

Optimistic Suburbia – Large housing complexes for the middle-class

The special dossier *Optimistic Suburbia – Large housing complexes for the middle-class* brings closure to the cycle initiated with the International Conference *Optimistic Suburbia – Large housing complexes for the middle-class beyond Europe*, which took place at ISCTE-IUL from 20 to 22 May 2015. This conference integrated the research project “Homes for the biggest number: Lisbon, Luanda, Macau” funded by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (Principal Investigator: Ana Vaz Milheiro, PTDC/ATP-AQI/3707/2012, 2013-15). Research aimed to survey, catalogue and contextualize housing projects in Lisbon, Luanda and Macao, built between the 1960s and the 1980s, which stood out for large-scale, large area occupation and high number of people housed. The existing housing and urban models were identified and the changes after 40 years of use were mapped in order to understand how it adapted to the urban and social current conditions and to support future interventions. Three case studies were chosen to sustain the research arguments: the Prenda Neighbourhood Unit n.1 (Luanda, Angola, 1961-63), comprehending 28 buildings and 1150 apartments in 30 hectares, for an estimated population of 3.300 inhabitants; the Portela Neighbourhood (Lisbon Metropolitan Area, Portugal, 1965-79), with an area of 50 hectares, designed for 18,500 inhabitants spread over 199 residential plots and 4503 dwellings; and the buildings of STDM - Society of Macao Tourism and Recreation (Macao, China, 1978-84), comprising three blocks for 625 families. The conference was organized within the context of this project, issuing a call for papers around 6 sessions chaired by research team members, where 46 works were presented by researchers from 23 different institutions, with 5 international keynote speakers, 8 workshops and an exhibition. Among these presentations, a few authors were challenged to submit a paper to *CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios* with a view of integrating this dossier. Our intention was to showcase a few works complementary to our own but from a different perspective and going beyond our case studies. In order to achieve this goal, the call was specifically directed to researchers outside the project “Homes for the biggest number”. Invited researchers are working on similar topics (Broes; Caramellino; Dehaene; De Vos; Renzoni), and also departing from different primary sources and analysis methodologies, such as the media (Costa; Silva) or the arts (Alves). The results are now published.

“Negotiating the Post-war Italian City. Shaping Public Spaces and Facilities through Housing Complexes for the Middle-class: 1950s-1970s”, Gaia Caramellino and Cristina Renzoni offer a viewpoint over the post-war Italian city from Turin, focusing on the relationship between large-scale housing complexes devoted to the middle-class and collective spaces and public facilities. This work combines results produced by the research project “Architecture for the Middle-class in Italy, 1950s-1970s: for a Social History of Dwelling” (funded by the Italian government through the FIRB_Futuro in Ricerca programme, aimed at supporting emerging scholars), coordinated by Caramellino, while research performed by Renzoni within the research team Officina Welfare Space, where she worked on the spatial legacy of Welfare State policies in post-war Italian cities and territories. Caramellino currently lectures at Politecnico di Milano and Renzoni is a lecturer at Politecnico di Torino.

The following article takes us to a different European geography, the city of Antwerp, in Belgium. Tom Broes and Michiel Dehaene author “Real Estate Pioneers on the Metropolitan Frontier. The works of Jean-Florian Collin and François Amelinckx in Antwerp”, proposing, as the title indicates, a more biographical focus, bringing us closer to two pioneers of the Flemish property boom. As indicated in the abstract, the paper studies the close relationship between the production of the very different forms of ‘mass housing’ built in Belgium: low- and high-rise, inner-city and suburban. The object of study integrates a PhD programme that Broes is developing under Dehaene’s supervision at the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Ghent, where they are both faculty members.

Also focusing on Antwerp are the two case studies presented by Els De Vos in her article “Modernist High-Rises in Post-war Antwerp. Two Answers to the same Question”: Luchtbal-estate (arch. Kuyck, 1954-62); and Kiel-estate (arch. Braem, 1953). The central subject is the modernist rise buildings and their diversity: programmatic, aesthetic, technological. In this article, De Vos recalls that from 1978 onwards, migrant families and other

vulnerable groups started to inhabit the social rental houses, resulting in neighbourhoods characterized by a high level of multi-culturalism. The author thus portrays the current status of these neighbourhoods departing from the premises of the Modern Movement. The issue of the dwelling in 1960s-1970s in Belgian Flanders and its spatial appropriations had already been touched upon her PhD thesis, published in 2012. De Vos lectures at University of Antwerp.

Rui Seco focused on the Portuguese architectural and urban planning culture in the post-25 Abril Revolution period to produce “Antes do recomeço: periódicos especializados e debate sobre a cidade”. He analysed the international feedback of journals such as *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. However, the article moves from the past to the future: the anticipation of this effusive moment in Portuguese architecture that served as a moto for a systematic reading of the journal *Arquitectura* in the period before the 25 April Revolution. He revisited debates, international references, and projects. Rui Seco completed a MA in architecture about urban design in Portugal during the 20th Century and is working on his PhD at University of Coimbra.

The 1974 revolution is also the starting point for the article presented by Leonor Cabral Matos Silva, “Recording the optimistic. An audio-visual approach to the city of Lisbon by its architecture school in the 1980s”. The author analysed three videos (“Tedium”, “The Place Where I Was Born”, and “Harbour Station”) that reproduce pedagogical experiments that took place at Lisbon School of Fine Arts between 1976 and 1986. The paper resorted to primary sources not yet disclosed – namely testimonies and documents – that directly relate to Lisbon’s architecture course, configuring the background research for her PhD thesis, “Cultura arquitectónica em Lisboa: um olhar a partir da ESBAL/FAUTL no período de 1975 a 1990”, nearly concluded, at DINÂMIA’CET-IUL, University Institute of Lisbon.

The dossier wraps up with a proposal emerging from the arts and their relationship with the contemporary city. Its scope is wide. It begins with the 1960s and concludes in the eve of contemporary times. Margarida Brito Alves put forward “Casas em série, construções temporárias e lotes vazios. Subúrbios e arte contemporânea”, considering the transfers between art and architecture, as stated in the abstract. Brito Alves is concerned with the way art critically operates in ‘constructed realities’, both in architecture and/or urban planning. The author currently lectures at Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. Her studies in Art and Architecture date back to her PhD thesis “O Espaço na Criação Artística do Século XX”, published in 2012.

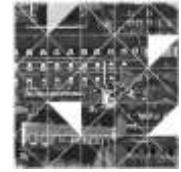
The overview granted by this dossier is expected to cover the multitude of disciplines intersecting research architecture, especially regarding objects such as collective housing.

Ana Vaz Milheiro

Editorial Team,

with Filipa Fiúza and Rogério Vieira de Almeida

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Negotiating the middle-class city. Housing and equipping post-war Turin, 1950-1980.

Gaia Caramellino¹, Politecnico di Milano, Italy.

Cristina Renzoni², Politecnico di Milano, Italy.

Abstract

The article explores the pattern of fragmented public spaces and collective facilities built in Turin between the 1950s and the 1970s, as the result of negotiation processes conducted between public institutions, private developers and professionals over the design and construction of housing devoted to the middle-class. Considering three developments – the complexes of Moncalieri and Collegno located at the outskirts of the city, and the new residential district of Quartiere Ippodromo in the southern sector – the article observes public facilities as the outcome of a set of different policies, mirroring the encounter between an heterogeneous set of actors and initiatives: from the scale of the playground close to the condominio to the public park at the edge of the new residential sectors, from the neighborhood's kindergartens and primary schools, to the community and sports centers in the new districts. During this period, houses devoted to middle-class and new public facilities were negotiated, designed and built simultaneously, bringing light to the fragmented process of construction that generated post-war Turin, implemented through series of punctual agreements between private and public actors. Through an uncommon approach, that aims at combining traditional sources with the analysis of less explored planning tools (mainly the *convenzioni urbanistiche* and the *piani di lottizzazione*), the article contributes to a deeper understanding of the development of post-war Italian cities, by looking at the aggregation of houses and facilities as two dimensions of inhabiting/living – closely interrelated in middle class housing – that together contribute to actively build the “ordinary” city. Nowadays this interrelationship still represents a focal point of social cohesion, urban quality and liveability.

Palavras-chave: Middle-class housing; Post-war Italy; Turin; Urban facilities; Building Agreements..

¹ gaia.caramellino@gmail.com

² cristina.renzoni@polimi.it

1. Beyond housing: reassessing the study of post-war Italian growth

Like several other European Countries, Italy experienced an extraordinary process of economic growth and social and cultural change between the 1950s and the 1970s, while deep transformation affected the territorial distribution of the population and the way of living of the different social groups (Ginsborg, 1989; Crainz, 1996, 2003). These changes, profoundly altered the structure of the metropolitan Italy during the years of the so-called golden age, encouraging the renewal of previously built areas and the construction of new neighborhoods in the fast-spreading zones of urban expansion. While the needs of an increasing population with growing requirements in terms of living comfort were met by a massive building development, middle classes were the main protagonists of this process and their houses had a decisive part in the process of post-war urban growth. They populated the greatest part of the new neighborhoods and it was their expectations, their cultures, habits and residential aspirations that shaped the expansion and transformation of many Italian cities, leaving unmistakable traces on the contemporary urban landscape.

One of the main assumptions of this article is that it is not possible to investigate the post-war Italian city looking separately at houses, services and public spaces. In middle-class housing complexes, in particular, the two dimensions of “living/inhabiting” – the residence on the one hand, facilities and equipment on the other – are closely interrelated and the aggregation between houses and collective spaces contributes to bring light to the fragmented process of construction that shaped the post-war Italian city, implemented through series of punctual agreements and negotiations between private and public actors. However, a set of fundamental features still need to be addressed: which has been the role of middle-class houses in building new parts of the Italian cities in those years, in adding and designing not only houses, but also new streets, sidewalks, parking lots, parks and playgrounds, schools and sport centers?

Facilities and housing have mainly been studied separately and in a quite “sectorial” way (from both the theoretical and the operative- procedural perspectives), as the product of processes, programs and policies that are rarely interweaved. On the one hand, the history of post-war Italian housing has mostly focused on the major public programs and projects (Di Biagi, 2001; Di Biagi et al., 2009), rarely addressing the nuanced and multifaceted relationship between the ordinary stock built by the market for the middle classes and its facilities³. On the other hand, recent international scholarship mirrored a growing interest for the history of facilities, addresses mainly through a typological perspective (Wagenaar, 2006; Clarck, 2006, 2010; Lewi, Nichols, 2010; Pietsch, Muller, 2015; Darian-Smith, Wills, 2017) or from a political standpoint, principally looking at the institutionalization procedures often in between bottom-up and top-down processes.

The study of the building processes, of the stories of the places made of the aggregation of houses and facilities, as well as of their relations and transformations, brings light to the importance to re-define strategies to implement this interrelationship that still represents a focal point of social cohesion, urban quality and livability⁴. Housing and equipment, meant as indivisible aspects of the same question, represent together a material legacy to be addressed through integrated regeneration programs, and a fundamental resource (in terms of urban quality) in the agenda for the 21st century city. Furthermore, this wide “urban stock” built between 1950 and 1980 is experiencing today processes of technological obsolescence as well as of generational and societal changes, bringing light to several concerns related to its punctual re-use and re-evaluation (Caramellino, Zanfi 2015; Renzoni 2015).

³ This perspective has been adopted only by a limited number of studies mostly dedicated to the story of some neighborhoods (Sotgia 2010; Bonomo 2007, 2009; Viccaro 2007; De Pieri 2010).

⁴ On the one side, the study is in keeping with the renewed interest for the middle classes and for the process of “fragilization” that characterize this social group today, which affected both historical studies and social sciences in the recent years (See Bagnasco 2008, Maurin-Gaux 2012, Bosc 2008). On the other, the article stem from recent scholarship on Welfare State and on the negotiation between collective and individual rights, universalistic public actions and personalized demands., together with an increasing attention that is being given to the ‘built reality’ of welfare state policies which have accumulated inside and outside Europe over the last century (Avermaete, Swenarton 2014; Renzoni 2013; Munarin et al. 2011; Gosseye, Heynen 2010; Rykewaert 2011).

Figure 1. Centro Europa District, Turin.

Source: Photography by Michela Pace, 2013.

The article focuses on the case of Turin, and adopts an unconventional approach, combining the research conducted on “traditional” sources (municipal archives, professionals’ private archives, familiar sources), with the analysis of urban and building agreements. In particular, the paper chooses as the main point of observation two specific planning tools: the *convenzione urbanistica* (building agreement) and the *piano di lottizzazione* (parceling plan / detailed plan)⁵. If the *piano di lottizzazione* is an executive planning instrument based on the initiative by private owners, its implementation is based on an agreement (*convenzione urbanistica*) between the municipality and the owners of the land, who accept to offer part of the land for public use and construct infrastructures, services and facilities at their own expenses. Significant urban sectors built in the booming Italy were in fact the result of articulated processes of negotiations between public administrations and a plurality of actors (developers, land owners, real estate promoters, architects...). However, while the Italian planning culture of the 1960s focused on the debate over the design and the study of *quartieri organici*, *città satelliti*, *insediamenti autonomi* and *quartieri integrati*, a significant amount of urban public facilities took shape through the individual initiative of single stakeholders involved in the construction of middle-class housing, implemented through a process of continuous negotiations between private actors and the local municipal administration (Zanfi, 2013).

