avenues and large parks "as if he saw them from the top of the cathedral in 1950."[49] The SCAA and Prost were extensively praised for developing a version of "Antwerp turned into Versailles!"[50]—a description that undoubtedly sounded like music to the ears of the newspaper's bourgeois readership. *La Métropole's* attention to the event remained substantial in the following weeks, and small announcements frequently recommended that the Antwerp bourgeoisie pay the exhibition a visit. Even in the popular *Gazet van Antwerpen*, which was at odds with SCAA chairman Delbeke at that time, a laudatory review of the exhibition appeared on October 26, praising the "vast number of plans (…) too important not to be visited."[51] Although the exhibition was unanimously perceived as an overwhelming success, with very high attendance rates introducing many citizens to the emerging discipline of urban planning,[52] a number of critical observations can nevertheless be made.

In retrospect, it seems odd that the design competition and the exhibition only considered the city's former military ramparts, while the inner city and especially the outer agglomeration were completely disregarded. (Fig. 6.4) This is in sharp contrast with competitions such as in Berlin (1910) or Paris (1919), where specific ideas and visions for all these subareas were explicitly part of the competition's brief and subsequent exhibitions.[53] That is remarkable, because in Antwerp, it was precisely these military grounds that were, in the end, never released by the Ministry of Defense.[54] It is hard to imagine that King Leopold II and his right-hand man Auguste Delbeke were unaware of this situation, especially since the Ministry of Defense was part of the SCAA.[55] Consequently, the exhibition showed urbanist reveries that had no chance of immediate execution. More than anything else, the exhibition seems to have served the purpose of popularizing the SCAA's mission, yielding artefacts of international master urbanists as ready-made promotional material, originally intended for a professional jury yet shown to the lay public without any editing. The exhibition did not contain any traces of the projects the SCAA was actually realizing, as they were listed in Delbeke's activist pamphlet of that same period, refusing to explain the SCAA's 'relative ideal' as Schobbens was already formulating it at the time.

Moreover, SCAA protagonists such as Schobbens and De Heem were little present, and it were mainly the committee's dignitaries who eagerly used the moment to defend the SCAA's legitimacy. *La Métropole*, for instance, reported how chairman Auguste Delbeke claimed that it was

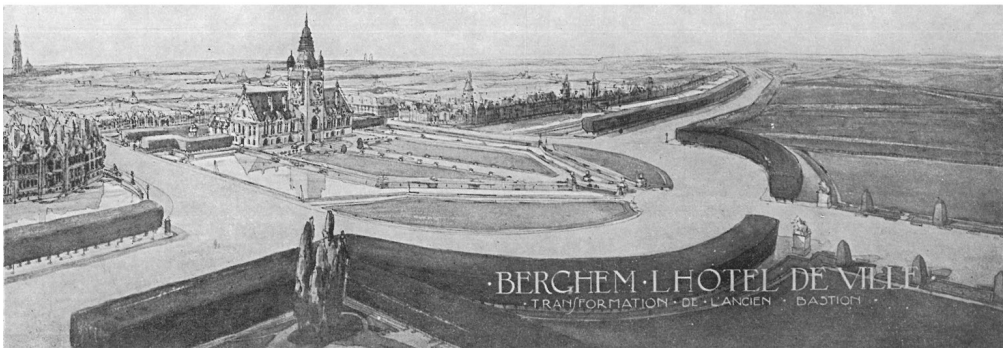


Figure 6.4 Bird's eye view that embodies how the 1910 exhibition suggested that urbanizing the agglomeration was about 'turning Antwerp into Versailles' on the city's very edges. Note how the historic city has been reduced to the cathedral in the background and how the landscape outside the former fortifications remains strikingly empty.

neither his nor the committee's fault that certain municipalities were unwilling to seize the opportunities created by the SCAA's urbanization program.[56] In addition, Delbeke contested the widely held view that the SCAA's work was going to initiate unnecessary and costly operations in the agglomeration. The new minister of public works, Joris Helleputte, for his part, congratulated the SCAA, claiming that the committee was lucky not to "share the poor fate of many similar associations of which in the end could be concluded that they had only been created to delay and even to bury all good ideas (Laughter)."[57] The newspaper even asked for the audience's understanding that it would take a "considerable laps of time"[58] before "so much beauty could ever be realized."[59] In sum, the exhibition and its inauguration created an excellent public stage to polish the SCAA's reputation, to defend its mission, without really revealing its full scope.

Finally, and without detracting from the exhibition's effective success, the inclusiveness of the event should be questioned. After all, in the more socialist press such as *De Werker*, not a single trace of the 1910 competition or the exhibition can be found. Apparently the SCAA had been rather selective in inviting the Antwerp press. Perhaps Prost's 'Antwerp turned into Versailles' was considered of minor importance to the working poor. In the end, the 1910 exhibition received by far the most attention in the bourgeois journal *La Métropole*. The SCAA's later exhibitions, however, would garner ever more inclusive press coverage—and it is maybe not entirely coincidental that these events were less and less concerned with merely exhibiting urbanism as an artistic technique giving shape to bourgeois ideals.

The 1913 event: Exhibition at a tipping point

When the organizing committee of the world exhibition in Ghent in 1913 asked the SCAA to produce and exhibit a large scale model of the 1910 competition, Schobbens seized the opportunity to "exhibit this model in Antwerp first."[60] Moreover, the SCAA decided not just to show a model but to use the event as an opportunity to get the hard work the committee had been doing "out of the shadows."[61] The exhibition was divided into three parts, each of which was supposed to fill a separate room in Antwerp's City Hall. In a first room, Prots's winning design proposal of 1910 was re-exhibited. In a second room, a technical plan projected the final plans the SCAA had elaborated on top of Prost's preliminary design, together with a spectacular model "which easily filled the 200m² room"[62] and "fifteen watercolor perspectives, from Mr. Prost's hand, to enrich the legibility of the plan."[63] (Fig. 6.5) It was, however, the third room that contained the most innovative material.

De Heem and Schobbens decided that this third room should display plans of subareas other than the military belt to give visitors a better idea of the broader workings of the SCAA.[64] The exhibited material included a map of a larger part of the agglomeration, a trajectory of the state road Antwerp-Brussels, the plans for approved expropriations, and several development plans for new urban quarters in the outer agglomeration.[65] (Fig. 6.5) Schobbens and De Heem made sure that the expropriation plans at display were "ratified by Royal Decree before the exhibition,"[66] in order to avoid unwanted speculation. Besides iconic plans of master urbanists, De Heem and Schobbens now insisted on showing the true guises of the SCAA's everyday work. As was the case with Prost's watercolor perspectives, plans and drawings for this third room were especially prepared for public display by engineer De Heem.[67] Thus, the main technocrat of the department of bridges and roads turned himself into a cultural producer of exhibition material. This growing concern for lay legibility may have been inspired by the famous 1910 exhibition on Greater Berlin—where it had been a particular focus as well, and of which Schobbens had ordered a catalog in preparation of the SCAA's exhibitions.[68]

This increasing consideration of lay comprehensibility went hand in hand with the broadening of the SCAA's media strategy. The "pre-sessions for press representatives"[69] were more widely communicated, and next to *La Métropole*, the more popular *Gazet van Antwerpen* was able to write about the exhibition before its public opening on March 2, 1913.[70] Both



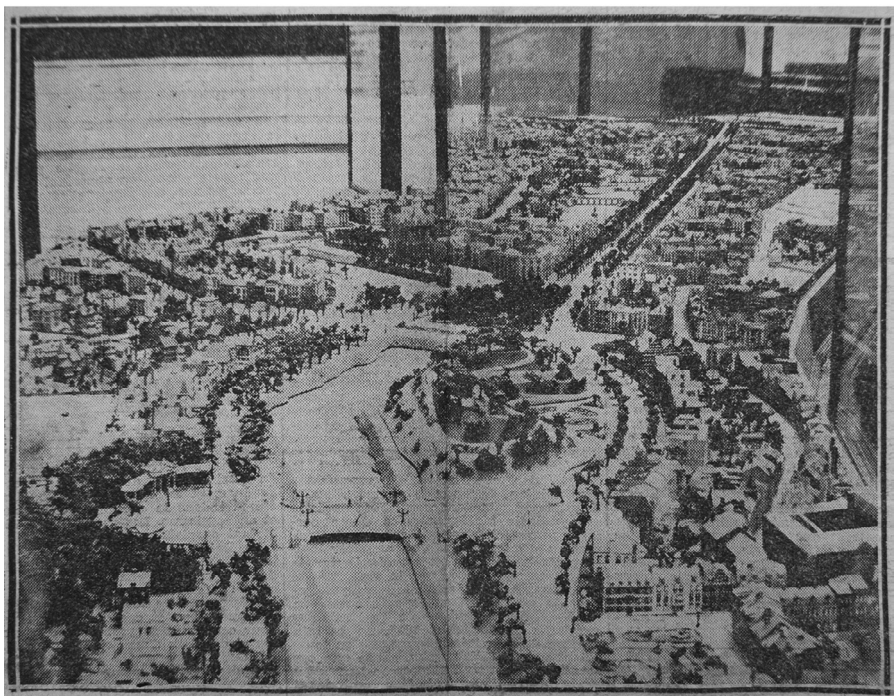


Figure 6.5 A giant scale model became the center piece of an exhibition that focused on enhancing lay legibility. Several plans of the wider agglomeration brought the SCAA's daily activities to public attention, beyond the 1910 competition's focus on the former bulwark.

newspapers were extremely enthusiastic about the exhibition and stressed how dignitaries such as ministers Helleputte and Delbeke lauded the SCAA's role in elaborating Prost's initial plans and in urbanizing the agglomeration in general.[71] The widely read *Gazet van Antwerpen* stressed that the "access to the remarkable exhibition was public and completely free of charge,"[72] while *La Métropole* recommended visits daily in its cover section "Echos de la Ville."[73] Lecture series were organized by Antwerp architects, in the upper room of Café Suisse on the Groenplaats, to make sure that citizens "could visit the current exhibition in more informed ways."[74]

The SCAA, for its part, organized "guided tours and lectures as long as the exhibition ran."[75] Engineer De Heem, in particular, showed dignitaries, cultural associations, and school groups around,[76] to whom he explained the "SCAA's mission by way of an intimate talk, showing his deep interest in the development of our city."[77] Many visitors "warmly thanked their lovely guide before returning home, contemplating and wishing for the quick realization of the beautiful plans."[78] The exhibition caused such a "hustle and bustle at the City Hall, with thousands of Antwerp citizens parading in front of the plans and around the model every day,"[79] that it was decided to prolong the event by three additional days in response to the "great eagerness and interest of the public."[80] After the exhibition, a significant portion of the plans was further exhibited in Berchem's town hall.[81] The large model, in turn, left for the World Expo in Ghent, where it received great acclaim, and an invitation to the 1914 World Exhibition in Lyon, organized by Tony Garnier with a strong focus on urban planning. De Heem and Schobbens, however, feared "damage to the model from the transport" and saw "little point in exhibiting it in Lyon."[82] Arguably, for the SCAA, the model was more of a local communication tool than an international showpiece.

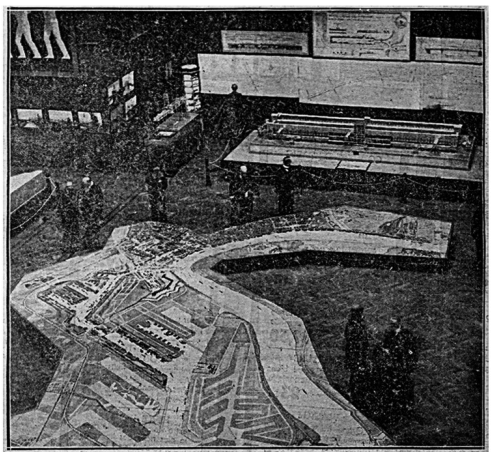
The most persistent criticism on the 1913 exhibition came from the socialist press. Unlike in 1910, an article about the exhibition appeared in the socialist newspaper *De Werker* in 1913—yet it was anything but positive. The article's title, "Not Fair," left little to the imagination and denounced the preferential treatment the SCAA had given to 'some newspapers' that were given the opportunity to report on the exhibition even "before Antwerp's City Councilors themselves had even been able to visit it!"[83] The newspaper questioned the SCAA's good intentions and affability, suggesting that it remained a 'national' organization after all, which did not necessarily act in the best interests of all Antwerp citizens. Arguably, this editorial sting must be considered as a retaliation to the

fact that "*De Werker* had not been given the same special favor of the other newspapers."[84] They had, in other words, not been invited to the early press meeting. The SCAA wouldn't repeat this omission in its last and largest exhibition in 1932.

The 1932 Exhibition: Immersing large crowds within the relative ideal

The SCAA organized its last and most important exhibition in 1932, again in Antwerp's City Hall, on the occasion of the committee's twenty-fifth anniversary. A month in advance, *La Métropole* already congratulated the SCAA, with a cover article enthusiastically announcing the upcoming exhibition that was planned from September 10 to October 10.[85] This time, the entire Antwerp press, including the socialist *Volksgazet* (successor to *De Werker*) was invited by engineer De Heem and provided with "insightful explanations"[86] that were all widely published well before the exhibition's inauguration. The press unanimously predicted that the event "would surely get the public's acclaim," stressing that "this vivid exhibition, in which one could spend days and days,"[87] was "more than worth a visit."[88] In his opening speech, Holvoet sincerely thanked "the press, for announcing the exhibition and for always generating and spreading ideas needed to help overcome the major problems concerning the Antwerp agglomeration."[89] Good relationships with the press had always been essential for the SCAA and over the years, it increasingly expanded its outreach from Antwerp's upper-class bourgeoisie to ever larger parts of the population. No surprise then, that the SCAA's last exhibition was praised for being "very much to the taste of *all* Antwerp citizens."[90]

This drive toward inclusiveness was mostly to the credit of Joseph Schobbens, who became the exhibition's "main initiator and curator."[91] He was warmly congratulated for creating an exhibition that was "very well designed (…) in such a way as to be accessible to the general public."[92] This time, Schobbens had commissioned engineer Mennes to draft special exhibition plans,[93] which "really spoke to the masses."[94] Engineer De Heem, in turn, organized several "conference promenades"[95] that he once again hosted himself. Unlike previous editions, the SCAA's protagonists came much more explicitly in the picture. (Fig. 6.6) An interview with Joseph Schobbens appeared on the cover of *La Métropole* a few days after the vernissage, which portrayed him as "the SCAA's true linchpin"[96] and as "a man completely devoted the cause of a Greater Antwerp."[97] With



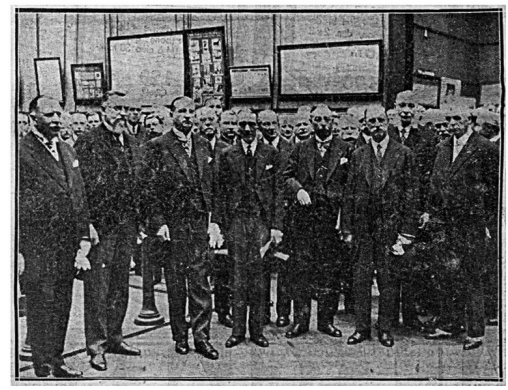


Figure 6.6 Rare pictures from the 1932 exhibition venue and opening were published in the newspaper *La Métropole*. De Heem and Schobbens are standing on the front row, next to Governor Holvoet in the middle, as fifth and sixth persons from the left respectively.

Schobbens as curator and press officer and De Heem as guide and lecturer, the SCAA's two main bureaucrats explicitly engaged as sociocultural agents. Moreover, in 1932, they presented *their* perspective on urbanizing the Antwerp agglomeration, which became evident in two aspects that clearly set this final exhibition apart from its two early predecessors

First of all, the exhibition was no longer centered on visionary competition plans seducing visitors with utopian urban dreams. This time, the exhibition served as an almost literal reflection of the SCAA's internal organization. It was set up as a collaboration between several "ministerial departments, the provincial authorities, the city, the agglomeration's municipalities and a handful of private organizations,"[98] picturing the Antwerp agglomeration "decomposed in separate layers."[99] The event was divided into "seventeen sections showing plans, projects, drawings, photos, diagrams, models of communication routes, means of transport, new districts, the left bank, the former bulwark, public parks, market squares, cemeteries, sports fields, swimming pools, the sewerage system, the harbor, etc."[100] Significant amounts of statistical data quantified the agglomeration's rate of urbanization.[101] The electricity, water supply, and railway companies all made "very important contributions"[102] in showing how modern utilities undergirded urbanization. Mennes's elaborate sewerage plan was given full spotlight, next to large-scale models of new railway lines and successive port extensions.[103] The 1932 event, in sum,



Figure 6.7 General overview plan by August Mennes from 1932, showing the outlines and actual status of the SCAA's urbanization mission. The plan includes markings for 12 sub-plans that showed the SCAA's ambitions and achievements in greater detail in all corners of the agglomeration.

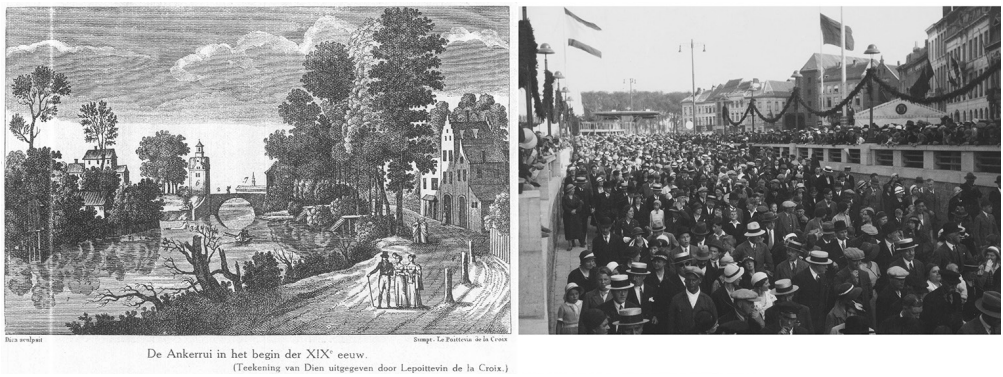


Figure 6.8 Plate of the Ankerrui at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as part of the section *Iconography* at the SCAA's 1932 exhibition, compared to a picture of the same place at the opening of the SCAA's tunnel for motorized traffic toward the Left Bank in 1933.



Figure 6.9 Overview of Van Lyere's late seventeenth-century map of the Buitenijen beyond the Spanish moats, and a cutout zoom comparing the late seventeenth-century situation to the state of development in 1930.

plainly depicted the urban questions the SCAA dealt with throughout the entire agglomeration. (Fig. 6.7)

Second, the exhibition explicated that urbanizing the agglomeration was not an instant project marking a strong caesura between a premodern past and a modern future. In that sense, the 1932 exhibition connected much more with the cultural-historical exhibition techniques of people like Marcel Poëte or Patrick Geddes, picturing the evolutionary nature of the cities immersed in the thick of time.[104] The section *Histoire et Iconographie*, composed by Antwerp's renowned archivist Floris Prims, depicted "the development of Antwerp and its surroundings long before the SCAA had even been founded" and reminded visitors of the long-standing and "constant metamorphosis of the city through time."[105] Many plans and images, which were "rarely on display,"[106] gave an impressive overview of Antwerp's historical evolution. (Fig. 6.8) The masterpiece was a projection of a 1930 map on top of a complete series of 1690 historical maps by cartographer Van Lyere that allowed "anyone living outside the old Spanish moats to see what the place of his current dwelling looked like in the 17th century" and even "to track down the former land-owners."[107] (Fig. 6.9) The SCAA's work was portrayed as a natural continuation of this historical transformation, grafting the future upon the past—averse to the idea of seeing the passage of time as the concatenation of discrete instants.[108] Raphaël Verwilghen concluded that "none of the recent international exhibitions on urbanism—Düsseldorf, Paris, London, Berlin—had presented such a complete iconographic collection on the topographical evolution of a city."[109]

The SCAA's final exhibition completely immersed the visitor in the committee's preference for the relatively ideal, part of a historically contingent process, driven by essay-ism and reason rather than by the certainties of rational planning, etc. It gave the committee both praise and criticism. The local press stressed that the SCAA had "accomplished extremely important work,"[110] because it was responsible for "everything that has been achieved in the field of urbanization in the Antwerp agglomeration from 1907 to the present day."[111] The exhibition "convinced the last sceptics of the undeniable fact that it had effectively been highly performant"[112] and was to be turned into a permanent "documentation and study center of undeniable value for all those interested in the marvelous ways of urban development."[113] There was, however, also fierce criticism. Prost's unimplemented plans and the years of standstill regarding the sewage question were cited as evidence of the SCAA's limited clout.[114] Critic Amand de Lattin thought the

historical section above all revealed the extent to which urban beauty had been destroyed, which he interpreted as the result of the lack of an overall development plan, dismissing the SCAA's mission as a "hodgepodge of loose ideas without coherence, without a vantage point or guiding thought."[115]

Planning expert Raphaël Verwilghen thought the exhibition was a complete "disillusion in terms of urban planning" and found it very curious to "notice that nearly all urban development plans in the agglomeration had been signed by one single name—namely that of 'the engineer' that designed the plan for the sewage system!"[116] He fulminated that all plans were "lifeless, insisting on outdated formulae that had been in vogue in Germany before the Great War (…) celebrating the triumph of the street at a moment when Le Corbusier proclaimed the 'death on the street!'"[117] Looking back, however, it seems safe to say that 'the street' did not necessarily become a backward concept just because the modern movement's guru claimed it was. From Zampa's work, we know by now that Verwilghen was not the man to settle for suboptimal working conditions. After his failed attempts to join "the state administration with the idea of implementing an integral kind of urbanism (…) to put the whole of Belgium into one directive urban plan,'"[118] Verwilghen never "invented a new strategy for action (…) to participate in the vicissitudes of urbanism in his country." Instead, he chose "the path of detachment (…) of observing from a distance (…) trusting his ideas to not more than a few articles" resulting in "the end of his career as an urban planner well before his death," turning it into "the continuity of an illusion."[119] Arguably, the exhibition in the Antwerp City Hall in 1932 confronted Verwilghen with his own illusions once more, with the SCAA's work again confirming the failure of the directive and integral planning methods he had hoped to implement in the Belgian context.

Unlike Verwilghen, figures like Schobbens and De Heem remained in post as 'urbanists' within public administrations, even if the institutional context was far from ideal. They committed themselves to make the best of it, patiently awaiting policy windows to shape the circumstances as much as possible to their liking—out of a deep allegiance to the city of Antwerp, the larger agglomeration and its citizens. Nevertheless, SCAA protagonists such as Schobbens were fully aware of the fact that the lack of proper legislative frameworks highly complicated their mission, in terms of political and economic clout, time management, building regulations, etc.[120] He acknowledged that new neighborhoods were too often realized "at the whim of land ownership," causing the agglomeration to be built in "little islands, often very distant from each other," which forced all "public services (water, gas,

electricity, telephones, sewers, fire, police, etc.) to scatter their efforts as well (…) prohibiting an adequate return on investment while causing major additional expenses."[121] Schobbens concluded his interview in *La Métropole* by stressing that he "counted on the largest possible support from the central government"[122] to put the SCAA in a more forceful position. Barely a few weeks later, the 1932 bill on urbanization was submitted by Emile Vinck, a noted guest at the exhibition's festive opening ceremony, raising the question whether and to which extent the event was supposed to prepare the grounds for the famous bill.[123] In the meantime, Schobbens told his readers that all the temporary shortcomings did not leave him discouraged and that he was always looking ahead, trying "develop feasible urbanization programs, rather than to muse about utopian projects."[124] With these words policy-entrepreneur Schobbens made his readers part of the SCAA's provisional pursuit of the 'relative ideal'—as he had written down some twenty years earlier. This was a perspective for which the SCAA received praise by critics such as Lucien François, who argued that even if the committee had not been "able to find the elegant and perfect solutions that one would have liked," it had nevertheless managed to bring "at least some order, harmony and efficiency to the functioning of the port, the city it serves, and the entire region around it—a considerable effort that deserved to be shown as an example for all those who had a share of responsibility in better organizing and managing the common good that was the city."[125] Whereas the SCAA's first exhibition in 1910 had still pictured urbanism as a utopian-artistic practice, mostly catering to urban elites, the 1932 event showed urbanization as a historically contingent, relatively ideal, and sociocultural practice, at the service of increasingly broad segments of the population. The SCAA's technocrats increasingly came forward as cultural producers and exhibition amateurs, with a growing allegiance toward ordinary folk.

EXPERIENCING AND EXPLORING URBANIZATION: CIVIC FESTIVITIES AND REGIONAL TOURISM

Apart from 'educating' people about their environment through the spoken or written word, by means of lectures or exhibitions, some SCAA members looked for more active ways to involve Antwerp citizens. For them, urbanizing the agglomeration became a question of getting the population out there, of encouraging citizens to explore and to actively appropriate the agglomeration's pristine, but swiftly transforming territories that would



Figure 6.10 The inauguration of the Prins Boudewijnlaan between Berchem and Kontich and a garden-city district in Merksem, with celebratory marches, bicycle races, and overall festivities.

soon become their home. An author like Lefebvre explicitly stressed the importance of experiential learning in the production of urban space.[126] Sieverts, sixty years later, promoted "unexpected forms of discovering the city,"[127] such as the organization of festivals or sports events, to stimulate "a deeper emotional rootedness of citizens in their city-territory" and a better understanding of their "urban-cultural city-landscapes."[128]

Throughout its existence, the SCAA invariably had new avenues or garden districts inaugurated with a festive opening such as folk festivals or cycling races. (Fig. 6.10) To inaugurate the Prins Boudewijnlaan, for instance, grandstands were placed all along its trajectory, from where frenzied crowds cheered hordes of cyclists participating in a race officially 'opening' the road, which was decorated with ceremonial arcades for the occasion.[129] Urbanization was celebrated as a project of social progress allowing all revelers to appropriate the new urban potential that grew with each successive project. The many sports facilities that found a place in the agglomeration under the impetus of the SCAA's project soon grew into valuable places of urban life serving many different social needs and aspirations. (Fig. 6.11) The SCAA governors in particular used major festivities and sporting events to lure Antwerp citizens beyond the former city walls, making them acquainted with the agglomeration's urbanizing territories. The SCAA used these festivities to promote a certain consciousness of the urban experience far beyond the historical city while "tightening social links at the same time as they gave free rein to all desires which had been pent up by collective discipline and necessities of work."[130] In addition to these exceptional moments of celebration, members such as Schobbens also encouraged more everyday explorations of the agglomeration. Sieverts recently argued that "guided tours through the periphery

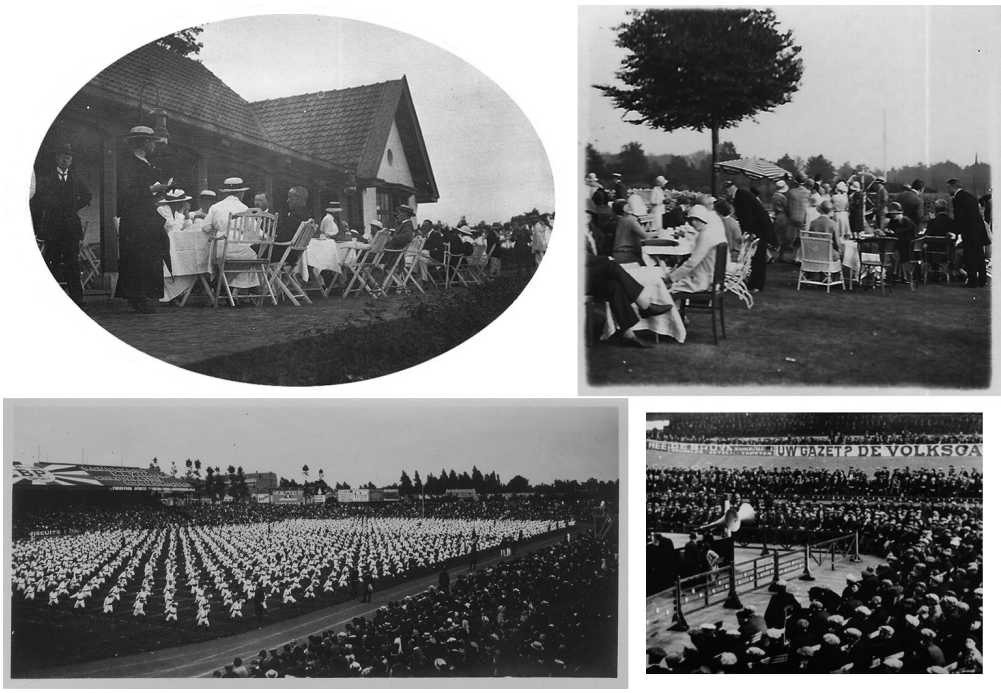


Figure 6.11 Sports infrastructures were used for all kinds of social gatherings such as matinées at the polo and golf clubs (1920s), school parties at the BAC stadium (1930s), and even strikes at the Sports Palace (1936).

(…) passing through areas people usually never cross (…) are a proven tool (…) to help them discover their urban-cultural landscape as a field of full history, surprises and unexpected beauty."[131] Similar forms of "regional tourism"[132] were promoted by some SCAA protagonists, usually in their free time, as members of local associations, to bring about a fundamental change in the sociocultural meaning and perception of the subspace of the agglomeration: from an exotic outside to a potential urban habitat.

The 1920 Olympics and the 1930 World Fair

The SCAA was involved in the organization of numerous events in the Antwerp agglomeration between 1907 and 1939. Iconic moments, such as the week of aviation in 1909 on the Wilrijk Fields or the World Cycling Championships at the velodrome in Wilrijk in 1920, encouraged Antwerp citizens to discover and explore their wider surroundings. Two major



Figure 6.12 The 1920 Olympics as an occasion to explore and experience the leisure potential of the former Brialmont moats: horse dressage, swimming, and water polo competitions.

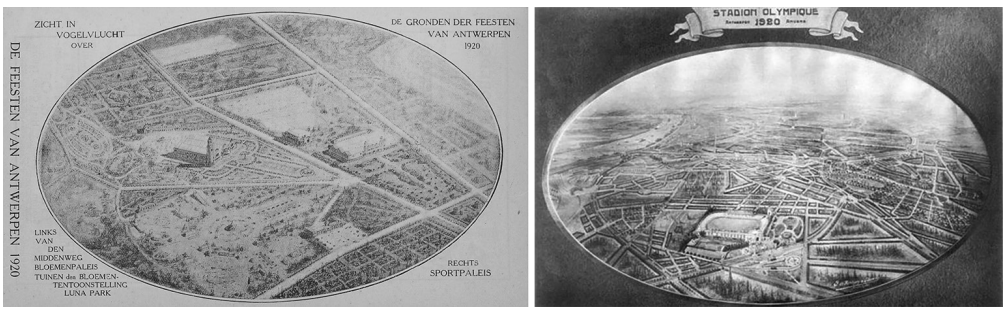


Figure 6.13 Publications for the Olympics and Antwerp Festivities in 1920 encouraged new public perspectives on Antwerp's southern urban fringes.

events, however, stand out: the 1920 Olympics and the 1930 World Fair. Both show how the SCAA used event organizing as a sociocultural accelerator for their urbanization project, and how they, again, engaged an ever-widening audience. Governor Gaston Van de Werve de Schilde, SCAA chairman between 1912 and 1923, presided over the 1920 Olympics. The games were spread all over the agglomeration: golf and equestrian competitions were held in the northern corners near Hoogboom,[133] the Elsdonck velodrome in Wilrijk became the homebase for cycling competitions,[134] the marathon followed a 42km trajectory throughout the south largely over the road Antwerp-Brussels realized by the SCAA,[135] the old ramparts housed events such as swimming competitions in the former moats or horse dressage, etc. (Fig. 6.12) The Beerschot Athletics Club's stadium near the Kiel district, finally, became the center of the games. The Olympic Games, in sum, attracted spectators to the agglomeration's far corners, where Antwerp citizens did not dare to venture a decade earlier. A catalogue with the games' entire program was printed on one million copies

and flyers were distributed showing temporary tram and railway lines to the sports venues.[136] Some pamphlets featured a spectacular bird's-eye view of the main Olympic stadium on the city's outskirts, projecting an idealized image of the agglomeration in the making. (Fig. 6.13) However, as tickets were more expensive than most blue- and even white-collars could afford, the games did not really grow into a big popular success. It was the Antwerp Festivities organized in the margins of the Olympic Games between May and October that became the real crowd-puller in the summer of 1920—to the Olympic Committee's great dissatisfaction.[137]

Interestingly, SCAA members Auguste Delbeke and again Governor Van de Werve de Schilde were part of the Antwerp Festivities' honorary committee.[138] The festivities were based at the Nachtegalenpark—one of the SCAA's earliest achievements (see chapter 3). For the occasion, temporary infrastructures such as a sports hall, a flower palace, a luna park with horse-mill, toboggans, a kiosk, theatre, pub, restaurant, etc. were built. A watchtower offered magnificent views over the historic city on one side and over the urbanizing agglomeration on the other.[139] It became "a center of first-rate attractiveness,"[140] promoting the urbanizing agglomeration as a vast green setting imbued with a new urban imagination. (Fig. 6.13) The extensive program of these festivities included the big international flying competitions, international sports exhibitions, regional gymnastics competitions, cycling events, dozens of music events and concerts, lighted park evenings with fireworks, folk games, etc.[141] More than 230 local associations took part in the music concerts alone.[142] The Antwerp Festivities became a real social outburst, tapping into all the urban potential with which the SCAA was irrigating the agglomeration.

At the very end of the Olympics, one specific event succeeded in attracting large masses: the soccer final in which Belgium took on Czechoslovakia. Reportedly, the stadium was "too small to accommodate (…) the vast and dense crowds that slowly moved from the city center to all sides of the stadium."[143] Arguably, it was this popular success that prompted the provincial governors to sponsor international soccer games in Antwerp FC's new Bosuil stadium in Deurne (see chapter 3). When the new stadium, with a capacity of some forty thousand fans, was officially inaugurated with an international match against England on November 1, 1923, a press reporter wrote that he "had to drive through a sea of people from the middle of the city all the way up to the stadium, an endless procession of pedestrians, cyclists, cars, lorries, and vehicles of all kinds, including some new buses."[144] Schobbens was one of the honorary members in the



Figure 6.14 The 1930 World Fair luring Antwerp citizens to the urban fringe. Behind the arc, the Jan van Rijswijck avenue extra muros is in full development.

grandstands, witnessing for himself how a piece of farmland, attracting no more than a few "occasional hikers,"[145] had been transformed into a metropolitan crowd-puller in less than a year.

With the 1930 World Fair, another large event fell under the direction of then SCAA president Governor Georges Holvoet. A plan by engineer August Mennes again suggested the Nachtegalenpark as the fair's base. But it was soon agreed that such an international event would put too much pressure on the park, and in the end, it was decided to hold the event on vacant land, owned by the city, just beyond the former ramparts. Unlike the 1920 Olympics, the 1930 World Fair became a huge popular success. All newspapers, from *La Métropole* to *Gazet van Antwerpen* to the *Volksgazet*, invited their readers to visit it with enticing articles filled with attractive imagery of the fair's capricious setting. (Fig. 6.14) The event was even advertised in the magazine *Charitable Antwerp*[146] published by

Antwerp's Commission for Public Support, and the 1930 World Fair went down in history as the very first that managed to attract a wide audience in Belgium.[147] Consequently, on the day of the opening, "dense crowds filled the sidewalks"[148] and "the masses on their way to the expo were so busy around noon already, that it was no longer possible to get through."[149] The SCAA's beloved Jan van Rijswijcklaan, extended especially for the event beyond the city walls, became a kind of urban foyer for the fair, which symbolically blurred the physical and mental boundary between what was considered city and non-city.[150]

Looking back at the visual material in this section, it is striking how all the events described foregrounded the agglomeration as the harbinger of a new kind of urbanity, marked by large green avenues, park-like decors, wide vistas, pavilion-like buildings next to large metropolitan complexes, atmospheric lighting, etc., all imprinting new urban imaginaries into the citizens' experiential world. Arguably, these temporary and ephemeral events were the agglomeration's Coney Island, shaping and magnifying the collective imagination of a new urban world in the making.[151] These events were all co-organized by the provincial authorities and led by the provincial governors themselves, who simultaneously acted as SCAA officials and (amateur) festival directors. Urbanizing the agglomeration was not only a matter of hard infrastructural development but also a question of stimulating social appropriation and the accumulation of meaning.

Les Amis des Parcs d'Anvers and Les Environs d'Anvers

Besides these memorable temporary events, several SCAA members were involved in more modest but long-term initiatives as committed members of several organizations in Antwerp's sociocultural landscape. One of those associations, La Société de Amis des Parcs d'Anvers (SAPA), was founded on February 27, 1910, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Nachtegalenpark—with the explicit aim of "awakening interest in the physiognomy of the city and its parks in all levels of the Antwerp population."[152] (Fig. 6.15) The initiators all came from the landed gentry whose private estates had been turned into public parks. Among the first members, the name of Baron Auguste Delbeke featured as well, and soon, the park friends were "particularly pleased to be joined by Mr. Schobbens,(…) Mr. Geyselinck (…) and Mr. Lemeunier."[153] In 1913, SCAA president de Baillet Latour was nominated as the organization's chairman, as one of



Figure 6.15 Public hike to inaugurate the Nachtegalenpark (1910). Note the long string of walkers in the back of the picture.

those "Antwerp citizens who [were] truly passionate about their city."[154] Many SCAA representatives thus joined a club of enthusiasts who bore the socialization of the agglomeration and its new parks close to heart.