2. Housing and Equipping Post-war Turin

Within the frame of cities that constitute the backbone of Italian economy during the years of the boom (Rome and Milan), Turin offers an interesting case from the standpoint of the social changes, mirroring several specificities. The narrative of the modernization of post-war Turin – deeply influenced by the presence of the FIAT factory – has been strongly oriented by the image of the company-town, while the attention of both specialized and non-specialized literature has focused on the history and the culture of the working classes (Musso 2005, Cardoza-Symcox, 2006).

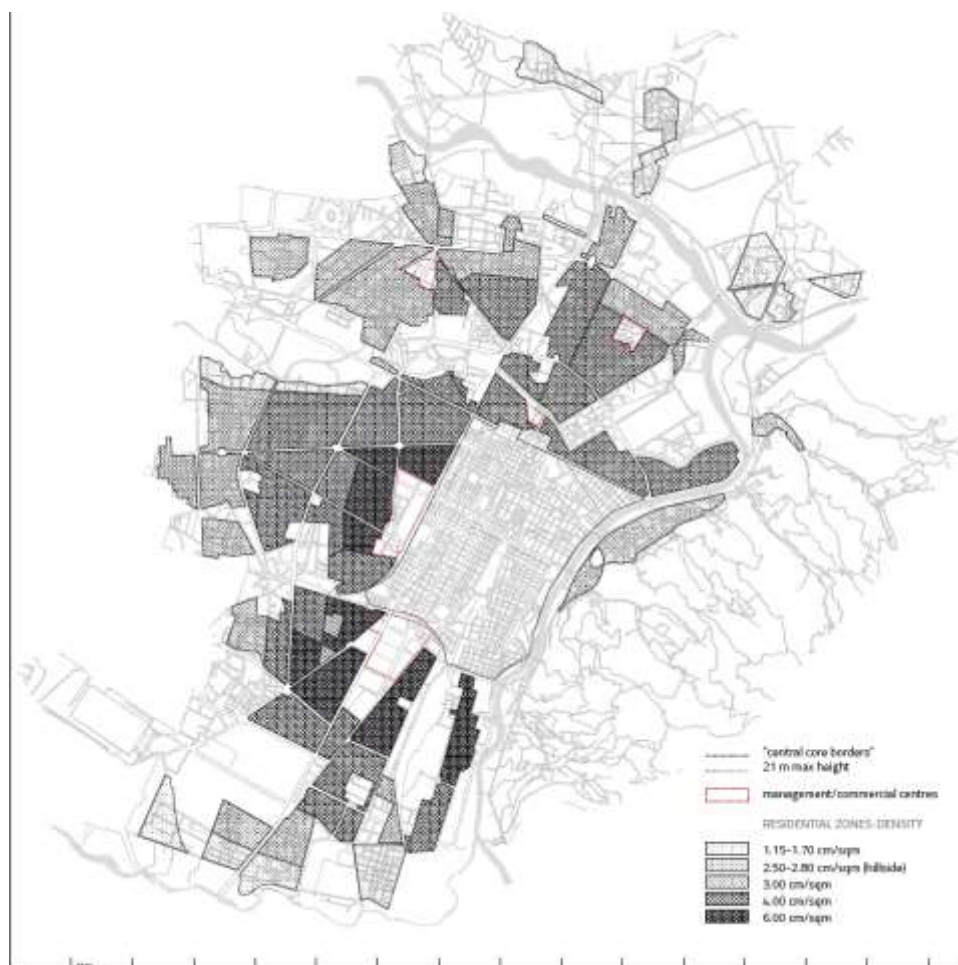
⁵ In Italian planning culture the *piani di lottizzazione* and *convenzioni urbanistiche* played also a relevant role in the post-war planning practice. In 1968 Italian government promoted a wide survey aimed at documenting this widespread phenomenon and its distortion (Ministero dei lavori pubblici – Ministry of Public Works-, 1968).

However, even if ignored by the main narratives on the city, middle-class cultures had a significant role in its transformation, affecting diverse sectors of a real estate market that operated at different scales: from the integrated large-scale building complexes to the fully equipped *condomini*, from the slab-blocks for the lower-middle classes to the palazzine for the upper-middle classes. The core of these transformations was represented by the metropolitan area, which grew, along with its outskirts, touched by the diffusion of bourgeois ways of life. In these new residential sectors the construction of collective buildings has been combined with a plurality of new medium and small-sized public spaces and facilities, from the scale of the playground originated close to the *condominio*, to the public park at the edge of the new residential sectors, from the neighborhoods kindergartens to the primary schools and sport centres in the core of the new areas (Olmo-Mazza, 1991).

Mirroring the spatial forms of urban divisions originated in the first half of the century (Falco-Morbelli, 1976), different urban sectors in post-war Turin were converted into residential neighbourhoods for the middle-class through a process of spatial distribution that was also profoundly touched by the growing privatization of some natural resources (as in the case of the shores of the Po river) and often supported by public policies in the field of public services and infrastructures (Caramellino, De Pieri, Renzoni, 2015).

However, it seems necessary a deeper understanding of the planning tools, professional practices and decision processes that generated – and in many cases encouraged- the implementation of middle-class housing in the city and in its outskirts.

Figure 2. The General City Plan of Turin, 1959.



Source: Drawing by Cristina Renzoni, 2012.

During the period addressed by the article, the Turin General City Plan was under development, as a preliminary document during the first ten years and already adopted as planning tool during the second decade.

Drawn up by the council offices and by an Executive Committee chaired by the engineer Giorgio Rigotti (in charge of the general coordination and flat part) and the architect Molli Boffa (hilly part) starting from 1951, the new General Plan was adopted by the city in 1956 and approved by the Ministry of Public Works in 1959, right in the midst of the economic miracle. In the meantime, the city grew from 700,000 (1951) to over one million inhabitants (1961) and its urban transformation developed according to precise spatial logics: on the one hand the process of urban development was guided by the planning discourses implemented over the first two decades of the 20th century; on the other, it answered the requests coming from the medium and medium-large protagonists of Turin market and entrepreneurship (Falco, 1991 ; Ramello et al., 2014). The reconstruction of the city and its expansion occurred, in fact, outside of the debate on the elaboration of the new town plan, « confirming a routine to use flexible tools – made up of exceptions to the planning tools in force – which had already marked construction development during Fascism» (De Magistris 1999, 207). Over the 1950s and 1970s the planning agreement has been the main form of implementation of the on-going city plan (1959) in Turin (Falco, 1991): a sort of a “spotted” and “negotiated” city-making procedure that brings light to the real interrelation in the construction of whole parts of the city, of houses and facilities through the involvement of a multiplicity of actors.

Beyond promoting numerous interventions of replacement in the city center (through demolition and reconstruction of small plots), the most relevant programs elaborated between the 1950s and the 1970s, supported the development of detailed plans in the new areas of urban expansion for the construction of residential sectors and equipped complexes for the middle classes, that often became the occasion for the implementation of public facilities such as kindergartens, schools, playgrounds, parks...

On the one side, stakeholders such as real estate promoters, building contractors, housing developers, insurance companies produced during the decade several studies for the construction of new residential urban sectors aimed at strengthening the public image of the promoters through reconvertng marginal areas, for the construction of homes for the market or intended for an agreement foreseeing the sale to employees. On the other, on several occasions, still unknown local professionals – in cooperation with the owners of lands occupied by small industrial activities and often interested in converting their properties in residential neighbourhoods – promoted and carried on the urbanization of entire new sectors and, through a long negotiation process with the local municipality, arrived to build a significant percentage of facilities and services.

Private developers had in fact the possibility to transfer to the Municipality part of their land properties for the construction of public facilities by the public administration. In change of this land, the amount of inbuilt cubic meters was allotted to the properties of the developers, who were able to increase the square meters, the density standards and the height of the residential interventions built on the remaining properties⁶.

The application of these planning tools broke in some ways the equilibrium between the residential stock and the facilities, as envisioned by the Turin city plan through its application the Turin Municipality achieved to build only in a few years – between 1960 and 1964 – an unexpected stock of public facilities, acquiring – through more than 50 urban agreements – 367.000 square meters of land for their construction for a cost of 7 billion of lire⁷.

⁶ These long administrative procedure and processes of negotiations, carried on by the professionals or by the stakeholders, were regulated by a local law defining the urban agreements between the Municipality of Turin and the promoters, approved on the occasion of the inauguration of the local General City Plan (see the art. n. 6-34 Norme Urbanistiche Edilizie di attuazione del PRG).

⁷ Un'accesa polemica dell'opposizione. Dibattito in consiglio sulle licenze edilizie: in due anni il comune ha acquisito i servizi pubblici 367 mila metri quadrati, concedendo in cambio ai privati maggiori diritti di cubatura, «La Stampa», January 28 1964; Articolo rinviato in Consiglio Comunale, «La Stampa», January 29 1964.

3. Exploring the “ordinary city”: three cases

Many of the new wide urban sectors that were built to fulfil the mass request for housing in Italy between the 1950s and the 1970s, have been considered for a long time as the product of a speculation culture (Insolera, 1993), being mostly ignored by the main histories of Turin modernization (Levi-Maida, 2002). This vast production has not been included in the architectural guides that in the 1980s tried, for the first time, to codify the canons of postwar Italian architecture through a catalogue of *exempla* that, by contrast, carefully analyzed the experimental housing solutions conceived by a limited number of outstanding architects in their attempts to meet the requirements of cultivated clients (Magnaghi, Monge, Re, 1982). However, the diffuse forms of the “ordinary” urban stock (made of houses, streets and facilities), characterized by the repetition of recognizable solutions, met the requirement of a booming market that was able to codify the aspirations and the taste of an emerging urban middle class by producing quality and to answer to their growing requirements in terms of comfort (Bonomo, 2011).

The three analyzed cases mirror two prevailing scales of intervention, where houses devoted to the local middle-class and new public facilities were negotiated, designed and built simultaneously through a building agreement: on the one hand, the scale of the urban block located in the outskirts of the city, as shown by the cases of Corso Roma in Moncalieri (3.1) and “The Sky Residence” in Collegno (3.2); on the other, the scale of a new wide urban district, as illustrated by the case of Quartiere Ippodromo, in the southern sector of the city (3.3).

3.1. A modern “Satellite Town” for 5.000 inhabitants in the Southern expansion of the city

Located in the Southern periphery of Turin, immediately out of the municipal boundaries, the new neighborhood of Corso Roma in Moncalieri took shape along one of the main directions of the expansion of the city.

The plan for the new residential sector originated from a wider urban vision, conceived by the Turin architect Enzo Dolci in the early 1950s for the urbanization of the agrarian land owned by the local industrialist Giacomo Bosso. Never mentioned in the histories of post-war Italian architecture, Enzo Dolci (1926-82) belongs to a generation of local practitioners who have rarely been investigated by the main studies on Turin, even if actively involved in the modernization processes that radically transformed the local urban landscape during the booming years⁸.

Deeply engaged in the construction of the post-war Turin, Dolci was particularly active on the ground of residential architecture and contributed to the definition of a set of housing solutions for the local middle-class⁹: from the individual villas located on the hill and the holidays resorts, to the numerous parceling plans that he elaborated for a number of small Municipalities situated in the outskirts of the city. His work, documented through a heterogeneous set of sources, mirrors his attempts to combine languages and solutions conceived in response to the requirements of the local market, with recent experiences and models coming from abroad¹⁰.

⁸ Along with the work of Dolci we can mention the contribution of many other protagonists of this still unexplored Turin professional milieu; among them are Nello Renacco, Gino Salvestrini, Gualtiero Casalegno, Enrico Bordogna, Elio Luzi, Massimo Cotti.

⁹ Dolci E., *Edilizia Residenziale*, «Vita», September 19 1963, pp. 62-63.

¹⁰ Documents from the Departments of Urban and Building Affairs of the Municipal Archives of Moncalieri and Turin were interweaved with familiar sources, oral sources and records from the private archive of Riccardo Carver (nephew of Enzo Dolci).

Figure 3. Aerial view of the residential complex of Corso Roma

Source: Photo by Michela Pace.

Note: Core of facilities that include the playground, the equipped park, the kindergarten, the elementary school and the social housing development built in the early 1950s.

His awareness of the international debate is confirmed by the project for the residential complex of Corso Roma, where the unusual solution envisioned by Dolci for the ten high-rise towers in clinker echoed the references to the recent CIAM urban discourse (Mumford, 2000). The residential buildings connected through a continuous commercial platform were articulated around a core of facilities that included a primary school, the kindergarten, the playground and the equipped park; however, the solution reflected also the impact of the ongoing debate on the local implementation of the concept of *unità di vicinato* (Neighborhood Unit), that was affecting Italian architectural and planning culture during the 1950s.

In 1954 Dolci proposed the construction of plots of villini for the entire area, already marked by the presence of the public housing settlement built by the Istituto Case Popolari (IACP) for the local working class at the beginning of the 1950s¹¹.

The whole plan took shape over 20 years and went through several phases, informed by a long process of negotiation between the architect and the Municipal authorities. Inaugurated with the Parcelling Plan proposed by Dolci in 1954 for the entire urban sector, the history of the implementation of the entire program interweaves diverse seasons of the local urban discourse, as well as the most relevant moments that marked the definition of local planning tools and urban policies, from the approval of General City Plan of Moncalieri in 1957, to the publication of the proposal for the Piano Intercomunale (Intermunicipal Plan) in 1964¹².

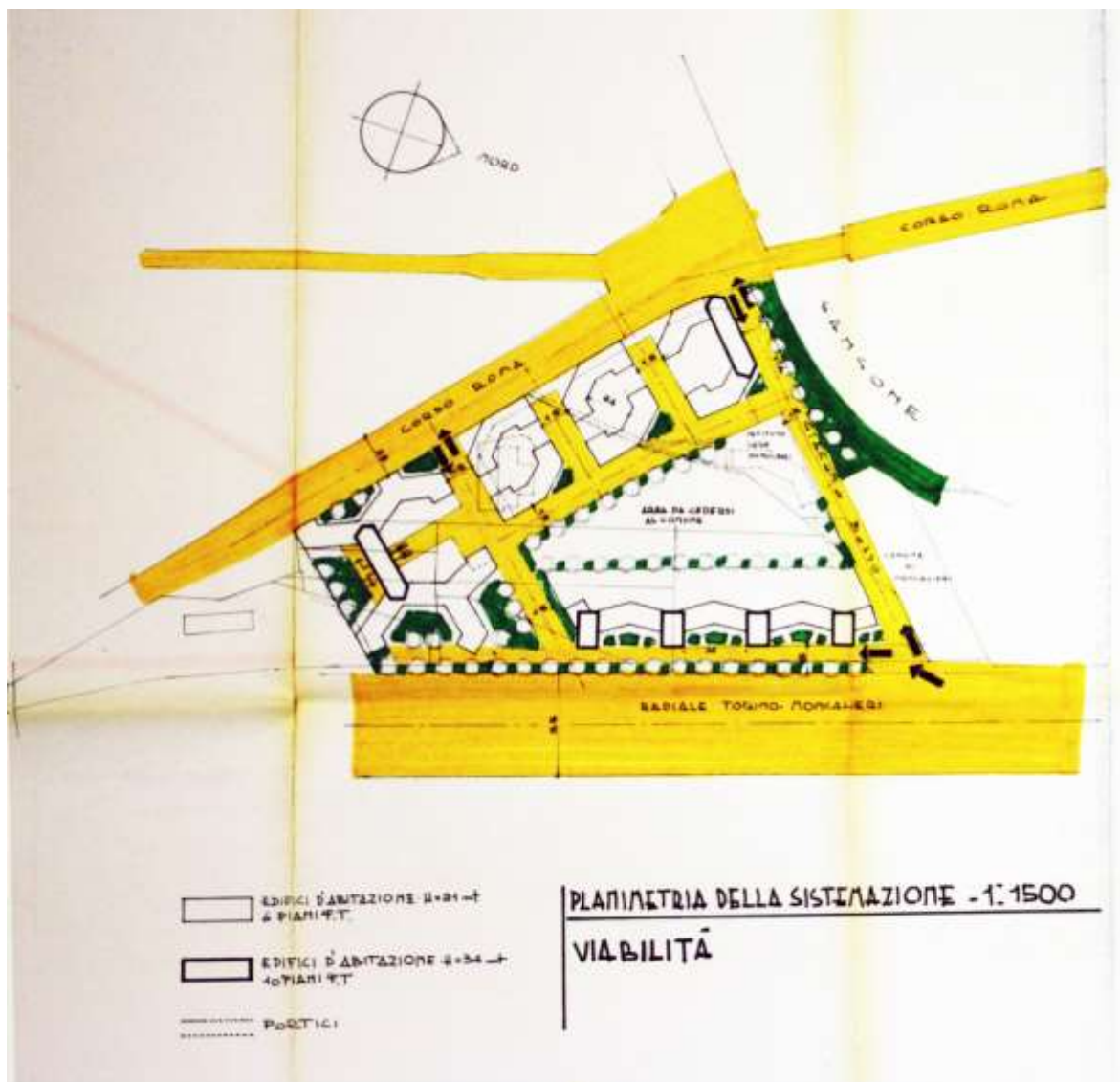
¹¹ Parceling plan proposed to the Municipality of Moncalieri by the architect Enzo Dolci in 1954. Private archive of the architect R. Carver.

¹² Municipality of Turin, Piano Regolatore Intercomunale. Relazione generale, Turin, July 1964, pp. 223, 264-5. See also De Magistris, 1993, pp. 271-82.

After a long series of negotiations conducted with the Municipality of Moncalieri, Enzo Dolci was able to codify his innovative vision for the urban sector through an ambitious plan for a «very modern satellite town for 5.000 inhabitants». Developed on a site of 60.000 square meters, the plan for the residential complex included apartment buildings, commercial activities, offices, a cinema, parks, playgrounds and «all can serve for the independent life of a rationally settled community»¹³.

However, the project had also the secondary aim of linking the two Municipalities of Turin and Moncalieri through the massive construction and urban densification of the Southern periphery, drew up by the architect along the main axis of growth. This plan mirrored the debate on the southwards expansion of the city in the early 1960s and was influenced by three relevant factors: the foreseen development of these areas, located in close proximity of the site of Italia'61, erected on the occasion of the celebration of the International Expo 1961; the new residential use of the land sanctioned by the 1957 General City Plan (PRG) of Moncalieri and the ongoing debate on the construction of new infrastructures aimed at connecting the city of Turin with its Southern periphery.

Figure 4. First proposal for the residential complex of C.so Roma



Source: Archivio edilizio del Comune di Moncalieri_ Sezione Urbanistica.

Note: Proposal submitted by the architect Enzo Dolci to the Municipality of Moncalieri in 1958.

¹³ “Città satellite” per cinquemila persone fra Torino e Moncalieri «La Stampa» June 10, 1960, p. 9.

The series of proposals and agreements collected at the Archive of the Municipality of Moncalieri (Department of Urban Affairs) shows a long process of negotiation over the final solution, conducted between 1958 and 1964 with the Municipal offices and with the public authority of the IACP, which owned part of the land and the public houses already consigned to public housing development and to the urbanization of the entire land through the construction of lighting, infrastructures, and parking areas. After a long series of master plans submitted by the architect, the urban agreement signed on February 4th 1964 approved the assignment of 10.000 square meters of land owned by the Consorzio Zona 2 – an association formed by the architect, the industrialist and the other land owners – for the construction of all the facilities and works of urbanization, as well as the transfer of cubic meters aimed to increase housing density in the construction of the 10 apartment buildings; beyond that, the agreement approved an height of 15 stories for the northern and southern towers (even if the height allowed by the local building code of Moncalieri was of 10 stories)¹⁴.

The first phase of the real estate operation brought to the construction, between 1968 and 1972, of 10 residential towers with a commercial row set under the archways running along the entire complex. Faced with the clearly recognizable unitary project by Dolci – proposing a quite unusual residential solution in the built landscape of the working neighborhood of Borgo San Pietro – the intervention saw the involvement of a plurality of different stakeholders (local building cooperatives, small-family run construction companies, big national real estate developers and insurance companies like the Istituto Nazionale Assicurazioni –INA), who proposed a variety of diverse residential solutions, with different apartments' layouts, generating a heterogeneous and fragmented social fabric (Caramellino 2013).

Figure 5. Construction of the 15-storey northern tower in the residential complex of Corso Roma, 1970.



Source: Photography courtesy of Riccardo Carver.

¹⁴ Municipality of Moncalieri (1958-64), Convenzione edilizia n. 18104/1939 ai fini di sfruttamento edilizio per consentire la fabbricazione, notary deed of dr. G. Gardini, February 4, 1964. Archivio del Comune di Moncalieri, X.11, n. 4/1964. According to the Italian National Planning Law of 1942, the agreement approves the parceling plan submitted by Dolci: Piano planivolumetrico consensuale di sfruttamento edilizio della zona di piano particolareggiato n. 2, 1964.

A second phase of the operation, carried on by the same Enzo Dolci on the same lands, brought to the construction of other twelve economic high-density apartments buildings along the banks of the Sangone river, between 1963 and 1968, designed by the architect in cooperation with a National real estate developer, the Società Generale Immobiliare (SGI). Active in Italy and abroad (Washington, Montreal, Mexico City, Montecarlo) since the late 19th century, the SGI was responsible for the construction of more than 700 residential buildings in Italy between 1945 and 1975 (Puzzuoli 2003, Bonomo 2007).

Cooperating with the Società Generale di Lavori di Pubblica Utilità (Sogene), established in 1947 to manage building initiatives, the SGI was active in the new areas of urban expansion and was responsible for the urbanization and construction of more than 36.000 cubic meters in Turin between 1951 and 1966. Through diverse forms of intervention (adopting different housing and planning models, forms of funding, construction processes...), the developer was able to codify an heterogeneous set of residential solutions conceived for diverse social groups: from the “integrated building complexes” in the Southern sector of the city (mainly Turin Parc 1 and Turin Parc 2) to fully equipped condomini, from the slab blocks conceived for the lower-middle-class neighborhoods to the palazzine built for the upper-middle class in the city center (the outcome of punctual processes of replacement of existing buildings).

Within the frame of SGI residential programs, the compound of Corso Roma, mirrored the strategies of the company, that adopted a “complete cycle methodology” (that included all the phases, from the urbanization of the land to the construction processes), introducing recent researches on the ground of the “integrated house”¹⁵.

Figure 6. The project of the towers of the Sangone Po complex.



Source: Sgi, *Realizzazioni e studi nel settore edilizio*, 1965, p. 75.

¹⁵ The ability to meet the requirements of diverse parts of the Turin middle class is mirrored by the initiative to create the Istituto di Edilizia Economica Popolare (IEEP), established by the SGI in Turin in 1947 along with Montecatini, Snia Viscosa, Banco di Sicilia, to build apartments for the employees of these companies in the frame of the economic facilitations made available by the existing laws (Shubina 2014).

This second intervention formed part of the same parceling plan for the urbanization of the entire area signed by Dolci at the beginning of the 1950s and was the last fragment to be implemented. As in the previous phase, a long negotiation between the Municipality of Moncalieri and the architect resulted in the construction of five towers and seven slab-blocks, built on the same land occupied by the IACP houses constructed in the previous decade. The intervention was pushed forth in two phases by the Company: a first sector was erected between 1962 and 1964 and the second blocks between 1964 and 1968, taking charge of the renewal of the Sangone banks, designed as a new public green area, and of the construction of streets and services (Società Generale Immobiliare, 1965). This new residential sector hosting more than 560 families, along with the adjacent housing complex of Corso Roma, mirrors the overall experience acquired in the field of affordable housing by Società Generale Immobiliare through the Istituti per l'Edilizia Economica e Popolare during the 1950s and, represents a portion of the ambitious satellite towns envisioned by the architect at the beginning of the 1950s, implemented through different phases and by a plurality of different actors through punctual interventions and a series of negotiation processes that arrived to produce a significant sector of the emerging “well-equipped city”.

3.2. The Western expansion: the Sky Residence in Collegno

The second case is situated in the western outskirts of Turin, in the municipality of Collegno, along the Corso Francia, one of the main outgoing axes of the city, connecting Turin with Rivoli and the Susa Valley, in the direction of France. The residential complex “Sky Residence” consists of two perpendicular 11 story-blocks, placed on top of a commercial court, and it represents an interesting case for two main reasons: the first one is related to the long process of negotiation of the “Sky Residence” masterplan between the architect, the building company and the public municipal office, and its final realization; the second one is related to the interesting connection of professionals involved in this experience.

With its concave façade on the street and its modern white and blue lines, the Sky Residence does not go unnoticed. Not only due to the architectural vocabulary – which is very different from the typical apartment blocks built in Turin after WWII – but also due to the dimension of the blocks, which strongly encourages the dialogue not with the pre-existing urban settlement of Collegno, but exclusively with the axis of corso Francia: it is not linked to the outskirts of Turin as to this large urban avenue running east-west. Seen from Collegno, the Sky building emerges like a white transatlantic from the largely pavillonnaire surrounding urban fabric (Renzoni 2013).