The SAPA published and disseminated park manuals, invited international lecturers with expertise on park construction, aesthetics, use and appropriation, etc., or simply distributed "large-volume collections of illustrated postcards with the most interesting park views."[155] They wrote a number of rather compelling letters to the public authorities, with recommendations for the proper maintenance of trees and plants and an urgent request for the organization of design competitions to turn former private estates into proper public parks.[156] The city effectively launched a full competition program, which was thwarted by the outbreak of the Great War. Inspired by the Waldfriedhof in Hamburg-Ohlsdorf, the park friends decided to organize an exhibition in 1912 to familiarize the general public with the concept of the cemetery-park, including a design proposal for the Schoonselhof (see chapter 3) by architect and SAPA secretary Marcel

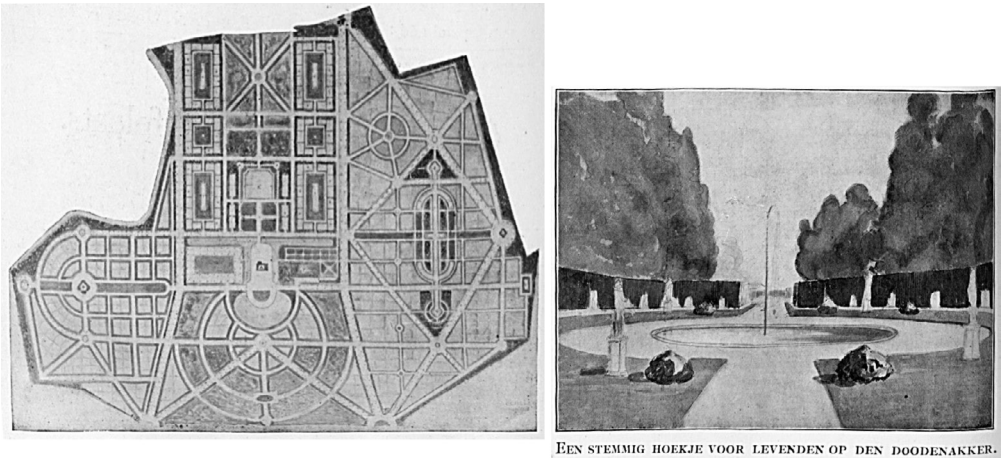


Figure 6.16 The Schoonselhof as park-cemetery: Schmitz's exhibited design sketches (1912).

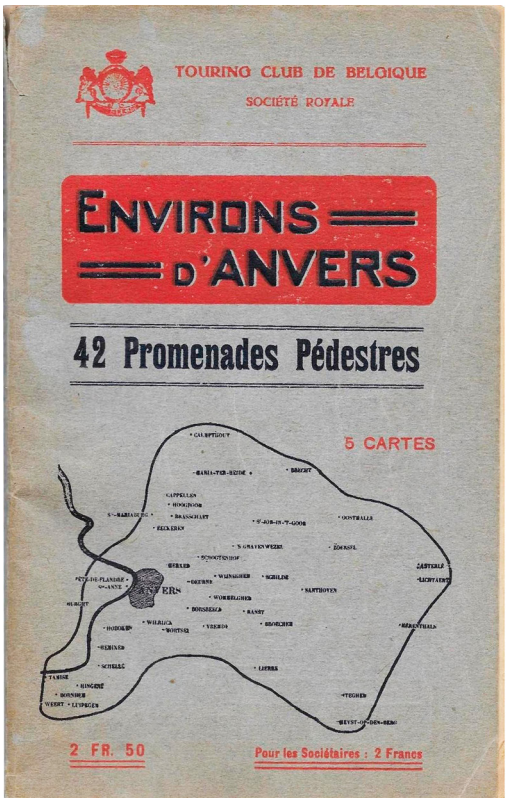
Schmitz.[157](Fig. 6.16) Afterwards, all the material, including Schmitz's design, was sent to the Antwerp authorities as a source of inspiration for the final plan of the cemetery, which was officially opened after the war, in 1921. All these initiatives—from printing and distributing postcards to organizing exhibitions—were self-sponsored by the SAPA's volunteers. "Park friends, we are all amateurs,"[158] the members addressed each other tellingly.

Even if there are no traces of SAPA activities after the First World War, some park amateurs nevertheless persisted in their mission. Several early members, including Schobbens, organized the exhibition "Our Parks" in the Antwerp Harmony in 1924, showcasing all the parks that the SCAA had managed to preserve throughout the agglomeration.[159] The Royal Association for Natural and Urban Beauty (KVNS), under whose patronage the exhibition fell, published an entire theme issue about the parks in June of that same year. One of the contributions was a printout of the inaugural lecture given by Mennes to open the exhibition, among other things explaining the importance of the sewers for a healthy park system.[160] The event "was praised by the entire Antwerp press"[161] and was visited by international experts and Antwerp citizens alike, including the majority of local schools.[162] Joseph Schobbens in particular made constant efforts to promote the new parks through lectures and publications.[163] Schobbens claimed he mainly acted "out of love for [his] hometown (…) I love it with all my heart, and I want to give her the most precious jewels one can think of."[164]

Schobbens's amateurism and his love for his hometown led him to publish a series of walking guides called *Les Environs d'Anvers*, first

published in 1921. The guide's introduction stated that it was meant to be "a work of popularization inspired by an ardent worship (…) of the beauty of our region."[165] The guide stimulated people to explore the agglomeration, while providing them with botanical and historical descriptions of the places they crossed—making them aware of the fact that "they actually know very little of the places that nevertheless saw them being born."[166] Arguably, Schobbens played into regionalist and nationalistic sentiments to promote the agglomeration as a *lieu de mémoire* of profound historical depth and scenic beauty. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Schobbens was deeply aware that most of his hikes crossed territories in full urbanization. The names of all the quarters and noble estates that the SCAA helped develop emerge in his walking guides, such as Pulhof, Troyen ten Hof, Posthof, Oosterveld, Bosuil, Venneborg, Hoogboom, Schotenhof, Lackbors, Donck, or Oude God—only to name a few. It is quite plausible that, apart from promoting natural heritage, the hikes were intended to introduce Antwerp citizens to an urban agglomeration in the making.

For instance, a reporter of *La Métropole*, taken in tow by the SCAA through the agglomeration, described how they "[crossed] charming corners, where greenery reigns, and men were grubbing potatoes from the earth with their arms up their sleeves." But he immediately added that "where meadows or the silence of the woods was once found, now suddenly the trowels of masons resounded," so that the "countryside scenery [would] not last much longer, as urbanization [was] insatiable, its tentacles spreading ever further."[167] This remarkable sensation of a changing reality is beautifully captured in a number of plans in the appendices of Schobbens's guides, simultaneously depicting the existing situation and an imminent reality in the making. (Fig. 6.17) The SCAA's entire urbanization program is superimposed on the maps in dotted lines: planned harbor docks, essential parts of the multiple ring roads, the Prins Boudewijnlaan or the de Baillet Latourlaan—even Schmitz's preliminary plan for the park-cemetery Schoonselhof. The maps thus allowed hikers to understand the new urban reality being projected on the landscapes they were crossing, helping citizens to see the agglomeration not only as a botanical-historical scenery but also as a new urban habitat in the making. Published by the popular Royal Touring Club de Belgique, founded as Belgium's very first tourist organization in 1895 with a readership that could easily compete with the country's largest newspapers,[168] the guides grew into a big sales success.[169] They were widely promoted in the Antwerp press, generally praised as educational, entertaining, widely accessible,



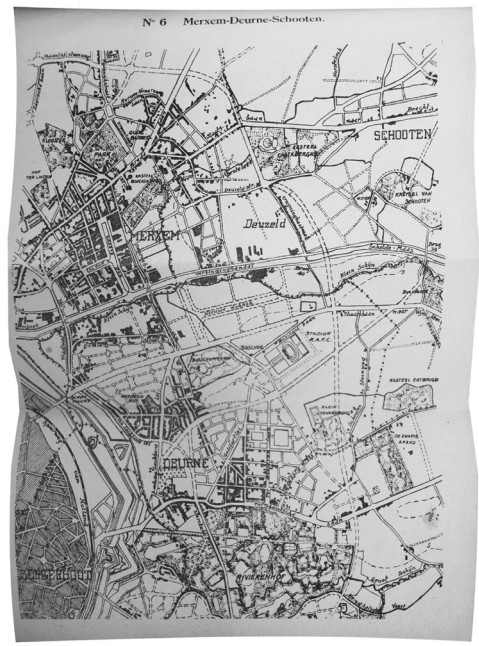


Figure 6.17 Schobbens's famous walking guides, including plans with clear indications of future urbanization, alongside remnants of historical landscapes.

and inexpensive, and were reissued several times—each time including some new trails.[170] Schobbens reportedly became known to the general public mainly for his walking guides,[171] as a city-amateur promoting a kind of regional tourism inviting citizens of all walks of life to explore and comprehend the agglomeration's urbanizing landscapes.

AMATEURISM AS PRECONDITION FOR URBANIZATION AS A SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICE

According to Andy Merrifield, Edward Said perfectly defined amateurism, describing it as all about being "moved not by profit or reward but by love for, and an unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty,

in caring for ideas and values in spite of the restrictions of a profession."[172] Arguably, their love for the agglomeration urged some of the SCAA's members to cross all kinds of (territorial, temporal, legal, professional, etc.) boundaries in view of the higher cause of urbanizing the agglomeration. This definition of amateurism seems apt to capture 'other' aspects of the SCAA's work beyond their work as professional planners, allowing for the portrayal of members like Schobbens, De Heem, Holvoet, or Mennes as proponents of the agglomeration outside the expert confines of their technocratic office, acting as amateur writers, lecturers, exhibition curators and guides, event planners, press delegates, voluntary hobbyists, and promoters of local tourism—all in service of launching and underpinning urbanization as a sociocultural project involving Antwerp society at large.

Of all the SCAA members, perhaps Joseph Schobbens most incarnated this amateurism, having "abandoned a very promising professional career as an attorney because of his public vocation."[173] In his role as clerk, urbanizing the agglomeration had become "a cause he had chosen as his life's work," which he "tackled with enthusiasm and driving force" as a man who had always "an open eye for the social problems raised by urban planning."[174] Schobbens, in other words symbolized the SCAA's "multifaceted approach" with his profound "knowledge of natural and urban beauty, archaeology, history and folklore."[175] His allegiance to ordinary folk stimulated him to take his duties well "beyond the confines of the SCAA and his delimited task as a Provincial Clerk."[176] Arguably, it was this kind of tireless dedication, across partitions of all kinds, that in the long run established a shared way of looking at the agglomeration among different administrations and policy levels, civil engineers, architects, landowners, developers, contractors, and—as was argued in this chapter—even among the Antwerp population at large. Even though none of the ancillary activities mentioned in this chapter really fell under the heading of 'direct' or 'professional' participation, they nevertheless stimulated a certain degree of popular involvement, simply by making sure that people were 'being there' and were 'being made aware' of what was going on.[177] Perhaps the most important precondition for genuine public involvement is to equip citizens with sufficient cultural capital, allowing and encouraging them to make their own personal readings of the city and urbanization. The success of the SCAA's mission depended on the organization of a sociocultural awareness turning urbanization into a shared matter of concern, a shared reverie, which an ever growing share of the population could comprehend and relate to.

His colleagues generously admitted that Schobbens's "role had coincided with, and defined the committee's entire history."[178] Even after his retirement in 1938, Schobbens, as befits a true amateur, remained involved within the SCAA, albeit in a "different role,"[179] freed from the administrative burdens of a secretary. When Schobbens died unexpectedly in June 1939, barely one year after his retirement at the age of sixty-seven, his passing marked the premature end of an era. The SCAA remained active, but especially after the German Occupation, nothing much remained of its diligent operation. When engineer De Heem resigned in 1941, the SCAA had lost its two most devoted advocates and de facto ceased to exist. Turning urbanization into a societal project was just as much the fruit of the devoted lives and amateurism of a number of passionate people as it had been the outcome of 'expert' planners trying to gain a foothold as proper professionals within institutional frameworks. It was in the 'in-between-ness' of the province, between state and municipality, that people like Schobbens and De Heem found the perfect free-haven to indulge their professionalizing amateurism, or amateurish professionalism. Schobbens knew all too well that this position was under increasing pressure. Upon his retirement, he stressed to his 275 guests that "the province had an almost boundless and continued role to play in terms of urbanization" which was "something that had always been close to his heart."[180] (Fig. 6.18) Yet he warned that the office of provincial official was slowly but surely eroding. "It is necessary," he continued, "that the provincial council itself, and all its members, are very aware of their own rights and are willing to defend those rights, both against the all-consuming spirit of centralization and against the considerable influence of the big cities."[181] These would prove prophetic words heralding the downfall of the SCAA's hard-won success in practicing urbanization as a full-fledged sociocultural project.

After the Second World War, the provincial, aristocratic-bourgeois environment in which the SCAA was rooted was completely dismantled. In *The Sorrows of Belgium*, Martin Conway describes how the role of the provinces was marginalized in the postwar political reconstruction of the country.[182] Probably it was not by chance that this political maneuver happened under a socialist regime, fueled by figures such as Camille Huysmans and Lode Craeybeckx who, constantly switching between their roles as Antwerp mayors and statesmen, were eager to put an end to "one hundred years of bourgeois democracy."[183] A kind of democracy of which the aristocratic provinces had been the prime example and which was quickly done away with in the postwar period, heralding an era of



Hulde in den Provincieraad

Griffier Schobbens aan de eer

Hartelijke feestreden

Overlijden van den heer Schobbens

Eere-griffier der Provincie Antwerpen

Een droeve mare kwam ons heden, Donderdagmorgen toe: de alomgekende en gewaardeerde, sympathieke heer Schobbens, eere-griffier der provincie Antwerpen, is plotseling overleden. De weerklank van dit tragische nieuws zal voorzeker groot geweest zijn, zoowel in de officieele kringen van gansch de provincie als in de voor-aanstaande middens onzer handelsmetropool.

Niet lang heeft de steeds zoo ijverige en werkzame oud-griffier dus mogen genieten van de welverdiende rust welke men hem nog vele jaren gewenscht had.

Wie herinnert zich niet het zoo hartelijk als schitterend geroerd afscheid van den eere-griffier waarbij hij gefeest werd door alle provinciale en stedelijke overheden, door ieder die maar ietwat hoogstaanden naam had in provincie en stad Antwerpen.

Heer Schobbens was hier al te gekend dan dat het noodig wezen zou hier zijn heel verdienstelijk leven nog eens te verhalen. Schitterend student van de Universiteit, ingeschreven als advocaat bij de Balie van Antwerpen, waar hij zich ook al spoedig deed opmerken, werd hij aldra benoemd als

HEER SCHOBBENS

Figure 6.18 Excerpts from Gazet Van Antwerpen showing Schobbens giving a speech at his retirement tribute in 1938, and an announcement of his death barely one year later in 1939.

renewed depolitization of the provincial level. It certainly seems as if the provincial playing field for policy entrepreneurs and amateurs such as Schobbens and De Heem was crushed between the growing weight of city and state, marking the end of the province's efforts to practice urbanization in the agglomeration.

When the SCAA was no longer in charge of urbanizing the agglomeration, the practices of many stakeholders—such as municipalities, real estate agents, engineers, architects, landowners, etc.—soon slipped into uninspired pragmatism, determined by internal corporate or professional logics, deprived of a shared horizon or collective imagination. (Fig. 6.19) No longer did exhibitions, newspaper articles, walking guides, or architectural journals bring the questions of 'urbanizing the agglomeration' to broad public attention. Urbanization simply disappeared from the political agenda and the public sphere and ceased to be a shared matter of concern. This was, of course, a global trend, determining the course of twentieth-century territories in general.[184] In the Antwerp context, however, this transition remarkably coincided with the disappearance of a provincial playing field from which professional policy-entrepreneurs (a.k.a. passionate amateurs) could invent, promote, and practice urbanization as a fully-fledged social project. It was figures such as Schobbens and

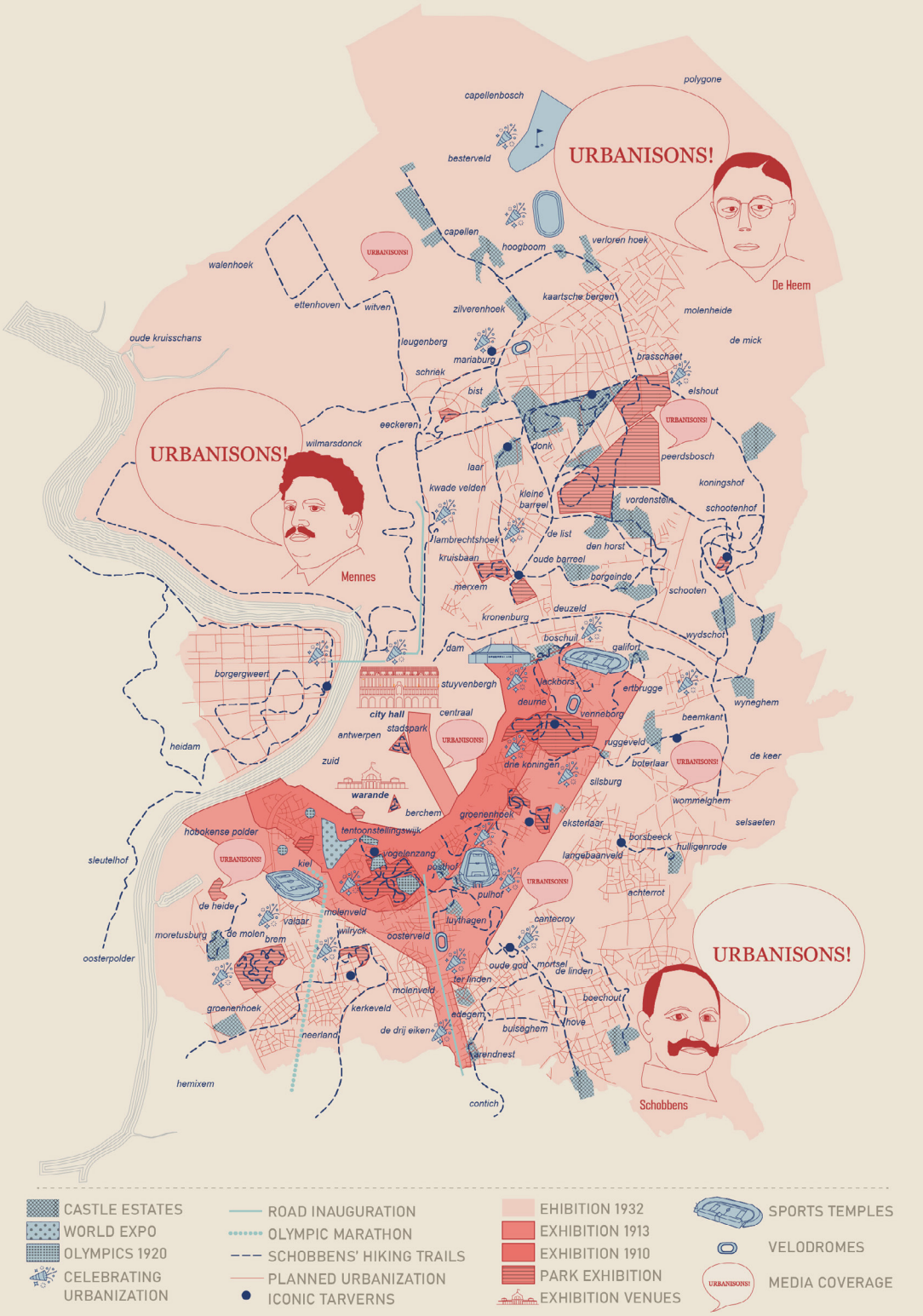


Figure 6.19 Without the SCAA's curating role in urbanizing the agglomeration, a real estate player like Amelinckx no longer contributed to the collective project of building the city but started building standardized products next to the city instead. Urbanization no longer respected the in-depth knowledge of the agglomeration's hydrological laws, which Mennes had carefully collected, etc.

De Heem and institutions such as the SCAA that tried to keep increasingly disintegrating urban questions together as the constituent components of a plausible urbanization project. Without these 'Hommes de l'agglomération' and their arduous efforts, postwar urbanization quickly turned from a shared project into an automated process or monist technology that society was subjected to and simply had to undergo. After Schobbens and De Heem, the right to control the urbanization process, hence the right to the city, was no longer claimed in the agglomeration.

Map 6: Amateur Readings.

This map intends to depict urbanization as a project of sociocultural and experiential learning. It shows how the SCAA's main exhibitions from 1910, 1913, and 1932 covered ever larger parts of the urban agglomeration, while increasingly familiarizing Antwerp society at large with the committee's 'relative ideal.' The SCAA maintained an extensive lecture and publication culture, building on excellent relations with the entire Antwerp press. A substantial collection of newspaper clippings and articles revealed that urbanization was 'celebrated' on many occasions to solemnly inaugurate parks, new roads, or even entire urban quarters (e.g. Fig. 6.10). Maps and artist impressions from historical catalogues documenting the 1920 Olympics or the 1930 World Fair suggest these major festivities were deployed as a means to collectively explore the urbanizing fringes just outside the former ramparts. The social appropriation of the many sports stadiums and venues made citizens venture where they never had done before, discovering the new guises of the city on its edges. The Amis des Parcs d'Anvers brought new parks to public attention through organizing guided field trips. Some sixty hikes, described in Schobbens's *Les environs d'Anvers*—traced on top of the SCAA's overall urbanization plans (Fig. 6.7)—show how he introduced his fellow-citizens to centuries-old landscapes, dotted with toponyms and noble estates, that were at the same time in full urban transformation. It were all these cultural activities, often rooted in city-amateurism, that encouraged citizens to 'learn', 'appreciate', and 'read' urbanization as a project of socio-spatial change.


URBANISONS!
De Heem
URBANISONS!
Mennes
URBANISONS!
Schobbens
polygone
capellenbosch
besterveld
capellen
hoogboom
verloren hoek
walenhoek
ettenhoven
witven
zilverenhoek
kaartsche bergen
molenheide
de mick
oude kruisschans
leugenberg
mariaburg
schriek
brasschaet
elshout
bist
eeckeren
wilmarsdonck
donk
laar
peerdsbosch
kwade velden
koningshof
kleine barreel
vordenstein
schootenhof
lambrechtshoek
de list
den horst
kruisbaan
oude barreel
borgeinde
merxem
schooten
deuzeld
kronenburg
wydschot
dam
boschuil
galifort
borgergweert
stuyvenbergh
vackbors
ertbrugge
wyneghem
city hall
centraal
deurne
venneborg
beemkant
heidam
antwerpen
stadspark
ruggeveld
de keer
zuid
drie koningen
boterlaar
silsburg
warande
wommelghem
berchem
groenenhoek
selsaeten
hobokense polder
tentoonstellingswijk
eksterlaar
borsbeeck
hulligenrode
sleutelhof
vogelenzang
kiel
langebaanveld
postdok
pulhof
achterrot
de heide
molenveld
cantecroy
valaar
luythagen
de molen
brem
moretusburg
wilrijck
oosterveld
oosterpolder
oude god
mortsel
de linden
ter linden
molenveld
beechout
groenenhoek
kerkeveld
edegem
thove
de drij eiken
bulseghem
neerland
karendnest
hemixem
contich
CASTLE ESTATES
WORLD EXPO
OLYMPICS 1920
CELEBRATING URBANIZATION
ROAD INAUGURATION
OLYMPIC MARATHON
SCHOBBENS' HIKING TRAILS
PLANNED URBANIZATION
ICONIC TARVERNS
EHIBITION 1932
EXHIBITION 1913
EXHIBITION 1910
PARK EXHIBITION
EXHIBITION VENUES
SPORTS TEMPLES
VELODROMES
MEDIA COVERAGE

"Research constitutes amassing data; it rarely means thinking deeply about a problem, certainly not formulating concepts about this problem, and then engaging in a politics around that problem. This isn't helpful in the development of deeper, critical understandings of the urban problematic. (…) On the other flank, neither is sloppy theorizing, or theorizing divorced from political and social engagement. Consequently, there are dangers of 'pure' theorizing too. (…) 'Thoughts without content are empty', said Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; although he also said 'thoughts without concepts are blind.' And so we hobble along, between analytical emptiness and conceptual blindness…"

Andy Merrifield, *The New Urban Question*, 2014, 3-4.

"In principle urban historians have the opportunity to become the most important interpreters of the ways that global social processes articulate with small-scale social life. No use talking about it; someone will have to do it!"

Charles Tilly, *"What Good Is Urban History?"*, 1996, 702.

Post Scriptum
Final reflections on the *Art of Urbanization*

If there is anything I hope this book achieves, it is that it instills in the reader a different connotation of the term "urbanization." It is my hope that the preceding six chapters, each dissecting collective agency on six different urban questions, create a compelling picture of urbanization as a precise programmatic practice rather than a rampant process of random accumulation. This work painstakingly reconstructed how the SCAA's 'practice' or 'art' of urbanization shaped an extended urban agglomeration that was in many ways more coherent, livable, enjoyable, socially inclusive, and generative than many urban environments produced by (late) twentieth-century urbanization. I hope it is now clear that the SCAA accomplished all this without reverting to rigorous spatial planning procedures fueled by the panacea of leading urban designers; rather, the committee did so by consistently 'handling' day-to-day urbanization from below, over a long period of time. The SCAA never 'imposed' a rationally planned or designed spatial order on the agglomeration but patiently assembled many different subplans—each serving economic, sociocultural, political, and ecological needs—into the incremental components of a reasoned urban milieu in the making. (Fig. C1)

The urban qualities with which the SCAA managed to irrigate the agglomeration were somewhat abstractly described in this book in terms of agglomeration effects, positive externalities, spatial capital, etcetera. But they are also tangibly concrete for everyone venturing through the agglomeration, even today. They can be felt in picturesque interwar streetscapes, in the wind rustling through the leaves of the many trees along wide avenues and sumptuous parks, in the urban amenities that accumulated around many squares, in the crowded trams running up to the many sports venues, in the intermediary ringways that lie dormant in the urban fabric, and so on. The urban potential simply lurks around every corner the SCAA once laid hands on. The 2013 urban design competition LABXX, in which several design teams were invited to examine strategies for the further densification, renewal, and transformation of the twentieth-century belt around Antwerp, largely confirmed this observation. At

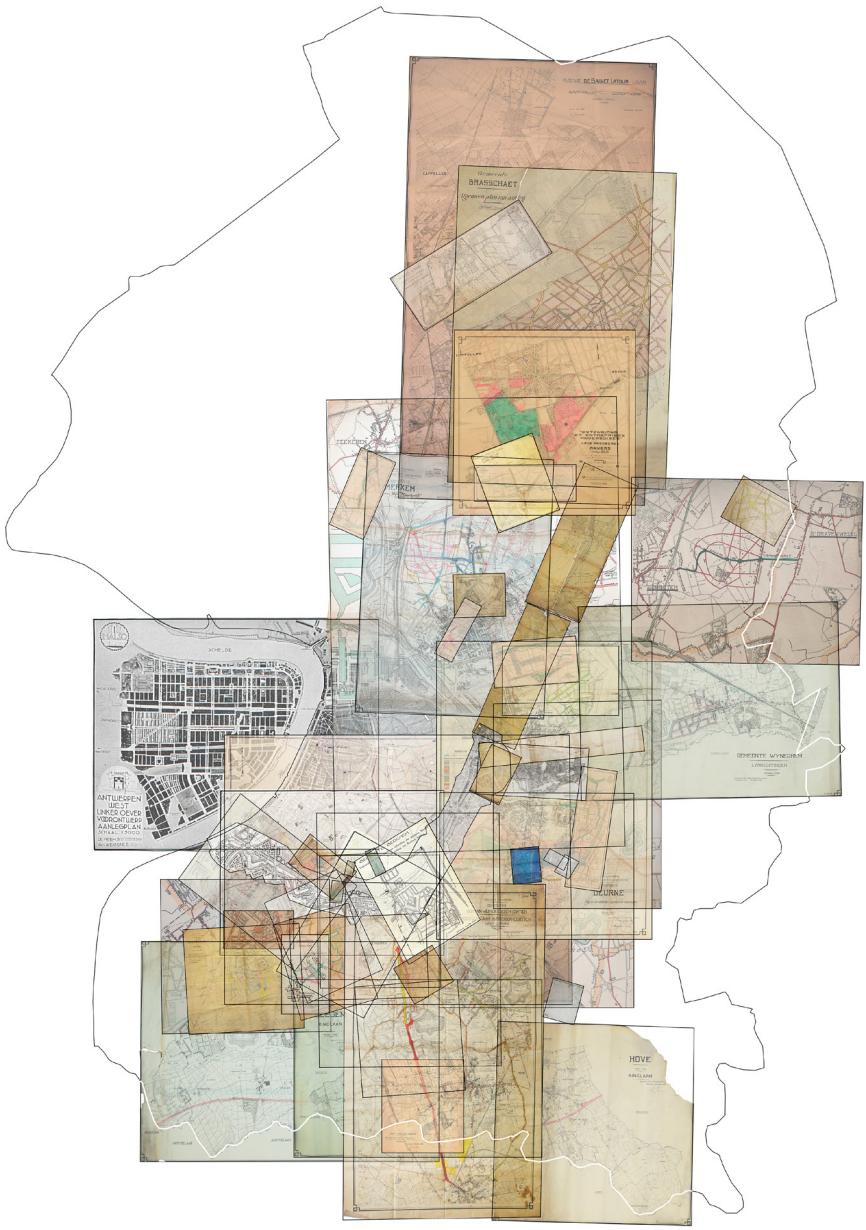


Figure C.1 Practicing urbanization: the urban agglomeration as the reasoned outcome of numerous incremental plans. Collage by author of all the plans that feature throughout this volume.

that time, the SCAA's history was still unwritten and completely unknown, and yet all teams picked up the thread of urbanizing the agglomeration exactly where the committee had left it in 1939. The SCAA's intermunicipal ring road was recycled to propose a circular tramline to 'network' the urban fringe; the many squares were revisited to unfold a fine mesh of 'micro-centralities'; and the sumptuous parks were recovered as perfect voids around which to absorb further densification.[1] In a way, the LABXX competition convincingly confirms that the SCAA effectively launched the agglomeration on a sustained path of continued accumulation and generative urbanization—and that these conceptualizations are no mere theoretical constructs divorced from reality.

Recovering the unwritten development history of Antwerp's urban fringe was the initial trigger for this research on the SCAA's *Art of Urbanization*. One of the book's objectives was to restore forgotten figures such as Schobbens, De Heem, and Mennes to their rightful place in Antwerp's planning history. However, as work on this book progressed, a number of additional objectives started to emerge. First, the *Art of Urbanization* develops a notion of urbanization as a situated practice that is nevertheless concerned with quasi-universal urban questions—thus presenting a framework for analysis that can contribute to the development of a critical urban theory that is fundamentally attentive to historical difference. Second, the *Art of Urbanization* became a metaphor forwarding Belgium as a pertinent and fruitful context for writing a different kind of planning history. Third and finally, the *Art of Urbanization* develops an approach to urbanism that is not rooted in the do's and don'ts of good city form, spatial design, or rational planning but that obtains its raison d'être and is fundamentally grounded in analytical understandings or theories of urbanization. Brief reflections on the potential of the *Art of Urbanization* on these frontiers make up the final sections of this book.

THE *ART OF URBANIZATION*: BRIDGING URBAN THEORY AND URBAN HISTORY?

This work leaves little doubt that the SCAA's two secretaries, Joseph Schobbens and Paul De Heem, were the only true 'Hommes de l'agglomération' in the Antwerp context. They were the true masters of urbanization, orchestrating the collective action that shaped the agglomeration's indeterminate future over time. They engaged with local mayors and aldermen, provincial officials, several ministers and ministries, state

and provincial engineers, bankers, real estate and tract developers, aristocratic landowners, notaries, architects, land surveyors, contractors, all kinds of professional and amateur associations, journalists, and, ultimately, Antwerp citizens at large. The book thus moves away from ways of studying urbanization as an 'abstracted' or 'automated' process, glossing over the historical agency of the many players involved in its dialectical and historical making. At the same time, the work highlights the SCAA's great attentiveness to and acceptance of the agglomeration's socio-spatial idiosyncrasies, peculiar contingencies, and historical memory. This study of the SCAA's *Art of Urbanization*, in sum, contributes to ridding urbanization from its often misconstrued ambitions to have scientific and universal standing and partly 'provincializes' it, as a relational attribute of its physical and sociocultural context, marked by distinctive historical difference.[2]

On the other hand, the SCAA was concerned with quasi-universal urban questions that were anything but specific and manifested themselves time and again in urbanization processes around the globe. It is no coincidence that the SCAA's urbanization practice developed in the slipstream of organizations such as the UVCB and UIV, which sought to study and compare the urban questions and problematics encountered in the making of urban life-worlds around the globe. Reading these early twentieth-century discourses against the background of the current debate on the theory of planetary urbanization, derived from the writings of Henri Lefebvre from the 1960s onward, and linking it to the work of other stimulating urbanization theorists of that time, offered a very productive analytical framework for interpreting the SCAA's urbanization practices. It contributed, for instance, to call into question the dichotomy between concentrated and dispersed forms of urbanization,[3] instead pointing to its close interrelationships in Antwerp and Belgium in (a) political ways (e.g., electrifying the Campine region in exchange for urban parks), (b) systemic ways (e.g., the search for drinking water and the implication of remote municipalities), (c) material ways (e.g., the strong dependence of urbanization on the industrial brickyards along the Rupel), and (d) selective ways (the urban demand for, and appropriation of national infrastructures)—some of which may in fact be understood as so-called operational landscapes.[4] This body of theory helped me understand how the agglomeration's urbanization dynamic was radically rescaled by the globalization of Belgium's national port; that it was multipolar and multiscalar; not contiguous but prestructured by historical yet splintered settlement patterns and infrastructural layers; simultaneously transforming city and countryside alike.[5] The fact that

Schobbens and De Heem realized very early on that "the agglomeration was built in scattered patches, often far apart from one another"[6] suggests that they were early witnesses of the burgeoning phenomenon of extended or regional urbanization.[7] As such, this study substantiates the assertion that today's allegedly "postmodern landscapes were in fact implied as early as the 1920s but forced themselves upon our consciousness only by the 1960s."[8] This work thus contributes to the understanding that current manifestations and conceptions of (planetary) urbanization have deep historical roots.[9]

These findings echo the current and ongoing convergence between the fields of urban theory and urban history. While urban theorists claim that the current phenomenon of (planetary) urbanization is fundamentally historical,[10] several urban historians call for the exploration and production of more profound historical-theoretical frameworks.[11] At stake is "critical urban theory attentive to historical difference as a fundamental constituting process of global political economy."[12] Building on the assertion that "a theory of the city needs practices of urbanization,"[13] i.e. "verbs,"[14] and on the simple observation that practices are always fundamentally historical, this work forwards the study of the practice of urbanization (derived from the verb 'to urbanize') as a promising method to explore the dialectics between urban history and urban theory. The systematic study of the 'practice' or 'art' of urbanization seems topical to underpin a theory of (global) urban history, and conversely, to provide truly engaged and invested historical support for a theory of (planetary) urbanization. This book, then, is an open invitation to write similar urbanization histories from sources that document the *longue durée* of day-to-day urbanization practices, adopting and elaborating an empirically grounded theoretical approach that may further our historical-theoretical understanding of urbanization as a situated worlding practice undergirding the making of 'our urban planet.'[15]

THE *ART OF URBANIZATION*: BELGIAN PRACTICE FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF PLANNING HISTORY?

Belgian planning professionals never played a central role in the international planning debates and conferences that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. Figures such as Schobbens and De Heem too acted rather modestly at the planning conferences they attended. In much (inter)national research, a feeling of 'Belgian failure' in contributing to

the making and writing of modern planning history prevails.[16] The Belgian voice in the discourses shaping the modern planning movement in Europe was largely absent.[17] Belgium was described as a case in point of "selective borrowing," meaning that "no identifiable innovation resulted from borrowed ideas and practices" and that the engagement with "imported planning models was rather shallow."[18] Nonetheless, this book reveals that Belgium did pursue an active planning politics in its larger cities in the first decades of the twentieth century. Yet urbanizing the agglomerations was a provisional and pragmatic practice that simply did not correspond well with the big expectations and ambitions that colored the more radical narratives of many 'chroniclers' of the modern planning movement at the turn of the twentieth century.[19] Yet just as for Belgian architecture, it seems that urbanizing the agglomerations, and the Antwerp agglomeration in particular, never aspired "to be part of a bigger movement or doctrinal schools of thought, but at the same time wasn't anti-intellectual either: it simply resisted any form of intellectual fanatism."[20]

In that respect, it is particularly interesting that this book reveals that the qualities of the SCAA's project lay exactly in its reluctance to blindly follow all aspects of the modern planning doctrines. It shows how, unlike much planning approaches, the committee did not seek solutions to the urban question beyond the imaginary of the historical city.[21] It refused to break with a notion of the urban as an historical accumulation process.[22] It did not just try to avoid the negative externalities typically associated with the industrial city but actively kept pursuing and accommodating positive externalities, urban fortunes, and all the thrills that come with urban life.[23] It refused to go along with the tendency toward an annihilation of time that marked much modern urban design, etc.[24] And yet the SCAA's sustained efforts put the agglomeration on a perfectly reasonable, incremental, open ended, and generative path of urbanization, supporting processes of continued accumulation to this day. Although the Antwerp agglomeration was examined in particular, several historical sources and preliminary research suggest that similar urbanization programs were put into practice in cities such as Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Charleroi, and Liege.[25] Here lies an as yet underexplored research project that, after two decades of persistent research into urban sprawl in Belgium, could help provide a more critical and nuanced reading of Belgium's full urbanization history—if only to better understand the historical nexus between concentrated and dispersed forms of urbanization, the remarkable role of the provinces in urbanization, etc. (Fig. C.2)

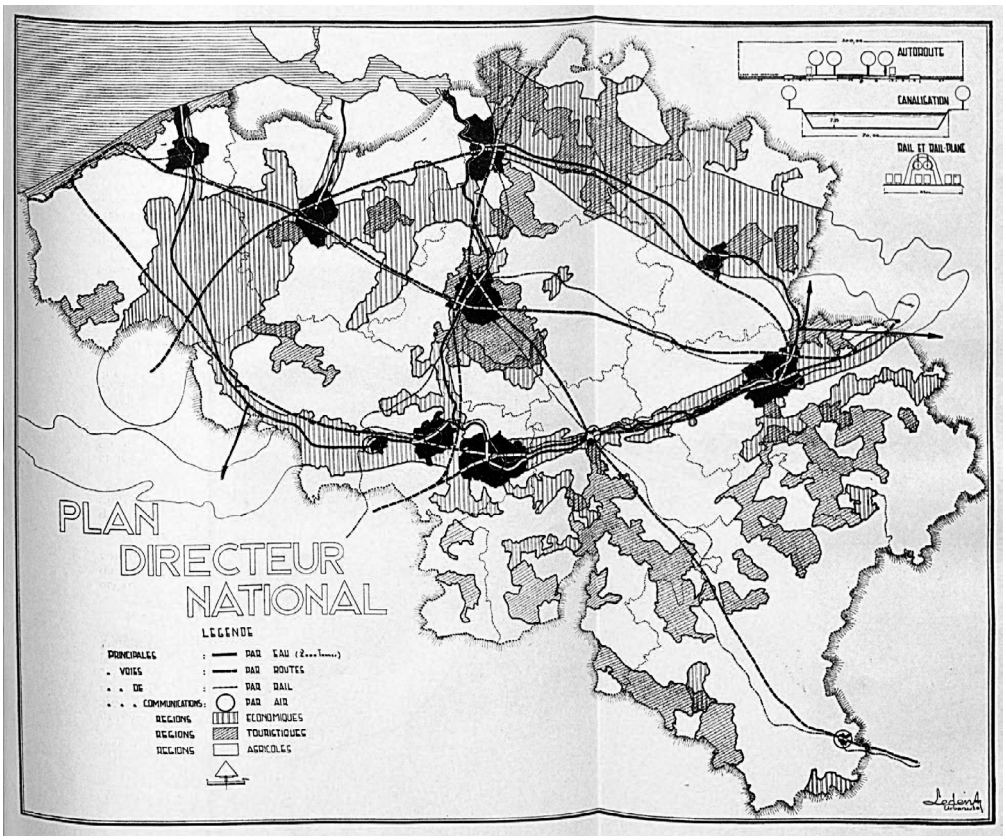


Figure C.2 Plan Directeur National by Ledent, showing the urban agglomerations (black), economic zones (vertical hatch), and touristic zones (oblique hatch) against the administrative boundaries of the provinces.

In the realm of architecture, it has been claimed that in the absence of a dominant architectural culture in Belgium, the study of construction history offers clues for writing a more mundane or general kind of architectural history.[26] In a similar vein, this book suggests that in the absence of strong planning doctrines, the study of day-to-day urbanization holds promising leads to write another kind of planning history. This is especially the case since the term 'urbanization' was explicitly launched in the early 1920s in Belgium in the context of metropolitan development. This book indeed proves that Belgium is not only a pertinent case of *'urbanisation sans urbanisme'*, but also as a prime example of *'urbanisation comme urbanisme'* consisting of collective agency on urbanization programs in the urban agglomerations. Recollecting this Belgian *Art of Urbanization*

should not be understood as part of an operative planning historiography, post-rationalizing the history of urban planning based on eclectic account of iconic plans, ideas, models, events, etc.[27] In fact, the discrepancy between the ideal plans and models of the famous 1910 urban design competition in Antwerp and the actual developments on the ground even indicates a possible recalibration of the urban design competitions of the even more well-known cases.[28] Rather, studying the *Art of Urbanization* resonates with Choay's 'forgotten third way' of writing planning history, not by studying rational spatial plans, models, or ideologies, but by way of a detailed historical exploration of collective, pragmatic, and provisional action on urban questions (see introduction).[29] It requires a radically different approach toward writing planning history that comes with its own methods and sources—that are as fundamental and anecdotal as the many canonical records in the field's historiography—and that, rather than being dismissed as shallow should rightly claim their place in the annals of European planning. The *Art of Urbanization* adds another chapter to emerging research that reconstructs this kind of planning history in the Belgian context, as well as to the extensive research showing that planning came under many different guises in twentieth century Europe.[30] It encourages ways of writing planning history that—in the current era of complexifying urbanization processes on a planetary scale—can help substantiate notions of urbanism as a reflective practice, a *savoir*, or a post-normal science, rather than as a model-based, applied science.[31]

THE *ART OF URBANIZATION*: GROUNDING A NOTION OF URBANISM IN URBAN THEORY?

At the 1913 International planning conference in Ghent, Schobbens and De Heem somewhat apologetically stated that their contribution was of a "much more practical than theoretical nature."[32] They merely "provided answers for the Antwerp context" and made no attempt to "generalize, not knowing how the problem arises in other cities."[33] On the one hand, their stance was rather clever, showing their understanding of urbanism as a fundamentally situated practice and endorsing the idea that there are "simply too many contexts in which urban phenomena may be encountered for a general theory of urbanism to emerge easily."[34] On the other hand, it reveals their reluctance to contribute to the epistemology of urbanism, fully ignoring the idea that the shear impossibility of

formulating a "general theory ought not to deter us from pursuing general inquiries into those essential qualities of urbanism."[35] A more precise understanding of the essential qualities of the SCAA's *Art of Urbanization* would have been very useful, however, especially given that one of the final "wishes" of the 1913 conference was that every decent city should install an urbanization committee such as the SCAA. This book gives Schobbens and De Heem a helping hand in that respect. Next to recollecting their pragmatic tinkering in the agglomeration, it must also be read as an attempt to conceptualize their *Art of Urbanization*. Chapter per chapter, the book grounds the SCAA's rhetoric and agency on different urban questions in various theories of urbanization (linking to aspects of governance, aesthetics, economics, etc.) to substantiate which stances, attitudes, and mentalities comprised the *Art of Urbanization*.

Chapter 1 showed that in a splintered institutional and legislative context, the SCAA was never in a position to pursue the 'absolute ideal' of designing and imposing a regional masterplan. Instead, the committee reverted to the 'relative ideal' of directing collective and provisional action in an open-ended 'urbanization program'. The SCAA's actions were linked to the notions of confederal municipalism and policy-entrepreneurship. These two forms of spatial agency, right down to getting new laws voted and territorial boundaries adapted, ignited persistent processes of political in-betweening from within the intermediary level of the province. The SCAA sought to make sure that the 'mediating urban level' was not being whittled away between inward-looking municipalism or private claims on the one hand and abstract statecraft or global economic processes on the other.[36] They also mounted a context in which separate urban questions could be addressed beyond their own limited spatial fix, shaping an integrative urbanization culture that was more than the juxtaposition of sectoral projects. (Fig. C.3) Schobbens and De Heem incessantly oscillated "between a politics of the real and a politics of the possible, between pragmatism and utopianism"[37] in pursuit of better (but never perfect) urbanization protocols.

Chapter 2 revealed the SCAA's technocratic, infrastructure-led approach but also stipulated the willingness of its engineers to 'urbanize' their technological frameworks, taking many of the agglomeration's socio-spatial idiosyncrasies into account. Major roads did not only accommodate traffic flows but equally harbored a diversity of social amenities and



Figure C.3 The park question as a sanitary question and housing question alike. Urban culture emerges as the cross-fertilization of parallel urban questions.

urban addresses. Sewers did not only drain wastewater but also stimulated different kinds of urban appropriation of sanitized waterways. The impact of national railroads on the porosity of the local urban fabric was maximally contained, etc. In De Heem's and Mennes's work, "exaggerated taste for authorship, abstract thesis or doctrinal controversy made way for knowledge rooted in concrete experience, geared towards timely and practical advice."[38] It gave rise to a radically cautious (or cautiously radical) approach to engineering that underpinned what can be considered a more ecologically vested urban infrastructure.

Chapter 3 revealed how the SCAA acted from the clear stance that the agglomeration could not be consumed solely by private claims or allotments. The committee consciously served the 'common interest' by consistently implementing shared urban services such as public parks and programs, public squares, sports infrastructures, etc., some of which the historical city needed but could not accommodate itself. This allowed for the linkeage of the SCAA's activities to notions of generative urbanization, forging positive externalities out of private accumulation, serving collective consumption needs and aspirations, underpinning the viability of urbanization, putting the agglomeration on a path of continued accumulation, etc.[39] It also lets us cast the SCAA's members as welfare creators and community improvers, at times explicitly advocating the right to the city of Antwerp's urbanizing society at large.

Chapter 4 reconstructed how the SCAA was completely invested in contemporary discussions arguing that real estate surplus value usually did not

accrue to individuals or professionals but should be shared with society at large. Linking these observations to theories of land and urban rent,[40] the chapter argued that the SCAA's *Art of Urbanization* was explicitly concerned with redistributing (class monopoly) urban rent—exploring strategies such as the municipalization of land, the implementation of general tax rules on real estate *and* land, the negotiation of consistent development charges in each and every project, etc. This persistent practice of redistribution was aimed at turning urbanization from a random process of private capital accumulation into a reasoned project of expanded capital accumulation, including the building of infrastructural, social, ecological, aesthetic, and cultural capital.[41]

Chapter 5 argued that the question of urban aesthetics was never a matter of the individual muse or liberal artists but the product of an 'integration' of the mutual knowledges, skills, and labor power of many different actors involved in the production of space—such as engineers, property tycoons, contractors, constructions workers, material producers, policymakers, architects, municipal servants, etc. The SCAA's project created the conditions that encouraged and enabled this aesthetic integration, moving design agency "from the privacy of the design studio into the flow of socio-natural life,"[42] in pursuit of "an integrity of urban experience across property boundaries [i.e. individual projects]."[43] In the context of the agglomeration, it led to the development of complementary but internally coherent urban imaginaries, tied to different urbanization dynamics, coalescing in the fascinating embrace of the historical city (around the old cores), the garden city (around the many parks), and the modern metropolis (along the metropolitan road grid).

Chapter 6 argues that for Schobbens and De Heem, urbanizing the agglomeration was not just a short-lived project but a life's work, performed in the thick of time, which naturally extended beyond their professional duties. They acted out of a deep allegiance, care, and love for the city and its inhabitants, spending their free time on exhibiting, lecturing, and publishing about urbanizing the Antwerp agglomeration, as well as organizing popular events and hikes to get citizens to explore the city's urbanizing fringes. This allowed me to identify (professional) 'amateurism' as one of the SCAA's prime motivations, as its members dedicated their professional careers to their beloved city, practicing urbanization as a project of sociocultural and experiential learning, making fellow-citizens

(politically) aware, equipping them with (personal) techniques to read, navigate, and appropriate emerging urban landscapes.

The SCAA's *Art of Urbanization*, in sum, consisted of persistent policy-entrepreneurship, radically careful technocracy, generative welfare creation, capital redistribution, integrative design, and a great deal of amateurism. It is here that a more general notion of urbanism as the *Art of Urbanization* starts to emerge, grounded in conceptual-theoretical literature. As such this book is aligned with emerging scholarship that aims to bring urbanism in a close conversation with economic theory,[44] theories of land,[45] urbanization theory,[46] etc., all of which explore alternative theoretical grounds for urbanism—a discipline that has often been criticized for its rather weak and normative theoretical foundations. These theoretical grounds, moreover, move away from a notion of urbanism as a hard-rock model-based science and are more aligned with contemporary calls for relative,[47] dynamic,[48] integrative,[49] or interpretive[50] epistemologies of the urban and urbanism.

More than anything else, the tireless efforts of les Hommes de l'agglomération Schobbens and De Heem inspired me to no longer read urbanization as a mere 'production process' but as a potentially 'reproductive practice.' What stood out in their story, and in more than thirty years of meeting minutes, was their unconditional willingness to engage in the 'thick of time' functioning as an "extended present, that avoids mere repetition of past times or the instant celebration of new futures."[51] The construction of thick time presupposes a transition from the *in-stans,* (the instant; etymologically 'what does not hold or what is not stable) to a notion of *manu tenere* (the maintained present), i.e., 'what one holds tightly in one's own hands so as not to let it slip away.'[52] And that is exactly what the unadulterated amateurs and policy-entrepreneurs Schobbens and De Heem did by taking control of urbanization in the agglomeration. Arguably, it was their steady pursuit of 'institutionalizing' urbanization in better (but not perfect) ways, and of equipping citizens with personal techniques to appropriate urbanization more meaningfully, that allowed them to turn urbanization into a (more) sustainable practice.[53] The *Art of Urbanization* thus answers to a topical need to (re)construct urbanization programs that not only feed into fashionable discourses, ideologies, or design concepts—but patiently build on economic, ecological, legislative, political, and sociocultural dispositions that sustain them. It does so not from the ambition to realize abstract utopia's, grand ideas, or spectacular urban



Figure C.4 The art of urbanization produces nonspectacular but feasible and accumulative everyday spaces of 'jouissance'.

skylines, but simply to tinker with the concrete utopia of building more enjoyable urban life-worlds that meet the everyday needs, aspirations, and desires of situated urban societies.[54] (Fig. C.4) It is my hope then, that the *Art of Urbanization* will be read, understood, and further explored as a practice with potential in our current era of (planetary) urbanization.

Appendix
List of SCAA Meeting Minutes

MEETING MINUTES OF THE SCAA BETWEEN 1908 AND 1939

Legenda

I Provincial Archives Desguinlei, Depotnr. 506/107(27). Provinciale Technische Dienst: Studie Inrichting Antwerpsche Agglomeratie.

II Provincial Archives Desguinlei, Depotnr. 506/108(28). Provinciale Technische Dienst: Studie Inrichting Antwerpsche Agglomeratie.

III Provincial Archives Desguinlei, Depotnr. 506/109(29). Provinciale Technische Dienst: Studie Inrichting Antwerpsche Agglomeratie.

IV Provincial Archives Beveren, BE-A0511 / PAA745/76. Studiecommissie tot geschiktmaking van de Antwerpsche Agglomeratie. Vergaderstukken inzake de ontsluiting van de Antwerpsche Agglomeratie. 1924-1942.

DATE		SUBJECT	SUB-COMMITTEE
1908			
20-Feb-1908	I	Examen d'un projet de boulevard entre la Pépinière et la rue dite "Rempart de Wilrijck".	12
27-Feb-1908	I	Écoulement des eaux naturelles et résiduaires de la zone d'extension (confidentiel).	1
10-Mar-1908	I	Chemins de fer. Examen des propositions de Stübben par Mr. Lemeunier et Mr. Derudder.	2
29-Apr-1908	I	Route Anvers à Merxem: Discussion sur la largeur des ponts et de la chaussée.	4
5-May-1908	I	Aménagement du pont 40 – Reprise de la Route Merxem-Brecht.	25
9-May-1908	I	Ouverture de Rues à Berchem, à travers du vélodrôme de Zurenborg.	23
11-May-1908	I	Nouveau Boulevard de La Pépinière: projet van VAN DER BECKE.	12
19-May-1908	I	Élargissement de la route Bruxelles-Anvers, dans la traverse de Berchem: largeur désidérable.	7
21-May-1908	I	Nouveau Boulevard de La Pépinière: discussion sur trois projets actuels, soumis à la Commission d'Etudes.	12
23-May-1908	I	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclassée: discussion sur le contrat d'option entre l'État et les Communes.	13
25-May-1908	I	Nombre, étendu, et emplacement des parcs publics à établir dans l'Anvers nouveau.	10
25-May-1908	I	Demande d'ouverture de rues, retardée à cause 1°) de la question du viaduc de Deurne-Merxem, 2°) du plan d'ensemble à établir.	25

1-Jun-1908	I	L'Élargissement de la route Anvers-Bruxelles dans la traverse de Berchem, Mortsel, etc.	7
4-Jul-1908	I	Ouverture de rues à Deurne, sur les terrains du comte Van de Werve.	24
16-Jul-1908	I	1°) Discussion de la note du Mr. L'inspecteur général Pierrot, concernant l'assèchement des terrains situés au nord de la ville – 2°) Fixation de la cote minima à laquelle devront s'établir les rues à ouvrir.	1
23-Jul-1908	I	Élargissement de la route Anvers-Turnhout dans les traverses d'Anvers (Rue Carnot), de Borgerhout et de Deurne.	6
25-Jul-1908	I	Plans généraux d'alignement des routes Anvers-Breda et Anvers (Porte du Schyn)-Merxem.	4
2-Sep-1908	I	Plans généraux d'alignement de la route d'Herentals – Élargissement de la rue Sterckxhof et du Boterlaarbaan.	23
2-Sep-1908	I	Plan général d'alignement de la route de Borsbeeck, dite "Rue d'Argile".	21
7-Sep-1908	I	Nouveau boulevard de la Pépinière – visite des lieux et promenade sur les terrains de l'enceinte.	12
16-Sep-1908	I	Reconstruction des ponts tournants 36 en 37.	25
16-Sep-1908	I	Décision concernant le nouveau boulevard de la Pépinière.	12
17-Sep-1908	I	Excursion du 17 septembre 1908: Visite des cours d'eau du nord d'Anvers.	1
22-Sep-1908	I	Plans généraux d'alignement des routes provinciales Anvers-Boom et Anvers-Niel.	6
22-Sep-1908	I	Plantations le long de la route militaire.	28
25-Sep-1908	I	Prolongement de la Sterckxhoflei – Création d'une artère nouvelle entre Deurne-Nord, Deurne-Sud et Mortsel.	21
25-Sep-1908	I	Ouverture d'une rue à Borgerhout.	24
28-Sep-1908	I	Excursion du 28 septembre 1908 – Visite des cours d'eau du Nord d'Anvers.	1
28-Sep-1908	I	Écoulement des eaux naturelles et résiduaires de la zone d'extension (confidentiel) – Plans de Mr. Pierrot.	1
5-Oct-1908	I	Voûtement du canal d'Herentals – Nouveau plan d'alignement de l'avenue Plantin (est) – Passage sous la gare de Borgerhout ou détournement de l'avenue vers la porte Louise.	11
7-Oct-1908	I	Élargissement et rectification de la route Anvers (porte du Schyn) – Wyneghem.	5
7-Oct-1908	I	Ouverture d'une rue entre l'avenue Markgrave et l'avenue des Petits Coqs.	20
21-Oct-1908	I	Ouverture de rues à Berchem, sur les terrains de Madame Meyer-Van den Bergh.	21
21-Oct-1908	I	Élargissement de la route provinciale Vieux Dieu-Lierre.	17
24-Oct-1908	I	Suite de la discussion concernant l'écoulement des eaux naturelles et résiduaires de la zône d'extension.	1
30-Oct-1908	I	Ouverture de la rue Robert Mols, entre l'avenue des Petits Coqs et l'Avenue Margrave.	20

30-Oct-1908	I	Ouverture de rues à Berchem, sur les terrains de Madame Meyer-Van den Bergh – au Pulhof.	21
31-Oct-1908	I	Séance plénaire.	9
14-Nov-1908	I	Suite de la discussion concernant l'écoulement des eaux naturelles et résiduaires de la zône d'extension. Excursions vers Bruxelles et Ostende.	1
16-Nov-1908	I	Projet de nouveaux chemins de fer et modifications aux emplacements existants.	2
25-Nov-1908	I	Création d'une artère entre le viaduc de Merxem et les darses.	26
28-Nov-1908	I	Étude de l'écoulement des eaux (suite) – système d'Egouts d'Anvers et d'Ostende.	1
30-Nov-1908	I	Brèches à pratiquer dans l'enceinte.	29
3-Dec-1908	I	Ouverture d'une rue entre la rue Looibroeck et la rue Ceulemans – Élargissement des rues Pothoek, Egliseet, porte du Schyn – Création d'une artère directe entre la place de Coninck et la porte du Schyn.	25
5-Dec-1908	I	Élargissement de la Dryhoekstraat, de l'Herentalsche Baan et de la Boterlaarbaan.	23
10-Dec-1908	I	Ouverture d'une rue entre la route de Lierre et la route de Bruxelles (propriété Peellaert).	22
12-Dec-1908	I	Rapport de la visite des égouts d'Anvers le samedi 12 Décembre.	1
17-Dec-1908	I	Lettre de la société "Terrains et Entreprises" demandant une modification dans les conditions imposées pour l'ouverture de la rue Robert Mols. Création d'une artère entre l'avenue du Sud et le quartier St. Laurent.	20
23-Dec-1908	I	Discussion du profil transversal de la route (nouveau boulevard de la Pépinière).	12
26-Dec-1908	I	1°) Ouverture d'une rue à Brasschaet, entre la chaussée de Hoogboom et le chemin vers le lege Kaart (MM. Kennes et Rombouts); 2°) Ouverture d'une rue à Eeckeren-Donck, entre la chaussée vers la gare d'Eeckeren et la route d'Anvers vers Bergen-Op-Zoom (MM. De Bruyn); 3°) Élargissement du chemin dit "Essenhoutsche Baan".	26

1909

11-Jan-1909	II	Boulevard de la Pépinière: nouveau projet de MM. Von der Becke.	12
1-Feb-1909	II	Aménagement de la voirie aux aboutissants de la communication à établir entre les deux rives de l'Escaut.	3
3-Feb-1909	II	Largeur à donner aux ponts à construire sur les fossés de la nouvelle enceinte.	30
9-Feb-1909	II	Nouveaux alignements généraux pour certaines rues de la commune d'Eeckeren.	26
11-Feb-1909	II	1°) Plans généraux d'alignement de la route Anvers (Schyn) à Wyneghem. 2°) Ouverture de rues sur le domaine 'De Werve Hoef" à Wyneghem.	5

15-Feb-1909	II	1°) Examen du nouveau projet Hasse pour le boulevard de la Pépinière. 2°) Adoption du tracé définitif.	12
1-Mar-1909	II	Utilisation du sous-sol pour les canalisations diverses.	14
2-Mar-1909	II	Plans généraux d'alignement pour la Kapellestraat et la Doornboschstraat à Hove.	22
15-Mar-1909	II	Exposé par les délégués de la Cie du Gaz, de la Cie des Eaux et de la Cie Électrique de leur manière de voir concernant l'utilisation du sous-sol des rues pour les canalisations diverses.	14
20-Mar-2009	II	1°) Passages sous le chemin de fer à Eeckeren – 2°) Relèvement de la ligne de Hollande au droit de la chaussée de Bréda, et de la rue de Merxem – 3°) Situation future du chemin de fer au droit de la route de Boom et de la route de st Bernard.	2
24-Mar-1909	II	Fixation d'un repère devant servir de base à toutes les études de la Commission	31
29-Mar-1909	II	1°) Ouvrage d'art à établir à la déviation de la route de Bruxelles en vue de la suppression du passage à niveau d'Edeghem-Mortsel. 2°) Plans d'alignement généraux sous les communes de Hove, Edeghem, Bouchout.	7
29-Mar-1909	II	1°) Exposé de Mr. Cornet, directeur du réseau téléphonique d'Anvers, concernant l'utilisation du sous-sol des rues pour les canalisations diverses – 2°) Rédaction du questionnaire à envoyer aux différentes entreprises intéressées.	14
3-Apr-1909	II	Reprise par l'Etat de la route du Kiel au Rupel (confidentiel).	16
3-Apr-1909	II	Emplacements respectifs du nouveau boulevard du nord, de la ligne de Hollande, des gares du nord et des raccordements aux bassins.	2
15-Apr-1909	II	Tracé du Boulevard du Nord.	8
17-Apr-1909	II	Création de parcs publics (confidentiel).	10
19-Apr-1909	II	Écoulement des Eaux – Excursion du 19 Avril 1909: Visite des Égouts de Bruxelles.	1
22-Apr-1909	II	Visite des lieux pour l'étude des ouvertures à établir dans la nouvelle enceinte (section Wilmarsdonck-Eeckeren).	30
24-Apr-1909	II	Aménagement d'un parc public au sud de la ville d'Anvers (Confidentiel).	10
29-Apr-1909	II	Largeur à donner aux ouvertures à pratiquer dans la nouvelle enceinte.	30
1-May-1909	II	Création d'un parc public au sud de la ville d'Anvers.	10
13-May-1909	II	Détournement de la route militaire entre le fort 5 et la route Bruxelles-Anvers-Luythagen – Fixation de nouveaux alignements.	20
15-May-1909	II	Évaluation de la dépense à effectuer pour la création d'un parc au sud de la ville d'Anvers (confidentiel).	10
22-May-1909	II	Déplacement des gares de marchandise du Nord d'Anvers.	2
27-May-1909	II	Route provinciale Anvers-Boom; plans généraux d'alignement.	16
3-Jun-1909	II	Écoulement des eaux – Voyage d'étude à Berlin.	1

3-Jun-1909	II	Création d'un parc au sud de la ville d'Anvers – La commission entend le bourgmestre de Berchem (confidentiel).	10
9-Jul-1909	II	Création d'un parc au sud de la ville d'Anvers – La commission entend le bourgmestre de Wilryck (confidentiel).	10
10-Jul-1909	II	Élargissement des rues Terninck et Gérard, à Anvers (confidentiel).	16
12-Jul-1909	II	Discussion de la taxe de plus-value.	9
13-Jul-1909	II	Élargissement de la route Anvers-Bréda, sous Brasschaet (confidentiel).	4
15-Jul-1909	II	Type de grilles à adopter pour le nouveau Boulevard de la Pépinière (confidentiel).	12
15-Jul-1909	II	Ouverture de rues sur les terrains des frères De Bruyn, sous Wilrijck, Hoboken et Anvers.	19
19-Jul-1909	II	Création d'un parc au sud de la ville d'Anvers.	10
22-Jul-1909	II	Prolongement de l'Avenue Plantin.	11
24-Jul-1909	II	Route Bruxelles-Breda, traverse d'Anvers.	7
26-Jul-1909	II	Déplacement éventuel de l'enceinte, près du château d'Ertbrugge, au delà du Fort 1.	30
26-Jul-1909	II	Examen de deux dispositifs (grilles) pour la nouvelle enceinte.	30
4-Aug-1909	II	Mr. Donny, bourgmestre de Wilryck, expose le résultat de ses études au sujet de la création d'un parc, au sud de la ville.	10
6-Aug-1909	II	Brèches à pratiquer dans l'enceinte actuelle.	30
6-Aug-1909	II	Largeur de la route le long de la nouvelle enceinte.	30
9-Sep-1909	II	Voyage à Paris.	1
9-Sep-1909	II	Ouverture d'une rue à Eeckeren-Donck, sur les terrains de MM. De Bruyn.	26
17-Sep-1909	II	Élargissement de la rue du Verger.	21
30-Sep-1909	II	Éoulement des eaux. Voyage d'études à Paris (27-30 septembre 1909).	1
4-Nov-1909	II	Discussion du projet de règlement au sujet de la taxe de plus-value.	9
4-Nov-1909	II	Programme du concours: examen et discussion.	13
6-Nov-1909	II	Alignement de la route Anvers (Schyn)-Wyneghem, traverse de Wyneghem.	5
6-Nov-1909	II	Plan général d'alignement pour la Doornbosch- et Kapellestraat à Hove.	22
11-Nov-1909	II	Discussion du programme-concours.	13
18-Nov-1909	II	Discussion du programme-concours.	13
25-Nov-1909	II	Aménagement du quartier St. Laurent, à Anvers.	20
2-Dec-1909	II	Discussion du programme du concours (lecture d'ensemble).	13
4-Dec-1909	II	Plans généreaux d'alignement des rues suivantes à Mortsel: rue d'Edeghem, Varent, Zepte, St Benoit Herse, Eglise, Drap, chausée de Deurne et de Hove.	22
7-Dec-1909	II	Aménagement du quartier St. Laurent, à Anvers.	20

9-Dec-1909	II	Écoulement des eaux. Excursion du 9 Décembre 1909: visite de l'usine d'épuration des eaux d'égouts d'Ostende, par le système Vial.	1
16-Dec-1909	II	Lettre des architectes belges proposant un concours national.	13
16-Dec-1909	II	Nouvelle artère entre le Steenengoot (tir communal) et le centre de Hoboken.	19

1910

4-Jan-1910	II	Plans généraux d'alignement de la route Merxem-Brecht.	25
8-Jan-1910	II	Ouverture de rues sure les terrains des frères De Bruyn, sous Anvers, Hoboken et Wilryck.	19
8-Jan-1910	II	Demande d'ouverture de rue entre la rue Van Schoonbeke et la rue Robert Mols (Terrains et Entreprises).	20
11-Jan-1910	II	Détournement de la route Anvers (Schyn)-Wyneghem, aux abords de la route de Turnhout.	5
11-Jan-1910	II	Plan général d'alignement de la route Anvers-Wyneghem, traverse de Wyneghem.	6
13-Jan-1910	II	Ouverture d'une nouvelle rue, à Eeckeren, vers le nouveau cimetière.	26
22-Jan-1910	II	Plan général d'aménagement des rues de Borgerhout.	23
12-Feb-1910	II	Route militaire, Plan général d'alignement de la traverse de Borsbeek.	28
17-Feb-1910	II	Détermination du profil transversal du nouveau boulevard de la Pépinière, partie extra-muros (largeur 50 mètres, et 20m de jardinets).	12
19-Feb-1910	II	Plans d'alignement de la longue rue d'Argile, extra-muros.	21
24-Feb-1910	II	Plan d'aligmenent du Pont de Meir et du Marché aux Oeufs, jusqu'au canal au Sucre.	18
26-Feb-1910	II	Ouverture de rues à Deurne, plan d'ensemble.	20
3-Mar-1910	II	Alignement nouveau de la rue Lozanne.	20
5-Mar-1910	II	Demandes d'ouvertures de rues à Calmpthout, Eeckeren et Capellen.	26
12-Mar-1910	II	Plan d'aménagement de la rue Julius de Geyter.	19
12-Mar-1910	II	Plan d'alignement de la route vers le Fort 5.	20
17-Mar-1910	II	Étude de l'écoulement des eaux naturelles et résiduaires de la zône d'extension.	1
17-Mar-1910	II	Alignement de la rue Lozanne, jusqu'à la rue Anselmo.	20
31-Mar-1910	II	Élargissement de la rue Léopold.	18
2-Apr-1910	II	Plan d'aménagement pour les rues suivantes à Wilryck: Vallaerstr., Edegemschestr., Laerstr., Berkenstr., Doornstr., Oudestr., Boekstraat.	20
4-Apr-1910	II	Brèche de la porte d'Eeckeren – visite sur les lieux.	30
7-Apr-1910	II	Brèche à la porte d'Eeckeren, discussion.	30
9-Apr-1910	II	Séance Plénaire du samedi 9 avril 1910.	9
9-Apr-1910	II	Plans d'alignement de diverses rues à Wilryck (suite).	20
16-Apr-1910	II	Détournement de la route militaire et passage sous la ligne de chemin de fer stratégique, à proximité du fort 4 (Mortsel).	2

18-Apr-1910	II	Prolongement de l'avenue Plantin, du boulevard Léopold et de la rue de l'Orient, Déplacement de la gare de Borgerhout.	11
21-Apr-1910	II	Élargissement de la place de la Comédie.	18
25-Apr-1910	II	Boulevard du Nord.	8
12-May-1910	II	Nouvelles brèches à pratiquer dans l'enceinte – Évacuation de certains bâtiments militaires.	30
19-May-1910	II	1) Plans d'alignement des rues Drink, des Champs et du Casque, à Borgerhout; 2) Ouverture de rues au Steenenbrug.	23
28-May-1910	II	Rues à Calmpthout et Capellen	26
9-Jun-1910	II	Habitations à bon marché.	15
16-Jun-1910	II	Plan d'alignement de la route militaire (section Wilryck).	20
18-Jun-1910	II	Emplacement et largeur des passages dans la nouvelle enceinte (section comprise entre le fort 2 et le chemin de fer de Hollande).	30
23-Jun-1910	II	Plan d'alignement de la route militaire (section Wilryck).	8
23-Jun-1910	II	Premier tronçon du Boulevard du Nord.	30
27-Jun-1910	II	Ouverture de rues à Calmpthout et Capellen.	26
14-Jul-1910	II	Mesures à prendre en vue d'éviter les dénominations identiques des rues de l'agglomération Anversoise.	9
18-Jul-1910	II	Plan d'ensemble des rues à ouvrir dans la zône du nouveau parc d'Anvers.	20
18-Jul-1910	II	Plan d'alignement de la rue du Jardin, à Borgerhout.	23
30-Jul-1910	II	Plan d'ensemble des rues à ouvrir dans la zône du nouveau parc d'Anvers.	20
21-Oct-1910	II	1°) Plan d'alignement de la route Anvers-Bréda, section comprise entre la glacière et l'ancienne église à Merxem. 2°) Aménagement du quartier compris entre la rue Gasthuishoeve et le viaduc de Merxem.	4
12-Nov-1910	II	1) Ouverture d'une rue entre la chausée d'Herentals et la route vers le fort N°2 (Wommelghem) – 2) Plans d'alignement sur le territoire de la commune de Vremde.	23
15-Nov-1910	II	Ouverture de rues à Mortsel, sur les propriétés Coetermans et Baugment.	22
15-Nov-1910	II	Overname door den Staat van de baan Antwerpen Santvliet.	27
21-Nov-1910	II	1) Élargissement de la rue de l'Ancre, à Deurne, 2) Plan général de la rue d'Argile (place publique à créer).	23
24-Nov-1910	II	1°) Opening eener straat te Wommelghem. 2°) Algemeene lijnrichting-splans voor de gemeente Borsbeek.	23
28-Nov-1910	II	Plan d'alignement de la longue rue d'Argile, extra muros, place publique à créer.	23
28-Nov-1910	II	Plans généraux d'alignement de la route Merxem-Brecht, traverse de Schooten.	25
29-Nov-1910	II	1°) Plan d'alignement de la chausée vers Lint, à Hove; 2° Ouverture de rues à Mortsel sur les propriétés Bangniet et Coetermans.	22

3-Dec-1910	II	Plan d'alignement de la route militaire, sous Hoboken.	19
5-Dec-1910	II	Élargissement de rues latérales de la chausée de Turnhout, à Deurne.	23
8-Dec-1910	II	1°) Passages dans la nouvelle enceinte; 2°) recul de la nouvelle enceinte; 3°) pétition des habitants de la commune de Wommelghem.	30
8-Dec-1910	II	Brèche à la porte du Kiel.	31
12-Dec-1910	II	Profil transversal de la "Herentalschebaan" élargie (traverse de Borgerhout).	23
19-Dec-1910	II	Plan d'Ensemble – Projet de réponse à une communication de Mr. Le Ministre des Travaux Publics.	13
29-Dec-1910	II	Discusson du projet de réponse à Mr. le Ministre des Travaux Publics au sujet de sa demande de plan 'ensemble.	13
29-Dec-1910	II	Aménagement des terrains de l'Anvien Arsenal.	18

1911

9-Jan-1911	II	Plan d'alignement de la rue Steyn, à Hoboken.	19
12-Jan-1911	II	Plans d'alignement à Brasschaat et Capellen.	26
14-Jan-1911	II	Étude détaillée des plans primés du concours.	13
19-Jan-1911	II	Étude détaillée des plans primés du concours.	13
19-Jan-1911	II	Aménagement du quartier autour de la Ankerstraat à Deurne.	23
23-Jan-1911	II	Plans d'alignement de rues à Capellen et Brasschaat.	26
28-Jan-1911	II	Détournement de la ligne des chemins de fer Vieux Dieu-Boom, entre Edeghem et Mortsel; passages inférieurs à établir pour la route d'Anvers à Mallines, la Wouwstaat et la Croonstraat.	26
30-Jan-1911	II	1°) Ouverture de rues sur le terrain Peellaert, au Luythagen, à Mortsel, demandée par la société "Voorspoed". 2°) Ouverture de rues sur le terrain Coetermans à Mortsel.	22
13-Mar-1911	II	Création d'un parc public à Deurne.	10
17-Mar-1911	II	Aménagement du quartier autour du cimetière de Berchem.	20
23-Mar-1911	II	Aménagement de la propriété Cogels à Deurne.	10
28-Mar-1911	II	Emplacement des nouvelles lignes du chemin de fer, sur le territoire de Wilryck.	20
24-Apr-1911	II	Ouverture de rues sur les terrains de MM. De Bruyn, à Hoboken et Wilryck.	19
24-Apr-1911	II	Plan d'alignement de rues à Mortsel, Bouchout, Borsbeek. Ouverture d'une rue à Edeghem.	22
27-Apr-1911	II	Aménagement de la zone autour du cimetière de Berchem, dite le "Schom".	20
1-May-1911	II	Aménagement de la propriété Cogels à Deurne.	21
3-May-1911	II	Plan d'aménagement et d'expropriation du prolongement de l'Avenue Plantin (établissement d'un boulevard de 40 mètres sur le canal d'Herenthals, vers la gare de Borgerhout).	11
13-May-1911	II	Modification du tracé du chemin de fer, sur le territoire de Borgerhout.	2

22-May-1911	II	1°) Passage des ponts militaires des portes Léopold, d'Edeghem et de Kiel; 2°) Lettre de l'association des employés belges "UNITAS", au sujet du déclassement de l'enceinte. 3°) Lettre de Mr. Le Ministre de la Guerre, concernant l'exécution de nouvelles brèches; 4°) Maintien des portes de l'enceinte; lettre de l'association des Artistes anversois.	13
6-Jun-1911	II	Reconstruction de l'églilse St Cathérine, au Kiel.	19
14-Jun-1911	II	Aménagement du quartier St Laurent.	20
17-Jun-1911	II	Ouverture d'une rue entre la chaussée de Bréda et la chausée de Merxem à Schooten, à Merxem.	25
24-Jun-1911	II	1°) Ouverture d'une rue entre la chaussée de Bréda et la chausée de Merxem à Schooten, à Merxem; 2°) Plan d'alignement de la route de Brasschaet à 's Gravenwezel.	25
26-Jun-1911	II	Agrandissement du tir communal d'Anvers, au Kiel.	19
3-Jul-1911	II	Plan d'alignement de la traverse de Schooten (route Merxem-Brecht).	25
5-Jul-1911	II	1°) Plan d'alignement de la rue de la Pépinière; 2°) Demande à bâtir dans la rue du Polder.	20
15-Jul-1911	II	Ouverture de rues sur la propriété Cogels et du Bois, à Deurne.	21
29-Jul-1911	II	Demande d'ouverture de rues à Merxem, par le bureau de Bienfaisance; formation d'une cité-jardin.	25
1-Aug-1911	II	Route provinciale du Kiel au Rupel; plan d'alignement sur le territoire de la commune d'Hemixem.	19
2-Aug-1911	II	Plan d'aménagement à Hoboken, ouverture de rues.	19
29-Aug-1911	II	Prolongement de l'avenue Jan Van Ryswyck; appropriation des terrains compris entre la plaine des manoeuvres et la route de Boom; appropriation du polder du Kiel.	12
30-Aug-1911	II	Prolongement de l'avenue Jan Van Ryswyck; appropriation des terrains compris entre la plaine des manoeuvres et la route de Boom; appropriation du polder du Kiel.	12
11-Sep-1911	I	Aménagement du Marché aux Souliers.	18
23-Oct-1911	II	Alignement de la Van Houte's dreef à Deurne – Alignement de la voie d'accès au fortin de Deurne.	21
25-Oct-1911	II	Ouverture de rue à Brasschaet.	26
28-Oct-1911	II	Établissement d'un bassin de batelage à l'extrêmité sud des quais d'Anvers – Aménagement du polder du Kiel et des abords de la plaine des manoeuves.	19
16-Nov-1911	II	Alignement de la route Anvers-porte du Schyn- à Wyneghem, à la sortie de l'enceinte.	5
16-Nov-1911	II	Alignements généraux de la Antwerpschestraat, à Hoboken.	19
28-Nov-1911	II	Dispositions à prendre en vue de la conservation du domaine Boekenberg à Deurne.	10
7-Dec-1911	II	Alignement de la route de Bouchout à Borsbeeck.	22
11-Dec-1911	II	Ouverture de rue à Deurne, entre la Boterlaerbaan et la chausée d'Herenthals.	21