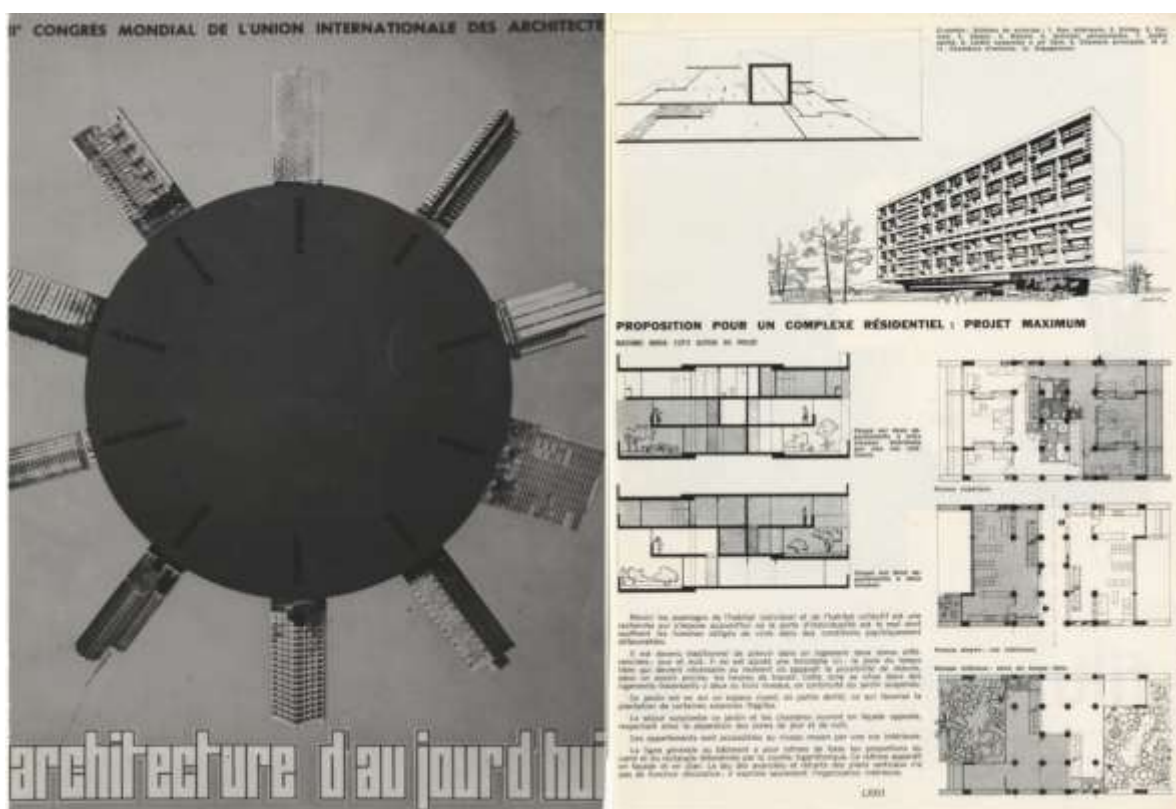
Figure 7. Sky Residence, Collegno (Turin).



Source: Photography by Michela Pace, 2013

Designed between 1963 and 1964 by Massimo Cotti, the complex was built by the Campiglia building company between 1964 and 1972. Massimo Cotti was, in the early '1960s, a young *geometra*, with a good natural talent for architectural and interior design. In those years, he started attending the evening school for the admission to the University courses, in order to become an architect and obtain his license to build. In those years, he was the designer of the façade solutions for the main residential building constructed by the building company lead by Angelo Campiglia, an ambitious entrepreneur that built a few residential interventions around the city centre. The collaboration between Campiglia and Cotti characterized the whole production of the company during the 1960s. Meanwhile, Cotti obtained his degree in Architecture in 1975 – having previously studied engineering in Switzerland and then architecture at the Politecnico di Torino. During the whole 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, Massimo Cotti worked as a sort of “ghost-designer” for relevant and visible buildings and complexes, conducting his own firm and collaborating with private owners and small and medium-sized building companies. This condition on the one hand, and its architectural style, on the other, mostly far from the mainstream in Turin in those years, contributed to keep his works out of the main narratives on post-war architecture in Turin. These reasons can explain the lack of attention that characterized Cotti's architecture within the main professional network, while many of his realized buildings and projects were published between the 1960s and the 1970s on international specialized journals, such as *L'architecture d'au jour d'hui* and *DBZ*¹⁶.

Figure 8. Architect Massimo M. Cotti, Proposition pour un complexe résidentiel: projet Maximum.

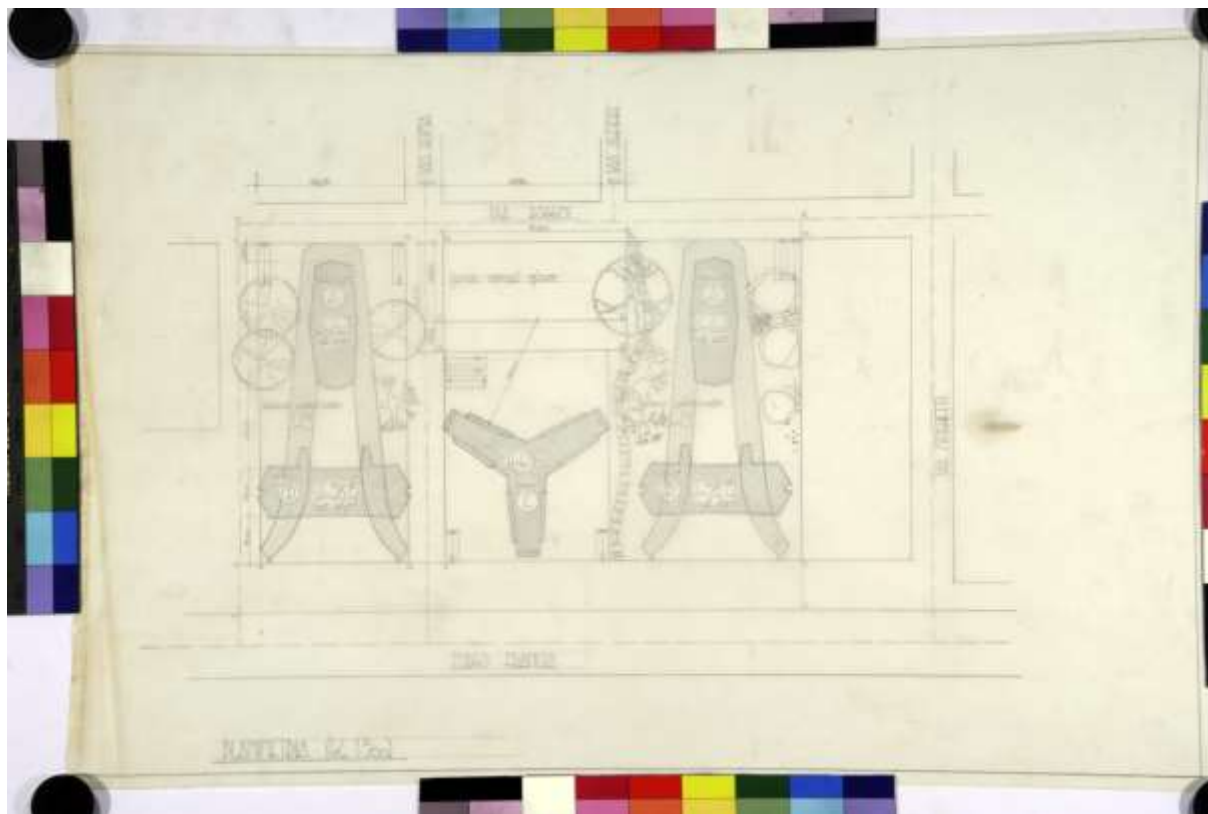


Source: *L'architecture d'au jour d'hui*, 1966, p. LXXII

¹⁶ The work of Massimo Cotti appeared on international specialized journals during the 1960s. See: Proposition pour un complexe résidentiel: projet Maximum, «*L'architecture d'au jour d'hui*», 1966, p. LXXII; Projekt eines Großwohnhauses. Blick über die Grenzen, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 14, n. 2, February 1966, pp. 175-6; Woninggebouw van maisonnettes. Optimale privacy ondanks samenvoeging, «*Cobouw. Dagblad voor de Bouwwereld*», Zaterdag 27, August 1966, n. 197, p. 1; Wohnanlage bei Turin. Blick über die Grenzen, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 14, n. 9, September 1966, pp. 1593-4; Sky Residence, «*Kenchiku Bunka*», vol. 22, n. 246, April 1967, pp. 42-3; Mehrfamilienhaus bei Turin, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 15, n. 12, December 1967, pp. 2067-8; Mehrfamilienhaus in Turin, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 17, n. 5, Mai 1969, pp. 875-6; Dendratom – Turmstadt, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 17, n. 10, October 1969, pp. 2047-8, 2051-2; Dendratom – La ville est un arbre, «*L'architecture d'au jour d'hui*», n. 146, 1969, pp. 83-9; Wohnhaus bei Turin, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 18, n. 11, November 1970; Grundschnitz in Grugliasco, Turin, «*DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift*», vol. 20, n. 11, November 1972, pp. 2137-40.

The Sky Residence building stands at the end of a big lot (21000 sqm) which, until the early Sixties, was occupied by the factory of a timber producer based in Veneto Region (Baroni Spa), and was erected after receiving the approval of a «consensual arrangement plan», the result of a building agreement between the Municipality of Collegno and the Baroni company¹⁷. The city of Collegno was provided with a city plan signed by Giorgio Rigotti in 1949 and approved by the Italian Ministry of Public Works in 1956¹⁸: this plan moved the majority of the industrial settlements on the eastern city limit towards Torino borders, and the Sky Residence lot (currently the timber factory) was totally inserted within the expansion of the on-growing residential fabric of Collegno proposed by the new General Rigotti Plan. In the subsequent years, a new City Plan was issued, in order to adapt the development provisions to the exceptional transformation of the first belt of Turin: it was issued by the local engineer Gabriele Manfredi in 1959 and it was approved in 1966¹⁹. In this new planning document, it is possible to find the masterplan of The Sky's area, as designed by Massimo Cotti in the early 1960s: in the new Collegno general Plan, in 1966, the masterplan of the Sky and its layout, issued by the urban agreement, was inserted as an integrated part of the general planning instrument.

Figure 9. Sky Residence, Collegno (Turin).



Source: Public Archive

Note: Scheme of the Building Agreement, 1963, Municipality of Collegno.

In exchange for an increase in volume, all the perimeter and penetration areas were transferred to the Municipality, equipping the entire block with pavements, two pedestrian crosswalks and the tree-lined side road

¹⁷ Municipality of Collegno, Archivio Edilizio, Piani di Lottizzazione, repertorio n. 48.780, del 25.03.1964, notaio Avv. Sebastiano Dell'Arte, fascicolo n. 2.

¹⁸ Municipality of Collegno, Archivio Urbanistico, Piano regolatore generale comunale, Studio A. & G. Rigotti, 1949.

¹⁹ Municipality of Collegno, Archivio Urbanistico, Piano regolatore generale comunale, Ing. Gabriele Manfredi, 1966.

of corso Francia, a typical street layout used in Turin. The “consensual agreement plan” (March, 1964) initially stated the transfer of an area of 2000 square meters in the central part of the plot intended to the construction of a new kindergarten; the lot was articulated in three areas: the Sky Residence block, a new axis perpendicular to corso Francia, and a second double block divided through a pedestrian pathway that would connect the forecast crosswalk on corso Francia with the street behind. This ambitious piano di lottizzazione (residential buildings with a commercial deck at the ground floor, public park and kindergarten with pedestrian pathways) was shaped through the realization of several layouts, which the Campiglia building company and its architect, Massimo Cotti, produced in a few years. One of the first proposal was based on the repetition of the double 11-storey block, situated both symmetrically beside a 17-storey tower. This masterplan, rejected by the municipal building commission, was published on international architecture journals²⁰ and was the one chosen by the entrepreneur for producing a wide-scale maquette model presented to the public for selling purposes. Hereafter, the central tower was, in the masterplan, replaced by a single 11-story block. In the meanwhile, the discussion on the masterplan continued, a part of the masterplan (the “A part”) was accepted and the construction site was settled.

Figure 10. Sky Residence, Collegno (Turin). Model of the Housing Development, 1963.



Source: Courtesy of the architect Massimo Cotti.

After the construction of the first double 11-storey block of the Sky Residence, the remaining part of the lot was sold together with a building permit amendment and a new preliminary masterplan designed by architect Cotti, that totally changed the aspect of the architectural and planning. The executive design was signed by the architect Enzo Dolci (the designer of the above mentioned corso Roma complex in the opposite side of the city) and the two residential slabs (7 floors) were built between 1972 and 1977. This second part of the lot was named “Diorama II” (the “Diorama I” was completed a few years before in Turin in an area of deep transformation of the city). The new buildings, with a “L” and “S” layout, proposed the same façade solution of the Sky Residence,

²⁰ Wohnanlage bei Turin. Blick über die Grenzen, «DBZ – Deutsche Bauzeitschrift», vol. 14, n. 9, September 1966, pp. 1593-4; s.a., Sky Residence, «Kenchiku Bunka», vol. 22, n. 246, April 1967, pp. 42-3.

but in a simplified way. With a new planning agreement (June 1977) the owner of the lot (the Cenisia firm) came to know that the kindergarten would be replaced by a public park with a playground designed by the municipal technical office²¹ and built by the Cenisia itself²². Nowadays the green area, “a small park, but very much used” (as in the words of one of the inhabitants) every afternoon is crawling with parents, grandparents and kids.

3.3. The scale of the urban sector: the case of the Quartiere Ippodromo

Situated in front of the Fiat Mirafiori office building, in the southern part of the city, the Quartiere Ippodromo (Hippodrome neighbourhood) was built between 1958 and 1975 on the land where the former city hippodrome was placed during the 1920s. It represents an important example – from both the quantitative-dimensional standpoint, as well as from that of the results – of an urban planning agreement between the city and the land owners (Murgia 2015). We can call it a sort of *ante-litteram* “consensual urbanism”, where it is possible to follow an interesting intersection between the professionals involved (the same planner of the ongoing Turin General City plan), private landowners (organized in 7 associations), builders (58 building companies involved), and municipal planning offices.