13-Dec-1911	II	Influence de la création d'un réseau d'égouts dans la banlieue anversoise sur le maintien de l'eau dans les fossés de l'enceinte.	1
21-Dec-1911	II	Examen de l'avant-projet soumis par la sous-commission spéciale pour l'aménagement des terrains de l'enceinte.	13
23-Dec-1911	II	1°) Tracé de l'avenue Plantin; 2°) Demande d'ouverture de rues sur les terrains Marinis, dits "Blijkhof" à Borgerhout.	23

1912

15-Jan-1912	II	1°) Tracé de l'avenue Plantin; 2°) Ouverture de rues au Blijkhof à Borgerhout.	21
16-Jan-1912	II	Projet d'exposition des plans d'aménagement de l'enceinte.	13
18-Jan-1912	II	Création d'un réseau d'égouts à Berchem et à Deurne.	1
27-Jan-1912	II	Route militaire, alignements de la section sous Wilryck, passages sous le chemin de fer.	28
12-Feb-1912	II	Ouverture de rues à Deurne et plans d'alignement à Borgerhout.	23
13-Feb-1912	II	1°) Tracé du boulevard du Nord; 2°) Modifications que la ville d'Anvers se propose de réaliser au nord de la nouvelle cale sèche en construction près du bassin Lefebvre; 3°) Requête tendant au comblement du Schyn intra-muros.	8
23-Feb-1912	II	1°) Plan d'ensemble à Mortsel entre l'église et la limite de Bouchout; 2°) Ouverture de rue à Mortsel, demandée par la Burgerlijke Maatschappij Van Havere; 3°) Ouverture de rues à Contich, demandée par MM. Della Faille et de Villermont.	22
27-Feb-1912	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
5-Mar-1912	II	Écoulement des eaux des prorpriétés Cogels et du Bois à Deurne (Luysbekelaarvelden).	1
7-Mar-1912	II	Appropriation du fortin déclassé de Deurne en cité-jardin.	15
14-Mar-1912	II	1°) Ouverture de rues à Merxem; 2°) Plans d'alignement à Eeckeren.	26
16-Mar-1912	II	Ouverture de rues au "Steenenbrug", demande Collins et Landmeters.	23
23-Mar-1912	II	1°) Plans d'aligmenent à Anvers (longue rue d'Argile, longue rue de l'Hôpital, chaussée de Malines, chausée St. Bernard); 2°) Plan d'aménagement du polder du Kiel.	19
3-Apr-1912	II	Demande d'ouverture de rues à Merxem.	25
3-Apr-1912	II	Destination de la rue du Rempart, longeant la nouvelle enceinte; lettre de Mr. le ministre de la Guerre.	30
11-Apr-1912	II	Plans d'alignement à Eeckeren.	26
15-Apr-1912	II	Destination de la rue du Rempart, longeant la nouvelle enceinte.	30
18-Apr-1912	II	Destination des bâtiments militaires établis le long de l'enceinte actuelle.	13
20-Apr-1912	II	Plans d'alignement à Mortsel et à Bouchout, – Ouverture de rues à Edeghem.	22
2-May-1912	II	Destination de la rue du Rempart de la nouvelle enceinte.	30
8-Jun-1912	II	Ouverture de rues à Hoboken, autour du nouveau cimetière.	19

13-Jun-1912	II	1°) Ouverture de rues à Edeghem; 2°) Plan d'alignement de la chaussée de Hove vers Linth; 3°) Plans d'alignement à Bouchout.	22
15-Jun-1912	II	Aménagement de la zone s'étendant autour du nouveau parc de la ville d'Anvers jusqu'à la route militaire sous Wilryck – Passages sous le chemin de fer longeant la route militaire.	20
21-Jun-1912	II	Écoulement des eaux des nouveaux quartiers à construire sur les terrains des propriétés Cogels et Dubois à Deurne.	1
25-Jun-1912	II	Alignement de la route de Bréda, aus abords de la Glacière, à Merxem et au Dam, à Anvers.	4
27-Jun-1912	II	Mesures à prendre par la commune d'Hoboken à la suite de l'expropriation du polder du Kiel par la ville d'Anvers.	19
1-Jul-1912	II	Suppresion du bras actuel du Canal de la Campine – Modifications à apporter à la région de la Glacière et du Dam.	8
18-Jul-1912	II	Plans d'alignement des rues Léopold et Durlet à Anvers et expropriation d'une partie du polder Ferdinand.	18
23-Jul-1912	II	Plan d'expropriation de l'Ankerstraat à Deurne.	23
23-Jul-1912	II	1°) Expropriation par la commune de Borgerhout des terrains compris entre l'enceinte actuelle et la limite de Deurne; 2°) Aménagement d'un nouveau quartier aux environs de Muggenberg, à Deurne.	23
25-Jul-1912	II	Plan d'alignement de la rue Léopold. Plan d'expropriation du polder Ferdinand.	18
31-Jul-1912	II	1°) Route Militaire, traverse de Wilryck; 2°) Aménagement du domaine de l'Elsdonck, à Wilryck.	20
6-Aug-1912	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche, programme général des études. La question du tunnel.	32
8-Aug-1912	II	Disparition des bâtiments militaires. Cession de la commune de Berchem du polygône du Génie.	29
10-Oct-1912	II	Examen du rapport du Comité technique pour l'étude de l'écoulement des eaux – Adoption du texte définitif.	1
12-Oct-1912	II	Destination à donner à la nouvelle rue due Rempart; lettre de M. le ministre de la Guerre.	30
14-Oct-1912	II	Modifications à appporter aux voies ferrées et aménagement de la voirie au Nord d'Anvers. Lettre de M. le Ministre des Chemins de Fer.	8
16-Oct-1912	II	Aménagement et expropriation par la Ville d'Anvers du polder du Kiel.	19
19-Oct-1912	II	Prolongement des rues due Pavillon et Congo, à Anvers et Borgerhout.	23
21-Oct-1912	II	Nouveau plan d'alignement de la rue de la Fabrique à Merxem; Aménagement d'une artère nouvelle vers le Canal.	25
23-Oct-1912	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche- Discussion du plan soumis par M. l'Ingénieur et chef Van Bogaert au sujet du tracé des gares et des lignes de chemins de fer.	23
24-Oct-1912	II	1°) Ouverture de rue à Mortsel (Demande Baugniet Frères); 2°) Plan d'alignement de rues Varent et Zepte.	22
25-Oct-1912	II	Écoulement des eaux des Luysbeeklaervelden, à Deurne (Propriétés Cogels et du Bois).	1

28-Oct-1912	II	Ouverture de rues à Deurne, au Steenenbrug, (propriété de Bonhomme).	23
30-Oct-1912	II	Création de maisons ouvrières, au nord d'Anvers.	15
4-Nov-1912	II	1°) Ouvertures de rues à Hoboken; 2°) Aménagement de la propriété "De Hertog van Brabant", 3°) Plan d'aménagement de la propriété "Het Hondsnest" à Wilryck.	20
8-Nov-1912	II	Écoulement des eaux du nouveau quartier de Deurne (propriétés Dubois et Cogels, aux Luisbekelaervelden).	1
9-Nov-1912	II	Ouverture de rues à Deurne.	21
11-Nov-1912	II	Ouverture de rues sur les terrains de l'ancien Beerschot, à Anvers. (Demande Van Oenen et Donnet).	19
13-Nov-1912	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
16-Nov-1912	II	Ouverture de rues à Deurne (Demande de la Société Bouwvak).	21
18-Nov-1912	II	Création d'une artère nouvelle vers le parc des Rossignols, derrière le Minerva.	20
22-Nov-1912	II	1°) Plan d'alignement de la rue de Hove et de St. Benoit à Mortsel; 2°) Demande d'ouverture de rue à Mortsel entre le Contichschen binnenweg et la nouvelle enceinte (Demande Van Gestel).	22
25-Nov-1912	II	1°) Création d'une artère nouvelle vers le Parc du Rossignol (derrière le Minerva); 2°) Aménagement du quartier St. Laurent.	20
27-Nov-1912	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
2-Dec-1912	II	Détermination du profil transversal de la route d'Anvers à Malines.	7
4-Dec-1912	II	Écoulement des eaux des nouveaux quartiers de Deurne.	1
9-Dec-1912	II	1°) Etablissement d'un chemin de fer vicinal dans la chausée d'Herenthals; 2°) Aménagement du carrefour compris entre le Kattenberg et le Hooge Weg, à Borgerhout.	23
11-Dec-1912	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
12-Dec-1912	II	Assemblée Générale du jeudi 12 Décembre 1912, tenue au gouvernement Provincial.	9
16-Dec-1912	II	Aménagement du fortin de Deurne.	15
19-Dec-1912	II	Écoulement des eaux des quartiers de Deurne situés à l'est de la route d'Herenthals.	1

1913

8-Jan-1913	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
9-Jan-1913	II	Aménagement du fortin de Deurne en cité-jardin.	19
13-Jan-1913	II	Profil des artères à tracer dans la propriété Lebaudy, à Merxem.	26
15-Jan-1913	II	Tracé des rues nouvelles autour du nouveau parc d'Anvers.	20
17-Jan-1913	II	Lettre de l'union des Cavaliers pour la conservation de routes cavalières dans l'agglomération anversoise.	/
20-Jan-1913	II	Projet d'exposition des plans d'aménagement de l'enceinte.	13

27-Jan-1913	II	Chemin de fer stratégique. Projet de gare à établir à Wommelghem, à la Boterlaerbaan.	2
28-Jan-1913	II	Ouverture de rues et plans d'expropriations à Deurne et Borgerhout.	21
30-Jan-1913	II	Tracé de rues autour du nouveau Parc d'Anvers.	20
10-Feb-1913	II	Plans d'alignement de diverses rues à Wommelghem.	23
17-Feb-1913	II	Chemin de fer stratégique. Projet de gare à établir à Wommelghem, au droit du Boterlaerbaan.	2
22-Feb-1913	II	Nouveaux chemins de fer à Mortsel et Berchem.	2
25-Feb-1913	II	Situation de l'avenue des Anglais à Borgerhout.	23
6-Mar-1913	II	Aménagement du quartier "De Groenenhoek" à Berchem.	20
12-Mar-1913	II	Aménagement du quartier "De Groenenhoek" à Berchem (suite).	20
2-Apr-1913	II	Prolongement de l'Avenue Plantin.	11
8-Apr-1913	II	1°) Ouverture de rue à Mortsel (Demande Baugniet, Frères); 2°) Plan d'alignement du Contischschen Binnenweg, à Mortsel.	22
10-Apr-1913	II	Ouverture de rues à Hoboken, au Moretusburg et dans la propriété de la société "Hoboken-Centre".	19
12-Apr-1913	II	Brèche à pratiquer dans l'enceinte pour le prolongement de l'avenue Van Ryswyck.	12
16-Apr-1913	II	Artères à tracer autour du nouveau parc de la Ville d'Anvers.	20
17-Apr-1913	II	1°) Merxem demande d'ouverture de rues dans le polder (demande Joossens); 2°) Schooten – demande d'ouverture de rues entre l'Eethuisstraat et la Kromme Deuzelstraat.	25
23-Apr-1913	II	Artères à créer autour du nouveau parc d'Anvers, sur les territoires d'Anvers, Berchem et Wilryck.	20
23-Apr-1913	II	Deurne 1°) prolongement du ring intermédiaire au delà de la propriété Boeckenberg, jusqu'à la rue St. Roch – 2°) ouverture de rue entre la Van den Haute's lei et la rue St. Roch (Demande Jan Somers et consorts).	21
26-Apr-1913	II	Plans d'alignements à Anvers – Ouverture de rues sur les terrains du Beerschot.	20
3-May-1913	II	Aménagement des routes à Mortsel à l'intersection du chemin de fer surélevé et de la Eggestraat, près du passage de la route de Vieux Dieu à Anvers, sous le chemin de fer.	2
6-May-1913	II	Ouverture de rue à Eeckeren (Demande de la famille Delfs).	27
23-May-1913	II	Plans d'alignement à Bouchout.	22
24-May-1913	II	Ouverture de rues à Hoboken, (Demande Mertens, Pauwels et d'Ursel).	19
24-May-1913	II	Projet d'aménagement de la propriété della Faille à Deurne (Lackborshof).	21
27-May-1913	II	Plans d'alignement à Vremde.	22
10-Jun-1913	II	Élargissement de la Vieille Route et création d'une artère entre la Pépinière et le nouveau parc d'Anvers.	20
12-Jun-1913	II	Prolongement de l'Avenue Plantin.	11
14-Jun-1913	II	Plan des nouveaux chemins de fer sur le territoire de Merxem.	2

17-Jun-1913	II	Prolongement de l'Avenue Plantin.	11
21-Jun-1913	II	Ouverture de rue à Merxem (demande Joossens).	25
28-Jun-1913	II	Plan d'alignement de la chausée d'Herenthals sur le territoire de Wommelghem.	23
23-Jul-1913	II	Aménagement des abords du nouveau parc d'Anvers sur les territoires d'Anvers et de Wilryck.	20
25-Jul-1913	II	Aménagement du Laekborshof à Deurne (Propriété della Faille).	23
27-Sep-1913	II	Relèvement de la voie ferrée vers la Hollande – viaducs à établir sur le territoire de la commune de Merxem.	2
29-Sep-1913	II	Ouverture de rues à Borgerhout 1°) entre la chausée de Turnhout et la rue des Trois Coins (Dryhoekstraat), 2°) entre la rue du Jardin (Hofstraat) et la rue du Prince (Prinsstraat).	23
30-Sep-1913	II	Ouverture de rue à Mortsel, à la proximité du Contichschen binnenweg (Demande Horemans).	22
2-Oct-1913	II	Plan d'alignement de la route d'Anvers à Bréda, dans la traverse de Maria Ter Heide (Brasschaat).	4
9-Oct-1913	II	Aménagement du fortin déclassé de Deurne en cité-jardin. – Plans et projet financier de la "Société pour l'amélioration des maisons ouvrières".	15
13-Oct-1913	II	Création du nouveau Boulevard du Nord.	8
15-Oct-1913	II	Plans d'alignement de diverses rues à Edeghem.	22
16-Oct-1913	II	Ouverture de rues à Hoboken (Demande Mertens et Pauwels).	19
25-Oct-1913	II	Aménagement de la propriété du "Lackbors" à Deurne-Nord.	23
10-Nov-1913	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche – Projet de rapport à Monsieur le Ministre des Travaux Publics.	32
11-Nov-1913	II	Ouverture de rues à Deurne, entre la rue St. Roch et la Van Haute's lei (Demande Somers et Consorts).	21
13-Nov-1913	II	Ouverture de rues à Brasschaet et à Schooten.	25
8-Dec-1913	II	1°) Nouvelle voie d'accès vers le Nachtegaelenpark, derrière les usines de la "Minerva C°"; 2°) Élargissement de la rue Julius De Geyter.	20
10-Dec-1913	II	Demande d'ouverture de rues à Schooten, introduite par la "Société Anonyme pour l'exploitation de la banlieue d'Anvers".	25
11-Dec-1913	II	Demande d'ouverture de rues héritiers Heirman-Van de Put et de M. Joseph Moretus – Plan d'ensemble.	19
22-Dec-1913	II	Création de parcs publics à Borgerhout et Deurne.	22
24-Dec-1913	II	Amélioration du passage de la nouvelle porte de Boom, à travers, l'enceinte fortifiée d'Anvers.	29

1914

12-Jan-1914	II	Création d'une artère directe vers le Parc de Rossignols, derrière les usines "Minerva".	20
15-Jan-1914	II	Participation de la Commission à l'Exposition de Lyon.	34

19-Jan-1914	II	Suppression des noms de rues faisant double emploi dans le principales communes de l'Agglomération Anversoise.	9
21-Jan-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclasée d'Anvers, partie comprise sous Borgerhout- discussion des profils transversaux.	13
22-Jan-1914	II	Participation de la Commission à l'Exposition internationale urbaine de Lyon.	34
26-Jan-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclasée partie comprise sous Borgerhout.	13
27-Jan-1914	II	Prolongement de l'avenue Plantin.	11
4-Feb-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclasée partie comprise sous Borgerhout.	13
5-Feb-1914	II	Tracé du boulevard De Smet de Nayer (nouveau Boulevard du Nord).	8
11-Feb-1914	II	Plans d'alignement à Eeckeren.	27
12-Feb-1914	II	Suppression des noms de rues faisant double emploi dans le principales communes de l'Agglomération Anversoise (Deurne, Hoboken, Mortsel).	9
18-Feb-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclasée partie comprise sous Berchem.	13
19-Feb-1914	II	Aménagement du quartier "Groenenhoek" à Berchem.	20
25-Feb-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclasée partie comprise sous Berchem.	13
2-Mar-1914	II	Aménagement du quartier "Groenenhoek" à Berchem.	20
5-Mar-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte déclasée partie comprise sous Berchem.	13
9-Mar-1914	II	Suppression des noms de rues faisant double emploi dans le principales communes de l'Agglomération Anversoise (Merxem, Eeckeren, Edeghem, Bouchout, Wyneghem, Wommelghem, Borsbeeck, Schooten, Hove).	9
11-Mar-1914	II	Ouverture de rue à Deurne, entre la rue St. Roch et la Van Haute's dreef (Demande Somers et Cie).	21
16-Mar-1914	II	Aménagement des terrains militaires partie comprise sous Berchem – Maintien des portes de l'enceinte fortifiée.	13
18-Mar-1914	II	Ouverture de rue à Deurne, entre la rue St. Roch et la Van Haute's dreef (Demande Somers et Cie).	21
19-Mar-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte, partie comprise sous Anvers.	13
23-Mar-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte, partie comprise sous Berchem – Appropriation de la propriété de MM. Librecht et consorts.	13
26-Mar-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte, partie comprise sous Anvers.	13
1-Apr-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte, partie compris sous Borgerhout – Plan financier.	13
2-Apr-1914	II	Ouverture de rues à Mortsel 1°) entre les rues Rubens et Van Dyck et la Wauwestraat (demande de la société Van Havre); 2°) Entre le Contichschen steenweg et le Fortlaan (demande A.Bogaerts).	22
29-Apr-1914	II	Construction de viaducs pour le chemin de fer à Mortsel.	2
6-May-1914	II	Aménagement de l'enceinte, partie comprise sous Anvers – Plan financier.	13

7-May-1914	II	Profil transversal de la chausée de Turnhout, dans la traverse de Borgerhout.	6
25-May-1914	II	Aménagement du quartier “Lackbors” à Deurne.	23
27-May-1914	II	Aménagement de la rive gauche. Communication de procès-verbaux de la commission provinciale de la Flandre Orientale.	32
10-Jun-1914	II	1°) Plan d’alignement de la “Oude Baan”, à Berchem, extra-muros; 2°) Plan d’aménagement des terrains Librecht, à Berchem.	20

1919

10-Jun-1919	I	Lettre au Comité Belge de la VIIème Olympiade.	/
7-Jul-1919	I	Aménagement de la rue du Rempart de la nouvelle enceinte d’Anvers.	30
15-Jul-1919	I	I° Reprise des études pour l’aménagement du Polder de Borgerweert; 2° Plantations à établir dans le Polder de Borgerweert.	32
2-Aug-1919	I	Aménagement du Marché aux Souliers.	18
13-Aug-1919	I	Cession aux communes intéresées des terrains de l’enceinte déclassée d’Anvers.	13
10-Sep-1919	I	Tracé de la nouvelle enceinte au Nord d’Anvers – Rapport du Lieutenant Général DOCTEUR.	30
25-Sep-1919	I	Élargissement des routes de l’État, expropriations par zones – Rapport de M. Le Président De Stryker (confidentiel).	4
6-Oct-1919	I	Choix d’un emplacement pour un bassin de natation, sur le territoire de la commune de Berchem.	20
6-Oct-1919	I	Plan d’alignement de l’avenue des Anglais, à Borgerhout (entre la chausée de Turnhout et la rue des Trois Coins).	23
8-Oct-1919	I	Rapport de M. De Stryker sur les expropriations – Projet de réponse à M. le ministre des Travaux Publics.	4
9-Oct-1919	I	Plantations à établir dans la banlieue d’Anvers et sur les forts.	33
15-Oct-1919	I	Aménagement du Polder de Borgerweert. 1°) Lettre du Ministre des Travaux Publics. 2°) Construction par la ville d’Anvers d’abris provisoieres. 3°) Continuation des études.	32
20-Oct-1919	I	Utilisation des terrains de l’enceinte 1°) pour baraquements d’internat pour la navire-école, 2°) pour un atelier provisoire de fabrication de tabac.	30
22-Oct-1919	I	Construction d’un bassin de natation à Berchem.	20
12-Nov-1919	I	Maintien éventuel de la Porte de Wilryck.	13
13-Nov-1919	I	Nouveau plan d’alignement de la rue des Peignes, à Anvers.	18
27-Nov-1919	I	Aménagement du Marché aux Souliers.	18
4-Dec-1919	I	Aménagement da la rive gauche. Plan général d’appropriation.	32
22-Dec-1919	I	Ouverture de rues à Eeckeren, aux environs de l’église.	27

1920			
22-Jan-1920	I	Création d'une avenue au Kiel, sur le territoire de la ville d'Anvers (terrains Van Tichelen et consorts).	19
10-Mar-1920	I	Aménagement de la rive gauche – Tunnel à établir entre les deux rives de l'Escaut; Rapport de M. l'Ingénieur en chef Tobie Claes.	32
18-Mar-1920	I	Aménagement du Marché aux Souliers.	18
22-Mar-1920	I	Plan d'alignement à Mortsel pour la Drapstraat, la Kerkstraat et la Molenstraat.	22
3-May-1920	I	Ouverture de rues à Berchem, au "Groenen Hoek".	20
15-May-1920	I	Examen du rapport de la sous-commission spécialement instituée pour l'étude du projet de M. L'Ingénieur en chef Tobie Claes, relatif au tunnel à construire sous l'Escaut.	32
19-May-1920	I	Examen du rapport de la sous-commission spécialement instituée pour l'étude du projet de M. L'Ingénieur en chef Tobie Claes, relatif au tunnel à construire sous l'Escaut.	32
17-Jun-1920	I	Examen du rapport de la sous-commission spécialement instituée pour l'étude du projet de M. L'Ingénieur en chef Tobie Claes, relatif au tunnel à construire sous l'Escaut.	32
19-Jun-1920	I	Construction de nouveaux quais à Austruweel – Mesures à prendre en vue de l'écoulement des eaux.	1
20-Jul-1920	I	Examen du projet à adresser par la Commission à M. le Ministre des travaux publics relativement au tunnel à établir sous l'Escaut à Anvers.	32
11-Oct-1920	I	Aménagement de l'Enceinte – Bâtiments militaires.	13
26-Oct-1920	I	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
1921			
26-Jan-1921	I	Ouverture de rues à Deurne, près de la Boterlaerbaan (Papegaaienlaan).	23
26-Jan-1921	I	Ouverture de rues à Eeckeren, entre la Hofstraat et la Steenstraat.	26
24-Feb-1921	I	Aménagement des terrains extra-muros de la commune de Borgerhout.	23
3-Mar-1921	I	1°) Plan d'alignement de la Bloemstraat à Deurne, 2°) Plan d'aménagement du quartier "Kerkevelden", à Deurne.	21
26-Oct-1921	I	Choix d'un emplacement pour habitations à bon marché, à Berchem.	15
1922			
15-Jan-1922	I	Plan d'alignement de la route Brasschaet-Hoogboom.	25
17-Jan-1922	I	Ouverture de rues à Mortsel, entre la route Anvers-Bruxelles et la route provinciale Vieux-Dieu-Lierre (demande Baugniet-Frères).	22
18-Jan-1922	I	Plan d'alignement de la route Brasschaet-Hoogboom.	25
19-Jan-1922	I	Aménagement du quartier d'habitations à bon marché, au "Groenenhoek", à Berchem.	15
20-Apr-1922	I	Plan d'aligmenent de la Molenbaan, à Brasschaet.	25

24-Apr-1922	I	Plan d'aménagement de l'enceinte partie comprise dans le territoire de la Ville d'Anvers.	13
25-Apr-1922	I	Habitations à Bon Marché au Nord d'Anvers – moyens d'exécution.	27
2-May-1922	I	Création d'une artère directe vers le Parc des Rossignols (derrière la Minerva).	20
17-May-1922	I	Création d'une artère directe vers le Parc des Rossignols (derrière la Minerva).	20
23-May-1922	I	Construction d'une caserne de gendarmerie, à Wilryck.	21
10-Jul-1922	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Merxem.	25
11-Jul-1922	I	Plan d'aménagement de la cité-jardin à construire aux abords des darses 2 et 3.	27
12-Jul-1922	I	1.) Aménagement de la propriété Leysen, à Berchem. 2.) Ouverture de rues, entre la longue rue d'Argile et la Helderstraat.	20
20-Jul-1922	I	Plan d'aménagement de la cité-jardin à construire aux abords des darses 2 et 3.	27
25-Jul-1922	I	Plan d'aménagement de la cité-jardin à construire aux abords des darses 2 et 3.	27
1-Aug-1922	I	1°) Plan d'aménagement de la cité-jardin à créer aux abords des darses 2 et 3 (territoire des communes d'Anvers, Merxem, Eeckeren) 2°) Questions diverses relatives à l'aménagement de la commune de Merxem.	27
6-Nov-1922	I	Ouvertures de rues et aménagements à Merxem.	25
7-Nov-1922	I	Aménagement d'une cité-jardin, à Wilryck, aux Boeksvelden (demande soc. "De Eenheid").	30
15-Nov-1922	I	Changements proposés par la Direction de la Voirie Communale (ministère de l'Agriculture et des Travaux Publics) au plan d'aménagement du quartier du Groenenhoek à Berchem.	20
20-Nov-1922	I	Plan d'aménagement d'une cité-jardin à Hemixem.	19
29-Nov-1922	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Merxem (Société "De Goedkope Woning van het Arrondissement Antwerpen").	25
5-Dec-1922	I	1°) Constructions de maisons ouvrières dans la région des darses, sur le territoire de la commune de Wilmarsdonck, 2°) Aménagement de deux cités-jardins, aux abords du boulevard du Nord.	27

1923

10-Jan-1923	I	Plans d'alignement à Eeckeren.	27
24-Jan-1923	I	Tracé du ring intermédiaire, sur le territoire de la commune de Deurne.	24
31-Jan-1923	I	1° Aménagement de la propriété "Ter Rivieren Uitbreiding", à Deurne; 2°) Ring circulaire, sur le territoire de Deurne.	24
26-Feb-1923	I	Aménagements à Wilryck: 1°) Construction d'une cité-jardin par la société "Eenheid". 2°) Plan d'appropriation du Groenenborgerhof.	20
28-Feb-1923	I	Choix d'emplacements pour stands de tir.	30
1-Mar-1923	I	Plans d'alignement à Wommelghem.	23

11-Jun-1923	I	Plan d'aménagement de la commune de Merxem.	25
18-Jun-1923	I	Ouverture de rues à Wilryck: a) au Vallaer (demande "Maatschappy voor Goedkope Woning"; b) au "Duivelshoek" (demande Sté "Eenheid").	20
27-Jun-1923	I	Ouverture de rues à Deurne, pour l'aménagement de la cité-jardin "Unitas".	21
28-Jun-1923	I	Choix d'un terrain pour une plaine de jeu pour la garnison d'Anvers.	30
2-Jul-1923	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Merxem.	25
27-Sep-1923	I	Examen des conditions d'une adjudication combinant la construction du tunnel et la concession des terrains appartenant à l'État sur la rive gauche de l'Escaut (Polder de Borgerweert).	32
11-Oct-1923	I	Examen des conditions d'une adjudication combinant la construction du tunnel et la concession des terrains appartenant à l'État sur la rive gauche de l'Escaut (Polder de Borgerweert).	32
17-Oct-1923	I	Cession des terrains de l'enceinte (convention avec la commune de Berchem).	13
23-Oct-1923	I	Demande d'ouverture de rues à Wyneghem, entre la Brouwerslaan et la Kromme Lei (demande Frans Zomers).	24
27-Oct-1923	I	Ouverture de rues à Wilryck, au Duivelshoek (Soc. "Eenheid").	20

1924

31-Jan-1924	I	Extension du réseau des Tramways à Anvers et dans la banlieue.	35
14-Feb-1924	I	Extension du réseau des Tramways dans la ville d'Anvers et sa banlieue.	35
6-Mar-1924	I	Extension du réseau des tramways.	35
17-Mar-1924	I	Aménagement de nouveaux quartiers à Merxem.	25
26-Mar-1924	I	Aménagement des terrains compris entre la Rue d'Argile, la Vossenstraat et la Plaine d'aviation, sur Borgerhout et Deurne.	23
23-Jul-1924	I	Plans d'alignement de diverses rues à Edeghem.	22
29-Jul-1924	I	1°) Prolongement de la Statiestraat, à Zwijndrecht. 2°) Établissement d'une communication directe entre le Fort de la Tête de Flandre et la caserne Ste Anne. 3°) Déplacement du chemin entre la digue de l'Escaut et la Chausée vers St. Nicolas.	32
17-Nov-1924	I	1°) Plan d'alignement de la Hofstraat à Eeckeren, 2°) Plan d'alignement de la Hanoteaulei à Brasschaet.	25
18-Nov-1924	IV	Ouverture de rue à Mortsel (demande Bogaerts), près du Contichsche Binnenweg.	22

1925

19-Feb-1925	I	Plans d'alignement des chemins N°s 35 et 36 à Schooten.	25
25-Feb-1925	IV	Percées dans l'enceinte fortifiée, sur le territoire de la commune de Berchem.	13
3-Mar-1925	IV	Plans d'alignement des chemins N°s 35 et 36 à Schooten.	25
5-Mar-1925	I	Plans d'alignement des chemins N°s 35 et 36 à Schooten.	25

31-Mar-1925	I	Appropriation de la propriété Ullens, à Merxem.	25
26-May-1925	I	Ouverture de rues et plans d'alignement à Merxem et Schooten.	25
3-Jun-1925	I	Ouverture de rues et plans d'alignement à Merxem et Schooten.	25
10-Jun-1925	I	1°) Ouverture de rues à Deurne (demande Unitas Tuinwyk); 2°) Protestations de la commune de Deurne au sujet de la plaine d'aviation.	21
18-Jun-1925	I	Plan d'alignement pour la Heidestraat et la Statiestraat, à Cappellen.	26
22-Jun-1925	I	Demande de l'administration des chemins de fer tendant à la suppression de viaducs biais à proximité de la gare de Berchem.	2
25-Jun-1925	I	1°) Alignement de la Grand'Place à Eeckeren. 2°) Plans d'alignement de diverses rues à Mariaburg (Brasschaet).	25
25-Aug-1925	I	Aménagement de la rive gauche.	32
19-Oct-1925	I	Ouverture de rues à St. Mariaburg (Eeckeren et Brasschaet).	25
20-Oct-1925	I	Présentation au gouvernement d'un plan général d'aménagement du Polder de Borgerweert.	32
22-Oct-1925	I	Plan général d'aménagement du Polder de Borgerweert, à présenter par la Commission au Gouvernement.	32
26-Oct-1925	I	Demande d'ouvertures de rues à Schooten (entre la Gelmelestraat, la Kopstraat, etc.) Plan d'alignement de la Verbertstraat à Schooten. Demande d'ouverture de rue à Calmpthout (demande "Mij Vredeburg".	25
7-Nov-1925	I	Plans d'alignement du Hoogboomschen Steenweg et de la Yzerenweglaan, à Eeckeren – Plans d'alignement pour les rues du hameau de St. Mariaburg, partie comprise sous Eeckeren.	25
17-Dec-1925	I	Sorties de ville, étude générale.	36
22-Dec-1925	I	Sorties de ville, étude générale.	36
29-Dec-1925	I	Sorties de ville, étude générale.	36

1926

6-Jan-1926	I	Sorties de ville et aménagement général des communes de l'agglomération anversoise – Passages à prévoir dans le chemin de fer de ceinture – I Merxem – Eeckeren – Brasschaet.	36
9-Jan-1926	I	Plan général d'aménagement des communes de l'agglomération anversoise – Passages à prévoir dans le chemin de fer de ceinture – II Deurne, Schooten, Wommelghem.	36
12-Jan-1926	I	Aménagement des communes de l'agglomération anversoise – passages à prévoir dans le chemin de fer de ceinture III – Mortsel, Borsbeek, Vremde, Edegem, Contich, Bouchout, Hove, Wyneghem.	36
14-Jan-1926	I	Plans généraux d'aménagement de diverses communes de l'agglomération anversoise. Passages à prévoir dans les chemins de fer projetés. IV – Hoboken, Hemixem, Wilryck.	36
14-Jan-1926	I	1°) Demande d'ouverture de rues, à Wilryck (demande Soc. Eenheid). 2°) Plan d'alignement de la Groote Doornstraat, à Wilryck.	20
15-Jan-1926	I	Passages au chemin de fer de ceinture. Desiderata des communes du nord.	2

4-Feb-1926	I	Approbation officielle du plan général d'aménagement des terrains de l'enceinte déclassée d'Anvers.	13
31-Mar-1926	I	Plans d'aménagement de divers nouveaux quartiers à Merxem.	25
9-Apr-1926	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Merxem (partie comprise entre la petite barrière et les darses).	25
13-Apr-1926	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la communde d'Eeckeren.	26
15-Apr-1926	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Wyneghem (première partie).	24
27-Apr-1926	I	Suppression du port-rail établi à proximité de la gare de Waes.	2
28-Apr-1926	I	Amorce de l'avenue Baillet-Latour, au carrefour de la Petite Barrière. – Mesures à prendre par les communes intéressées.	25
28-Apr-1926	I	Plans d'alignement et demandes d'ouverture de rues à Hemixem et Wilryck.	20
6-May-1926	I	1°) Ouverture de rues derrière les plains d'aviation – 2°) Accès au stade du Boschuil – 3°) Plan général d'aménagement de la commune.	21
20-May-1926	I	1°) Carrefour de la Petite Barrière; 2°) Plan d'alignement du chemin n° 39, à Brasschaet.	25
11-Jun-1926	I	Plans d'alignement et d'ouverture de rues, à Wilryck.	20
13-Jun-1926	I	1°) Schooten, aménagement de nouveaux quartiers et plans d'alignement de diverses rues; 2°) Schilde: création d'une artère, sur l'emplacement du chemin de fer stratégique.	25
15-Jun-1926	I	Aménagement du carrefour de la Petite Barrière.	25
22-Jun-1926	I	Carrefour de la Petite Barrière.	23
13-Oct-1926	I	Plans d'alignement et ouvertures de rues, à Merxem et Schooten.	25
15-Oct-1926	I	Projet de pont sur l'Escaut, en aval d'Anvers.	3
19-Oct-1926	I	Ouverture de rues à Hoboken, aux "Vinckevelden" (demande Van den Wildenberg).	19
19-Oct-1926	I	Ouverture de rues et plans d'alignement à Wilryck.	20
19-Oct-1926	I	Ouverture de rues à Edeghem (demande de la S.A. "Anvers-Edeghem-Extension").	22
22-Oct-1926	I	Ouverture de rues et plans d'alignement à Wyneghem.	24
22-Oct-1926	I	1°) Projet de tunnel sous l'Escaut (projet du consortium dit "Suisse"). 2°) Nouveau projet de pont sur l'Escaut (projet Wattier).	3
28-Oct-1926	I	Aménagement des abords de la maison communale à Eeckeren.	26
29-Oct-1926	I	Aménagement du domaine du Donck.	25
4-Nov-1926	I	1°) Plan d'alignement de la Kromme Lei et de la chaussée Wyneghem-Wommelghem sur le territoire de la commune de Wyneghem; 2°) Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Wommelghem.	24
15-Dec-1926	I	Aménagement de la commune de Mortsel.	22
16-Dec-1926	I	Plans d'alignement de diverses rues à Edegem.	22
20-Dec-1926	IV	1) Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Deurne. 2) Plan d'alignement de la Confortalei.	21

1927

3-Jan-1927	IV	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Deurne.	21
10-Jan-1927	I	1°) Aménagement des terrains extra-muros de Borgerhout; 2°) Modification du plan d'alignement de l'Avenue Plantin.	23
13-Jan-1927	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Borsbeek.	21
3-Mar-1927	I	Plans d'alignement de la Torenstraat et de la Oude Baan à Wiryck.	20
8-Mar-1927	IV	Ouverture de rues à Mortsel, aux abords de l'Edegemsche straat.	22
12-Mar-1927	I	Expropriation de la ville d'Anvers d'une partie du quartier Stuyvenberg.	13
31-Mar-1927	I	Nouvelles voies ferrées sur le territoire de la commune de Mortsel.	2
31-Mar-1927	IV	Aménagement du domaine du Donck.	25
5-Apr-1927	IV	Boulevard du Nord – nouveau projet de M. Bonnet.	8
26-Apr-1927	IV	Objections de la commune de Merxem contre le dispositif proposé par M. Bonnet pour le Boulevard du Nord.	8
25-Jun-1927	I	1°) Ouverture d'une nouvelle rue au Vriesdonck à Brasschaet. 2°) Ouverture de la Van de Wielelei.	25
25-Jun-1927	I	1°) Deurne: Plan d'une cité-jardin à créer derrière la Plaine de l'Aviation – 2°) Tracé du boulevard circulaire (sur le territoire des communes de Deurne, Merxem et Schooten) – 3°) Diverses affaires à Schooten.	21
1-Jul-1927	I	Ouverture d'un nouveau quartier, à l'Elsdonck, sur le territoire des communes d'Edegem et Wilryck. Ouverture de rues à Edegem.	22
1-Jul-1927	I	Reprise de la commune de la rue Adolf Greiner.	19
4-Jul-1927	I	Plan général d'aménagement de la commune de Bouchout – Plans d'alignement de certaines rues à Bouchout.	22
8-Jul-1927	I	Aménagement extra-muros de la commune de Berchem.	20
16-Jul-1927	I	Création d'un quartier à Hoboken, entre les deux lignes de chemin de fer.	19
15-Nov-1927	IV	Ouverture d'une nouvelle série de rues à l'Elsdonck, à Edegem (demande de la Soc. "Anvers-Edegem-Extensions").	22
17-Nov-1927	I	Aménagement extra-muros de la commune de Berchem (propriétés Nottebohm et De Roest).	20
22-Nov-1927	I	Boulevard Berchem-Contich, par l'Elsdonck.	20
22-Nov-1927	I	Aménagement extra-muros de la commune de Borgerhout (environs du Rivierenhof).	23
29-Nov-1927	I	Aménagement de la propriété Melges (Oosterveldhof), sur le territoire des communes de Berchem, Mortsel, Wilryck.	20
1-Dec-1927	I	Aménagement de la commune de Hoboken (ouverture de rues dans le quartier des pépinières) – Programme des chemins de fer.	19
13-Dec-1927	I	1°) Aménagement de la propriété Melges, sur le territoire des communes de Mortsel, Berchem, et Wilryck; 2°) Ouverture de rues au Groenenhoek, à Berchem.	20

1928

7-Mar-1928	IV	1°) Tracé du boulevard circulaire (ring sur le territoire des communes du Nord: Merxem, Schooten, Deurne, Mortsel 2°) Plan d'alignement à Schooten.	21
8-Mar-1928	IV	1°) Tracé du Ring, sur le territoire des communes de Berchem, Wilryck et Mortsel – 2°) Différentes affaires relatives à l'aménagement de la commune de Mortsel.	20
1-May-1928	IV	Nivellement d'une partie de l'enceinte déclasée, en vue de l'établissement du Boulevard du Nord.	13
9-May-1928	IV	Différentes affaires relatives à l'aménagement extra-muros de Borgerhout.	23
11-May-1928	IV	Création d'une artère directe entre Burght et Zwyndrecht.	32
15-May-1928	IV	1) Mortsel – Ouverture de rues dans la cité "Minerva", b) ouverture de rues entre la Kerkstraat, la route de Lier et le chemin de fer; c) ouverture de rue dans le triangle des voies ferrées – 2) Bouchout – Plan d'alignement de la Appelkantstraat.	22
24-May-1928	IV	Aménagement de l'enceinte aux abords du pont du Kiel, à Anvers.	13
12-Jul-1928	IV	Création du boulevard direct Berchem-Contich.	20
17-Jul-1928	I	Aménagement du carrefour de la Petite Barrière, à Brasschaet.	25
25-Oct-1928	IV	Communications de la Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer sur ses nouveaux projets relativement à la gare d'Anvers-Sud, à la gare d'Anvers-sud, à la gare internationale de Borgerhout, à la gare de marchandises de Zurenborg.	2
29-Nov-1928	IV	Schooten – 1°) Ouverture de rues près de la Sinte Cordula Plein et du Papanaardekensweg; 2°) Ouverture d'une rue dans le domaine "Merxem-Deuzeveld".	25
29-Nov-1928	IV	1°) Ouverture de rues à Burght (demande Van Goethem); 2°) Proposition de Mr. le Bourgmestre de Zwijndrecht en vue de l'élaboration d'un plan d'aménagement des communes de la rive gauche.	32
7-Dec-1928	I	Plan général d'aménagement des communes de Zwijndrecht et Burght.	32
7-Dec-1928	I	Aménagement extra-muros de la commune de Berchem (Oosterveld) – Questions intéressant l'aménagement des communes de Berchem, Wilryck, Mortsel.	20
22-Dec-1928	IV	1°) Diverses questions relatives aux chemins de fer sur le territoire de la commune de Mortsel; 2°) Aménagement de la partie extra-muros de la commune de Berchem (Oosterveld).	20

1929

24-Jan-1929	IV	1°) Rond point de la Petite Barrière, sur le territoire des communes de Merxem, Brasschaet, Schooten. 2°) Ouverture de rues à Brasschaet.	25
20-Mar-1929	IV	Eigening van het park te Boelaer en omgeving, ter Borgerhout.	23
23-Apr-1929	IV	1°) Opening eener straat te Deurne; 2°) Algemeen plan tot aanleg van de gemeente Wommelghem.	23

2-May-1929	IV	1°) Hove – algemeen plan tot aanleg der gemeente; 2°) Bouchout – Rooilijnplan voor den Borsbeekschen Steenweg; 3°) Rooilijnplan voor den Deurnesteenweg; 4°) Deurne – Aanvraag tot opening van een straat (Verstraeten).	22
31-May-1929	IV	Déplacement de la gare du Sud et de ses dépendances.	2
31-May-1929	IV	Établissement de voies ferrées parallèlement à l'Escaut.	2
18-Jun-1929	I	1°) Algemeen plan tot aanleg van de gemeente Deurne; 2°) Lijnrichtingsplan voor de Boterlaerbaan te Deurne.	21
5-Jul-1929	I	Opening van straten te Capellen en te Brasschaet.	25

1930

1-Apr-1930	III	EDEGEM: 1) Algemeen plan tot aanleg van de gemeente 2) Verlenging van de Ullensstraat en Sterrenlaan (Elsdonck) op het grondgebied van Edegem en Wilryck – WILRIJCK: Plan tot aanleg van de wijk Kerkeveld. -- Opening van een straat, nabij den Edegemschen Steenweg.	22
8-Apr-1930	III	Opening van Straten in de streek "Lichtenberg" te Hoboken.	19
8-Apr-1930	III	Lijnrichtingsplan voor de Drakenhofstraat en de Grapheusstraat te Deurne.	21
15-Apr-1930	III	Eigening van het kwartier van de Meirbrug, de Schoenmarkt en de Eiermarkt.	18
18-Nov-1930	III	Plans tot opening van straten en rooilijnen in de gemeente Wilrijck.	20
18-Nov-1930	III	1) DEURNE – Lijninrichtingsplan van de Waterbaan; 2) BORSBEEK – Lijninrichtingsplan van den Ekkant.	21
25-Nov-1930	III	Nieuwe lijnrichtingen voor de Korte Zavelstraat, de Ste Elisabethstraat en de Muizenstraat, te Antwerpen.	18
25-Nov-1930	III	Eigening van het nieuwe kwartier rond het Kerkhof te Schooten.	25
2-Dec-1930	III	Intercommunale Ring – Wijziging aan de wegenis in den omtrek van de Kempische Vaart en de Turnhoutsche Vaart, op het grondgebied van de gemeenten Schooten, Wijneghem, Deurne, Merxem.	25

1931

10-Mar-1931	III	Opening van straten te Deurne.	21
10-Mar-1931	III	Lijnrichtingsplan van Te Couwelaerlei te Deurne.	21
12-May-1931	III	Aanleg van den Linker Scheldeoever- Wijzigingen aan het bestaande ontwerp aan te brengen ten gevolge van de veranderde ligplaatsen van de tunnels.	32
19-May-1931	III	Wijzigingen aangebracht aan het ontwerp voor de spoorwegen ten Zuiden van Antwerpen op het grondgebied van de gemeenten Berchem, Mortsel, Hove en Edegem.	2
26-May-1931	III	Borsbeek – Lijnrichtingsplan van de Weverstraat en den steenweg naar Bouchout. Deurne: a) opening van de Te Couwelaerlei. B) bouwlijnplan van de St-Rochusstraat, enz.	21
9-Jun-1931	III	Wilrijck, Opening van Straten op "Oosterveld".	20

9-Jun-1931	III	1°) Capellen: regularisatie van onwettig geopende straten. 2°) Wijneghem: opening van straten tusschen de Turnhoutsche Baan en den steenweg naar Merxem, ter streke Ruggeveld.	24
16-Jun-2009	III	Aanleggen van een nieuwe baan Bouchout Deurne.	21
23-Jun-1931	III	1°) Borsbeek – Aanleg van een nieuwe wijk; 2°) Deurne – A) aanleg van de gronden tusschen de Turnhoutsche baan en de grensch van Schooten. B) Ringlaan. C) Steenweg naar Borsbeek; 3°) Schooten – Lijnrichtingsplans voor de Heikant – de Kuipersakker – en de Fluitbergstraten.	21
4-Aug-1931	III	Ligging van de goederenstatie van de Nationale Maatschappij van Buurtspoorwegen, op het grondgebied van Borgerhout en aanleg van de omgeving.	23
1-Dec-1931	III	Gemeente Mortsel. 1) Brief van den heer Minister van Spoorwegen, tot afschaffing van een straat langsheen de spoorlijn naar Mechelen. 2) Aanvraag van de Gemeente om een voetpad en een riool in de Omheiningslei, nabij schans 8 aan te leggen.	22
8-Dec-1931	III	1) Bouchout- Lijnrichtingsplan voor de Heuvelstraat en de Lange Kroonstraat 2) Edegem – eigening van het eigendom “Arendsnest”.	22

1932

12-Jan-1932	III	1) Aanleg van nieuwe straten en dokken in de wijk “Boschuil”, te Deurne; 2) Tracé van de Ringlaan, op het grondgebied van Deurne en Schooten; 3) Aanleg van een nieuw kwartier te Wijnegem, op de gronden van de fabriek L. Meeus.	21
19-Jan-1932	III	Ekeren: Lijnrichtingen van verschillende straten in de kom van de gemeente en in de wijk Donck.	26
19-Jan-1932	III	Schooten lijnrichting voor de Groote Lei (Schootenhof).	25
26-Jan-1932	III	Rondpunt van de “Kleine Bareel” te Brasschaat.	25
2-Feb-1932	III	Bouwlijnplannen voor verschillende straten te Brasschaat-Caert.	25
11-Feb-1932	III	Opening van de Meeuwenhoflei, ter streke Lackbors te Deurne.	21
11-Feb-1932	III	Mortsel: 1) Verlenging van de Kretenburgstraat. 2) Bouwlijnplan St. Benedictusstraat en Floralei. Edegem: Eigening van de gronden nabij Fort 5.	22
3-Mar-1932	III	Oprichting van het Sportpaleis aan de Schijnpoort.	25
3-Mar-1932	III	Rondpunt van de “Kleine Bareel”.	25
10-Mar-1932	IV	Verbinding tusschen de Turnhoutsche Baan en de Schijnpoort.	13
17-Mar-1932	III	Rondpunt van de “Kleine Bareel”.	25
15-Apr-1932	III	Rondpunt van de “Kleine Bareel”.	25
24-May-1932	III	1) Mortsel: Bouwlijnplannen. 2) Kontich: Uitmonding van de Laan Berchem Kontich.	22
27-Jun-1932	III	Aanleg van nieuwe wijken te Berchem en Wilrijck.	20
30-Jun-1932	III	Aanleg van nieuw kwartier te Wilrijck en Hoboken. Vallaer – Opening van een straat te Wilrijck.	20

9-Nov-1932	**III**	Verbetering van den steenweg Santhoven-Oelegem-Deurne (zuid), in de kom van de gemeente Oelegem, nabij het Albertkanaal in verband met brug n°33.	8
17-Nov-1932	**III**	Lijnrichting Ankerrui te Antwerpen.	18
17-Nov-1932	**III**	Opening van straten te Brasschaat, ter streke “Het Zand”.	25

1933

19-Jan-1933	**IV**	Les transformations des installations ferroviaires du sud d’Anvers.	2
2-May-1933	III	Gordelonteigening met het oog op het aanleggen van een nieuwe wijk te Mortsel.	22
2-May-1933	III	1°) Wommelgem: openen van nieuwe straten, tusschen de Ternesselei en de Welkomstraat. 2°) Openen van nieuwe straten (buurtwegen 5, 11, 12).	23
2-May-1933	III	Schooten – wijziging aan het plan tot aanleg der wijk “Wouwens”.	25
2-May-1933	III	Openen eener straat te Deurne, tusschen de Herentalsche Vaart en de Boterlaarbaan.	21
8-May-1933	III	Bouwen van Hydrotechnisch laboratorium op de omheiningsgronden, te Berchem.	13
8-May-1933	III	Wijziging aan het lijnrichtingsplan van de Rerum Novarumlaan, te Merxem.	25
9-May-1933	III	Kunstwerken op de spoorbaan Antwerpen-Brussel (lijn der sneltrijnen), op het grondgebied van de gemeenten Berchem en Mortsel).	2
17-Jul-1933	III	Openen van straten te Antwerpen, op de gronden tussen de Manchesterlaan, de Noorderlaan, het toekomstig kanaal Antwerpen-Luik en den spoorweg Antwerpen-Rotterdam, met afschaffing van drie straten.	18
3-Aug-1933	III	Zwijdrecht: 1) Lijnrichting voor de Fortlaan. 2) Openen van een straat tusschen de Statiestraat en de Staatsbaan Antwerpen-Gent.	32
3-Aug-1933	III	Rooilijnplan voor de Veldstraat te Wijnegem.	24
3-Aug-1933	III	Lijnrichtingsplan voor verschillende straten te St. Mariaburg, Ekeren.	26
30-Oct-1933	III	Toestand geschapen te Berchem door den aanleg van de nieuwe spoorlijn.	2
30-Nov-1933	III	Planning tot opening van straten en tot vaststelling van rooilijnen in de gemeente Zwijndrecht.	32
30-Nov-1933	III	1) Opening van straten te Wijnegem. 2) Brug over het Albertkanaal, te Wijnegem.	24
23-Dec-1933	III	Voor-ontwerp tot aanleg van den Linker Scheldeoever (plan van de H.H. Deheem en Van Averbeke).	32

1934

15-Jan-1934	III	Voor-ontwerp tot aanleg van den Linker Schelde-oever (plan van H.H. De Heem en Van Averbeke).	32
7-Feb-1934	III	Rooilijnplannen te Hove.	22
7-Feb-1934	III	Rooilijnplannen in de gemeente Ekeren.	26

26-Feb-1934	III	Aanleg van straten te Merksem, op gronden toebehorend aan Mej. Du Chastel de la Houwarderie.	25
12-Mar-1934	III	Aanleg van straten te Merksem, op gronden toebehorend aan Mej. Du Chastel de la Houwarderie.	25
19-Mar-1934	III	Onteigening te Borgerhout voor de Turnhoutsche Baan.	23
10-Dec-1934	IV	Verplaatsing van de zuidstatie te Antwerpen: 1) slooping van het baanvak Antwerpen Zuid-Wilryck; 2) ontdubbeling van het spoor tusschen Hemiksem en Boom (brief van den Heer Minister van Verkeerswezen).	2

1935

28-Jan-1935	IV	Openen van straten te Deurne, rond het Antwerp stadion.	21
4-Feb-1935	IV	Antwerpen – Verbreding van de Karel Oomstraat, in verband met den aanleg der omheining.	20
3-Apr-1935	IV	Lijnrichtingsplannen voor verschillende straten, te Brasschaat.	25
10-Apr-1935	IV	1) Hoboken – Lijnrichting voor de Kapelstraat; 2) Wilrijk – openen van een straat ter streke “Oosterveld”.	19
10-Apr-1935	IV	Eekeren – Lijnrichtingsplan voor een nieuwe straat nabij de Schrieksche Straat.	25
12-Jun-1935	IV	Rooilijnplannen voor verschillende straten der gemeente Ekeren.	26
12-Jun-1935	IV	Aanleggen van een nieuwe wijk ter streke Laertkouter, te Zwijndrecht.	32
31-Jul-1935	IV	Hoboken – Lijnrichtingsplannen voor verschillende straten.	19
5-Sep-1935	IV	Verlenging van de Plantijnlei onder de Ooststatie (grondgebied Antwerpen en Borgerhout).	2
16-Dec-1935	IV	1°) Mortsel: ontwerp tot openen van straten tusschen de provinciebaan Antwerpen-Lier en de Drapstraat; 2°) Edegem: rooilijnplan voor de Buyseghemlei.	22
16-Dec-1935	III	Wijziging aan het rooilijnplan voor nieuwe straten, tusschen de Prins Boudewijnlaan en de Pastoor Van de Wouwerstraat, ter streke “Oosterveld”, Wilrijk.	20
16-Dec-1935	III	Nieuwe straten tusschen de Tuinwijkstraat en de Rerum Novarum Laan, ter streke “Katersvelden te Merksem”.	25
23-Dec-1935	IV	Overname door de gemeenten van de toegangswegen tot de Forten (Krijgsbaan).	30

1936

3-Feb-1936	IV	Doortrekking van de Plantijnlei onder de Ooststatie, op het grondgebied van Antwerpen en Borgerhout.	18
25-Feb-1936	IV	1) Doortrekking van de Plantijnlei onder de Ooststatie, te Antwerpen. 2) Verplaatsen van Zuidstatie te Antwerpen; afschaffing van het baanvak Antwerpen Zuid-Wilrijk.	2
20-Apr-1936	I	Deurne – 1) Aanleg van een gedeelte van de Ringlaan, tusschen de Sint-Rochusstraat en de Van den Hautelei; 2) Openen van een straat tusschen de Ringlaan en de Maquinaylaan.	21

20-Apr-1936	IV	Edegem – Rooilijnen voor de Doelveldstraat.	22
20-Apr-1936	I	Antwerpen – Openen van straten tusschen de Noorderlaan en de Havendokken.	27
20-Apr-1936	IV	Kapellen – Rooilijnplan voor de Kerkstraat en de Kerkweg.	26
6-Jun-1936	I	Oprichting van het definitief waterbouwkundig laboratorium op de gronden van de voormalige krijgsslachterij, te Borgerhout.	23
6-Jun-1936	IV	Openen van straten te Antwerpen, tusschen de Noorderlaan en de Havendokken.	27
6-Jun-1936	IV	Brasschaat: bouwlijnplan voor de Alfredlei en de Louislei, in het domein “Antwerpen-Donck”.	25
6-Jul-1936	IV	Hoboken – Rooilijnplannen voor de Van Amstelstraat, de Greinerstraat de Ketelmakerijstraat en de Vulkaanstraat te Hoboken.	19
13-Jul-1936	IV	Overname door de gemeente Mortsel van de Omheiningslei, van schans 6 tot schans 8.	30
21-Aug-1936	IV	Nieuw ontwerp tot het bouwen van het definitief waterbouwkundig laboratorium op de gronden van de Brilschans te Borgerhout.	23
21-Dec-1936	IV	De intercommunale ring: middelen tot uitvoering; algemene bespreking.	37
28-Dec-1936	IV	Aanleg van de Omheinings- en Vestingsleien, te Mortsel.	30

1937

22-Feb-1937	IV	Aanlegplan van den Linker Schelde-oever; stratenplan van de I.M.A.L.S.O.	32
8-Mar-1937	III	Deurne – Voorontwerp voor het openen van een straat tusschen de Confortalei en de Te Couwelaerlei.	21
8-Mar-1937	III	Rooilijnplan voor de Vredestraat en voor de Tuinwijkstraat te Kapellen.	26
8-Mar-1937	III	Wilrijk – 1) Rooilijnplan voor weg n°38; 2) Protest tegen het bouwlijn-plan van de Ferdinand Itschertlaan (Vallaer).	20
8-Mar-1937	III	Brasschaat – 1) Bouwlijnplan voor de Leopoldlei; 2) Openen van straten ter streke “Het Zand”.	25
31-May-1937	III	Edegem: openen van een straat tusschen de Boerenlegerstraat en de Ter Elststraat.	22
31-May-1937	III	Wommelgem: openen van een straat tusschen de St Damiaanstraat en weg n° 30 (Het Scheersel).	23
31-May-1937	III	Wilrijk: 1) Openen van straten tusschen den Boomschen steenweg en het Vallaar, op het grondgebied van de stad Antwerpen en de gemeente Wilrijk; 2) Openen van straten tusschen de Laarstraat en de Frans Cortstraat; 3) aanvraag tot bouwen in de Ferdinand Itschertlaan.	20
31-May-1937	III	Brasschaat: 1) Rooilijnplannen tusschen de kom van de gemeente en De Caert; Rooilijnplannen te Marie-Ter-Heide.	25
7-Jun-1937	III	1) Edegem: openen van een straat tusschen de Boerenlegerstraat en Ter Elststraat; 2) Mortsel: Openen van straten nabij de Drapstraat.	22
26-Jul-1937	III	Wilrijk- 1) Openen van straten tusschen de Frans de Cortstraat en de Laarstraat; 2) Afschaffing van een straat ter streke Oosterveld.	20

26-Jul-1937	III	Gedeelte van den Intercommunalen Ring, gelegen op het grondgebied van Merksem.	37
26-Jul-1937	III	Openen van straten te Wommelgem in de Immerseelvelden.	23
26-Jul-1937	III	Betwisting tusschen de stad Antwerpen en de gemeente Hoboken over een toelating tot bouwen, in verband met den aanleg van een straat op de grens der beide gemeenten.	19
27-Sep-1937	III	Deurne: 1) opening van straten in de wijk Papenhof (aanvraag van de nv Immobla); 2) opening van straten in de streek tusschen Palinckstraat en het kerkhof (bouwlijnplans voor de Ter Heyde Laan, de Te Couwelaerlei, de August Petenlei, enz.	21
27-Sep-1937	III	Voorstel van de Domeinen tot vervreemding van een perceel van de geslechte omheining, gelegen op het grondgebied van Berchem.	13
27-Sep-1937	III	Uitvoeringsplan voor het Waterbouwkundig Laboratorium te Borgerhout.	23
27-Sep-1937	III	Kapellen – 1) Opening van een straat tusschen de Hovensche Baan en de Streepstraat; 2) Lijnrichtingsplans voor verschillende straten.	26
27-Sep-1937	III	Hove – Rooilijnplan voor de Weyninchdreef, de Onderwijsstraat, de Veldkantstraat en de straten A, B, C en D.	22
11-Oct-1937	III	Deurne: 1) Aanleg van de wijk Papenhof; 2) Openen van straten in de wijk Lanteerneveld.	21
20-Dec-1937	III	Deurne: Wijziging aan het stratenplan voor de gronden der N.V. Deurne-Borgerhout-Uitbreiding.	21
20-Dec-1937	III	Brasschaat: Rooilijnplan voor den Donkschen Steenweg.	25
20-Dec-1937	III	Wilrijk – Wijziging van het stratenplan voor het Oosterveld; Aanleg van het kruispunt der “Zwaantjes”.	20

1938

24-Jan-1938	III	1) Openen van straten te Antwerpen in het tweede distrikt (Oorderen) door de S.M. “Onze Woning”; 2) In de oude stad, verbeteringen van de rooilijnen van de Hofstraat en de Oude Beurs.	27
24-Jan-1938	III	Aanleg van den Linker Schelde-Oever: Openen van Straten te Zwijndrecht en te Burgt.	32
24-Jan-1938	III	Tracé van de Intercommunale Ringlaan, op het grondgebied van Antwerpen.	37
7-Feb-1938	III	Mortsel: a) Lijnrichtingsplan voor de Omheiningslei en de aanpalende schansen; b) openen van straten in de wijk “Wolschaerdersvelden”; c) openen van straten in de wijk “Flora”. Hove: openen van een straat tusschen den Bouchoutschen Steenweg en de Louis-Van-Lindenstraat.	22
7-Feb-1938	III	Ekeren: 1) Lijnrichtingsplan voor de verbindingstraat tusschen den Oorderenweg en den Kattenberg; 2) Lijnrichtingsplan voor de Waterstraat.	26
7-Feb-1938	III	Aanleg van het kruispunt aan de “Zwaantjes” op het grondgebied van Wilrijk en Hoboken.	19

7-Feb-1938	III	1) Merksem- a) wijziging van het rooilijnplan voor de Lange Bremstraat en de Zwaantjeslei; b) opheffing van het K.B. inzake het openen van straten, ter streke “Lambrechtshoeken”. 2) Brasschaat – a) opening van straten ter streke Bisschoppenhof: b) openen van straten in het oud domein Baillet-Latour.	25
11-Jul-1938	IV	Wilrijk: openen van een straat tusschen de Oude Straat en de Poekstraat.	20
11-Jul-1938	IV	Intercommunale ring op het grondgebied van Hove.	37
19-Jul-1938	IV	Intercommunale ringlaan op het grondgebied van de gemeenten Wilrijk, Berchem, Mortsel en Deurne.	37
19-Jul-1938	IV	Antwerpen – 1°) Openen van straten in de tuinwijk “Luchtbal” – 2°) Afschaffen van een achterbuurt in de Korte Ridderstraat.	18
19-Jul-1938	IV	Hoboken: onteigening bij strooken in de Louisa-laan en de Steynstraat.	19
19-Jul-1938	IV	Merksem 1°) Openen van straten ter streke Catersvelden; 2°) Wijziging aan het stratenplan voor de gronden van Mevr. Du Chastel.	25
19-Jul-1938	IV	Aanleg van de omheiningslei te Mortsel.	22
19-Jul-1938	IV	Rooilijnplan voor de tuinwijk Boterlaar, te Deurne.	21

1939

6-Feb-1939	IV	Mortsel: Rooilijnplan voor den Eggeweg, de Fortstraat en de Stockmanslei. Hove: Openen van straten tusschen den spoorweg Mechelen-Antwerpen, de Kapelstraat en den Mortselschen Steenweg. Edegem: openen van een straat, tusschen de Oude Godstraat en de Onafhankelijkheidstraat.	22
6-Feb-1939	IV	Hoboken – Lijnrichtingsplannen voor de Nieuwe Parklaan, de Hollebeekstraat, de Meerlenhoflaan en de Eikenlei.	19
6-Feb-1939	IV	Brasschaat – Openen van straten tusschen den Steenweg naar Hoogboom en de Leeuwenstraat.	25
8-Feb-1939	IV	Voorstellen van den heer Burgemeester van Oelegem betreffende het scheppen van een nieuwe verkeersweg tusschen den steenweg Santhoven-Oelegem en de Staatsbaan Antwerpen-Turnhout.	23
3-Jul-1939	IV	Mortsel – Bouwlijnen voor de Safier- en Vosstraten.	22
3-Jul-1939	IV	Deurne – Openen van straten op de gronden gelegen tusschen de Stevenslei, de Langveldstraat, de Herentalsche Baan en de Boterlaerbaan (aanvraag van de N.V. “Société Internationale de Verreries”).	12
3-Jul-1939	IV	Berchem – Bouwlijnplan voor nieuwe straten, tusschen den Grooten steenweg (Staatsbaan Antwerpen-Brussel) en de Oogststraat (Buurtweg nr. 10) ter streke “De Zepten”.	20
3-Jul-1939	IV	Burcht – wijzigingen aan het lijnrichtingsplan van buurtweg N° 2.	32
3-Jul-1939	IV	Merksem: openen van een straat ter streken “Katersvelden”. Brasschaat: openen van straten (Berréstraat, Hensberglei en Dierentijdlei.	25

9-Oct-1939	III	Mortsel – 1°) Rooilijnplan voor een deel van de Sint-Benedictusstraat; 2°) Openen van een straat langsheen de spoorbaan, tusschen den Lierschen Steenweg en de Vandijckstraat; 3°) Bezwaar van de stad Antwerpen voor het gebruik maken van dezelfde straatnamen door verschillende gemeenten.	22
9-Oct-1939	III	Zwijndrecht – Rooilijnplan voor de Sint-Annaboom-, de Heide-, de Lindestraat en den Heiligen Geesthoek.	32
28-Dec-1939	III	Burgt – Wijziging aan het rooilijnplan voor de Statiestraat.	32
28-Dec-1939	III	Deurne – Voorontwerp tot het openen van straten, ter streke Eksterlaar.	22
28-Dec-1939	III	Wilrijk – wijziging aan het rooilijnplan voor voetweg n° 38.	20
28-Dec-1939	III	Hove – aanvraag tot het openen van straten in de wijk gelegen tusschen de Kapelstraat, de Mortselschensteenweg en den spoorweg Antwerpen-Brussel.	22

Notes

INTRODUCTION. URBANIZATION IN THEORY, HISTORY, AND PRACTICE

1 Originally, the committee was called *La commission d'études pour l'aménagement de l'agglomération anversoise*, but the general consensus was that the term "urbanization," from the moment it made its appearance in Belgian vocabulary from the early 1920s onwards, best characterized the SCAA's project. See: Jean Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise* (Antwerp, 1929).

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18 Harvey, "Cities or Urbanization?," 58.

19 Bernard Stiegler, *La société automatique*, vol. 59, *L'avenir du travail* (Paris: Frayard, 2015).

20 Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

21 Brenner, *Critique of Urbanization*; Harvey, "Cities or Urbanization?"

22 Harvey, "Cities or Urbanization?," 62.

23 Harvey, "Cities or Urbanization?," 62.

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72 The SCAA's work is occasionally mentioned, but a comprehensive reconstruction does not exist. See: Roger Charlier, *L'extension urbaine de la ville d'Anvers aux XIXe & XXe siècles* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1945); Geert Bekaert et al., *Modern Bouwen 1920–1940: Brasschaat – Deurne – Mortsel* (Antwerp: Bright Image, 1993); Petra Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof: Vijf Eeuwen Parkgeschiedenis* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1997); Lombaerde and Spitaels, "Architectuur, Stedenbouw en Verkeer"; Van Acker, *From Flux to Frame*; Bart Tritsmans, *Bomen Zijn Waardevolle Bijkomstigheden: Stedelijk Groen in Antwerpen, 1859—1973* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016); Laura May, "Suburban Place-Making: Political Economic Coalitions and 'Place Distinctiveness' (Antwerp, c. 1860–c. 1940)" (PhD diss., University of Antwerp, 2020); Ilja Van Damme et al., *Historical Atlas of Antwerp: Between Aspiration and Achievement* (Bussum: Toth, 2022).

73 See: File Ma#88546: "Slechten Der Wallen," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

74 Karel Van Isacker, *Meesters en Huurlingen: De staking van 1907 aan de Haven van Antwerpen* (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1962).

[75] See: Parliamentary Debates, Acts of May 5, 1905, *Wetsontwerp betreffende het verdedigingsstelsel van Antwerpen en de uitbreiding der Haveninrichtingen dezer stad.*

[76] Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération.*

[77] Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1971); Castells, *La question urbaine*.

[78] Auguste Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning, 1907," in *Studiecommissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie: Wedstrijd voor het Benuttigen der Beschikbare Gronden ten Gevolge de Slechting der Versterkte Omheining van Antwerpen*, ed. Ministerie van Landbouw en Openbare Werken (Antwerp: SCAA, 1911).

[79] Karel Velle, *Het Ministerie van Openbare Werken (1837–1990): I. Organisatie* (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1993), 498—527.

[80] Scouring a micro-historical approach. See, e.g.: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A New History of Global Capitalism* (London: Allen Lane, 2014).

[81] Anne Kockelkorn and Nina Zschocke, eds., *Productive Universals—Specific Situations: Critical Engagements in Art, Architecture and Urbanism* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019), 10-35.

[82] Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978); Oswald Matthias Ungers et al., *The City in the City: Berlin, a Green Archipelago (1977)* (Zurich: Lars Müller, 2013); Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978); Reyner Banham and Joe Day, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (London: Allen Lane, 1971); Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977).

CHAPTER 1. THE QUESTION OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE: CONFEDERAL MUNICIPALISM, PROVINCIAL POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND PROGRAMMATIC URBANIZATION

[1] Roger Charlier, *L'Extension urbaine de la ville d'Anvers aux XIXe & XXe siècles* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1945).

[2] Louis Franck, Belgian Chamber of Representatives, *Acts*, August 3, 1907, 1.

[3] Laura May, "Suburban Place-Making: Political Economic Coalitions and 'Place Distinctiveness' (Antwerp, c.1860 – c.1940)" (PhD Dissertation University of Antwerp, 2020).

[4] Franck, *Acts*, 1.

[5] Franck, *Acts*, 2.

[6] Franck, *Acts*, 2.

[7] In 1983, the former municipalities of Berchem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Hoboken, Ekeren, Merksem, and Wilrijk merged with the city of Antwerp and became city districts, while the former City of Antwerp was divided in two districts: Antwerpen and Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo.

[8] Georges Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations urbaines* (Brussels: Ghiesbreght, 1937), 109.

[9] Louis Van Der Swaelmen, "Programme organique d'urbanisation intercommunale: Méthodes," in *L'administration et l'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations*, ed. Union des Villes et Communes Belges (Brussels: UVCB, 1925), 41–42.

[10] For similar readings, see: Benedikte Zitouni, *Agglomérer: Une Anatomie de l'Extension Bruxelloise (1828–1915)* (Brussels: VUBPress, 2010); Géry Leloutre, "La transformation moderne de Bruxelles: Processus d'agencement de l'espace urbain bruxellois entre 1949 et 1979" (PhD diss., ULB, 2020).

[11] Auguste Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning, 1907," in *Studiecommissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie: Wedstrijd voor het Benuttigen der Beschikbare Gronden ten Gevolge de Slechting der Versterkte Omheining van Antwerpen*, ed. Ministerie van Landbouw en Openbare Werken (Antwerp: SCAA, 1911).

[12] See, for instance: Ian Bache and Matthew Flinders, *Multi-Level Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[13] Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning," 13.

[14] On such topics, see: Jen Nelles, *Comparative Metropolitan Policy: Governing beyond Local Boundaries in the Imagined Metropolis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, "Henri Lefebvre on State, Space, Territory," *International Political Sociology* 3, no. 4 (2009).

[15] Victor Bure, "L'urbanisme et les communes," *La Maison* 4, no. 2 (1948): 28.

[16] Joseph Schobbens, *Un labyrinthe souterrain gigantesque ou le réseau général d'égouts de l'agglomération anversoise: Éléments juridiques et administratifs sur la question* (Antwerp: Veritas, 1924), 12.

[17] Panos Mantziaras, *La Ville-Paysage: Rudolf Schwarz et la dissolution des villes* (Geneva: MétisPresses, 2008), 98–118.

[18] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (London: Heinemann, 1902).

[19] Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, 126.

[20] Murray Bookchin, *Urbanization without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992), 277-98.

[21] Henri Charriaut, *La Belgique moderne: Une terre d'expériences* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1910), 96.

[22] Oscar Gaspari, "Cities against States? Hopes, Dreams and Shortcomings of the European Municipal Movement, 1900–1960," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 4 (2002): 604. See also: Roger Desmed, "Elisée Reclus, la Franc-Maçonnerie et la Loge 'Les Amis Philanthropes'," *Revue Belge de Géographie* 110, no. 1 (1986); Janet Polasky, *The Democratic Socialism of Emile Vandervelde: Between Reform and Revolution* (Oxford: Berg, 1995).

[23] Gaspari, "Cities against States?"

[24] Gérard Cooreman, "Discours de M. Cooreman, président, ministre d'État," in *Premier congrès International et Exposition Comparée des Villes. I) Construction des Villes. II) Organisation de la Vie Communale* (Brussels: UIV, 1914), 72–73.

[25] Louis Perrot, *Le municipalisme belge* (Brussels: UIV, 1937), 4-20.

[26] In 1550, 22.7 percent of the population lived in cities with at least ten thousand inhabitants, compared to 15.3 percent in the Netherlands, 15.1 percent in Northern Italy, 8.6 percent in Spain, 4.3 percent in France, 3.8 percent in Germany, and 3.5 percent in England. See: Jan Devries, *European Urbanization, 1500—1800* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1984).

[27] Maarten Van Ginderachter, "An Urban Civilisation: The Case of Municipal Autonomy in Belgian History, 1830–1914," in *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848–1914*, ed. William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer (London: Pelgrave Macmillan, 2011), 110–11.

[28] Van Ginderachter, "An Urban Civilisation," 110.

[29] Perrot, *Le municipalisme belge*, 229.

[30] Van Ginderachter, "An Urban Civilisation," 116. See also: Léon Dupriez, "Local Government in Belgium," *American Political Science Review* 14, no. 3 (1920): 418; Carl Strikwerda, *A House Divided: Catholics, Socialists, and Flemish Nationalists in Nineteenth-Century Belgium* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 29.

[31] Charriaut, *La Belgique moderne*, 96.

[32] Els Witte, "The Formation of a Centre in Belgium: The Role of Brussels in the Formative Stage of the Belgian State (1830–40)," *European History Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1989).

[33] Van Ginderachter, "An Urban Civilisation," 114.

[34] Pol De Bruyne, "L'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations, ses bases légales en Belgique," in *L'administration et l'urbanisation des grandes agglomérations*, ed. Union des Villes et Communes Belges (Liège-Brussels: UVCB, 1924–1925).

[35] Eleanor C. Vollans, "Urban Development in Belgium since 1830," in *Urbanisation and its Problems: Essays in Honour of E.W. Gilbert* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968); Koenraad De Ceuninck and Tony Valcke, "Van Gemeentewet naar Gemeentedecreet: Gemeentelijke Autonomie in Historisch Perspectief," in *De Kerktorenpolitiek Voorbij? Lokale Politiek in Vlaanderen*, ed. Herwig Reynaert and Kristof Steyvers (Brugge: Vanden Broele, 2010).

[36] Van Ginderachter, "An Urban Civilisation," 115.

[37] The National Bank of Belgium, for instance, was founded in 1850 and in 1860, the consumption taxes that large cities could raise were abolished.

[38] De Bruyne, "Bases légales."

[39] Marcel Smets, ed., *Resurgam: La Reconstruction en Belgique après 1914* (Brussels: Crédit Communal de Belgique, 1985), 71-98.

[40] Dieter Bruggeman, "Urban Questions in the Countryside: Urbanisation and the Collective Consumption of Electricity in Belgium, 1900-1940" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2019), 25.

[41] Jean Remy used a same train of reasoning to explain the early development of the Charleroi region as industrialization and not as urbanization per se. See: Jean Remy, *La ville: Phénomène économique* (Brussels: Editions Vie Ouvrière, 1966).

[42] Louis Perrot, "Relations entre le municipalisme belge et le développement économique et social et l'acroissement démographique du pays," in *Le municipalisme belge*, ed. Louis Perrot (UIV, 1937).

[43] Perrot, "Relations entre le municipalisme belge," 26-27.

[44] Perrot calculated that the debt of municipalities amounted to 688 Bfr/capita in Belgium as opposed to 305 Bfr/capita in France in the year 1932, which gave "an idea of the importance of the Belgian municipalities' efforts to solve modern problems of urbanization." See: Perrot, "Relations entre le municipalisme belge," 29.

[45] Perrot, "Relations entre le municipalisme belge," 44.