The district is built around a central backbone of services, articulated in two public parks, a kindergarten, a primary school, a cinema (that was transformed in a disco during the 1980s), a religious centre and a sports facility. The settlement hybridizes the type of the courtyard block of flats, where the repetition of six blocks is rotated through the insertion of two bigger symmetrical blocks and is concluded, on the eastern part of the plot, by a group of slabs connected by low-rise commercial buildings. The whole complex is provided by with covered pedestrian paths that strongly characterize the district: they open onto the central spine of facilities and onto the semi-collective green areas of the residential buildings. The height of the buildings decreases from the central spine (where the 11 corner towers overlook) to the external borders of the neighbourhood: the 15-storey corner towers rise from the average height of the buildings – between 6 and 10 floors, connected by a series of 2-3 storey buildings, originally built for tertiary service activities, nowadays converted to residential uses.

Figure 11. Quartiere Ippodromo (Hippodrome neighbourhood), Turin.



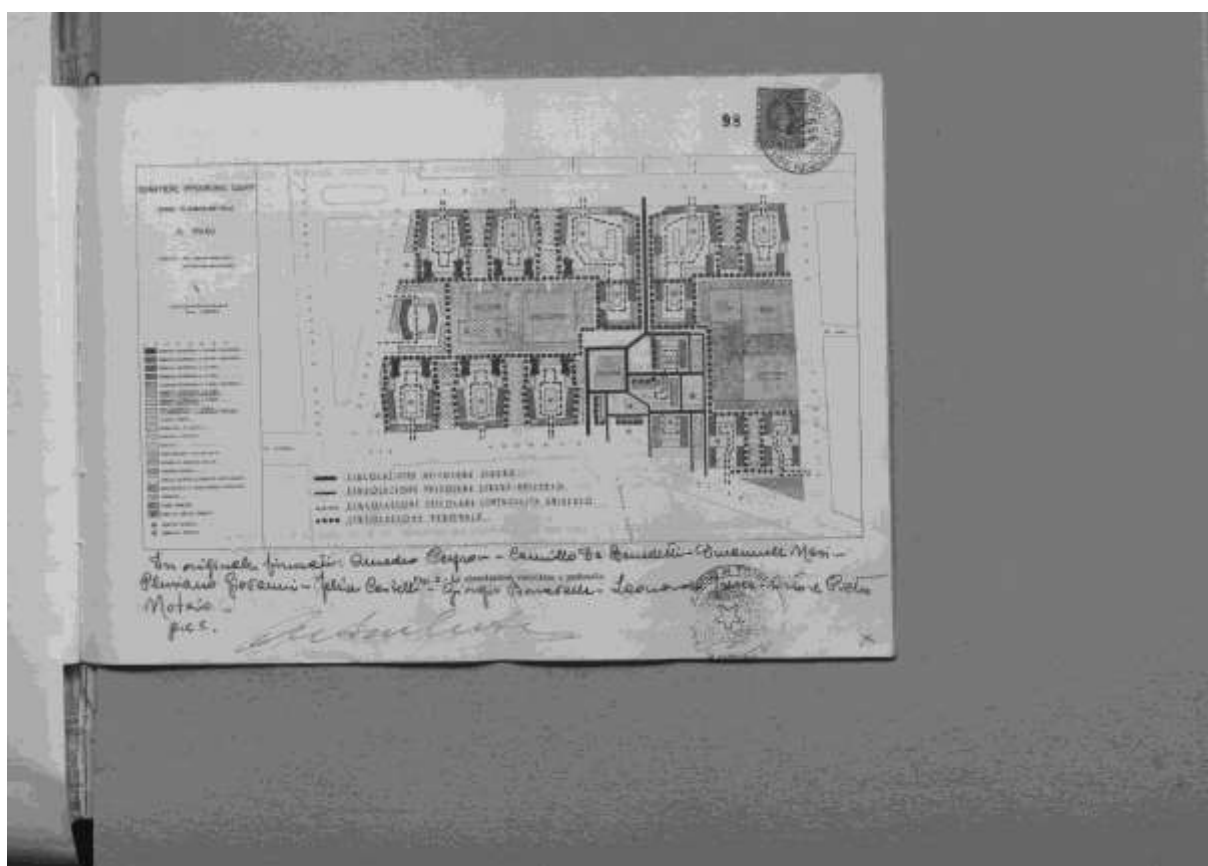
Source: Photography by Michela Pace, 2013.

²¹ Municipality of Collegno, Archivio edilizio, fasc. «Corso Francia 218-220-222, Diorama», Ufficio tecnico, Progetto n. 1006 bis, 14.4.1977.

²² Municipality of Collegno, Archivio edilizio, fasc. «Corso Francia 218-220-222, Diorama», 4 July 1977.

The first negotiations regarding this area and the moving of the existing hippodrome to build a residential neighbourhood started in 1956, the same year of the adoption of the new local city plan (April 1956). It is relevant to notice that the whole negotiation process was developed exactly during the years between the adoption of the plan and its approval (October 1959). In fact, the agreement for the new Quartiere Ippodromo was approved by the city council in September 1958²³ and defined with a notary act in May 1959²⁴. These chronological coordinates are interesting, mainly because the professional commissioned for the development plan was the engineer Giorgio Rigotti, together with the architect Rosamaria Renoglio (as mentioned before, Rigotti was, in those years, the responsible of the Turin city plan). This superposition of appointments casts an interesting light on the relation between professional practices, planning norms and city building: it traces a soft edge between the inside and the outside of a planning instrument, such as the General City Plan, in those years of turbulent growth.

Figure 12. Quartiere Ippodromo (Hippodrome neighbourhood), Turin.

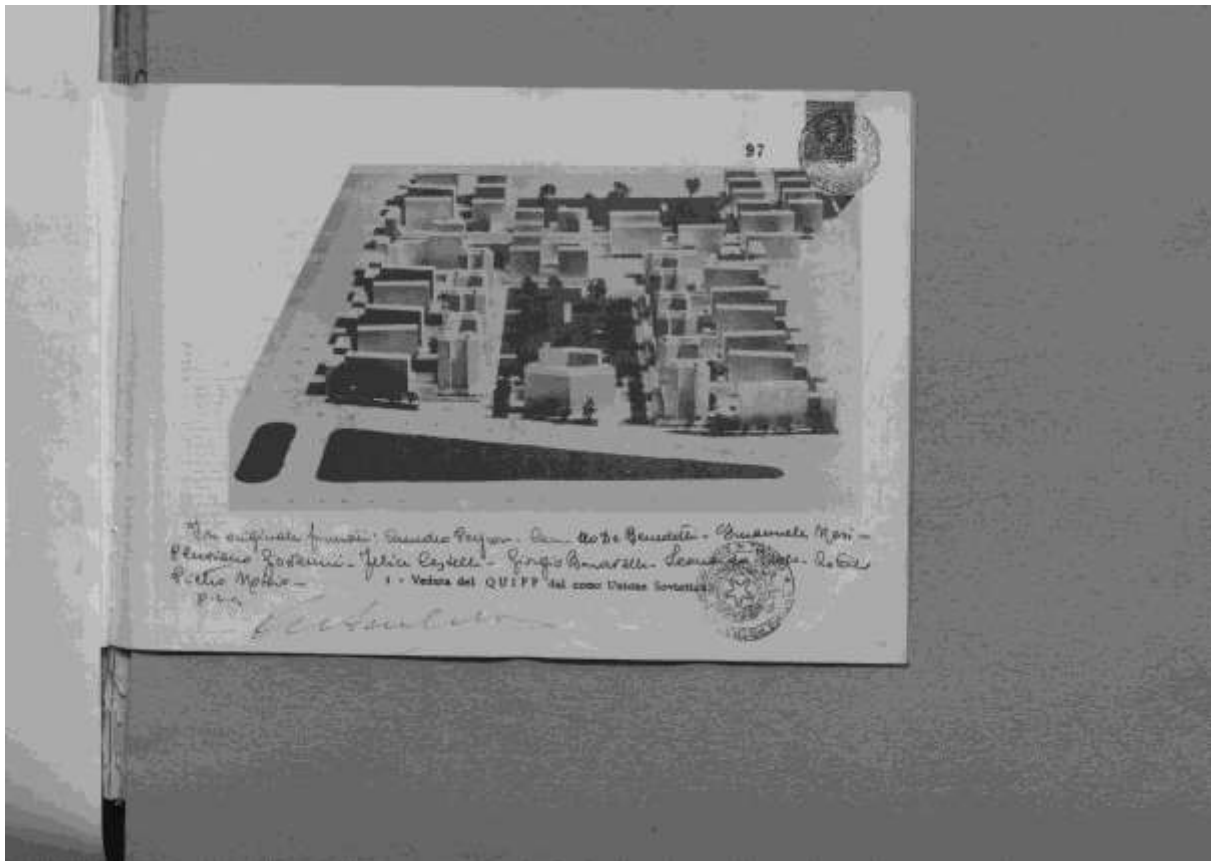


Source: Public Archive

Note: Scheme of the Building Agreement, 1959, Municipality of Turin.

²³ Municipality of Turin, City Council, 22 September 1958, Società Campo di Mirafiori, Avv. Marangoni Carlo, Pluviano Giovanni, Società Pinky e Mirella, Ovazza Giorgio e Ovazza Celeste in Segre, "Piano di Lottizzazione e sfruttamento edilizio di aree di terreno in località Mirafiori costituenti l'Ippodromo, Convenzione, approvazione", ASCT - City of Turin, Historical Archive.

²⁴ Municipality of Turin, Notary Deeds, Convenzione edilizia tra la Società Campo di Mirafiori e il Comune di Torino, May 15, 1959, ASCT - City of Turin, Historical Archive.

Figure 13. Quartiere Ippodromo (Hippodrome neighbourhood), Turin.

Source: Public Archive

Source: Model of the Housing Development, 1959, Municipality of Turin.

The General Plan for Turin fixed for this wide area (330.000 sqm) a maximum of 1.320.000 cubic meters for new buildings. The planning agreement between the City of Turin and the landowners was approved in September 1958 and established that for the whole area the owners should give to the city 140.500 square meters (42,57% of the entire area) to be devoted to services: 75.000 sqm for the infrastructural network, and 65.000 sqm for a set of public services (parish centre, nursery school, primary school and junior high school, district market, public green area, sport facilities, and community centre). In exchange the area took advantage from an increase of built volume (about 125.000 cubic meters).

If we compare this data with the whole increase of volume that the city granted between the end of the 1950s and the late 1960s through several *convenzioni urbanistiche*, we can notice that the Quartiere Ippodromo represented less than the 7% of the whole increase of volume for new buildings, while providing the 27% of public areas transferred to the Municipality for new public facilities. We can consider the Quartiere Ippodromo as an example of virtuous plan promoted by the private sector, in the same years in which a great effort was dedicated to the construction of “public housing” complexes. The Quartiere Ippodromo represents the story of a part of the city built by private developers and for mostly middle-class clients; the extension of the facilities included in the plan gave it, however, a strong public character.

Conclusions

The history of the planning, design and construction of the three residential sectors in Turin introduces a number of crucial concerns, challenging shared commonplaces and consolidated narratives on the history of the city, and contribute to create a deeper understanding of the complex and multifaceted frame and conditions that regulated the post-war urban growth, radically transforming Turin built environment.

The “ordinary city” generated by the private initiative contributed to shape the post-war public realm: middle-class housing complexes, while providing new houses, built new urban sectors or radically transformed existing ones, supplying new public facilities and collective services at different scales. Addressing these two dimensions of the construction of post-war Turin (houses + facilities) the article allows us to look at the negotiation processes with local authorities and to the planning tools; to deals with the ways of life, taking in consideration not only the “dwelling habits”, but also the everyday practices outside the domestic sphere; to analyze the emergence of new demands of welfare and new citizenship rights that shaped the urban dimension of post-war Italian cities; to deal with a multiplicity of urban portions, a patchwork of fragmented collective spaces implemented through series of punctual and diffuse agreements and negotiations between private and public actors.

However, the analysis of the three residential sectors also brought to the light the weakness of the quite ideological separation between public and private initiatives in the process of construction of post-war Italian cities. As shown by the cases, property developers have a central role in the definition of housing and urban policies both inside and outside the main planning instruments (often using public funds and lands) and they contribute to build public houses and facilities – schools, playgrounds, parks and gardens – in order to fix *ex post* the urban needs for the new inhabitants. It seems therefore necessary to problematize again, through an observation over the two decades, the relationship between public and private sectors, looking more closely at the negotiation processes between the municipal and regional bureaucracies and the forms of participation of the private initiative, questioning some dichotomies: the distinction between private housing and public services; the relationship between the building from the bottom of the demand of welfare and the forms of the institutional intervention; the opposition between top-down or bottom-up policies and the construction of opposing paradigms between technocracies and instances of participation. The boundaries between these opposing concepts these days seem increasingly blurred and their reinterpretation would enable the definition of new strategies of observation, new chronologies and new narratives.