[46] E.g., the law of August 6, 1897 (cooperation for hospitals); the law of July 1, 1899 (cooperation for the exploitation of vicinal railways); the law of August 18, 1907 (cooperation for distribution and supply of fresh water).

[47] Els Witte, *Gemeenteregies in België (1850–1914): Liberaal Interventionisme of Socialistisch Municipalisme?* (np: Gemeentekrediet, 1986).

[48] Perrot, *Le municipalisme belge*, 224.

[49] Perrot, *Le municipalisme belge*, 225.

[50] By 1937, state capital that was invested in the activities of the 289 societies for affordable housing that were established in Belgium represented only 12.7 percent of all capital involved. See: Perrot, *Le municipalisme belge*, 188.

[51] Perrot, *Le municipalisme belge*, 227.

[52] Bruggeman, "Urban Questions in the Countryside," 337-39.

[53] Jean Remy and Liliane Voyé, *La ville et l'urbanisation: Modalités d'analyse sociologique* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1974).

[54] Bénédicte Grosjean, *Urbanisation sans urbanisme: Une histoire de la "Ville Diffuse"* (Wavre: Mardaga, 2010).

[55] Michiel Dehaene, *Tuinieren in het Stedelijk Veld / Gardening in the Urban Field* (Ghent: A&S, 2013); Bruggeman, "Urban Questions in the Countryside."

[56] Marjatta Hietala, *Services and Urbanisation at the Turn of the Century: The Diffusion of Innovations* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1987).

[57] Bookchin, *Urbanization without Cities*, 8–11.

[58] Michiel Dehaene, "Horizontal Metropolis: Issues and Challenges of a New Urban Ecology: Statements," in *The Horizontal Metropolis between Urbanism and Urbanization*, ed. Paola Viganò, Chiara Cavalieri, and Martina Barcelloni Corte (Cham: Springer, 2018).

[59] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 2.

[60] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 16. See also: Emile Vinck, "Proposition de loi concernant l'urbanisation des villes et des communes," in *Urbanisation habitation*, ed. Union des Villes et Communes Belges (Brussels: UVCB, 1931).

[61] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 16.

[62] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 16.

[63] Vinck, "Proposition de loi concernant l'urbanisation," 2–3.

[64] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 2–3.

[65] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 8.

[66] It suggests that these men would term the processes of dispersal as described in the previous paragraph as industrialization rather than urbanization. Perhaps, after a lengthy discussion, they would agree upon the term 'cheap urbanization'.

[67] The term urbanization only emerged from the early 1920s, in architecture and planning journals, as well as parliamentary debates.

[68] UVCB, "Belgique," in *IIIème Congrès International des Villes Paris,* ed. Union Internationale des Villes (Brussels: UIV, 1925), 67. Italics in the original.
[69] UVCB, "Belgique," 114.
[70] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 17.
[71] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 17.
[72] De Bruyne, "Bases légales"; Vinck, "Proposition de loi concernant l'urbanisation"; Robert Wilkin, *Organisation et fonctionnement des autorités communales* (Liège: Imprimerie des Invalides, 1938).
[73] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 17.
[74] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 17.
[75] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 17.
[76] The proposal was launched by La Fédération des Ingénieurs Communaux de Belgique and was partly inspired by the 1915 law on the reconstruction of devastated areas in Belgium, partly on the French legislation of March 14, 1919, and partly on the Dutch Housing act, last revised in 1921. See: De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 18–25.
[77] De Bruyne, "Bases légales," 26.
[78] De Bruyne, "Bases légales."
[79] Bookchin, *Urbanization without Cities*, xix.
[80] In fact, De Bruyne's initial study was fully added to the bill. See: Belgian Senate, "Wetsvoorstel op de urbanisatie van steden en gemeenten," *Acts*, December 29, 1932: no. 17 (1932): 1–82.
[81] Belgian Senate, "Aanvullend verslag uit naam van de Vereenigde Commissiën van Binnenlandse Zaken en van Openbare Werken, belast met het onderzoek van het wetsvoorstel op de urbanisatie van steden en gemeenten," *Acts*, March 18, 1936: no. 124 (1936): 11.
[82] Louis Fredericq, *Urbanisatie en Provincie* (Ghent: Van Melle, 1938), 17.
[83] Belgian Chamber of Representatives, *Acts*, February 8, 1939.
[84] Steve Heylen, Bart De Nil, and Bart D'hondt, eds., *Geschiedenis van de Provincie Antwerpen: Een Politieke Biografie* (Antwerp: Provincie Antwerpen, 2005), 236.
[85] Heylen, De Nil, and D'hondt, *Geschiedenis Provincie Antwerpen,* 45.
[86] Smets, *Resurgam*, 75.
[87] The 1889 housing law casted the provinces as neutral referees; the 1907 law involved the provinces in the question of fresh water supply.
[88] Federica Zampa, "La continuïté d'une illusion: L'urbanisme de Raphaël Verwilghen entre valeurs éthiques et pratiques professionnelles" (PhD diss., KULeuven, 1999).
[89] The leading Liberal and Catholic parties were increasingly challenged by rising socialism. The Catholic Minister of Public Works du Bus de Warnaffe, for instance, openly wondered whether it would not be wiser to invest in 'real' needs, instead of in preliminary urbanization plans and fantasies. Belgian Senate, "Vergadering van donderdag 2 april 1936, wetsvoorstel op de urbanisatie van steden en gemeenten – voortzetting vergadering 25 maart 1936," *Annals,* 87, 602.
[90] Fredericq, *Urbanisatie en Provincie*, 7–8.
[91] Fredericq, *Urbanisatie en Provincie*, 22.
[92] Apart from Antwerp, there were similar study committees in Brussels, Ghent, Bruges and Liège. See: Karel Velle, *Het Ministerie van Openbare Werken (1837–1990): I. Organisatie* (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1993).
[93] See: File 506/108, folder 1910, "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910," *Archives of the Province of Antwerp*, Antwerp.
[94] Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organisational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1972).
[95] This number was obtained by patiently counting each and every different name of the members that participated in SCAA meetings between 1907 and 1939.
[96] Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning," 40.
[97] "Auguste Delbeke," in *Biographie Coloniale Belge*, ed. Institut Royal Colonial Belge (Brussels: Falk, 1955).
[98] Petra Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof: Vijf Eeuwen Parkgeschiedenis* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1997), 129.

[99] David Peleman, "Les Hommes de la Route: Engineering the Urban Society of the Modern Road in Belgium, 1899–1962" (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2014).

[100] Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning," 14.

[101] SCAA, subcommittee 27, April 25, 1922. Throughout this book, all the SCAA's minutes are referenced by subcommittee and date. This combination makes it possible to retrace the full meeting agendas, as well as the exact archival entry, in appendix 1 of this book, which presents a chronological overview of all of the SCAA's 680 meetings.

[102] E.g. François Destryker, Inspector of Registrations and Domains of the province; Mr. Deduytschaever, General Inspector of Domains at the Ministry of Finances; Mr. Boufflers, chairman of the committee of expropriations in Antwerp.

[103] Vincent Vandewoude, "Metropoolvorming Antwerpse Agglomeratie: Analyse van de Eerste Twintig Jaar Werking van de Studie-Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpse Agglomeratie (1907–1927)" (Master's thesis, Universiteit Gent, 2018).

[104] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986).

[105] Roberto Ferretti, "The Formation of a Bureaucratic Group between Centre and Periphery: Engineers and Local Government in Italy from the Liberal Period to Fascism (1861–1939)," in *Municipal Services and Employees in the Modern City*, ed. Michèle Dagenais (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

[106] On competing politics of technology, see: Eduardo Aibar and Wiebe E. Bijker, "Constructing a City: The Cerdà Plan for the Extension of Barcelona," *Science, Technology & Human Values* 22, no. 1 (1997).

[107] David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 29–30.

[108] Heylen, Nil, and D'hondt, *Geschiedenis Provincie Antwerpen*, 87–90. For men, the multiple general voting right was installed in 1893 in Belgium, the general single voting right in 1919. For women it took until 1948 to obtain a general single voting right.

[109] Joseph Stübben, "Die Erweiterung der Stadt Antwerpen," *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 10, no. 20 (1915): 121.

[110] Auguste Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting der Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie Gehouden in het Provinciaal Bestuur van Antwerpen den 8 Februari 1908* (Antwerp: Van Neylen, 1908); Paul De Heem, "Conférence donnée par M. De Heem au Cercle Royal Artistique d'Anvers," *L'Émulation* 52, no. 11 (1932).

[111] De Heem, "Conférence," 328–29.

[112] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 43–45.

[113] See: File 506/108, folder 1910: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910." Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

[114] Joseph Schobbens and Paul De Heem, "Des règles à suivre dans l'aménagement des quartiers à créer sur les terrains provenant d'enceintes déclassées et dans leur jonction aux quartiers anciens et aux faubourgs extra-muros," in *Premier Congrès International et Exposition Comparée des Villes, Gand*, ed. Union Internationale des Villes (Brussels: UIV, 1913).

[115] Matthew Festenstein, *Pragmatism and Political Theory: From Dewey to Rorty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[116] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988).

[117] John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (Boston: Little Brown, 1984). Despite criticism, Kingdon's model has endured. See: Pragati Rawat and John Charles Morris, "Kingdon's 'Streams' Model at Thirty: Still Relevant in the 21st Century?" *Politics and Policy* 44, no. 4 (2016). Kingdon's ideas have successfully been adopted in the field of European planning. See: Thomas Block, "Van ID naar 3D: Besluitvormingsprocessen en Beslissingsmacht bij Stadsontwikkelingsprojecten" (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2009).

[118] Cohen, March, and Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model."

[119] Their empirical referent for such organizations, it pains the academic to admit, is universities.

[120] Kingdon, *Agendas*, 84.

[121] In the original garbage can model, four separate streams were identified: (1) problems, (2) solutions, (3) participants, and (4) choice opportunities. See: Cohen, March, and Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model."

[122] Cohen, March, and Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model," 2.
[123] Kingdon, *Agendas*, 180–81.
[124] Kingdon, *Agendas*, 180–81.
[125] Kingdon, *Agendas*, 180–81.
[126] Kingdon, *Agendas*, 180–81.
[127] Kingdon, *Agendas*, 180–81.
[128] UVCB, ed., *L'Administration et l'Urbanisation des Grandes Agglomérations* (Brussels: UVCB, 1925), 68-69.
[129] Schobbens and Heem, "Des règles," 92.
[130] *Urbanisation Habitation*, ed., UVCB (Brussels: UVCB, 1931), 83.
[131] Jens van de Maele, "Architectures of Bureaucracy: An Architectural and Political History of Ministerial Offices in Belgium, 1915–1940" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2019), 263–65.
[132] Jean Remy and Jean-Pierre Thiry, "Les grandes agglomérations urbaines belges: Analyse de la population, de la population active et de l'emploi," *Recherches Economiques de Louvain* 32, no. 8 (1966); Vollans, "Urban Development in Belgium"; Michael Ryckewaert, *Building the Economic Backbone of the Belgian Welfare State: Infrastructure, Planning and Architecture 1945–1973* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2011); Pieter Uyttenhove, *Stadland België: Hoofdstukken uit de Geschiedenis van de Stedenbouw* (Ghent: A&S Books, 2011), 465–509.
[133] Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations*; Georges Holvoet, *De Bestuurlijke Inrichting van de Groote Agglomeraties* (Antwerp: De Vos-Van Kleef, 1931).
[134] Metropolitan districts were considered a threat to the state. See: Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations*, 115–20.
[135] Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations*, 112–13.
[136] Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations*, 110.
[137] Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations*, 110.
[138] This can be inferred from Holvoet's personal notes of a conversation between himself and G. Romsée, member of the Chamber of Representatives and governor ad interim in the province of Limburg. See: Robert Picavet, *Baron Georges Holvoet: Magistraat 1899–1923, Gouverneur van de Provincie Antwerpen 1923–1945, Kabinetschef van de Prins-Regent 1944–1950* (Zellik: Roularta Books, 1998), 207–8.
[139] On September 8, 1942, De Heem's resignation from his position as SCAA member was accepted by the ministry of public works. See: File 745/76, folder 3: "Personeel Nr. P. 8-61-1. Nr. 988ter uitgang," State Archives Antwerp, Antwerp.
[140] All Mennes's municipal work was transferred to a central city-administration, leaving Mennes 'unemployed'. See: File 1595#797: "Uitkeren van Erelonen aan Ir. A. Mennes," *Antwerp City Archives* [Felixarchief], Antwerp.
[141] In a similar train of reasoning, Murray Bookchin changed the title of his book *Urbanization without Cities* to *From Urbanization to Cities* upon second print.
[142] Emile Vinck, "L'union Internationale des villes et Communes, Rapport Général," in *IIIème congrès international des villes, Paris 1925*, ed. Union Internationale des Villes (Brussels: UIV, 1925), 30.

CHAPTER 2. THE QUESTION OF URBAN WAYS: THE URBANIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURES

[1] Auguste Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning, 1907," in *Studiecommissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie: Wedstrijd voor het Benuttigen der Beschikbare Gronden ten Gevolge de Slechting der Versterkte Omheining van Antwerpen*, ed. Ministerie van Landbouw en Openbare Werken (Antwerp: SCAA, 1911).
[2] Auguste Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting der Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie Gehouden in het Provinciaal Bestuur van Antwerpen den 8 Februari 1908* (Antwerp: Van Neylen, 1908), 13.
[3] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 30.

4 For a theory of accumulative and non-accumulative processes, see: Henri Lefebvre, John Moore, and Gregory Elliott, *Critique of Everyday Life: The One-Volume Edition* (London: Verso, 2014), 609–33.

5 Antoine Picon, *French Architects and Engineers in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); Greet De Block, "Ecological Infrastructure in a Critical-Historical Perspective: From Engineering 'Social' Territory to Encoding 'Natural' Topography," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 48, no. 2 (2016).

6 Lefebvre, Moore, and Elliott, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 622.

7 John Bellamy Foster, "Marx and the Environment," in *Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda*, ed. Ellen Meiksins Wood and John Bellamy Foster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997); Maria Kaika, *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

8 Kaika, *City of Flows*, 5.

9 Foster, "Marx and the Environment."

10 Kaika, *City of Flows*, 3–10.

11 Kaika, *City of Flows*, 6.

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13 Ildefons Cerdà, *General Theory of Urbanization, 1867* (Barcelona: Actar, 2018).

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17 Stad Antwerpen, *Het Nieuwe Rioleringsplan van de Antwerpse Agglomeratie: Een Overzicht Bij Gelegenheid van de Plechtige Aanvang van het Rioleringswerk van de Zuidersector op Maandag 28 maart 1966* (Antwerp: Stad Antwerpen, 1966), 7–15.

18 Antwerpen, *Het Nieuwe Rioleringsplan*

19 August Mennes, *De Gezondmakingswerken in Vlaamsch-België* (Antwerp, 1910), 9–13.

20 Mennes, *De Gezondmakingswerken*, 7.

21 Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 30.

22 F. Sentenac, "Les égouts et l'urbanisation régionale," *Tijdschrift voor Volkshuisvesting en Stedebouw*, no. 565 (1924).

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26 AGIAHM, "Association Générale," 1.

27 AGIAHM, "Nominations," *La Technique Sanitaire* 2, no. 4 (1907): 96.

28 Claude, "Sanitery engineering," 161.

29 David Peleman, "Les Hommes de la Route: Engineering the Urban Society of the Modern Road in Belgium, 1899–1962" (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2014).

30 Mennes, *De gezondmakingswerken*, Kiliaan; August Mennes, *Note sur le calcul de la section des égouts* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1910); August Mennes, *Les Distributions d'eau en Belgique* (Brussels: Imprimerie Nationale, 1913); August Mennes, *Het Ontwerp der Provinciale en Intercommunale*

Drinkwatermaatschappij der Provincie Antwerpen (Antwerp: Buerbaum-Van der Goten, 1922); August Mennes, *Pluviographische Metingen te Antwerpen* (The Hague: Moorman, 1932).

31 UIV, ed., *Premier Congrès International et Exposition Comparée des Villes* (Brussels: UIV, 1913).

32 SCAA, *Rapport du comité technique sur l'écoulement des eaux naturelles et résiduaires d'Anvers et de sa banlieue* (Antwerp: Van Os-De Wolf, 1912), 6; SCAA, subcommittee 1, February 27, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 1, September 28, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 1, December 12, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 1, December 13, 1911.

33 SCAA, *Rapport du comité technique*, 70–72.

34 Joseph Schobbens, *Un labyrinthe souterrain gigantesque ou le réseau général d'égouts de l'agglomération anversoise: Éléments juridiques et administratifs sur la question* (Antwerp: Veritas, 1924).

35 August Mennes, *De Grootstad Antwerpen* (Antwerp: Katholieke Vlaamsche Schooluitbreiding, 1922), 37.

36 Claude, "Sanitary engineering," 163.

37 Mennes, *Pluviographische Metingen te Antwerpen*.

38 Schobbens, *Un labyrinthe souterrain*, 85—86.

39 Nick Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, eds., *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

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41 Mennes, *De Grootstad Antwerpen*, 33.

42 SCAA, subcommittee 23, November 22, 1927.

43 SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 17, 1925.

44 SCAA, subcommittee 25, November 6, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 23, July 26, 1937.

45 Mennes, *De Grootstad Antwerpen*, 39.

46 Provincie Antwerpen, *Ontwerp van Rioleering der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie* (Luik: Internationale Watertentoonstelling, 1939), 1–8; Georges Holvoet, *De Intercommunale Riolen-Collectors: De Rol der Provincie* (Antwerp: Provinciebestuur Antwerpen, 1938); Robert Picavet, *Baron Georges Holvoet: Magistraat 1899–1923, Gouverneur van de Provincie Antwerpen 1923–1945, Kabinetschef van de Prins-Regent 1944–1950* (Zellik: Roularta Books, 1998), 140–73.

47 Picavet, *Baron Georges Holvoet*, 172.

48 Picavet, *Baron Georges Holvoet*, 149 and 71. Mennes's eccentric behavior didn't really help him. He insisted on being addressed as 'Mr. Engineer' and had himself dropped off by taxi at every meeting.

49 SCAA, subcommittee 21, April 21, 1936.

50 See, for example, Files 388#1: "Dossiers over erelonen van externe urbanisten"; 1595#797: "Uitkeren van Erelonen aan Ir. A. Mennes"; 1595#1371: "Erelonen Ir. Mennes Surveyplannen"; MA#65790: "Ereloon Ir. Mennes voor het ontwerpen van rioleringen voor de randgemeenten," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

51 SCAA, subcommittee 24, January 24, 1923.

52 Jean Geyselinck, *L'Urbanisation de l'Agglomération Anversoise*, 1929, Antwerp.

53 Mennes, *Het Ontwerp*, 16.

54 Mennes, *Het Ontwerp*, 17.

55 De Block refers to scholars such as Aisenberg, Barles, La Berge, Gandy, Picon, Rabinow, De Meulder, Evans, Koch, and Baldwin in making her argument. De Block, "Ecological Infrastructure," 9.

56 Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 33.

57 Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning," 12.

58 Peleman, "Les Hommes de la Route," 14.

59 Peleman, "Les Hommes de la Route," 14.

60 Bestendige Vereniging der Belgische Wegencongressen, "Tweede Belgische Wegencongres: Verslag over de Werkzaamheden van het Congres en Verslagen" (Antwerp, 1933).

61 Michiel Dehaene, *Tuinieren in het Stedelijk Veld / Gardening in the Urban Field* (Ghent: A&S, 2013), 101.

62 Peleman, "Les Hommes de la Route," 279.

63 Engineer De Heem was, for instance, present at both the international conferences in London 1910 and in Ghent in 1913.

64 Richard Lemeunier and Paul De Heem, *Mode d'exécution des travaux de voirie, d'éclairage et d'adduction d'eau* (Paris: Imprimerie Générale Lahure, 1910).

65 SCAA, subcommittee 14, March 1, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 14, March 15, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 14, March 29, 1909.

66 The Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp contain hundreds of files from Lemeunier dated between 1900 and 1910 concerning the modernization of the city's road infrastructures. See: File: BE SA 199830: "Aanleggen nieuwe straten, onderhoud bestaande straten," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

67 Lemeunier and Heem, *Mode d'exécution*, 2.

68 Joseph Schobbens, *Des plantations routières et des constructions en recul le long de la Grande Voirie* (Brussels: Sanders, 1908), 3.

69 Schobbens, *Des plantations routières*, 8.

70 Schobbens, *Des plantations routières*, 12.

71 Schobbens, *Des plantations routières*, 24.

72 Schobbens, *Des plantations routières*, 13.

73 Raphaël Verwilghen, "Une nouvelle loi pour la protection des arbres et l'esthétique rurale," *Art et Technique* 4, no. 3 (1914): 17–18.

74 Franki, *De Tunnels onder de Schelde, Waaslandtunnel – Sint-Annatunnel, 1931–1933: Retrospektieve Tentoonstelling* (Liège: Franki, 1983).

75 Auguste Delbeke, *Openingsredevoering Gehouden op de Algemeene Vergadering van Donderdag 12 December 1912* (Antwerp: Van Os-De Wolf, 1912), 7.

76 See: File 506/108, folder 1910: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

77 SCAA, subcommittee 29, November 30, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 30, August 6, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 30, April 4, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 30, 7 April 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 30, May 12, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 31, December 8, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 13, May 22, 1911; SCAA, subcommittee 12, April 12, 1913.

78 For a complete overview of all Royal Decrees by 1912, see: Delbeke, *Openingsredevoering*.

79 *De Waarheid over de Werken in Antwerpen en het Omliggende en Minister Delbeke* (Antwerp: Van Os-De Wolf, 1910).

80 SCAA, subcommittee 20, March 3, 1910.

81 SCAA, subcommittee 2, September 5, 1935.

82 Almost all meetings from sections 11 and 12 were attended by both De Heem and Lemeunier; See: File 1059#4265: "Jan van Rijswijcklaan," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

83 See: File BE SA 272416: "Totstandkoming Groot Antwerpen 1920–1940," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

84 SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 7, 1925.

85 SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 7, 1925.

86 SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 7, 1925.

87 SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 17, 1925; SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 22, 1925; SCAA, subcommittee 36, 29 December 1925; SCAA, subcommittee 36, 6 January 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 36, 9 January 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 36, January 12, 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 36, January 14, 1926.

88 SCAA, subcommittee 36, January 9, 1926.

89 SCAA, subcommittee 36, January 9, 1926.

90 From 1946 onward Mennes's urban planning activities even earned him a place on the High Council of Urban Planning—an organism, presided by Emile Vinck, that was instated in the context of the provisional law on urbanism for postwar reconstruction.

91 SCAA, subcommittee 4, April 29, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 7, June 1, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 6, July 23, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 5, January 11, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 6, January 11, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 8, April 25, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 4, October 2, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 8, October 13, 1913.

92 Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 29.

93 SCAA, subcommittee 4, April 29, 1908.

[94] SCAA, subcommittee 18, August 2, 1919.
[95] Widths were limited on the Turnhoutschebaan through Antwerp and Borgerhout (22m), on the main road through *Berchem* intra-muros (25m), or at the passages of a number of villages, such as Mortsel, Merxem, or Wyneghem (30m). SCAA, subcommittee 6, July 23, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 4, July 13, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 7, July 24, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 23, December 23, 1911; SCAA, subcommittee 11, April 2, 1913.
[96] SCAA, subcommittee 4, September 25, 1919.
[97] SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 17, 1925; SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 29, 1925; SCAA, subcommittee 21, January 6, 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 36, December 20, 1937.
[98] SCAA, subcommittee 30, August 6, 1909.
[99] SCAA, subcommittee 30, April 3, 1912.
[100] SCAA, subcommittee 30, April 3, 1912.
[101] SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 11, 1938.
[102] SCAA, subcommittee 24, January 24, 1923 ; SCAA, subcommittee 21, March 7, 1928; SCAA, subcommittee 20, March 8, 1928; SCAA, subcommittee 25, December 2, 1930; SCAA, subcommittee 21, June 23, 1931; SCAA, subcommittee 21, January 12, 1932; SCAA, subcommittee 8, November 9, 1932; SCAA, subcommittee 21, April 20, 1936; SCAA, subcommittee 37, December 21, 1936; SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 26, 1937; SCAA, subcommittee 37, January 24, 1938; SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 19, 1938.
[103] Jens van de Maele, "Architectures of Bureaucracy: An Architectural and Political History of Ministerial Offices in Belgium, 1915–1940" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2019), 267.
[104] SCAA, subcommittee 37, December 21, 1936.
[105] SCAA, subcommittee 37, December 21, 1936.
[106] SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 26, 1937.
[107] SCAA, subcommittee 37, January 24, 1938.
[108] SCAA, subcommittee 37, January 24, 1938.
[109] Albert Dumont, *Etude de la voirie intercommunale du Grand-Bruxelles, partie est* (Brussels: UVCB, 1918).
[110] Géry Leloutre, "Une culture 'commune': L'urbanisme communal bruxellois ou la construction concertée d'une agglomération capitale," *Bruxelles Patrimoines*, no. 18 (2016).
[111] SCAA, subcommittee 20, March 8, 1937.
[112] SCAA, subcommittee 20, March 8, 1937.
[113] SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 11, 1938; SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 19, 1938.
[114] SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 26, 1937; SCAA, subcommittee 37, January 24, 1938.
[115] SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 11, 1938.
[116] See: File 506/108, folder 1910: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.
[117] See: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910."
[118] Paola Viganò, Bernardo Secchi, and Lorenzo Fabian, *Water and Asphalt: The Project of Isotropy* (Zurich: Park Books, 2016); Albert Pope, *Ladders* (Hudson: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997).
[119] SCAA, subcommittee 36, January 6, 1926.
[120] SCAA, subcommittee 23, May 9, 1908.
[121] SCAA, subcommittee 30, May 2, 1912.
[122] SCAA, subcommittee 12, December 23, 1908.
[123] See, for example, SCAA, subcommittee 12, February 12, 1910.
[124] SEE, Société de l'Electricité de l'Escaut (1905); PIDPA, Provinciale en Intercommunale voor Drinkwatervoorziening in de Provincie Antwerpen (1913); ARGIM, Antwerpsche regionale Gasbedeling Intercommunale (1922); AVIG, Antwerpsche Voorsteden Intercommunale Gasbedeling (1922); IGAH, Intercommunale Gasbedeling Antwerpen – Hoboken (1922); AWW, Antwerp Water Works (1880); CEA, Compagnie Electrique Anversois (1900); CICG, Compagnie Impéréale et Continentale du Gaz (1860).
[125] SCAA, subcommittee 21, April 20, 1936.
[126] Verwilghen, "Une nouvelle loi."

[127] Bruno Notteboom, "'Ouvrons les yeux!' Stedenbouw en Beeldvorming van het Landschap in België, 1890–1940" (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2009).
[128] SCAA, subcommittee 7, June 1, 1908 ; SCAA, subcommittee 4, July 25, 1908.
[129] SCAA, subcommittee 7, June 1, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 6, July 23, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 4, July 25, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 12, September 16, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 12, December 23, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 12, February 17, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 32, November 27, 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 11, June 17, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 4, October 2, 1913.
[130] Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree, *Land and Labour: Lessons from Belgium* (London: Macmillan, 1910); Grosjean, *Urbanisation sans urbanisme*.
[131] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 32.
[132] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 32.
[133] See: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910."
[134] Van Acker, *From Flux to Frame*, 335–51; Eric Keutgens, *De Antwerpse Tram: Van Paardetram tot Premetro, 1873–1979* (Antwerp: MIVA, 1980); Jos Neyens, *De Buurtspoorwegen in de Provincie Antwerpen, 1885–1968* (Lier: Van In, 1969); Herman Welter and Marius Broos, *Antwerpen op het Spoor* (Antwerp: De Vlijt, 1986).
[135] Welter and Broos, *Antwerpen op het Spoor*.
[136] SCAA, subcommittee 2, February 25, 1936.
[137] Welter and Broos, *Antwerpen op het Spoor*.
[138] SCAA, subcommittee 2, January 27, 1913.
[139] SCAA, subcommittee 2, June 22, 1925.
[140] SCAA, subcommittee 2, January 15, 1926.
[141] SCAA, subcommittee 2, May 22, 1909.
[142] SCAA, subcommittee 2, March 20, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 2, April 16, 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 13, 1911; SCAA, subcommittee 2, January 27, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 2, February 22, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 2, June 14, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 2, September 27, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 2, April 29, 1914; SCAA, subcommittee 2, January 15, 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 2, March 31, 1927; SCAA, subcommittee 2, October 25, 1928; SCAA, subcommittee 2, May 19, 1931; SCAA, subcommittee 2, May 9, 1933; SCAA, subcommittee 2, September 5, 1935.
[143] SCAA, subcommittee 2, March 31, 1927.
[144] SCAA, subcommittee 36, January 6, 1926 ; SCAA, subcommittee 2, January 15, 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 37, January 24, 1938.
[145] SCAA, subcommittee 2, February 25, 1936.
[146] SCAA, subcommittee 2, February 25, 1936.
[147] SCAA, subcommittee 2, February 25, 1936.
[148] Many neighborhoods in today's metropolitan regions that are lacking such porosity are struggling with problems of social segregation. For a description in the context of Greater Paris, see: Bernardo Secchi and Paola Viganò, *La ville poreuse: Un projet pour le Grand Paris et la métropole de l'après-Kyoto* (Geneva: MétisPresses, 2012).
[149] Bruno Latour, "A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps toward a Philosophy of Design (with Special Attention to Peter Sloterdijk)" (Networks of Design: 2008 Annual International Conference of the History of Design, University College Falmouth, BrownWalker Press, Irvine, 2009).
[150] Kaika, *City of Flows*, 24.
[151] De Block, "Ecological Infrastructure."

CHAPTER 3. THE QUESTION OF COLLECTIVE CONSUMPTION: GENERATIVE URBANIZATION AND SPATIAL DIFFERENTIATION SECURING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

[1] Auguste Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting der Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie Gehouden in het Provinciaal Bestuur van Antwerpen den 8 Februari 1908* (Antwerp: Van Neylen, 1908), 29.
[2] David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 29.

3 Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef, *Le Nouvel Anvers: Cité-Jardin* (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1907).
4 Mark Gottdiener, *Planned Sprawl, Private and Public Interests in Suburbia* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977); Harvey Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2 (1976).
5 Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine."
6 Henri Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968); Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital.*
7 Harlan Paul Douglas, *The Suburban Trend* (London: Century, 1925).
8 Leigh Gallagher, *The End of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream Is Moving* (New York: Penguin, 2013).
9 Louis H. Masotti and Jeffrey K. Hadden, eds., *The Urbanization of the Suburbs* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973), 17.
10 Nicholas A. Phelps, *Sequel to Suburbia: Glimpses of America's Post-Suburban Future* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).
11 Manuel Castells, *La question urbaine* (Paris: Maspero, 1972); Gottdiener, *Planned Sprawl*; Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital.*
12 Bert F. Hoselitz, *The Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960).
13 David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Andy Merrifield and Erik Swyngedouw, *The Urbanization of Injustice* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
14 The division of cities into rich, relatively well-served and networked suburbs, and poor, isolated neighborhoods, deprived of adequate facilities; the unequal exposure to the disadvantages of industrial development or the benefits of natural surroundings at a regional scale, etc. See, for instance: David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).
15 Phelps, *Sequel to Suburbia*, 65.
16 Phelps, *Sequel to Suburbia*, 63.
17 Phelps, *Sequel to Suburbia*, 41.
18 Castells, *La question urbaine.*
19 Jean Remy, *La ville: Phénomène économique* (Brussels: Editions Vie Ouvrière, 1966); Henri Lefebvre, "Le droit à la ville," *L'Homme et la Société* 6 (1967).
20 Lefebvre, "Le droit à la ville," 29.
21 On this topic, see Andy Merrifield, *The Amateur: The Pleasures of Doing What You Love* (London: Verso, 2017), 63–88.
22 Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville*; Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); David W. Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012).
23 Merrifield, *The Amateur*, 184–86.
24 Michiel Dehaene, *Tuinieren in het Stedelijk Veld / Gardening in the Urban Field* (Ghent: A&S, 2013), 82.
25 Hoselitz, *Sociological Aspects*.
26 Bernardo Secchi, *La ville du vingtième siècle* (Paris: Editions Recherches, 2009), 123; Arthur Cecil Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare* (London: Macmillan, 1912); Joseph Alois Schumpeter, *Ten Great Economists, from Marx to Keynes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).
27 Michiel Dehaene, "Horizontal Metropolis: Issues and Challenges of a New Urban Ecology: Statements," in *The Horizontal Metropolis between Urbanism and Urbanization*, ed. Paola Viganò, Chiara Cavalieri, and Martina Barcelloni Corte (Cham: Springer, 2018).
28 Secchi, *La ville du vingtième siècle*, 123–25.
29 SCAA, subcommittee 22, February 23, 1912.
30 SCAA, subcommittee 20, April 9, 1910.
31 SCAA, subcommittee 19, July 15, 1909.
32 SCAA, subcommittee 25, June 11, 1926.
33 SCAA, subcommittee 19, uly 15, 1909.

[34] On non-commodifiability, see: Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944); Karl Polanyi et al., *Les systèmes économiques dans l'histoire et dans la théorie* (Paris: Larousse, 1975).
[35] SCAA, subcommittee 22, February 23, 1912.
[36] SCAA, subcommittee 24, November 4, 1926.
[37] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 12.
[38] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 12.
[39] Ilja Van Damme et al., *Historical Atlas of Antwerp: Between Aspiration and Achievement* (Bussum: Toth, 2022).
[40] De Vos-Van Kleef, *Le Nouvel Anvers*, 65–66.
[41] Today, the Warande is known as the Albert Park.
[42] Bart Tritsmans, *Bomen Zijn Waardevolle Bijkomstigheden: Stedelijk Groen in Antwerpen, 1859–1973* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016).
[43] SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 25, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 10, April 17, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 10, April 24, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 15, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 10, June 3, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 10, July 9, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 10, July 19, 1909; SCAA, subcommittee 10, August 4, 1909.
[44] Joseph Schobbens, *Les parcs publics dans l'agglomération anversoise* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1924).
[45] German Planner Stübben told Schobbens that European cities should reserve about 10 percent of their territory for urban parks. In the case of Antwerp, this was not even 1 percent. See: SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 25, 1908.
[46] Helen Elizabeth Meller, *European Cities, 1890–1930s: History, Culture and the Built Environment* (Chichester: Wiley, 2001).
[47] Petra Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof: Vijf Eeuwen Parkgeschiedenis* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1997), 132.
[48] SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 25, 1908.
[49] SCAA, subcommittee 21, October 11, 1908.
[50] It were in particular working class municipalities lacking funds, and rural municipalities in which citizens could stroll in fields, that objected to expensive public parks. See: Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 126.
[51] As was often the case. See: Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).
[52] SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 25, 1908.
[53] SCAA, subcommittee 10, May 25, 1908.
[54] As long as it was not entirely clear what would happen with the military belt, all initiatives were frozen.
[55] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 8.
[56] Laura May, "Suburban Place-Making: Political Economic Coalitions and 'Place Distinctiveness' (Antwerp, c.1860– c.1940)" (PhD diss., University of Antwerp, 2020), 119.
[57] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 10.
[58] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 10.
[59] May, "Suburban Place-Making," 121.
[60] May, "Suburban Place-Making," 120–22.
[61] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 10.
[62] SCAA, subcommittee 20, 1 June 14, 1911.
[63] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 43.
[64] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 12; N.I. Crahay, *Verslag Aangaande de Goederen Geheeten: Boeckenberg en Teboulaer onder Deurne*, Studie-Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie (Antwerp, 1911).
[65] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 23.
[66] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 24–25.
[67] Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 131.
[68] Both deals were registered on November, 24, 1913. The new territorial boundaries were approved by law on May 26, 1914. See: Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*.

[69] SCAA, subcommittee 20, July 8, 1927.
[70] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 34.
[71] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 34.
[72] *Nécrologie Monsieur Joseph Schobbens … Décédé à Anvers, le 22 Juin 1939* (Brussels: 1939).
[73] Provincie Antwerpen, *50 Jaar Provinciale Elektriciteitsdienst: 1924–1974* (Antwerp: Provincie Antwerpen, 1974).
[74] *Onthulling van het Borstbeeld van den Heer J. Schobbens, Griffier der Provincie Antwerpen*, (Antwerp: 1941).
[75] The 1919 international competition for a greater Paris, for instance, yielded many ideas for new parks, none of which were realized, because the authorities lacked the right levers. See: Beatriz Fernandez Agueda, "Rationalizing the Greater City: The 1919 International Competition for Greater Paris," *Planning Perspectives* 32, no. 1 (2017).
[76] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 2.
[77] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 93.
[78] SCAA, subcommittee 30, May 2, 1912.
[79] SCAA, subcommittee 30, May 12, 1910.
[80] SCAA, subcommittee 19, January 22, 1920.
[81] SCAA, subcommittee 37, July 19, 1938.
[82] SCAA, subcommittee 20, January 15, 1913.
[83] SCAA, subcommittee 20, May 17, 1922.
[84] Joseph Schobbens, "Openbare Parken," *Maandschrift der Vereeniging voor Natuur- en Stedenschoon* 5, no. 4 (1926).
[85] Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*.
[86] SCAA, subcommittee 20, June 15, 1912.
[87] Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 147.
[88] SCAA, subcommittee 23, March 20, 1929.
[89] SCAA, subcommittee 23, March 20, 1929.
[90] SCAA, subcommittee 24, January 24, 1923; SCAA, *Wedstrijd voor den Aanleg van het Rivierenhof, Domein der Provincie Antwerpen te Deurne* (Antwerp: Provincie Antwerpen, 1922).
[91] Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 143–45.
[92] Tritsmans, *Bomen zijn Waardevolle Bijkomstigheden*.
[93] "Deurne: Heet dat nog een park?" *Maandschrift der Vereeniging voor Natuur- en Stedenschoon* 14, no. 9 (1935): 126.
[94] Bastijns, provincial councilor, as quoted in: Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 173.
[95] Maurice Dequeecker, "Wat Dient Gezegd," *Arbeiderstoerisme* 7, no. 9 (1935).
[96] Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 127—29.
[97] Schobbens, "Openbare Parken," 62–63.
[98] Jules Nobels, provincial councilor, as quoted in: Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 172.
[99] In Belgium, only the Josaphat Park in Schaerbeek had sports facilities.
[100] Antwerp Province, *Zwem- en Badinrichtingen in het Land en den Vreemde Bezocht, met het Oog op den Bouw van een Zwem- en Badgelegenheid in Rivierenhof* (Antwerp: Van Tilborg & Kenens, 1930).
[101] SCAA, subcommittee 23, March 20, 1929
[102] Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974), 405–15.
[103] Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, 95—105.
[104] Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 13–29.
[105] Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*.
[106] Joseph Schobbens, "Les parcs publics au point de vue social," *La Vie Economique et Sociale* 18 (1939): 1.
[107] Frans Van Kuyck as quoted in SCAA, subcommittee 20, November 25, 1909.
[108] SCAA, subcommittee 22, December 28, 1939.
[109] SCAA, subcommittee 20, March 12, 1913.
[110] SCAA, subcommittee 12, August 29, 1911.

[111] SCAA, subcommittee 22, February 7, 1934.
[112] SCAA, subcommittee 13, March 23, 1914.
[113] SCAA, subcommittee 21, January 13, 1927.
[114] SCAA, subcommittee 22, July 4, 1927.
[115] SCAA, subcommittee 22, May 24, 1932.
[116] SCAA, subcommittee 21, January 13, 1927.
[117] SCAA, subcommittee 27, December 22, 1919.
[118] SCAA, subcommittee 6, January 11, 1910.
[119] SCAA, subcommittee 23, June 6, 1936.
[120] SCAA, subcommittee 22, October 19, 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 22, May 2, 1933.
[121] SCAA, subcommittee 19, June 8, 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 23, July 25, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 25, November 25, 1930; SCAA, subcommittee 21, June 23, 1931; SCAA, subcommittee 21, May 26, 1931; SCAA, subcommittee 21, September 27, 1937.
[122] Hyppolite Geyselinck, *Le Grand-Anvers: Conférence donnée au Cercle Royal Artistique d'Anvers le 28 novembre 1931* (Antwerp: CRAA, 1931).
[123] Geyselinck, *Le Grand-Anvers*.
[124] Georges Holvoet, *Les grandes agglomérations urbaines* (Brussels: Ghiesbreght, 1937).
[125] Jean Remy, "À la Recherche d'une signification économique et sociale du développement urbain actuel," *Synthèses* 263/264 (1968): 43–44.
[126] Remy, "À la recherche," 43–44.
[127] For a similar interpretation, see: Secchi, *La ville du vingtième siècle*, 123–50.
[128] Herman Pas and Hugo Janssen, *Repertorium van Voorzieningen voor Kinderen en Jongeren in de Provincie Antwerpen* (Antwerp: Bond van Grote en Jonge Gezinnen, 1977).
[129] Marijke den Hollander, *Sport in 't Stad: Antwerpen, 1830–1914* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006).
[130] Christel Verswijvelen, "Royal Antwerp Golf Club," *'t Bruggeske*, 1989, 12; JH. Lagers, *Royal Antwerp Golf Club, 1888—1988* (Kapellen: RAGC, 1988).
[131] den Hollander, *Sport in 't stad*.
[132] Thierry Mandoul, *Sports, Portrait d'une Métropole* (Paris: Pavillon de l'Arsenal, 2014); Thierry Terret and Sandra Heck, eds., *Sport and Urban Space in Europe: Facilities, Industries, Identities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017); Steven A. Riess, *Sport in Industrial America, 1850—1920* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1995).
[133] RBAC, *Livre d'or du Royal Beerschot Athletic Club Antwerp, 1900–1950* (Edegem: RBAC, 1950), 21.
[134] RBAC, *Livre d'or*, 35.
[135] Delbeke shared many business interests with the Grisar family. See *Belgian State Gazette*, December 31, 1913, rubric 8209; *Belgian State Gazette*, December 31, 1911, rubric 7310.
[136] Roland Renson, *De VIIe Olympiade Antwerpen 1920: De Herboren Spelen* (Brussels: BOIC, 1985).
[137] Roelands Raymond, *Geschiedenis van Kasteeldomein 'Oude Gracht' in Hoogboom* (Kapellen: Hobonia, 2016).
[138] SCAA, subcommittee 25, January 15, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 25, January 18, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 25, November 7, 1925.
[139] *Belgian State Gazette*, 31 December 1925, rubric 645.
[140] *Belgian State Gazette*, 31 December 1925, rubric 7601.
[141] Lagers, *Antwerp Golf*, 21.
[142] den Hollander, *Sport in 't stad*, 165-69.
[143] Marc Brans, "Iets over het Poloplein van Hoogboom," *'t Bruggeske*, 2003.
[144] From a 1924 report of a meeting at the Athletic Club Cappellen quoted in: Brans, "Poloplein van Hoogboom," 132.
[145] Brans, "Poloplein van Hoogboom," 132.
[146] Renson, *Herboren Spelen*.
[147] Renson, *Herboren Spelen*, 10-13.
[148] See: File 506/108(28): "Letter from VII Olympic Comittee to Engineer Verhoustraete, june 10, 1919," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

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150 SCAA, subcommittee 19, January 22, 1920.
151 Chalkley Brian and Stephen Essex, "Urban Development through Hosting International Events: A History of the Olympic Games," *Planning Perspectives* 14, no. 4 (1999).
152 Roger Charlier, *L'extension urbaine de la ville d'Anvers aux XIXe & XXe siècles* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1945), 56.
153 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 56.
154 den Hollander, *Sport in 't stad*.
155 Dirk Willocx et al., *125 jaar Royal Antwerp F.C, 1880–2005* (Antwerp: Book & Media Publishing, 2005), 26.
156 Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 153.
157 Verdijck Alfred and Eugeen Nuyts, *RAFC, 1880–1930: Gedenkboek Uitgegeven ter Gelegenheid van het Vijftigjarig Bestaan van Royal Antwerp Football Club* (Antwerp: RAFC, 1930), 70.
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159 SCAA, subcommittee 21, May 6, 1926.
160 SCAA, subcommittee 21, May 6, 1926; SCAA, subcommittee 21, January 28, 1935; Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 71.
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162 Joseph Schobbens as quoted in SCAA, subcommittee 20, July 8, 1927.
163 SCAA, subcommittee 20, November 17, 1927.
164 RBS, *Gedenkboek: 1906–1931*, 147–70.
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166 Bert Moeyaert, "Van Wielerbaan tot … "Velo-droom": De Geschiedenis van het Baanwielrennen in België van 1890 tot 2003" (Master's thesis, KULeuven, 2003).
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168 Louis De Winter and Rik Hodister, *25 Jaar Sportpaleis: Gedenkboek Uitgegeven ter Gelegenheid van het Vijfentwintigjarig Bestaan van Sportpaleis Antwerpen* (Antwerp: Excelsior, 1958), 21.
169 SCAA, subcommittee 25, March 3, 1932.
170 De Winter and Hodister, *25 jaar Sportpaleis*, 37.
171 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 71. See also: SCAA, subcommittee 21, May 24, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 23, October 25, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 23, May 25, 1914; SCAA, subcommittee 21, February 11, 1923.
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173 Katleen Pittevils, *De Luchtaven van Deurne: Een Vergeten Pionier* (Brussels: Departement Mobiliteit en Openbare Werken, 2008).
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199 SCAA, subcommittee 35, January 31, 1924.
200 SCAA, subcommittee 35, January 31, 1924.
201 SCAA, subcommittee 35, January 31, 1924.
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203 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 71.
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207 Keutgens, *De Antwerpse tram*, 477–79.
208 Raphaël Verwilghen, "Les transports en fonction du plan régional: Rapport présenté à la conférence internationale de l'aménagement des villes," *La Cité* 5, no. 2 (1924).
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212 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 53.
213 Secchi, *La ville du vingtième siècle*, 132.
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215 It is not a coincidence that the horizontal metropolis has been framed as the produce of a history in between urbanism and urbanization. See: Paola Viganò, Chiara Cavalieri, and Martina Barcelloni Corte, *The Horizontal Metropolis: Between Urbanism and Urbanization* (Cham: Springer, 2018).

CHAPTER 4. THE HOUSING QUESTION: REAL ESTATE AGENCY AND THE URBANIZATION OF TAXES ON URBAN RENT

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5 Jean Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise*, 1929, Antwerp; Jan-Albert Goris, *Antwerpen: Een Statistiek Handboekje over de Jaren 1918–1928* (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1929).

6 Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef, *Le Nouvel Anvers: Cité-Jardin* (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1907); Marcel Smets, *De Ontwikkeling van de Tuinwijkgedachte in België: Een Overzicht van de Belgische Volkswoningbouw in de Periode van 1830 tot 1930* (Brussels: Mardaga, 1977).

7 Mennes, *De Grootstad Antwerpen*; Hyppolite Geyselinck, *Le Grand-Anvers: Conférence Donnée au Cercle Royal Artistique d'Anvers le 28 novembre 1931* (Antwerp: CRAA, 1931).

8 Patrick Pieters, "Het Ontmoetingsnetwerk van de Antwerpse Bankierselite aan de Vooravond van de Eerste Wereldoorlog" (Master's thesis, University of Antwerp, 2008).

9 Smets, *Ontwikkeling van de Tuinwijkgedachte*.

10 See, for instance: N.V. Het Oosterveldkwartier: *Belgian State Gazette*, September 9, 1908, acts 5047–5049; Groenenborger Tuinstede (Antwerpsche Uitbreiding): *Belgian State Gazette*, July 27, 1911, acts 4976–4977; S.A. Elsdonck: *Belgian State Gazette*, July 18, 1922, acts 8597–8598; S.A. Conforta, *Belgian State Gazette*, May 8, 1925, acts 5739–5741; Anvers Donck: *Belgian State Gazette*, December 31, 1925, acts 644–645; Te Boulaer Extension, *Belgian State Gazette*, July 19, 1928, act 11562; Hoogboom Extensions, *Belgian State Gazette*, August 13, 1937, acts 12356–12357.

11 See, for instance: Hoboken Centre: *Belgian State Gazette*, October 18, 1907, act 5347; Mortsel Extensions: *Belgian State Gazette*, July 20, 1911, act 4849; Edegem Extension: *Belgian State Gazette*, January 31, 1912, acts 985–986; Berchem-Extensions: *Belgian State Gazette*, April 30, 1923, act 4732; Merxem-Extensions: *Belgian State Gazette*, September 21, 1923, acts 9908–9909; S.A. Compagnie du Nord d'Anvers: *Belgian State Gazette*, December 8, 1927, act 14360; Deurne et Borgerhout Extensions: *Belgian State Gazette*, April 7, 1929, act 4553; Hoboken Extension, *Belgian State Gazette*, November 6, 1930, act 15542; Hoboken Ouest: *Belgian State Gazette*, November 25, 1931, act 8165; Immobilière de Berchem: *Belgian State Gazette*, August 26, 1936, act 12942.

12 See, for instance: S.A. pour L'Exploitation Commerciale et Industrielle de la Banlieue d'Anvers: *Belgian State Gazette*, December 23, 1905, act 87; S.A. Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises: *Belgian State Gazette*, July 15, 1910, act 4823; S.A. L'Agglomération Anversoise: *Belgian State Gazette*, April 23, 1933, act 4990.

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14 See, for instance: N.V. Vooruitzicht*: Belgian State Gazette*, February 23, 1905, act 876; N.V. Van Riel & Van Den Bergh*: Belgian State Gazette*: March 24, 1905, acts 1412–1413.

15 Christian Topalov, *Les promoteurs immobiliers: Contribution à l'analyse de la production capitaliste du logement en France* (Paris: Mouton, 1974), 285.

16 John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: California Press, 1987).

17 Tom Broes and Michiel Dehaene, "Real Estate Pioneers on the Metropolitan Frontier: The Works of Jean-Florian Collin and François Amelinckx in Antwerp," *Cities, Communities, and Territories*, no. 33 (2017); Laurence Heindryckx and Michiel Dehaene, "'Captains of Industry' of the Metropolitan Nexus: Private Mass Housing Development in Twentieth-Century Belgium," *Planning Perspectives* 38, no. 1 (2023).

18 Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 13.

19 David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 57.

20 Jean Remy and Liliane Voyé, *La ville et l'urbanisation: Modalités d'analyse sociologique* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1974).

[21] The possibility of building social relations outside the sphere of industrial production is what discerns urbanization from industrialization. See: Remy and Voyé, *La ville et l'urbanisation*.

[22] Bénédicte Grosjean, *Urbanisation sans urbanisme: Une histoire de la "ville diffuse"* (Wavre: Mardaga, 2010); Bruno De Meulder, "La loi relative aux habitations ouvrières du 9 août 1889 et la distribution géographique de la main d'oeuvre en Belgique: Les habitations ouvrières et la banlieue radieuse (1889–1914)," in *La politica della casa al inisio del XXe secolo*, ed. Donatella Calabi (Venice: Instituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, 1995).

[23] De Meulder, "La loi relative aux habitations ouvrières."

[24] Marcel Smets, "La Belgique ou la banlieue radieuse," in *Paysage d'architectures, catalogue d'exposition*, ed. Maurice Culot and Caroline Mierop (Brussels: Fondation de l'Architecture, 1986).

[25] Grosjean, *Urbanisation sans urbanisme*, 187.

[26] Grosjean, *Urbanisation sans urbanisme*, 202–88.

[27] Most often, the nexus between urbanism and public housing is emphasized. See, for instance: Chiara Monterumisi and Alessandro Porotto, "New Perspectives on the II CIAM Onwards: How Does Housing Build Cities?" *Urban Planning* 4, no. 3 (2019).

[28] Housing increasingly became part of the social division of labor characteristic of urbanizing societies. Topalov, *Les promoteurs immobiliers*; Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question* (Moscow: Progress Pulbishers, 1997).

[29] Topalov, *Les promoteurs immobiliers*, 279.

[30] Topalov, *Les promoteurs immobiliers*, 279.

[31] In Harvey's analysis, four different streams of capital structure market exchanges: (a) producer durables/built environment, (b) consumer durables/built environment (c) social expenditures (education, health, welfare, etc.), and (d) technological and scientific innovation. See: David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 8–13.

[32] Until 1935 financial institutions were not obliged to publish reports or figures on their activities. See: B. Heneau, "Het Bank- en Verzekeringswezen in Antwerpen tijdens het Interbellum," *Tijdschrift voor Economie en Management* 35, no. 4 (1990).

[33] Erik Buyst, *An Economic History of Residential Building in Belgium between 1890 and 1961* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 118–28.

[34] For instance: Banque Belge de Prêts Fonciers (1899), Crédit Foncier Sud-Américain (1903), Compagnie Immobilière et Agricole du Canada (1906), Société Foncière Belge-Argentine (1910), Crédit Immobilier Sud-Américain (1911), Société Foncière Belge-Canadienne (1911), Société Belge de Crédit Foncier (1912), Banque Hypothécaire et Immobilière d'Anvers (1913?). See: Pieters, "De Antwerpse bankierselite."

[35] Heneau, "Het Bank- en Verzekeringswezen," 356–58.

[36] Pieters, "De Antwerpse bankierselite," 64; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986).

[37] On the growing importance of finance capitalism around the turn of the century see: Rudolf Hilferding, *Das Finanzkapital: Eine Studie ueber die Juengste Entwicklung des Kapitalismus* (Vienna: Brand, 1910).

[38] Frank himself eventually became an important figure in the banking world. See: Camille Huysmans, *In Memoriam Monsieur Louis Franck, Gouverneur de la Banque Nationale* (Woluwé-St.-Pierre: 1938).

[39] Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973).

[40] Auguste Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting der Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie Gehouden in het Provinciaal Bestuur van Antwerpen den 8 Februari 1908* (Antwerp: Van Neylen, 1908), 38.

[41] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 39.

[42] Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 39.

[43] See: File Edouard Bunge, "Letter from Edouard Bunge to Ernest Bunge, 22 June 1907," Koninklijke Heemkring Hooghescote, Kapellen.

[44] Le Crédit Anversois, *L'Industrie Briquetière*, ed. Le Crédit Anversois, vol. 12, *La renaissance économique de la Belgique* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1918).

[45] See: File Kapitel, folder Steenbakkerij, "Constitution de la société anonyme Briquetterie Kapittel-Niel [notarial deed], May 5, 1923," Extensa Private Archives, Brussels.

[46] Smets, *Ontwikkeling van de Tuinwijkgedachte*, 9; Benoît Verhaegen, *Contribution à l'histoire économique des Flandres* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1961).

[47] Philippe Panerai, Jean Castex, and Jean-Charles Depaule, *Formes urbaines: De l'îlot à la barre* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 1997 (1975)).

[48] Richard Harris, "How Land Markets Make and Change Suburbs," in *Suburban Constellations: Governance, Land and Infrastructure in the 21st Century*, ed. Roger Keil (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2013).

[49] Topalov, *Les promoteurs immobiliers*, 278.

[50] Topalov, *Les promoteurs immobiliers*, 279.

[51] Broes and Dehaene, "Real Estate Pioneers."

[52] Robert Picavet, *Baron Georges Holvoet: Magistraat 1899–1923, Gouverneur van de Provincie Antwerpen 1923–1945, Kabinetschef van de Prins-Regent 1944–1950* (Zellik: Roularta Books, 1998).

[53] See: File 745/76, folder 3: "Letter from Baron Georges Holvoet to Baron Albéric Ruzette, dated 11 December 1923," *Archives of the Province of Antwerp*, Antwerp.

[54] See: File Actes de vente, 1: "Gheysens, Frédéric Auguste. "Convention della Faille [Notarial Deed], 27 May 1910," *Extensa Private Archives*, Brussels.

[55] Nest Lernout, "Berthoutstraat – Verkaveling Blockx," in *Mortsel Heemkundige Kring Jaarboek 2016*, ed. Bruno Gastmans (Mortsel: Mortsel Heemkundige Kring, 2016).

[56] See: File August Mennes. Retrieved from *Heemkundige Kring van Merksem,* Merksem.

[57] See: Files 388#1: "Dossiers over erelonen van externe urbanisten."; 1595#797: "Uitkeren van Erelonen aan Ir. A. Mennes."; 1595#1371: "Erelonen Ir. Mennes Surveyplannen."; MA#65790: "Ereloon Ir. Mennes voor het ontwerpen van rioleringen voor de randgemeenten." All in Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

[58] Renaat Braem and Francis Strauven, *Het Schoonste Land ter Wereld* (Leuven: Kritak, 1987), 83.

[59] Emmanuel Gerard and Frederik Verleden, *De Schaduw van het Interbellum: België van Euforie tot Crisis 1918–1939* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2017).

[60] Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital*.

[61] Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital*, 90–125.

[62] Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital*, 88.

[63] On 'the urban illusion', see: Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 160.

[64] Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 160–61.

[65] Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 160–61.

[66] David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

[67] Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974); Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (London: Arnold, 1983).

[68] Marx's *Capital* first appeared in French translations around the turn of the twentieth century. See: Karl Marx et al., *Le capital: Critique de l'économie politique* (Paris: Giard et Brière, 1902).

[69] Frédéric Borde, "Terre: Organe Hebdomadaire du Socialisme Rationnel et de la Ligue pour la Nationalisation du Sol," (1905-1909); Agathon de Potter, *Transition de l'appropriation individuelle du sol à son appropriation collective* (Brussels: Veuve Monnom, 1903).

[70] Camille Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière dans les communes belges* (Ghent: Volksdrukkerij, 1909), 4–5.

[71] Friedrich Engels, for instance, wrote, "To want to solve the housing question while at the same time desiring to maintain the modern big cities is an absurdity." See: Engels, *The Housing Question*, 48–49.

[72] Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière*, 9.

[73] Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière*, 43.

[74] Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière*, 43.

[75] Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière*, 30.

[76] Chamber of Representatives, *Acts*, April 24, 1908, p. 1134; April 30, 1908, p. 1715, and May 1, 1908, p. 1740.

77 Victor Devadder, *Les taxes communales de plus-value immobilière* (Brussels: Veuve Ferd. Larcier, 1908).

78 Devadder, *Les taxes communales de plus-value immobilière*, 39–40.

79 Devadder, *Les taxes communales de plus-value immobilière*, 37.

80 Devadder, *Les taxes communales de plus-value immobilière*, 1.

81 Raphaël Verwilghen, "L'Urbanisation du Grand-Anvers," *La Cité* 11, no. 1 (1932).

82 Broadly speaking, the 'undeserved' added value was calculated by subtracting the indexed purchase price plus all costs incurred by the owner to improve the property from the new sales price. The actual tax was a percentage of the difference, which increased significantly as the period between purchase and sale of the property became shorter. In this way, professional speculation and quick gains were taxed in particular. See: Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière*, 39–42.

83 See, for instance all interventions on *la plus-value immobilière* in Belgium's chamber of representatives. Session of March 17, 1911, session of June 29, 1911, session of June 30, 1911, session of December 13, 1912, session of December 22, 1913, session of December 23, 1913, session of June 3, 1920, session of August 12, 1920, session of January 16, 1924, session of January 17, 1924, session of December 16, 1927, session of February 18, 1930.

84 SCAA, subcommittee 9, July 12, 1909.
SCAA, subcommittee 9, November 4, 1909.

85 SCAA, subcommittee 9, July 12, 1909.

86 SCAA, subcommittee 9, July 12, 1909.

87 SCAA, subcommittee 9, July 12, 1909.

88 As Le Crédit Communal gave loans refundable at a rate of 4.25 percent over sixty-six years, direct taxes could never exceed 4.25 percent of the correspondent indirect taxes. SCAA, subcommittee 9, November 4, 1909.

89 SCAA, subcommittee 9, November 4, 1909.

90 Auguste Delbeke, *Openingsredevoering Gehouden op de Algemeene Vergadering van Donderdag 12 December 1912* (Antwerp: Van Os-De Wolf, 1912), 18–19.

91 See Files 718#1095: "Belasting op bouwen en herbouwen en belasting op nieuwe woningen door tijdelijke kwijtschelding van grondlasten 1912"; 589#88: "Belasting op het bouwen en herbouwen Antwerpen"; 1702#2897: "Belasting op het bouwen en herbouwen 1911–1920." All in Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp. See also: Stad Antwerpen, *Verordening, Belasting op de Bouwingen en Herbouwingen te Antwerpen: Belasting op de Afsluitingen* (Antwerp: 1910).

92 SCAA, subcommittee 25, July 10, 1922.

93 See: File 589#88: "Belasting op het bouwen en herbouwen, letter from Georges Holvoet to the Antwerp City Administration, dated 23; March 1935," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

94 See: File 589#88, "Belasting op het bouwen en herbouwen; Letter from Paul Berryer to Gaston Van de Werve de Schilde, dated 8 August 1922," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

95 Marx et al., *Le Capital*, 567.

96 Borde, "Terre"; De Potter, *Transition à l'appropriation collective*.

97 Huysmans referred to Amsterdam, Berlin, and London as cities making profit from surplus-values and urban rent themselves. See: Huysmans, *La plus-value immobilière*.

98 Geyselinck, *Le Grand-Anvers*.

99 Geyselinck, *Le Grand-Anvers*.

100 See: Files 1933#43450: "Detailtoegang op de dossiers bouwvergunningen"; 18#2833: "Detailtoegang op de dossiers bouwvergunningen," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

101 Dirk Laureys and Serge Migom, *Van Sprookjestuin tot Modelstad: Antwerpen 1930 en de Tentoonstellingswijk* (Antwerp: Provincieraad, 2005), 77.

102 Roger Charlier, *L'Extension urbaine de la ville d'Anvers aux XIXe & XXe siècles* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1945), 55.

103 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 59.

104 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 62.

105 Charlier, *L'extension urbaine*, 63–64.

[106] For such analyses, see: Andy Merrifield and Erik Swyngedouw, *The Urbanization of Injustice* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (2nd ed.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

[107] SCAA, subcommittee 20, July 31, 1912.

[108] Geyselinck, *Le Grand-Anvers*.

[109] See: File 506/108, folder 1910: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

[110] N. I. Crahay, *Verslag Aangaande de Goederen Geheeten: Boeckenberg en Teboulaer onder Deurne*, Studie-Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie (Antwerp, 1911), 15.

[111] In Extensa's private archives a series of intriguing booklets was found listing all plots that Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises ever sold between 1910 and 1985 (including plot characteristics, selling prices, and names and identification of all buyers). From these booklets, it was easy to recover all selling prices in the entire agglomeration at each and every moment throughout the twentieth century.

[112] Joseph Schobbens, *Les parcs publics dans l'agglomération anversoise* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1924), 9.

[113] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 10.

[114] Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 20. See also: SCAA, subcommittee 22, December 22, 1913.

[115] SCAA, subcommittee 22, December 22, 1913.

[116] SCAA, subcommittee 22, December 22, 1913.

[117] SCAA, subcommittee 20, 18 July 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 30 July 1910; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 17 March 1911; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 15 June 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 4 November 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 18 November 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 25 November 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 15 January 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 30 January 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 6 March 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 12 March 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 16 April 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 23 April 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 10 June 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 23 July 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 8 December 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 12 January 1914; SCAA, subcommittee 20, 19 February 1914.

[118] See: File Actes de vente, 1: "Gheysens, Frédéric Auguste. Convention della Faille [Notarial Deed], 27 May 1910." *Extensa Private Archives*, Brussels.

[119] See: File 506/108, folder 1910: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to Paul De Heem, dated 1 June 1910." *Archives of the Province of Antwerp*, Antwerp. See also: SCAA, subcommittee 23, 25 May 1914.

[120] SCAA, subcommittee 23, 25 May 1914.

[121] SCAA, subcommittee 23, 25 May 1914.

[122] SCAA, subcommittee 23, 25 May 1914.

[123] See: File Prins Boudewijnlaan: "Correspondance." *Extensa Private Archives*, Brussels. See also: "La Nouvelle Avenue Prince Baudouin sera inaugurée solennellement le 17 juin. Une route moderne répondant aux exigences du trafic moderne," *Le Matin*, 10 juin 1933.

[124] See file: *Studies for Historical Circle Wilricia,* De Geschiedenis van de Prins Boudewijnlaan [Draft Andreas Van Elshocht]. Retrieved from *Van Elshocht Private Archives*, Wilrijk.

[125] "Wat Privaat Initiatief Vermag. De Nieuwe Laan Berchem-Elsdonk-Kontich," *De Morgenpost*, 11 June 1933.

[126] SCAA, subcommittee 20, 22 November 1927.

[127] "La Nouvelle Avenue Prince Baudouin sera inaugurée solennellement le 17 juin. Une route moderne répondant aux exigences du traffic moderne," *Le Matin*, 10 June 1933.

[128] SCAA, subcommittee 20, 31 July 1912.

[129] SCAA, subcommittee 5, 11 January 1910.

[130] SCAA, subcommitee 25, 28 April 1926.

[131] SCAA, subcommitee 25, 20 May 1926.

[132] Engels, *The Housing Question*, 23.

[133] Vincent Vandewoude, "Metropoolvorming Antwerpse Agglomeratie: Analyse van de Eerste Twintig Jaar Werking van de Studie-Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpse Agglomeratie (1907–1927)" (Master's thesis, Universiteit Ghent, 2018).

[134] As soon as 1909, Schobbens was invested in the work of the protection the committee for workers' housing. See: Files 1317: "Joseph Schobbens," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

[135] SCAA, subcommittee 15, October 26, 1921; SCAA, subcommittee 15, January 19, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 27, April 25, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 27, July 11, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 30, November 7, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 19, November 20, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 27, December 5, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 20, February 26, 1923; SCAA, subcommittee 20, June 18, 1923.

[136] SCAA, subcommittee 15, October 26, 1921.

[137] Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*.

[138] On the dispute between Schobbens and Holvoet, see: Picavet, *Baron Georges Holvoet*, 178–90.

[139] See: Files: "Deed Booklets," Extensa private archives, Brussels.

[140] Devadder, *Les taxes communales de Plus-Value immobilière*, 9.

[141] Maurice Janssens, *Contribution de la propriété immobilière au redressement économique national* (Brussels: Wellens & Godenne, 1939).

[142] Janssens, *Contribution de la propriété immobilière*.

CHAPTER 5. THE QUESTION OF AESTHETICS: SPATIAL AGENCY AND *L'ESTHÉTIQUE INTÉGRALE* FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF URBANIZATION

1 George B. Ford, "The City Scientific," *Engineering Record* 67, no. 20 (1913): 260.

2 Nikolaus Pevsner, *Visual Planning and the picturesque* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010); Gordon Cullen, *Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1968); Kevin Lynch, *A Theory of Good City Form* (London: MIT Press, 1981); Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Jameson Frederick, "Architecture and the Critique of Ideology," in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

3 Leonardo Benevolo, *Storia della città* (Rome: Laterza, 1975), 12.

4 Hendrik Petrus Berlage, "Stedebouw (1915)," in *Het Idee van de Stad*, ed. Han Janselijn and Jan Brand (Arnhem: Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten, 1983), 234.

5 Cullen, *Townscape*; Lynch, *A Theory of Good City Form*; Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

6 Françoise Choay, *L'urbanisme, utopies et réalités: Une anthologie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965).

7 David W. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Jean Gottmann, *Economics, Esthetics and Ethics in Modern Urbanization* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962).

8 Gottmann, *Esthetics in Modern Urbanization*, 14–15.

9 Mark Gottdiener, *Planned Sprawl, Private and Public Interests in Suburbia* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977); David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

10 Thomas Sieverts, *Zwischenstadt: Zwischen Ort und Welt, Raum und Zeit, Stadt und Land* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1999), 103–29.

11 Gottmann, *Esthetics in Modern Urbanization*.

12 Loquet Floris, *L'avenir d'Anvers* (Antwerp: Janssens, 1916); Jan Van Aelst and Karel Peeters, *Conferentie van de Burgemeesters van de Antwerpse Agglomeratie, 1947–1957* (Antwerp: Stadsbestuur Antwerpen, 1958).

13 Apart from municipal architects that occasionally attended SCAA meetings: Van Not was city architect of Deurne; Vandenbroeck city architect of Edegem, and Van Rompaey city architect of Hoboken. See: SCAA, subcommittee 21, January 3, 1927; SCAA, subcommittee 19, February 6, 1939; SCAA, subcommittee 22, February 6, 1939.

14 Paul De Heem, *L'art de la construction et de l'embellissement des villes: L'exposition et le congrès de Londres (Town Planning Conference): Rapport de mission* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1912); Paul De Heem, *La construction des villes et cités-jardins à la conférence de Londres* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1921).

15 Amand de Lattin, "De Uitbreiding van Antwerpen," *Maandschrift der Vereeniging voor Natuur- en Stedenschoon* 11, no. 9 (1932): 131.

16 Planting strategies to improve the aesthetics of new neighborhoods were discussed at many SCAA meetings and were sometimes even central to the agenda. E.g.: SCAA, subcommittee 28, September 22, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 32, July 15, 1911; SCAA, subcommittee 32, October 9, 1919.

17 SCAA, subcommittee 6, July 23, 1908 ; SCAA, subcommittee 12, December 23, 1908; SCAA, subcommittee 12, February 17,1910; SCAA, subcommittee 20, November 4, 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 32, November 27, 1912; SCAA, subcommittee 11, June 17, 1913; SCAA, subcommittee 25, January 15, 1922; SCAA, subcommittee 25, February 26, 1934; SCAA, subcommittee 20, December 20, 1937.

18 SCAA, subcommittee 21, September 17, 1909.

19 SCAA, subcommittee 12, August 29, 1911.

20 SCAA, subcommittee 23, September 27, 1937.

21 On coping with contingency, see: Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2009), 45–61.

22 According to William Rasch, contingency is quite simply, the fact that things could be otherwise than they are. See: William Rasch, *Niklas Luhmann's Modernity: The Paradoxes of Differentiation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

23 Ford, "The City Scientific."

24 Camillo Sitte, *Der Städtebau nach seinen Künstlerischen Grundsätzen* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2002).

25 Auguste Delbeke, "Verslag aan den Koning, 1907," in *Studiecommissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie: Wedstrijd voor het Benuttigen der Beschikbare Gronden ten Gevolge de Slechting der Versterkte Omheining van Antwerpen*, ed. Ministerie van Landbouw en Openbare Werken (Antwerp: SCAA, 1911), 12.

26 Lombaerde and Spitaels, "Architectuur, Stedenbouw en Verkeer," 218; Oliver Hermann Karnau, *Hermann Joseph Stübben: Städtebau 1876–1930* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1996); Maarten Van Acker, *From Flux to Frame: Designing Infrastructure and Shaping Urbanization in Belgium* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014).

27 Auguste Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting der Commissie tot Inrichting der Antwerpsche Agglomeratie Gehouden in het Provinciaal Bestuur van Antwerpen den 8 Februari 1908* (Antwerp: Van Neylen, 1908), 16–19.

28 Jean Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise*, 1929, Antwerp.

29 Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération*, 9.

30 Alfred Portielje, "Town Planning in Antwerp: Past and Future," *Town Planning Review* 6, no. 2 (1915): 124.

31 Many authors have done this extensively. See, for instance: Karnau, *Hermann Joseph Stübben*; Louis Hautecoeur, Henry Lacoste, and Joseph Marrast, *L'oeuvre de Henri Prost: Architecture et urbanisme* (Paris: Académie d'architecture, 1960); Laurent Hodebert, "Henri Prost et le projet d'architecture du sol urbain (1910–1959)," in *Le sol des villes: Ressources et projets*, ed. Paola Viganò and Panos Mantziaras (Geneva: MétisPresses, 2016).

32 Delbeke, *Plechtige Aanstellingszitting*, 26.

33 Floris, *L'avenir d'Anvers*.

34 Hodebert, "Architecture du sol urbain."

35 Hodebert, "Architecture du sol urbain."

36 This association was founded by Ernest Stordiau in 1905 and consisted of the Société Centrale d'Architecture en Belgique, Société Royale des Architectes d'Anvers, Chambre Syndicale des Architectes de Belgique, L'Association des Architectes de Bruxelles, L'Association des Architectes de Liège, Kring voor Bouwkunde d'Anvers, Société des Architectes du Centre, Société des Architectes de la Flandre Orientale, Association des Architectes des Provinces de Namur et du Luxembourg, and finally the Kring der Bouwmeesters van Brugge. See: File 1317, Joseph Schobbens, Correspondentie: "Letter from FSAB to Joseph Schobbens, dated 15 March 1915," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

37 "Letter from FSAB to Joseph Schobbens, dated 15 March 1915."

38 "Letter from FSAB to Joseph Schobbens, dated 15 March 1915."

39 In the archives containing Schobbens's correspondence, a handwritten response letter was found that shows how he partly crossed out his first firm reaction in order to give it a milder tone. See: File 1317, Joseph Schobbens, folder Correspondentie: "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to FSAB, dated 18 March 1915," Archives of the Province of Antwerp, Antwerp.

40 "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to FSAB, dated 18 March 1915."

41 "Letter from Joseph Schobbens to FSAB, dated 18 March 1915."

42 D.P.S., *Exposition Anvers-Extension: Principes pour guider le visiteur, AVERTISSEMENT* (Antwerp, 1910).

43 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 1.

44 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 4.

45 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 5.

46 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 5.

47 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 1.

48 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 7.

49 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 7.

50 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 1.

51 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENT*, 17.

52 Marvin Trachtenberg, *Building-In-Time: From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

53 D.P.S., *AVERTISSEMENTS*, 17.

54 Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef, "Tentoonstelling Antwerpen-Uitbreiding," *De Bouwgids* 5, no. 3 (1913): 58.

55 Lombaerde and Spitaels, "Architectuur, Stedenbouw en Verkeer"; Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération*.

56 Floris, *L'avenir d'Anvers*, 45.

57 Portielje, "Town Planning in Antwerp," 124.

58 See: File Ma#88546, Slechten Der Wallen: "Terreins de l'Enceinte fortifiée et terrains du Nord, 22 February 1935," Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief], Antwerp.

59 Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 28.

60 Till, *Architecture Depends*, 52.

61 Till, *Architecture Depends*, 53.

62 Till, *Architecture Depends*, 53.

63 Till, *Architecture Depends*, 53.

64 Till, *Architecture Depends*, 53.

65 Perhaps it is telling that the counterideology to 'liberal irony' comes from feminist thinking. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988).

66 Because situated practitioners might become answerable, situated knowledge implies that they take responsibility for their 'enabling practices' and position them firmly in the political and ethical arena. Situated knowledge sees opportunities in the particular and does not look for problems to be solved in the universal scheme of things. Situated knowledge is partial knowledge, but this self-confessed partiality, in all its honesty and modesty, is a bonus, not a deficit. See: Till, *Architecture Depends*, 60.

67 Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991), 192.

68 Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till, eds., *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2011), 31. The authors paraphrase Giddens: Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 14.

69 Till, *Architecture Depends*, 98.

70 Casus, "Over de Kunstopvoeding van den Bouwmeester," *De Bouwgids* 3, no. 1 (1911): 69; Casus, "Over de Kunstopvoeding van den Bouwmeester"; Richard Chafee, "The Teaching of Architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts," in *The Architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts*, ed. Arthur Drexler

(London: Secker and Warburg, 1977); Andrés Duany, "The Beaux-Arts Model," in *Windsor Forum on Design Education: Toward an Ideal Curriculum to Reform Architectural Education*, ed. Stephanie Bothwell et al. (Miami: New Urban Press, 2004).

71 Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef, "De Oude Garde en de Jonge Wacht," *De Bouwgids* 4, no. 3 (1912); Dirk Laureys, "De Oude Garde en de Jonge Wacht: Het Architectuurdebat tijdens het Interbellum," in *Bouwen in Beeld: De Collectie van het Architectuurarchief van de Provincie Antwerpen*, ed. Willem Aerts and Dirk Laureys (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).

72 Gottmann, *Esthetics in Modern Urbanization*, 4.

73 Editors De Bouwgids, "Aan Onze Lezers," *De Bouwgids* 3, no. 1 (1911): 1.

74 Casus, "Over de Kunstopvoeding van den Bouwmeester," 19.

75 KMBA, "Inrichting der Urbanisatie in België," *KMBA: Maandschrift der Koninklijke Maatschappij der Bouwmeesters van Antwerpen* 6, no. 4 (1935): 109.

76 Gottmann, *Esthetics in Modern Urbanization*, 4.

77 Henri Lefebvre and Łukasz Stanek, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment [Vers une architecture de jouissance]* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 20.

78 The architect is equally capable of addressing a register ranging from furniture over gardens to parks and landscapes. See: Henri Lefebvre, "Préface," in *L'habitat pavillonnaire*, ed. Henri Raymond et al. (Paris: Centre de Recherche d'Urbanisme, 1971).