Finally, the study of the residential stock produced in Turin between the 1950s and 1970s bring light to an unexpected and multi-faceted professional panorama: not only the cultural hegemony of architects is not taken for granted but a plurality of other professional figures acquired a central role, mirroring the existing divorce between the main narrative of Turin post-war architecture and the history of the professional culture that was effectively active in the construction of the “ordinary” city. The analysis of the housing programs and the building policies of some of these stakeholders now active in Turin, along with the investigation of the residential stock they produced during these years, brings forth a set of heterogeneous residential models, interventions methods, forms of funding and settlement strategies, even if several common features emerged in their agenda.

In conclusions, considering post-war Turin as a “negotiated city”, or, to be more precise, an “agreed city”, shaped by localized, punctual and fragmented agreements, both inside and outside the main city plan instruments, the article contributes to provide a deeper understanding of the processes of transformation and urban expansion experienced by the majority of Italian cities that grew through a patchwork of local fragmented local implementations.

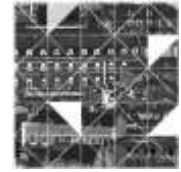
BIBIOGRAPHY

- Avermaete, T., Swenarton, M. (eds.) (2014), *Architecture and the Welfare State*, Routledge, London.
- Bagnasco, A. (2008), *Ceto medio. Perché e come occuparsene*, Il Mulino, Bologna.
- Bendimerad, S., Eleb, M. (2011), *Vu de l'interieur. Habiter un immeuble en Ile de France 1945-2010*, Archibooks, Paris.
- Bonomo, B. (2011), "Dwelling Space and Social Identities: the Roman Bourgeoisie, ca. 1950-1980", *Urban History*, XXXVIII, 38:2, pp. 276-300.
- Bonomo, B. (2009), "«On holiday 365 days a year» on the outskirts of Rome. Urban Form, Lifestyles and the pursuit of happiness in the suburb of Casalpalocco, ca. 1955-1980", in A. Bartetzky, M. Schalenberg (eds.), *Urban Planning and the Pursuit of Happiness. European variations on a Universal Theme (18th-21st centuries)*, Jovis, Berlin, pp. 168-197.
- Bonomo, B. (2007), *Il quartiere delle Valli. Costruire Roma nel secondo dopoguerra*, Franco Angeli, Milan.
- Bosc, S. (2008), *Sociologie des classes moyennes*, Editions La découverte, Paris.
- Caramellino, G., De Pieri, F. (2015), *Domestic Italy after WWII: collecting stories from middle-class houses, Candide. Journal of Architectural Knowledge*, 9: 6, pp. 45-72.
- Caramellino, G., Zanfi, F. (eds.) (2015), *Post-war Middle-class Housing. Models, Construction, Change*, Peter Lang, Bern.
- Caramellino, G., De Pieri, F., Renzoni, C. (2015), *Explorations in the middle-class city, Turin 1945-1980*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa.
- Caramellino, G. (2013), "Basta un milione per vivere in un grattacielo fronte collina", in De Pieri et al. (2013), pp. 295- 318.
- Cardoza, A., Symcox, G. (2006), *A History of Turin*, Einaudi, Turin.
- Clark, P. (ed.) (2006), *The European City and Green Space: London, Stockholm, Helsinki And St. Petersburg, 1850-2000*, Ashgate, London.
- Clark, P., Niemi, M., Niemela, J. (eds.) (2010), *Sport, Recreation & Green Space in the European City*, Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki
- Crainz, G. (1996), *Storia del miracolo italiano*, Donzelli, Rome.
- Crainz, G. (2003), *Il paese mancato. Dal miracolo economico agli anni ottanta*, Donzelli, Rome.
- Darian-Smith, K., Wills, J. (eds.) (2017), *Designing Schools: Space, Place and Pedagogy in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, London.
- De Magistris, A. (1993), "Il piano intercomunale torinese e il dibattito urbanistico degli anni '50-'60", in A. Peano (ed.), *Insegnamento, ricerca e pratica in urbanistica*, Edizioni Libreria Cortina, Turin, pp. 271-82.
- De Magistris, A. (1999), "L'urbanistica della grande trasformazione (1945-1980)", in N. Tranfaglia (ed.) (1999), *Storia di Torino*, vol. IX, Gli anni della Repubblica, Einaudi, Turin, pp. 189-238.
- De Pieri, F. (2010), "Searching for memories in the suburbs of Rome", *Modern Italy*, vol. 15, n. 3, pp. 371-379.
- De Pieri, F., Bonomo, B., Caramellino, G., Zanfi, F. (eds.) (2013), *Storie di Case. Abitare l'Italia del boom*, Donzelli, Rome.

- Di Biagi, P. (ed. 2001), *La grande ricostruzione. Il piano Ina-Casa e l'Italia degli anni cinquanta*, Donzelli, Rome.
- Di Biagi, P. (2008), *La città pubblica. Edilizia sociale e riqualificazione urbana a Torino*, Allemandi, Turin.
- Di Biagi, P., Marchigiani, E. (eds.) (2009), *Città pubbliche. Linee guida per la riqualificazione urbana*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan.
- Susan, F. (2010), *The Just City*, Cornell University Press, New York.
- Falco, L., Morbelli, G. (1976), *Torino, un secolo di sviluppo urbano. Appunti per una lettura di una città del capitale*, Celid, Turin.
- Gilardi, M.F. (2014), Il complesso residenziale di Gino Salvestrini in piazza Adriano a Torino (1968-1970): storia, attori, strategie, Master thesis, tutor F. De Pieri, Politecnico di Torino.
- Ginsborg, P. (1989), *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi. Società e politica 1943-1988*, Einaudi, Turin.
- Gosseye, J., Heynen, H. (2010), "Designing the Belgian welfare state 1950s to 1970s: social reform, leisure and ideological adherence", *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 15, n. 5, pp. 557-585.
- Gosseye, J., Heynen, H. (eds.) (2013), "Architecture for leisure in post-war Europe: 1945-1989: between experimentation, liberation and patronisation", *Journal of Architecture*, vol. 18, n. 5, pp. 623-743.
- Infussi, F. (ed.) (2011), *Dal recinto alla città. Milano, esplorazioni nella città pubblica*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan.
- Insolera, I. (1993), *Roma moderna. Un secolo di storia urbanistica 1870-1970*, Einaudi, Turin.
- Lasner, M.G. (2012), *High Life. Condo Living in the Suburban Century*, Yale University Press.
- Lassiter, M.D. (ed.) (2012), "Schools and housing in Metropolitan History", *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 38, n. 2, March 2012, pp. 195-270.
- Levi, F., Maida, B. (eds. 2002), *La città e lo sviluppo: crescita e disordine a Torino 1945-1970*, Franco Angeli, Milan.
- Lewi, H., Nichols, D. (eds.) (2010), *Community: Building Modern Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney.
- Magnaghi, A., Monge, M., Re, L. (eds.) (1982), *Guida all'architettura moderna di Torino*, Designers Riuniti Editori, Turin.
- Mattson, H., Wallenstein, S. (eds.) (2010), *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State*, Black Dog, London.
- Maurin, E., Goux, D. (2012), *Les nouvelles classe moyennes*, Seuil-La République des idées, Paris.
- Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici (1968), "Le lottizzazioni in Italia. Indagine condotta dal ministero dei lavori pubblici – direzione generale dell'urbanistica", *Città Spazio*, n. 3/4, pp. 10-52.
- Mumford, E. (2000), *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism: 1928-1960*, The MIT Press, Boston.
- Munarín, S., Tosi, M.C., Renzoni, C., Pace, M. (Officina Welfare Space) (2011), *Spazi del welfare. Esperienze luoghi pratiche*, Quodlibet, Macerata.
- Munarín, S., Tosi, M.C. (2013), *Welfare Spaces. On the Role of Welfare State Policies in the Construction of the Contemporary City*, List-Actar, Trento-Barcelona.

- Murgia, G. (2015), Il quartiere Ippodromo a Mirafiori Sud. Forme e attori di un processo di negoziazione, Master thesis, tutor C. Renzoni, Politecnico di Torino.
- Musso, S. (ed.) (2005), *Torino al lavoro. Dalla ricostruzione allo sviluppo*, Città di Torino, Turin.
- Olmo, C., Mazza, L. (eds.) (1991), *Architettura e urbanistica a Torino 1945-1990*, Allemandi, Turin.
- Piccinato, G. (2010), "A brief history of Italian town planning after 1945", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 81, n. 3, pp. 237-259.
- Pietsch, S., Muller, A. (eds.) (2015), *Walls that teach. On the Architecture of the Youth Centers*, Jam Sap Books.
- Puzzuoli, P. (ed.) (2003), *La Società generale immobiliare Sogene: storia, archivio, testimonianze*, Palombi, Rome.
- Ramello, M., Depaoli, A., Palmieri, G. (2014), "Torino: piani urbanistici per la città-fabbrica tra il 1945 e il 1980", *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, 65, pp. 41-63.
- Renzoni, C. (2014), "Diffusa e attrezzata. Dotazioni urbane e dispersione insediativa", in L. Fabian (ed.), *New Urban Question. Ricerche sulla città contemporanea, 2009-2014*, Aracne, Rome.
- Renzoni, C. (2013), "The Sky Residence. Abitare lungo un corso, in una casa «modernissima»", in De Pieri et al. (2013), pp. 130-151.
- Renzoni, C. (2012), "Measuring Italian Welfare: The Debate on Spatial Quantification of Social Services and Amenities in Postwar Italy", in J. Gosseye, H. Heynen (eds.), *Architecture for Leisure in Postwar Europe, 1945-1989*, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, pp. 108-123.
- Renzoni, C. (2013), "Spatial Legacies of the Welfare State: Housing and Beyond", *Contemporary European History*, vol. XXII, Special Issue n. 3: Recycling and Reuse in the Twentieth Century, August 2013, pp. 537-546.
- Ryckewaert, M. (2011), *Building the Economic Backbone of the Belgian Welfare State. Infrastructure, planning and architecture 1945-1973*, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Rogers, B.L. (2008), "Integrating Education History and Urban History. The Politics of Schools and Cities", *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 34, n. 5, July 2008, pp. 855-869.
- Smiley, D. (2013), *Pedestrian Modern. Shopping and American Architecture (1925-1956)*, Minnesota University Press.
- Società Generale Immobiliare (1963-1971), *Realizzazioni e studi nel settore edilizio*, Officina poligrafica laziale, Rome.
- Soja, E. (2010), *Seeking Spatial Justice*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Sotgia, A. (2010), *Ina Casa Tuscolano. Biografia di un quartiere romano*, Franco Angeli, Milan.
- Viccaro, U. (2007), *Storia di Borgata Giordani. Dal fascismo agli anni del "boom"*, Franco Angeli, Milan.
- Wagenaar, C. (2005), *Happy: Cities and Public Happiness in Post-War Europe*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam.
- WAGENAAR C. (2006), *The Architecture of Hospitals*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Zanfi, F. (2013), "Convenzioni urbanistiche e nuovo paesaggio residenziale per I ceti medi a Milano tra gli anni '50 e '70", *Territorio*, XVII, 64, pp. 66-74.
- Zanfi, F., Caramellino, G. (eds. 2013), "Costruire la città dei ceti medi", *Territorio*, XVII, 64, pp. 61-120.

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Real Estate Pioneers on the Metropolitan Frontier. The works of Jean-Florian Collin and François Amelinckx in Antwerp.

Tom Broes¹, University of Ghent, Belgium.

Michiel Dehaene², University of Ghent, Belgium.

Abstract

In the Belgian context, the production of Public Mass housing remained limited in scope. Apart from a few well published examples Cité Modèle & Kiel (Braem), Luchtbal (Van Kuyck), Cité de Droixhe (Groupe EGAU), Belgian housing policies focused on the promotion of private homeownership. Mass housing in Belgium took the form of the massive production of private houses, constituting a sprawled urban landscape that has been described as the 'banlieue radieuse'. Less studied is the short lived but quantitatively significant private production of large scale high-rise apartments. This paper studies the close relationship between the production of these very different forms of 'mass housing': low- and high rise, inner-city and suburban. While the public policy context is rather well known, the private developers that produced this landscape have hardly been studied. This paper studies major players (Amelinckx n.v., Etrimo n.v., Extensa n.v.) and the architectural and development models through which they managed to create and capture a vast market of commodified housing. Through the detailed reconstruction of large scale commercial development schemes in Antwerp and Brussels, the paper describes the optimism of these mavericks of the Belgian property boom and recollects the radiant suburban promise they delivered.

Although these property tycoons seem to have had little difficulty in luring in the middle classes and in persuading local political boards, today it becomes clear that the premises on the basis of which they sold the suburban dream were imbued with a thin instantaneous optimism that turned out to be too precarious to keep up with the subsequent impact of urbanization. While their activities are mostly remembered for the trauma of their bankruptcy, affecting many small contractors and private investors, this paper will highlight the collective failure to embed these large scale endeavours within enduring and intelligent (public) urban development strategies.

Key-words: Belgian Property Boom; Amelinckx; Metropolitan Urbanization.

¹ Tom.Broes@ugent.be.

² Michiel.Dehaene@ugent.be.

Figure 1. The most iconic and famous product of Amelinckx: the banalized housing slab.



Source: Amelinckx – Bien vivre dans son appartement.

1. Private mass housing and the metropolitan condition in Belgium

The post-war suburban fringes of the Belgian cities are quickly becoming part of history these days. If until recently the single family home, a car and two children was the widely divided housing ideal for many, these imaginaries, together with the historical expression thereof, are quickly aging. Cities like Ghent and Antwerp are studying the older suburban fringes as the next frontier of urban renewal, earmarking well located older suburbs as the ideal place for targeted densification and sustainable retrofitting efforts (Grafe et al., 2014). As public authorities begin to study these areas, it becomes manifest how little is known regarding the actual dynamics that historically shaped these areas. The planning history describes the great polarization between the development of, often self-built, single family homes and the rather marginal production of public housing estates (De Meulder et.al, 1999; De Vos, 2008; De Caigny, 2010; Van Herck et.al., 2006; Smets, 1977). Apart from a few well-published examples such as Cité Moderne (Braem), Kiel (Braem), Luchtbal (Van Kuyck), Cité de Droixhe (Groupe EGAU), Watersportbaan (G.Bontinck), true public mass housing schemes remained very limited in scope. Moreover, despite direct state subsidies for infrastructure, public space and public facilities, these social housing projects have been criticized for their limited impact on their immediate surroundings and on housing policies in general (De Meulder et al., 1999). As such, the 1949 law Brunfaut on social housing that undergirded the public financing of these projects, played a minor role in the process of urbanization as it failed to deliver its true ambition of converting the urban agglomerations in Belgium into consolidated metropolitan areas. In 1989 social housing barely represented 5% of the total housing stock in Belgium, as opposed to 30% in surrounding countries (Peeters & Dedeker, 1997).

This paper in contrast focusses on the development of private high rise estates that in the Belgian context contributed far more significantly to the production of housing for the masses than the collective complexes produced by the public sector. This paper focusses on this specific housing segment in order to study the emergence of a public-private *modus operandi* that turned out to be decisive for the way in which the urban fringes of many Belgian cities have been shaped. This private production will be illustrated through the work of two pioneers of the Belgian property boom: Jean-Florian Collin (Etrimo, 1949; Etrimo, 1963) and François Amelinckx (Amelinckx n.v.). These tycoons are mostly remembered for the production of utterly banal standardized housing slabs. They have been mainly the subject of critique and as the counterpoint of the qualitative production of the modernist masters (Braem, 1968). As they operated by and large outside of the

well-known public policy context of key Belgian housing laws, few attempts have been made to put their activities into a broader context, apart from some notable exceptions (Ledent, 2014).

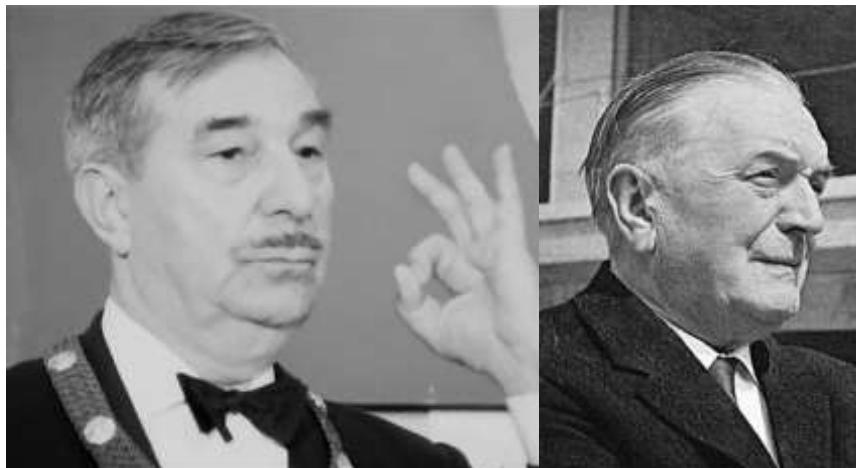
The general introduction of the activities of these two players is followed by a detailed reconstruction by the activities of one of them, François Amelinckx in his home town Antwerp. Piecing together a variety of material (ranging from Collin's manifestos (Collin, 1938; Etrimo, 1963; Collin, 1968) to socio-economic data retrieved from archival material) five tableaux are constructed that characterize the shifting ways of working of this Antwerp contractor. These five descriptions do not add up to a clear-cut historical chronology, but rather document a range of partly simultaneous and gradually shifting practices of housing production.

The paper reconstructs the changing public-private constellations in which these property tycoons contributed to the production of the metropolitan condition in Belgium and in a policy context that was increasingly deprived of an overall spatial image-guide. If the public housing law of 1949 was intended to promote the integrated development of the metropolitan area, in reality the production of public housing targeted a residual fraction, leaving the lion's share of mass housing production to the market.

The activities of Amelinckx in Antwerp show an opportunistic interaction between the entrepreneurial logic of the firm and the territorially divided landscape of local authorities right outside the 19th century walls, each working through their own agendas. The metropolitan area in turn was shaped through the specific interplay between a rising real estate sector and local authorities within various unfolding dynamics of urbanization: leaving a mixed historical legacy of urban surplus value derived from the *ad hoc* combinations made in the process on the one hand, however, showing an emerging collective failure in terms of a growing inability to make future oriented investment and to secure the (sustainable) reproduction of the urban areas in the making.

2. Pioneers of private apartment building: Jean-Florian Collin and François Amelinckx.

Figure 2. Jean-Florian Collin (1904-1985) and François Amelinckx (1898-1975).



Sources: Deroy David – Mr. Etrimo and 'François Amelinckx' – Zie Magazine.

Although Jean-Florian Collin and François Amelinckx were brothers in arms in the Belgian real estate business, Collin may be characterized as the real pioneer. After some early experiments in the interwar period, he founded the company *Etrimo n.v.* (Société D'Etudes et de Réalisations Immobilières) as early as 1935 (Etrimo, 1963). One year later, in 1936, François Amelinckx followed in his footsteps, founding his firm *Amelinckx n.v.* For

Collin, the aspect of research and study was essential and he regularly published articles and books to refine and explain his ideas on homeownership, society and property development. François Amelinckx on the contrary, has been profiled as a simple contractor that was interested in little more than building housing units (Van Hulle, 2000; Loris, 1976).

In 1955, Collin founded the U.P.C.L. (Union Professionel des Créateurs de Lotissements et de Logements), a Belgian association defending the interests of the real estate business (Etrimo, 1963). Collin served as its first president. Three years later, in 1958, he moved on and founded the U.E.C.L. (Union Européen des Constructeurs de Logements, secteur privé), an international association with alleged scientific goals, investigating different modes of private housing production within the diversified economic, juridical and political contexts of several countries throughout Europe (UECL, 1960?; UECL, 2010). Such an international turn was a logical next step in the sequence of earlier evolutions in the liberal Europe of the fifties, with the unified European coal and steel market in 1951 and the establishment of the European Economic Community in 1957 as main examples. Collin acted as president of the U.E.C.L. and asked Amelinckx to replace him at the U.P.C.L. (Etrimo, 1963).

Collin was one of the founding fathers of an up-and-coming sector in Europe, the cradle of which appears to have been lying (and still lies) in Brussels. He rose to become one of the biggest property tycoons in Europe at that time. In a 1969 interview, Collin boasted to aim for 9.000 finished apartments per year in the near future (Deroy & Frances, 2013; Deroy & Frances, 2014). Barely one year later, however, in 1970, he went bankrupt, causing major upheaval in the Belgian economy that affected small contractors and small private savers/investors. In a documentary of that time no less than 9 reasons are mentioned to explain Etrimo's failing, all of them addressing major shifts in building conjuncture and (inter)national economy (BRT, 1970).

François Amelinckx at first managed to survive this crisis and took over the majority of Collin's unfinished and ongoing projects (Van Impe, 2013). From that moment onwards, he was Belgian's uncontested number one tycoon. By the mid-seventies, his firm employed more than 2,200 people and consistently produced 4,000+ apartments each year. In his only public interview he bragged: 'That's 14 apartments each working day or 1 fully-equipped apartment each 45 working minutes' (François Amelinckx, 1970). Mass production *par excellence*. After François Amelinckx's death in 1975, the firm remained active under the leadership of his protégé Renaat Blyweert, totalling a staggering 45,000 apartments (BRT, 1985), until a new building crisis caused the firm's collapse in 1986.

Figure 3. Information Brochures and publicity from the golden '60's by Amelinckx (L) and Etrimo (R).



Sources: Amelinckx – Bien Vivre dans son appartement and Etrimo – Comment devenir propriétaire.

Taken together, these two giant tycoons alone built approximately 65.000 apartments, enough units to house over 200.000 people, the population of a city the size of Ghent. Even if these numbers trigger the imagination, little remains known of the precise political-economic context within which they acted. Through a thorough reconstruction of Amelinckx's building practices in Antwerp, this paper reconstructs the public-private deals in which these tycoons were involved, and in what sense their housing production contributed to the process of urbanizing both the urban core and its as yet rural suburbs (Rémy, 1974).

3. Amelinckx in Antwerp: fifty years of building activity in five tableaux.

Tableau 1. The Bourgeois Boulevard and representative City Expansion.



Source: Antwerp City Archives, file n° sa028126.

François Amelinckx was a 12-year old boy, when in 1910 the City Architect of Paris Henri Prost won the international design competition for the redevelopment of the old ramparts in Antwerp (*Studiecommissie ter inrichting van de Antwerpsche agglomeratie*, 1910). Little did he know that this symbolic event would set in motion a series of urbanization processes that were going to provide him with numerous building opportunities. A territory that until then had been a collection of separate and mainly rural municipalities became in no time the subject of urban speculation. Although Prost's plan produced quite a lot of enthusiasm among planning professionals, it was quickly abandoned. The plan did, however, bring the question of a Greater Antwerp on top of the political agenda and stirred the public imagination.

The 'Study Committee for a Greater Antwerp' that had organized the design competition resumed its activities shortly after the event. One of its very first achievements was the construction of the Jan Van Rijswijk Avenue that connected the city-center with the main road to Brussels. Planned already in 1907, its construction only began to take shape in the 1920s following the announcement that the 1930 World Fair would be hosted along the new avenue (ACA, 1908). Given the previous failure to get development along the avenue of the ground, a number of strategic lots were given special attention. It is at one of these iconic spots, at the far end of the Avenue welcoming visitors from Brussels, that François Amelinckx in 1928 would develop his first apartment building in Antwerp (ACA, 1929). The development of the avenue was regarded as representative of the future agglomeration and its construction must be understood in relation to Brussels' many new avenues that emerged in that same period. Buildings along the Van Rijswijk avenue were subject to approval by a board of architects (ACA, 1929). To this end, Amelinckx entrusted the design of the building to Marcel Segers, a prominent

Antwerp architect that associated on a regular basis with the famous Belgian modernist Renaat Braem at that time (Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed, 2013). The Building on the opposite side of the street was designed by Louis-Herman De Koninck, a leading Belgian architect of that time and living in Brussels.

As the son of a family that had a business in building-materials, Amelinckx was only one among many capitalists that invested in real estate along the Van Rijswijck avenue. After the first world war, an impoverished bourgeoisie emerged that was no longer able to maintain their living standards in their large fully-staffed hotels but was not ready to give up the representative decorum of their previous lifestyle (Delhay, 1946). Many industrialists and capitalists started small development companies to provide this emerging niche market with vast apartments along spacious boulevards mimicking the Parisian grandeur of the *Belle Epoque*. Along the Van Rijswijck Avenue, these private entrepreneurs not only bought their plots from the city of Antwerp, but also co-financed the construction of the public domain, including a full package of utilities systems (water, gas, sewerage and electricity) (ACA, 1929) that was indispensable for their high-standard products and equally brought a wider suburban area in reach of modernity

In retrospect, François Amelinckx's first investment tried to capitalize on an emerging 'bourgeois urbanism' and the promise of economic growth resulting from the world-fair. It took form within a climate of unqualified optimism that seems to have blinded Amelinckx, as it did so many others. His first complex contained 33 rental apartments and 3 shops for fair visitors. Only a few months after the event had ended, the building was standing largely empty in a peri-urban desert (ACA, 1929). Moreover, a dramatic fire in 1937 turned his first investment into a true disaster (ACA, 1929). The very difficult building process with endless negotiations didn't help either, but it formed the young Amelinckx as a political man, ready to fight. Despite the young age of 30, he didn't hesitate to directly address the socialist mayor Camille Huysmans to arrange his affairs (ACA, 1929). His political guts and subsequent connections to high-ranked people within the B.S.P. (Belgian Socialist Party) would serve him in his later career.

Figure 4. Amelinckx between prominent architects at the Jan Van Rijswijcklaan.



Source: Antwerp City Archives – imagebank.

Collin's early *art-deco* experiments in Brussels suffered the same fate. He faced bankruptcy for the first time in the early thirties (Deroy & Frances, 2013). These events, however, would not temper Collin's nor Amelinckx's optimism. On the contrary, both founded new companies in full building recession, respectively in 1935 and 1936. The remarkable book "L'épargne immobilière et sa fonction sociale" of 1938 proves Collin had been developing a clear line of thought. The book shows Collin's profound understanding of the strong link between the politics of capital accumulation and the subsequent processes of urbanization. Delving into the history of English building societies, he had learned that the success of a development company depended upon a critical mass of customers. The more capital could be accumulated, Collin explained, the more (external) surplus value could be generated within the process of urbanization. As such, involving the social and middle-classes, a

significant amount of collectively accumulated capital would not only pay for more private housing, but could cover the costs of all sorts of public utilities as well. In short, if managed well, the program he suggested would be able to realize a *plan harmonique d'urbanisme unique au monde*. Collin believed that a new 1938 law that allowed private building companies to accumulate private savings could become the decisive link that could turn the lower and middle-classes into future metropolitan apartment-dwellers. In his book, the emerging scene of planning professionals, architects and public authorities were asked to develop a national urban framework for which the consolidated metropolis seems to have been the image-guide. As such, Collin was aiming at the installation of a public-private practice of property and urban development, exploring working methods that sound surprisingly fresh today compared to current everyday practice.