79 Lefebvre and Stanek, *Vers une architecture de jouissance*, 4–5.

80 Lefebvre and Stanek, *Vers une architecture de jouissance*, xxxvi–xxxvii.

81 That doesn't mean that all local architects were situated practitioners pur sang.

82 Awan, Schneider, and Till, *Other Ways of Doing Architecture*, 33.

83 For a more detailed elaboration, see: Tom Broes and Michiel Dehaene, "From Artistry to Agency? Transactional Architecture for the Creative Fashioning of the Antwerp Suburbs in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Creativity from Suburban Nowheres: Rethinking Cultural and Creative Practices*, ed. Ilja Van Damme, Ruth McManus, and Michiel Dehaene, Global Suburbanisms (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023).

84 Portielje, "Town Planning in Antwerp"; Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef, *Le Nouvel Anvers: Cité-Jardin* (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1907).

85 Other magazines appeared in Antwerp in the period 1907–1939, such as for instance the *Bouwkunde* magazine. But they ran much shorter and were less influential.

86 Bouwgids, "Aan Onze Lezers," 1.

87 KMBA, "Aan den Lezer," *KMBA: Maandschrift der Koninklijke Maatschappij der Bouwmeesters van Antwerpen* 1, no. 1 (1930): 1.

88 De Vos-Van Kleef, *Le Nouvel Anvers*.

89 Which is in line with the reception of the garden-city rhetoric in mainland Europe at that time. See: Jean Bary, *Les cités-jardins: Villas et cottages* (Hasselt: Jos Van Langenacker, 1910); Marcel Smets, *De Ontwikkeling van de Tuinwijkgedachte in België: Een Overzicht van de Belgische Volkswoningbouw in de Periode van 1830 tot 1930* (Brussels: Mardaga, 1977).

90 In the Belgian context, 1930 was a symbolic year for the introduction of modernism, as the 3rd CIAM congress was hosted in the Palais Des Beaux Arts in Brussels in the autumn of 1930. See: Victor Bourgeois, "IIe Internationaal Kongres voor Moderne Bouwkunst," *KMBA: Maandschrift der Koninklijke Maatschappij der Bouwmeesters van Antwerpen* 1, no. 6 (1930).

91 Ludwig Hilberseimer, Richard Anderson, and Pier Vittorio Aureli, *MetropolisArchitecture and Selected Essays*, 2nd. ed. (New York: GSAPP Books, 2013).

92 De Vos-Van Kleef, *Le Nouvel Anvers*, 16.

93 Tom Broes and Michiel Dehaene, "Real Estate Pioneers on the Metropolitan Frontier: The Works of Jean-Florian Collin and François Amelinckx in Antwerp," *Cities, Communities, and Territories*, no. 33 (2017).

94 KMBA, "Inrichting der Urbanisatie in België," 109.

95 De Heem, *La construction des villes*, 6.

96 Hilberseimer, Anderson, and Aureli, *MetropolisArchitecture*, 133.

[97] Inge Bertels, "Building Contractors in Late Nineteenth-Century Belgium: From Craftsmen to Contractors," in *L'histoire de la construction: Relevé d'un chantier européen*, ed. Antonio Becchi, Robert Carvais, and Joël Sakarovitch (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018); Jelena Dobbels, "Becoming Professional Practitioners: A History of General Contractors in Belgium (1870–1970)" (PhD diss. VUB, 2018); Maurice Culot et al., eds., *Blaton: Une dynastie de constructeurs* (Brussels: CIVA, 2018).

[98] Inge Bertels, "Building the City: Antwerp 1819–1880" (PhD diss., Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2008), 201–2.

[99] Bertels, "Building the City," 201–2.

[100] Bestendige Vereniging der Belgische Wegencongressen, "Tweede Belgische Wegencongres: Verslag over de Werkzaamheden van het Congres en Verslagen" (Antwerp, 1933).

[101] De Vos-Van Kleef, "De Oude Garde en de Jonge Wacht."

[102] Victor Horta and Henry Van de Velde, *Rationalisation de l'habitation et de l'industrie du bâtiment* (Brussels: SBUAM, 1933), 7.

[103] Entreprises Générales de Constructions Van Riel & Van den Bergh, *Entreprises Générales de Construction, Van Riel & Van den Bergh, Société Anonyme, Rue Lamorinière 159, Anvers* (Antwerp: 1930).

[104] Tom Broes, "The Architect, the Contractor and the Developer: The Rise and Fall of Real-Estate Architecture in Belgium, 1918–1985," in *The Apartment Building*, ed. Benoît Burquel and Martin Dumont (Brussels: REA ASBL, 2018).

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[114] Dirk De Vos-Van Kleef, "Tuinwijk Vredeburg," *De Bouwgids* 16, no. 9 (1924): 165.

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[116] De Vos-Van Kleef, "Tuinwijk Vredeburg," 165.

[117] De Vos-Van Kleef, "Tuinwijk Vredeburg," 168.

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[122] Collin, *L'épargne immobilière*, 273–78.

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[125] Broes and Dehaene, "Real Estate Pioneers."

[126] Jos Oostvogels, *Handleiding voor de Bouwverordeningen van de Provincie Antwerpen: met Toelichtingen* (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1937).

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[130] Edward Leonard, "Gebouw, Omgeving en Tijd," in *Voor 's Lands Wederopbouw: Korte Opstellen over Bouwkunst*, ed. Edward Leonard (Amsterdam: Maatschappij voor Goede en Goedkope Lectuur, 1916), 89. Arguably, Leonard's approach toward aesthetics is in tune with what thinkers such as Marvin Trachtenberg and Trystan Edwards describe as the 'dominion of the eye', or 'inflection' respectively—concepts that go back to premodern modalities of urban accumulation. See: Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time*; Trystan Edwards, *Architectural Style* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1926).

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[136] Oostvogels, *Handleiding voor de Bouwverordeningen*, 481–82.

[137] Oostvogels, *Handleiding voor de Bouwverordeningen*, 251.

[138] Oostvogels, *Handleiding voor de Bouwverordeningen*, 429.

[139] Oostvogels, *Handleiding voor de Bouwverordeningen*, 260.

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CHAPTER 6. THE SOCIOCULTURAL QUESTION: URBANIZATION AS THE WORK OF CITY-AMATEURS

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List of Abbreviations

AGHTM — *Association Générale des Hygiénistes et Techniciens Municipaux / General Association of Municipal Hygienists and Technicians*
AGIAHM — *Association Générale des Ingénieurs, Architectes et Hygiénistes Municipaux* / General Association of Municipal Engineers, Architects and Hygienist
ARGIM — *Antwerpsche Regionale Gasbedeling Intercommunale / Antwerp Regional Gas Distribution Intermunicipal Association*
AVIG — *Antwerpsche Voorsteden Intercommunale Gasbedeling / Antwerp Suburbs Gas Distribution Intermunicipal Association*
AWW — *Antwerpse Water Werken* / *Antwerp Water Works*
BAC — *Beerschot Athletic Club*
CEA — *Compagnie Électrique Anversois / Antwerp Electric Company*
CETP — *Cercle des Entrepreneurs des Travaux Publics / Public Works Entrepreneurs Circle*
CGTA — *Compagnie Générale des Tramways d'Anvers / General Tramway Company of Antwerp*
CICG — *Compagnie Impériale et Continentale du Gaz / Imperial and Continental Gaz Company*
FSAB — *Fédération des Sociétés des Architectes de Belgique / Federation of Belgian Architects' Associations*
IGAH — *Intercommunale Gasbedeling Antwerpen – Hoboken / Intermunicipal Gas Distribution Antwerp – Hoboken*
KMBA — *Koninklijke Maatschappij der Bouwmeesters van Antwerpen / Royal Society of Antwerp Architects*
KVB — *Kring voor Bouwkunde / Circle for Building Arts*
KVNS — *Koninklijke Vereniging voor Natuur- en Stedenschoon / Royal Association for Natural and Urban Beauty*
NMBS — *Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen / National Company of Belgian Railways*
NMVB — *Nationale Maatschappij van Buurtspoorwegen / National Company of Vicinal Railways*
OREC — *Office de Redressement Économique / Office for Economic Recovery*
RAFC — *Royal Antwerp Football Club*
SAPA — *Société des Amis des Parcs d'Anvers / Society of Antwerp Park Friends*
SCAA — *Studiecommissie voor de Ontwikkeling van de Antwerpse Agglomeratie* / *Study Committee for the Development of the Antwerp Agglomeration*
SEE — *Société de l'Electricité de l'Escaut / Scheldt Electric Company*
TCB — *Touring Club de Belgique / Touring Club of Belgium*
UIV — *Union Internationale des Villes / International Union of Cities*
UVCB — *Union des Villes et des Communes Belges / Union of Belgian Cities and Municipalities*

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– *Records on the Governors*
– *Records on road infrastructure for the Antwerp agglomeration*
– *Records on public works: Alignment plans of municipalities*
– *Records on the study committee for the development of the Antwerp agglomeration*
– *Records on the left bank*
– *List of maps and drawings*
– *Plan register of the department of Bridges and Roads*

APA—Antwerpen Provinciaal Archief (Archives of the Province of Antwerp):
– *Records on the provincial technical service: Development of the Antwerp agglomeration*
– *Records on correspondence of Joseph Schobbens*

SAA—Stadsarchief Antwerpen (Antwerp City Archives [Felixarchief]):
– *Records on the city's government*
– *Records on the internal workings of the city*
– *Records on public works*
– *Records on municipalities prior to their annexation to Antwerp*
– *Inventory of building applications* (database)
– *Inventory of pictures* (database)

AAPA—Architecturale Archieven van de Provincie Antwerpen (Architectural Archives of the Province of Antwerp):
– *Records on the Royal Circle of Antwerp Architects*
– *Records on Cols & De Roeck*
– *Records on Portielje & De Braey*

FRV—Fonds Raphaël Verwilghen, KULeuven (Fund Raphaël Verwilghen, KULeuven)
– *Records on De Heem, Schobbens, and Antwerp.*

EHC—Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience (Heritage Library Hendrik Conscience).
– *Plans of Mennes and De Heem*

VIOE—Vlaams Instituut voor Onroerend Erfgoed (Flemish Heritage Institute, Brussels).
– *Records on Braem and Mennes*

HKW—Heemkundige Kring Wilrijk, Wilricia (History Circle Wilrijk).

HKH—Heemkundige Kring Hoghescote, Kapellen & Brasschaat (History Circle Hoghescote)

HKHo—Heemkundige kring Hobuechen, Hoboken (History Circle Hobuechen)

HKB—Heemkundige kring Berchem (History Circle Berchem)

HKM—Heemkundige kring Mortsel (History Circle Mortsel)

KKHM—Koninlijke Kring voor Heemkunde Merksem (Royal History Circle Merksem)

DAN—Documentatiecentrum Antwerpse Noorderpolders (Documentation Centre Antwerp Northern Polders)

EPA—Extensa Private Archieven (Extensa Private Archives)

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Illustration Credits

Fig. I.1 Collage by author. 20
Fig. I.2 *Demografie van België van 1921 tot 1939*, 1944 23
Fig. I.3 Produced by author. Pictures: Willy Boesiger, Pierre Jeanneret, et Le Corbusier, *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret: Oeuvre complète de 1910–1929*; Louis Van der Swaelmen, *Préliminaires D'art Civique,* 1916; Howard, Ebenezer, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow,* 1898. 25
Fig. I.4 Map produced by author. Pictures: La Métropole, August 29, 1929. 28
Fig. I.5 Covers: Stadsarchief Antwerpen (Antwerp City Archives, henceforth SAA), 1369#7072. Minutes: Archives of the Province of Antwerp (henceforth APA), Depot nr. 506/107–109. 29
Fig. 1.1 Map: SAA, 534#115, traced by author. Pictures from booklet series *In Oude Prentkaarten, 1970s*. 35
Fig. 1.2 Covers: UVCB, ed., *L'Administration et l'urbanisation*, 1925; J. Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise*, 1929 ; UVCB, ed., *Urbanisation habitation,* 1931. 37
Fig. 1.3 Drawing by author. Sketch: Michiel Dehaene, "Horizontal Metropolis: Issues and Challenges," 2018. 39
Fig. 1.4 Covers: Georges Holvoet, *Les Grandes agglomérations*, 1937; Albert Houtart, *Urbanisme en de Wet,* 1937; Louis Fredericq, *Urbanisatie en Provincie*, 1938: Cover; Hubert Verwilghen, *Over de gemeentelijke bouwreglementen,* 1938. 47
Fig. 1.5 Infographic produced by author based on records from APA. 50
Fig. 1.6 Infographic produced by author, based on data from: Heylen, Steve, Bart De Nil, and Bart D'hondt, *Geschiedenis van de Provincie Antwerpen*, 2005. 52
Fig. 1.7 Infographic produced by author based on records from APA. 54
Fig. 1.8 SAA, 1369#7072, traced by author; Rijksarchief Antwerpen (State Archives Antwerp, henceforth RAA), Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, B368, traced by author. 56
Fig. 1.9 Infographic produced by author, based on published work of the SCAA's members. 60
Fig. 1.10 APA, Depot nr. 1317. 62
Fig. 2.1 Map: SCAA, *Rapport sur l'écoulement des eaux naturelles,* 1912. Picture: SAA, FOTO#42644. 71
Fig. 2.2 SAA, 534#505, traced by author. 73
Fig. 2.3 SAA, 534#258. 74
Fig. 2.4 SAA, 534#27, traced by author. 75
Fig. 2.5 SAA, 534#34, traced by author, and 534#51. 76
Fig. 2.6 SAA, 534#26, traced by author. 77
Fig. 2.7 Bestendige vereniging der Belgische Wegencongressen, *Tweede Belgische Wegencongres,* 1933. 82
Fig. 2.8 Map: Georges Labrique, *Les Grand'Routes modernes en Belgique,* 1935. Picture: SAA, FOTO 1400#378. 85
Fig. 2.9 RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, B472, traced by author, and F50. SAA, 1500#5866. 87
Fig. 2.10 RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, D86, D68. RAA, Rooi- en onteigenings-plannen, Merksem. SAA, MA#65790. 89
Fig. 2.11 Extensa Private Archives (henceforth EPA). 90
Fig. 2.12 SAA, SA028122, 12#4291. 90
Fig. 2.13 SAA, SA060020. 92
Fig. 2.14 Produced by author, based on records from: RAA, Rooi-en onteigeningsplannen. 93
Fig. 2.15 Produced by author, based on: RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, D101, B0565, D054. 94
Fig. 2.16 Paul De Heem, "Conférence donnée," 1932. 96

Fig. 2.17 Author's private collection. 97
Fig. 2.18 SAA, 12#12528. RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5175/1410. 100
Fig. 2.19 Maps: RAA, Rooi-en onteigeningsplannen, Merksem and Mortsel. 101
Fig. 2.20 August Mennes, *De Grootstad Antwerpen*, 1922. 103
Fig. 3.1 Produced by author. Original images: Ludo Van Bouwel, *Sint-Mariaburg 75 jaar*, 1973; Paul Bogaerts, Rik De Smedt, and Lieven Gorissen, *Metamorfose: 100 Jaar Sint-Mariaburg*, 1997; Eddy Vaes, and Lycoris Vaes, *Sint-Mariaburg rond 1900*, 1997. 113
Fig. 3.2 Produced by author. Original maps: Joseph Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 1924; SAA, 571#50; RAA, Plannenregister departement Bruggen en Wegen, F112. 116
Fig. 3.3 RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, C126, B343. 117
Fig. 3.4 Paul De Heem, "Conférence donnée," 1932. 120
Fig. 3.5 Joseph Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 1924. 122
Fig. 3.6 Joseph Schobbens, *Les parcs publics*, 1924. Extra map: RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5195/1424. 123
Fig. 3.7 Map: RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, B343. Picture: SAA, FOTO#1881. 123
Fig. 3.8 Produced by author. Original maps: RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, F116; SAA, MA#65790. 124
Fig. 3.9 Private collection; Nationaal archief Nederland, Fotocollectie Spaarnestad, foto 492007. 126
Fig. 3.10 Petra Rebmann, *Het Rivierenhof*, 1997. 127
Fig. 3.11 Map: RAA, Rooi- en onteigeningsplannen, Borsbeek. Pictures: Koninlijke Kring voor Heemkunde Merksem (Royal History Circle Merksem, henceforth KKHM); Heemkundige Kring Wilrijk (History Circle Wilrijk, henceforth HKW). 129
Fig. 3.12 SAA, 2036#303; HKW. 129
Fig. 3.13 Produced by author. Based on scheme by: Marijke den Hollander, *Sport in 't stad*, 2006. 133
Fig. 3.14 Map: RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5176/1411. Pictures: Heemkundige Kring Hoghescote (History Circle Hoghescote, henceforth HKH). 134
Fig. 3.15 Documentatiecentrum Antwerpse Noorderpolders (Documentation Centre Antwerp Northern Polders, henceforth DAN), August Mennes, Gemeente Eeckeren: Hoogboomsche Steenweg. 135
Fig. 3.16 Map: SAA, 12#4914. Picture: RBAC, *Livre d'or du Royal Beerschot Athletic Club*, 1950. 137
Fig. 3.17 Map: SAA, MA#65790. Picture: RAFC, *RAFC, 1880-1955*, 1955. 137
Fig. 3.18 Royal Berchem Sport, *Royal Berchem Sport gedenkboek*, 1931. 139
Fig. 3.19 SAA, SA060047. 140
Fig. 3.20 Author's private collection. 140
Fig. 3.21 SAA, 12#8881, traced by author. 145
Fig. 3.22 SAA, SA172007. 149
Fig. 4.1 RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5172/1409, traced by author. 154
Fig. 4.2 EPA. 156
Fig. 4.3 RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5131/1377; RAA, Plannenregister Bruggen en Wegen, F117; KKHM, Merksem; traced by author. 163
Fig. 4.4 Produced by author. Based on records from RAA, Openbare Werken, Rooi-en onteigeningsplannen; RAA, Plannenregister departement Bruggen en Wegen, F117. 164
Fig. 4.5 Produced by author. Original maps: SAA, 534#27, 534#26. 165
Fig. 4.6 Huysmans, Camille, *La Plus-Value immobilière*, 1909; Devadder, Victor, *Les taxes communales*, 1908. 169
Fig. 4.7 SAA, 1059#5201. 174
Fig. 4.8 RAA, Openbare Werken, Rooi-en onteigeningsplannen, Merksem. 175
Fig. 4.9 EPA. 177
Fig. 4.10 EPA. 178
Fig. 4.11 Produced by author, based on original records from EPA. 179
Fig. 4.12 Map: RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5113/1364. Clippings: Gazet van Antwerpen (henceforth GVA, June 25, 1930, December 31, 1932; De Morgenpost (henceforth DMP), June 11, 1933. 181

Fig 4.13 SAA, FOTO#33464. 183
Fig. 5.1 Paul De Heem, *L'art de la construction des villes*, 1912. 191
Fig. 5.2 Produced by author. Original maps: Ministerie van Landbouw en Openbare Werken, *Studiecommissie tot inrichting der Antwerpsche agglomeratie*, 1911; Stübben, Joseph, "Die Erweiterung der Stadt Antwerpen," 1915; RAA, Plannenregister Departement Bruggen en Wegen, B328. 194
Fig. 5.3 Produced by author. Original pictures: Aerts, Wouter & Dirk Laureys, *Bouwen in beeld*, 2004; Van Mieghem, Saskia, *Alfred Portielje (1883-1965)*, 2015. 200
Fig. 5.4 *De Bouwgids* 3, no. 1, 1911; *KMBA Maandschrift* 1, no. 1, 1930. 203
Fig. 5.5 Produced by author. Images: De Vos—Van Kleef, Dirk, *Le Nouvel Anvers*, 1907; SAA, SA031045, FOTO-GF#422, FOTO-GF#420. 204
Fig. 5.6 Produced by author. All images are dated between 1907 and 1939 and retrieved from *De Bouwgids* (1911–1932) and *KMBA Maandschrift* (1930–1939) or the SAA. 205
Fig. 5.7 Produced by author. Original records: SAA, 1074#10494, 1932#41161, 1931#38652, 238#1401, 1927#27326, FOTO-OF#6031, FOTO-OF#6008; *De Bouwgids*; *KMBA Maandschrift*. 206
Fig. 5.8 Produced by author. Original images: Entreprises générales de constructions Van Riel & Van den Bergh, *Entreprises générales de construction*, 1930. 208
Fig. 5.9 Produced by author. *KMBA Maandschrift* 5, no. 12, 1934; *KMBA Maandschrift* 4, no. 6, 1933; Louis De Winter and Rik Hodister, *25 jaar Sportpaleis; RAFC, 1880–1930*, 1930. 208
Fig. 5.10 Produced by author. 209
Fig. 5.11 Robert Van Passen and Charles Neyens, *Edegem in Oude Prentkaarten*, 1974; Maurice Nonneman, *Deurne in Oude Prentkaarten*, 1978; J. V. Wappers, *Cols & J. De Roeck, architectes*, 1932. 211
Fig. 5.12 De Vos—Dirk Van Kleef, "Tuinwijk Vredeburg," 1924. 212
Fig. 5.13 KMBA, "Inrichting der urbanisatie in België," 1935. 214
Fig. 5.14 Produced by author. Original images: J. Oostvogels, *Handleiding voor de bouwverordeningen*, 1937; *KMBA Maandschrift*, 7, no. 12, 1936; Victor, Horta, "Le problème de la réglementation," 1932; M. Maertens, "Projet de réglementation," 1932. 216
Fig. 5.15 Produced by author. Original images: SAA, 1287#942; Alfons Francken and Henri Delvaux, *Heropbouw van de Schoenmarkt*, 1919. 218
Fig. 5.16 Map: EHC. Picture: EPA. 219
Fig. 5.17 KMBA, "Tentoonstelling van KMBA," 1932. 220
Fig. 5.18 L.D.M., "Urbanisatie der Linker Schelde-oever," 1936. 221
Fig. 6.1 Auguste Delbeke, *De waarheid over de werken van Antwerpen*, 1910. 230
Fig. 6.2 J. Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise*, 1929. 231
Fig. 6.3 Paul De Heem, "Conférence donnée," 1932. 232
Fig. 6.4 Ministerie van Landbouw en Openbare Werken. *Studiecommissie tot inrichting der Antwerpsche agglomeratie*, 1911. 235
Fig. 6.5 RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 7729/kaft 313 ; J. Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération*, 1929. 237
Fig. 6.6 *La Métropole*, September 12, 1932. 240
Fig. 6.7 RAA, Plannen & Tekeningen, 5165/1406 241
Fig. 6.8 SCAA, *Tentoonstelling in de stedelijke feestzaal*, 1932; SAA, FOTO#12611. 242
Fig. 6.9 Produced by author. Original files: SAA, 12#4922; Prims, Floris and H. Dierckx, *Atlas der Antwerpsche Stadsbuitenijen*, 1933. 242
Fig. 6.10 EPA; GVA, August 7, 1933. 246
Fig. 6.11 SAA, 934#22501, SA064181; HKH. 247
Fig. 6.12 SAA, 2151#212; Private collection. 248
Fig. 6.13 Comité Olympique 1920, *De 7de Olympiade en de feesten van Antwerpen*, 1920; Marc Maes et al., *Stedelijk Olympisch Stadion*, 2000. 248
Fig. 6.14 *La Métropole*, April 27, 1930. 250
Fig. 6.15 SAA, FOTO#14513. 252
Fig. 6.16 Eugène Joors, "Onze Nieuwe Begraafplaats", 1912. 253

Fig. 6.17 Joseph Schobbens, *Les Environs d'Anvers*, 1930. 255
Fig. 6.18 GVA, October 26, 1938 and June 22, 1939. 258
Fig. 6.19 SAA, FOTO#41164, FOTO#36783. 259
Fig. C.1 Map produced by author, based on the lion's share of maps that feature throughout this book. 264
Fig. C.2 Alfred Ledent, *Contribution à l'urbanisme national,* 1944. 269
Fig. C.3 SAA, 2037#1060. 272
Fig. C.4 J. Geyselinck, *L'urbanisation de l'agglomération anversoise,* 1929. 275

Index

abstract utopia, 201, 274
agency (spatial), 17, 19, 25-26, 30, 153, 155, 163, 189, 192, 199, 202, 207, 210, 220, 263, 266, 269-273, 310n, 329n, 335n, 337-339n
agglomeration effect, 19, 263
alignment plan, 66, 84, 86-95, 98, 175
amateurism, 225, 228, 253, 255-257, 260, 273-274
Amelinckx, François, 157-158, 209, 259, 330n, 338n
art of urbanization, 15-16, 18-24, 26, 30-31, 64, 263-275, 310n, 348n
autonomy, 34-35, 38, 40, 63, 222, 310n, 314n, 341n, 348n
Awan, Nishat, 199, 310n, 337-338n
Banham, Reyner, 31, 313n
Barthes, Roland, 227-228, 342n
Bertels, Inge, 12, 339n
Bookchin, Murray, 37, 42, 45, 309n, 314-316n, 318n
Brenner, Neil, 10, 17, 21, 309-310n, 314n, 346-348n
Buyst, Erik, 160, 331n
capital accumulation, 17-19, 111, 167, 273
capitalist urbanization, 7, 17, 110, 131, 166-167, 311n
careful radicalism, 6, 102, 105, 274
Castells, Manuel, 110, 168, 309-310n, 313n, 324n, 332n
Cerdà, Ildefons, 10, 14, 19, 44, 69, 310n, 317n, 319n
Choay, Françoise, 24-25, 270, 309n, 312n, 335n, 347n
civics, 30, 127-128, 189, 226, 245, 344n
Clarke, Linda, 12, 339n
Claude, Viviane, 70, 72, 319-320n
collective consumption, 27, 109-151, 272, 311n, 315n, 323n, 329n
Collin, Jean-Florian, 211-213, 286, 330n, 339n
commodification, 17, 155, 158, 162, 166, 192
concrete utopia, 201-202, 207, 275
confederal municipalism, 33, 36-38, 42, 45, 48, 57, 62-64, 271, 313n
Conway, Martin, 257, 346n
critical urban theory, 11, 18, 265, 267, 309n, 347n
De Block, Greet, 311n, 319-320n, 323n, 328n
De Heem, Paul, 32, 50-53, 55-57, 59, 61, 63, 68, 70-71, 81-83, 86-88, 90-92, 95, 97, 102, 117, 129, 136, 167, 176-177, 184, 190-194, 207, 217-218, 221-224, 232-234, 236, 238-240, 244, 256-259, 265, 267, 270-274, 302n, 316-318n, 320-323n, 329n, 334-335n, 339n, 342n, 347n, 349n
De Meulder, Bruno, 311n, 319-320n, 331n
Dehaene, Michiel, 10, 11, 12, 18, 21, 39, 310-312n, 315n, 320n, 324n, 326n, 329-330n, 332n, 338-339n, 341n, 347-348n
Delbeke, Auguste, 27-28, 32, 49, 56, 67, 70, 81, 86-88, 99, 109, 132, 146, 161-162, 229-230, 234-235, 238, 249, 251, 313n, 316n-321n, 323n, 325-327n, 331n, 333n, 336n, 341-343n.
Dewey, John, 58, 317n, 355n
differential rent, 157
dispersal, 22, 42-43, 52, 99, 119, 143, 158, 266-268, 315n
ecological infrastructures, 17-19, 67-72, 78, 104-105, 263, 272-274, 318-320n, 323n
exchange value, 17-19, 127, 168, 171, 184
experiential urbanism, 10, 19, 37, 57, 60-63, 83, 126, 171, 201, 221, 246-248, 251, 260, 272-273, 314n, 330n, 335n, 341n, 344n
externality (positive), 19, 130-131, 148, 185, 263, 268, 272
Geddes, Patrick, 226-227, 243, 310n, 312n, 341n, 344n
generative urbanization, 109-113, 131, 139, 143, 147-148, 150, 263, 265, 268, 272, 274, 323n
global urban history, 267
Gottmann, Jean, 200-201, 310n, 335n, 338n, 341n
governance (territorial), 22, 27, 33-63, 167, 271, 313n, 332n
Grosjean, Bénédicte, 311-312n, 315n, 319n, 323n, 331n, 347n
Grulois, Geoffrey, 24, 312n
Haraway, Donna, 58, 199, 317n, 337n
Harris, Richard, 162, 332n
Harvey, David, 17, 21, 52, 160, 166-168, 190, 309-310n, 317n, 323-324n, 330n, 331-332n, 335n, 341n, 347-348n

historical city, 9, 11, 15-22, 24-26, 31, 34-35, 38, 40, 43, 47, 64, 67-68, 76, 83-84, 88, 90, 95, 98, 101, 103-105, 109, 111, 114, 118, 143-144, 146-150, 157-161, 170, 190-193, 200, 204, 207, 220, 222, 243-246, 254-255, 260, 265-268, 270-273, 312-313n, 319n, 325n, 334n, 339n, 346n
Hoselitz, Bert, 111, 324n, 348n
Hutton, Jane Mah, 12, 339n
Huysmans, Camille, 45, 49, 152, 168-172, 185-186, 232, 257, 331n, 332n, 333n
incrementalism, 15, 22, 53-59, 64, 78-80, 86, 94-96, 104, 136, 195, 199, 213-214, 220, 263-264, 268
infrastructures, 15, 22, 27, 41, 43-46, 52, 55, 64, 67-69, 72-73, 82, 84-85, 94, 98-106, 109-112, 132, 136-137, 141-142, 158, 165, 176, 182, 185, 190, 247-251, 266, 271-273, 311-312n, 318-321n, 323n, 329n, 332n, 336n
integralism, 17, 21-22, 36, 45, 52, 83, 97-98, 100, 103, 144, 165, 172, 189, 195-197, 216-218, 220-222, 244, 259, 271-274, 311n, 335n, 341n, 348n
inter-municipalism, 29, 34, 36, 41, 46, 54-56, 62-65, 85-88, 91-94, 104, 106, 115, 130, 141, 265
interways, 69
justice, 17, 110, 167, 170, 309n, 324n, 332n, 334-335n, 347n
Kingdon, John W., 48, 58-61, 228, 317-318n
Kockelkorn, Anne, 12, 311n, 313n, 341n, 348n
Koolhaas, Rem, 31, 309n, 313n, 345n
Kropotkin, Peter, 37, 314n
labor, 17, 27, 68, 110-111, 152, 201, 209-210, 219, 273, 331n, 340n
landscape (urban), 57, 78, 98, 111, 124, 155, 157, 209-210, 219-221, 224, 235, 246-247, 251, 254-255, 260, 266-267, 274, 310-311n, 319n, 338-339n, 341n, 346n
land speculation, 112, 115, 119, 155, 177, 182, 212, 215, 236, 333n
Latour, Bruno, 105, 323n
Lefebvre, Henri, 10, 21, 157, 166-168, 201, 246, 266, 286, 309-310n, 314n, 319n, 324n, 326n, 330n, 332n, 338n, 341n, 345n, 347-348n
Leloutre, Géry, 11, 12, 22, 225, 312-313n, 322n, 341n
Lemeunier, Richard, 68, 71, 81, 83, 86, 95, 97, 100, 167, 173-174, 177, 217, 217, 251, 277, 321n
l'esthétique intégrale, 189, 197, 216, 218, 220, 273-274, 335n
liberal irony, 192, 197-199, 218, 337n
Marot, Sébastien, 12, 31, 311n, 342n, 348n
Marx, Karl, 24, 111, 160, 166-169, 172, 312n, 319n, 324n, 332-333n
master planning, 15, 16, 55-57, 95, 195
Mennes, August, 35, 52, 63, 68, 70-81, 87-89, 92-96, 100-103, 106, 117, 120, 124, 128, 129, 133-138, 141, 163-166, 175, 179, 180, 217, 219, 231-233, 239, 240-241, 250, 253, 256, 265, 272, 312n, 318-321n, 329-330n, 332n, 342n, 344-345n
Merrifield, Andy, 19, 111, 228, 255, 262, 309-310n, 324n, 342n, 346n
metropolitan grid, 81, 84, 94-95, 106, 131, 136-142, 147, 165-166, 181, 203-210, 215, 217, 273
municipalization of land, 7, 172, 174, 273
mutual knowledge, 219, 221-222, 273
negative space, 55, 64
Nightingale, Carl, 12, 347n
organized anarchy, 48, 58, 63
parasitic urbanization, 6, 109-111
Peleman, David, 11, 70, 81, 311-312n, 317n, 319-320n
Phelps, Nicholas A., 110-111, 148, 309n, 324, 328-329n, 348n
planetary urbanization, 10, 17, 266-267, 270, 275, 346-347n
planned sprawl, 309n, 324n, 335n, 342n
Polasky, Janet, 314n, 319n, 353n, 360n
policy entrepreneurship, 33, 48, 58-59, 61, 63-64, 95, 119, 167, 228, 245, 258, 271, 274, 313n
porosity, 99-102, 106, 272, 323n
practice, 10-11, 15-23, 26-27, 29-31, 38, 40, 44-45, 48, 57-58, 61, 64, 80, 92, 105-106, 109-113, 119, 131, 138, 147-149, 156, 158, 165, 167, 169, 189-190, 192, 196, 199-201, 205, 207, 210, 213, 215, 219-225, 229, 245, 255, 258, 263, 265-270, 273-275, 309-310n, 337-338n, 340n
pragmatism (philosophical), 15, 22, 24-25, 44, 48, 58, 63, 92, 104, 210, 258, 268, 270-271, 311n, 317n, 347n
programmatic urbanization, 15, 33, 37, 42-46, 51-52, 63, 202, 263, 313n
Prost, Henri, 26, 55, 91, 184, 193-198, 234-238, 243, 336n
public parks, 15, 29, 53, 108, 109, 113-125, 130, 137, 150, 176-178, 181-188, 204, 240, 251-255, 266, 272, 325n
public transport, 15, 53, 109, 111-112, 136, 142-150, 168, 183
Rabinow, Paul, 319-320n
real estate agency, 115, 125, 133, 138, 140, 152-165, 172-178, 184-186, 206, 210-213, 219, 258-259, 266, 272-273, 329-330n, 332n, 338-339n
reciprocal landscapes, 209-210, 339n
(re)distribution, 21, 42, 53, 110, 142-143, 148, 159, 182-183, 273-274, 311n, 315n, 319n, 331n
reflective practice, 20-21, 64, 270, 310n, 347n

regional tourism, 245, 247, 255
relative autonomy, 199-202, 222
relative ideal, 48-63-64, 92, 104, 195, 199, 213, 234, 239, 245, 260, 271
Remy, Jean, 130-131, 149, 310n, 315n, 318n, 324n, 327n, 329-331n, 346-348n
reproduction, 16-18, 27, 31, 42, 67, 110-111, 162, 274, 348n
right to the city, 18, 40, 84, 88, 109-111, 125-127, 148, 184, 259, 272, 309n, 323-324n, 347n
Rorty, Richard, 198, 317n, 337n
Ryckewaert, Michael, 312n, 318n
Said, Edward, 228, 255, 346n
Schmid, Christian, 10, 346n, 347n
Schobbens, Joseph, 50-52, 55-59, 61-62, 66, 70, 78, 81, 83-88, 90-92, 95, 98-102, 108, 114-115, 119, 121-122, 125-128, 136, 138, 141, 143-144, 146-147, 152, 155, 161, 167, 171-172, 175-177, 182-184, 188, 195-196, 215-217, 224, 231-240, 244-246, 249, 251, 253-260, 265, 267, 270-274, 314n, 316-318n, 320-323n, 325-326n, 328-329n, 334-337n, 340n, 342-347n, 349n
Secchi, Bernardo, 26, 310n, 311n, 322-324n, 327n, 329n, 346n
secondary circuit of capital, 159-160, 166, 185
selective borrowing, 207, 268
Sieverts, Thomas, 246, 310-311n, 335n, 341n, 344-345n
situatedness, 20-21, 30, 48, 58, 95, 118, 128, 196, 199, 213, 220, 233, 265, 267, 270, 275, 317n, 337-338n
Smets, Marcel, 311n, 312n, 315n, 316n, 330-332n, 338n, 347n
Smith, Neil, 324n, 334n
spatial agency, 189, 192, 199, 202, 220, 271, 310n, 335n, 337n
spatial differentiation, 18, 109-111, 148, 201, 323n, 336n
Sternberg, Ernst, 311n, 341n, 348n
Stiegler, Bernard, 18, 310n
Stübben, Joseph, 53, 193-195, 277, 309n, 317n, 325n, 336n
sub-urbanism, 10, 109-111, 143, 148-150, 309n, 312-313n, 324-325n, 329n, 332n, 338n, 348n
Till, Jeremy, 198-199, 310n, 336-338n, 348n.
Topalov, Christian, 159, 168, 330-332n
Trachtenberg, Marvin, 197, 337n, 340n
Tritsmans, Bart, 312n, 325-326n, 346n
urban question, 15-16, 19-21, 25-27, 30, 33, 38, 41, 53-55, 61-64, 67, 110-114, 158, 243, 259, 262-268, 270-272, 310-312n, 315n, 329n
urban rent (class-monopoly), 152-153, 159, 167-172, 175, 184-186, 232, 273, 329n, 333n
urbanization program, 27, 43, 45, 53, 64, 235, 245, 254, 268-269, 271, 274
use value, 17, 19, 111, 126-128, 142-144, 148, 162, 168, 171, 184
Uyttenhove, Pieter, 11, 310-311n, 318n, 328n, 341n
Van Acker, Maarten, 311-312n, 319n, 323n, 336n, 341n
Van der Swaelmen, Louis, 32, 34-35, 218, 311n, 313n, 340n
Vandervelde, Emile, 37, 152, 168, 314n
Verwilghen, Raphaël, 46, 63, 98, 170, 219, 243-244, 311n, 316n, 321n, 322n, 329n, 333n, 340n, 341n, 344n, 347n, 349n
vicinal infrastructures, 43, 143-150, 288, 315n
Viganò, Paola, 12, 310n, 311n, 315n, 322n, 323n, 324n, 329n, 336n
Ward, Stephen, 312n, 347n
water, 14, 15, 19, 41-42, 53, 66-72, 75, 78-83, 97, 104, 130, 142, 240, 244, 248, 266, 315n, 316n
welfare, 111-112, 118, 130-131, 141, 149, 272, 274, 331n
Witte, Els, 314n, 315n
Zitouni, Benedikte, 22, 312n, 313n