Tableau 2: “La Métropole Radieuse”³ for the middle classes.



Source: Antwerp City Archives file n° 238#740.

Note: Entire streets of repetitive row houses in the metropolitan suburbs of Antwerp. Excerpt of building application by Amelinckx for the Oosterveldlaan in the suburb of Wilrijk

In 1948 the Belgian parliament passed the ‘De Taeye’ housing law which shaped the postwar urban landscape in a decisive manner. Part and parcel of post-war politics of economic recovery, the law installed a broad package of financial incentives to produce a new generation of homeowners (Theunis, 2006). Since no maximal income rates were determined, the law made it possible for both the lower and upper middle classes to buy or build their own individual house, providing premiums and loans under state guarantee up to 100% of the fair market value of the house on top of a broad range of tax benefits (Theunis, 2006). Immediately, Jean-Florian Collin sounded the alarm. He had always been strongly opposed to state-interference in the regular housing market. For Collin, the state’s only task should be to provide social housing for the residual and most needy fraction in society. However, the new law targeted the middle classes as well. As such, it directly threatened Collin’s ambitions to expand his activities towards the same target audience. His main objection was that the law applied for single-family houses only and excluded the development of apartments which had been the core-business of property tycoons in the interwar days. The law was inspired by a Christian-Democratic ideology that saw the suburbanized nuclear family as the corner stone of the post-war welfare state. Because the law came without any spatial policy, and despite the fact that premiums were slightly raised in metropolitan areas to cover higher land values, nothing prevented most of the houses from emerging at any place throughout suburbia. In short, after WWII, both the apartment building as a housing typology and the metropolitan region as an evident field of action were under pressure. To make matters worse, an incessant skepticism towards private capital accumulation had already put a term to the 1938 law Collin was hoping to rely on (Kermis, 1948).

³ Term named after Marcel Smets who called the Belgian urban condition a *banlieue radieuse*.

Collin's reaction however was firm and came quickly, as he founded "Etrimo Social" (Etrimo, 1949a) and "Etrimo Classes Moyennes" (Etrimo, 1949b) in 1949. The first one complied fully within the outlines of the 1948 housing law, but falsely suggested that its main target audience was a social class. The latter, on the contrary, left little room for interpretation: middle classes ought to live in metropolitan apartments, rationalized and modernized descendants from their bourgeois ancestors. In a struggle for clients, Collin didn't come any further than closing a deal with the mortgage bank CGER that allowed buyers of apartments to get maximum loans of 50% of the fair market value, without any state guarantee or extra tax benefits (Etrimo, 1949b). This didn't even come close to the financial incentives and benefits from the 1948 law. Even if they had wanted, property tycoons could hardly even give their apartments away at that time.

No surprise that both Collin and Amelinckx started to build single-family houses. In the case of François Amelinckx in Antwerp, we can trace these experiments back to a couple of typical streets in the municipality of Wilrijk. Although Amelinckx was clearly surfing on the waves of the De Taeye Law, he stayed focused on the metropolitan territory he had been working in so far. The firm bought its plots from a tract developer called Extensa that had been founded in 1910 by the noble family Della Faille in the slipstream of the competition for a « Greater Antwerp » (Extensa, 1960). For them the time was right to add value to the soaring land value of their estates. In order to prepare their land for building activity, the firm financed the construction of an extensive road network according to a plan that they had asked engineer August Mennes to develop (EPA, 1930?).

It must not come as a surprise that the 1948 law helped boost the activities of these tract developers. Since new residents equaled higher tax returns, many municipalities made specific construction plans to attract as many De-Taeye-dwellings as possible (Theunis, 2006). Often, as was the case in Wilrijk, municipalities relied upon older plans from the interwar period to speed up the development process. Here, the old Mennes-plan was hastily recovered and Amelinckx provided a few entire streets with single-family houses (ACA, 1958a). In this experiment, Amelinckx only played a minor role in a much bigger public-private development deal between *Extensa* and several municipalities. Perhaps one of the reasons he hardly ever built single family houses again in the Antwerp metropolitan region can be found in the fact that intermediate tract developers such as *Extensa* already possessed most of the strategic plots and took too big a portion of the profit margin away.

Tableau 3: Inner-city metropolisation: countering the Suburban Dream.



Source: Antwerp City Archives, file 004216.

"*La Ville Urbanisée*": replacing bourgeois row-houses with apartment buildings at the Britselei in Antwerp. To the left, a new complex by Amelinckx is under construction.

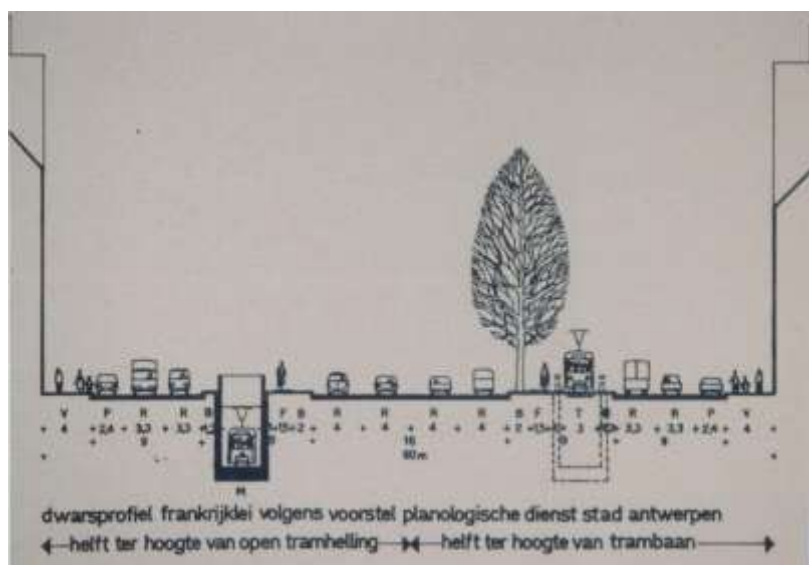
Initially, the 1948 housing law was only intended to last for the first 50.000 premiums. Because of its enduring success, however, it was prolonged twice in 1950 and 1955, each time for an additional 5 years (Theunis, 2006). This law had virtually decimated Collin's would-be clientele and he by now understood that he was not going to win this battle all by himself. In 1955, when the 1948 law was prolonged for the second time already, Collin felt that the time had come to take matters in his own hands. He founded the U.P.C.L (Union professionnelle des constructeurs de logements) a national union for real estate developers. Relying on slogans such as "A people can only be powerful if it's well organized", its mission could hardly be misunderstood (Etrimo, 1963). From now on, Belgian "Home-Builders" would claim their market share through intense and organized lobbying for customers on a national scale. But Collin had some more magic up his sleeve, as he managed to close a breakthrough deal with the biggest mortgage company in Belgium (le Crédit Hypothécaire et Immobilier de Belgique), granting all clients loans up to 80% of the fair market value of their future apartment (Etrimo, 1963). In retrospect, the year 1955 can be understood as the year in which Collin decided not to wait any longer for a public sector that never catered to his entrepreneurial ambitions and ideas. Instead, he set his own rules and mechanisms, paving the way for his fellow home-builders.

This « uprising of the property tycoons » occurred within two years after an important law on slum clearance (1953) had been passed (Heyns, 2006). State subsidies enabled local authorities to expropriate and clear slums without subjecting the cleared plots to specific conditions of re-use. Being more concerned with urban redevelopment than with reallocating slum dwellers, this law soon introduced a generalized practice of inner-city demolition, that stretched far beyond the 'slum areas' themselves (Heyns, 2006). In addition to an intensifying process of urban flight, these conditions explain how the recently organized sector of property tycoons lobbied its way into the devaluated land market of the urban core.

In Antwerp, more specifically, this period coincided with a costly 10-year plan that post-war and socialist mayor Craeybeckx had launched for the revitalization of the Antwerp harbor (1955-1965), cutting deep into city budgets despite state funding (Theunisse, 1973). What's more, ill-negotiated prewar conventions between the city and the state about the Antwerp port had left the cities' finances in a very bad condition. In 1936 already, alderman Delwaide had stated during a municipal council: "The harbor is urban property. This property is not managed by a company's capitals but by the collective responsibility of the Antwerp community. And this is a treacherous and dangerous situation. If our population decreases, the financial resistance of our harbor will equally diminish. We can only expand our harbour when the communities' base enlarges. That is why we propose to recollect the suburbs into a Greater-Antwerp administrative unit" ('Groot Antwerpen', 1941). Although such a merger only briefly existed during the war years under German occupation, and the 1948 housing law had only intensified the process of urban flight, the postwar 10-year plan nevertheless initiated a period of radical expansion of the Antwerp port. In short, the city could not afford to lose its entire population to the suburbs and was desperate to keep and attract taxable income-classes into its core. As a consequence, inner-city demolition, commodification and densification ultimately seem to have become profitable and indispensable mechanisms to keep the cities' finances in balance.

This variety of conditions explains how Amelinckx was able to jump on the bandwagon and become highly active in the city center, transforming former bourgeois boulevards into densified metropolitan avenues for lower and middle-class masses. A mostly French-speaking bourgeoisie easily found its way to outer city villa-parks that firms such as *Extensa* developed anyway (Extensa Private Archives, 1910-1985). Craeybeckx -a notorious Flemish-nationalist and explicitly opposed to the legacy of 100 years of bourgeois democracy in Belgium (Craeybeckx, 1930) - seemed hardly bothered by the destruction of this bourgeois heritage that by no means qualified as slums.

For more than 20 years, the Antwerp core remained Amelinckx' preferred field of action. The extent to which his activities were related to existing networks of public transport is striking. The firm mainly built on avenues that were served by tramways, providing offices and commercial spaces on lower floors and housing on the upper floors. From the sixties onwards, implementation schemes for a subway system throughout the city suggest that this correlation was not entirely unintentional. Cross sections of a typical avenue not only show adaptations of traffic flows and the implementation of public transport, but equally depict a densification and heightening of the adjacent buildings (Van Den Broeck et.al., 2015).

Figure 5. Proposal for introducing tram- and subway systems in the boulevard section in Antwerp.

Source: Van Den Broeck, Jef, et.al.- Maatschappij, ruimtelijk plannen en beleid, Antwerpen herwonnen stad? 1940-2012.

Note : Equally suggests the heightening of existing row houses.

The sudden growth of Amelinckx's activities from the mid-fifties onwards (ACA., 1956-1964) must be understood within these outlines. As a prominent member of a lobbying sector and in the slipstream of a law on slum-clearance, Amelinckx was able to capture a significant portion of the lower and middle-class market along the inner-city boulevards in Antwerp. Whereas Collin had suggested to co-finance entirely new urban ensembles including public infrastructures, little remained of these urban aspirations in the postwar era. Amelinckx merely capitalized on a pre-existing urban context to cash the growing residual land values without creating much additional urban value. At most, it could be claimed that this process of densification provided the necessary critical mass in terms of square meters of housing and commercial space to justify the further expansion of the tram and subway-system.

Tableau 4. Stacking the middle classes in suburbia.

Source: Götzfried (1980).

The minute he became the president of the U.P.C.L. in 1958, Amelinckx acted like a raging bull in a china shop. By then, he had become a (silent) member of the Belgian Socialist Party (B.S.P.) and seems to have been well-networked in national Belgian politics (ACA, 1954-1964). It was from this somewhat ambivalent, but strategic position, that Amelinckx raised several delicate topics.

First of all, Amelinckx aimed to put an end to the De-Taeye-premiums as was foreseen in 1960. In his view, apartments and single-family houses had to get equal state-support (ACA, 1956-1964). Furthermore, and that was new, he brought charges against what he stated to be unlawful practices in social housing policy (ACA, 1956-1964). As the president of the U.P.C.L. Amelinckx did not hesitate to name high ranked politicians who owned a 'social apartment'. He openly stated that social housing companies in the big agglomerations were mainly building for a bourgeois class. Amelinckx set the Avenue Jan De Vos in Antwerp as a clear example, where, according to him, more than 80% of the social flats were sold to people with much higher incomes than what was legally permitted (ACA, 1956-1964). Apart from that, and more generally, Amelinckx ridiculed the 1949 law of Brunfaut, as he claimed it was a money-wasting law that was only intended to be a playground for several architects (ACA, 1956-1964).

Given these circumstances, it is nevertheless remarkable that at this stage, the private sector reached out to the public sector again. Referring to examples in France and Germany, Amelinckx proposed to organize public competitions in which different teams of contractors and prominent architects – he mentioned Van Kuyck and Stynen – should participate in order to obtain the best possible solution at the best possible prices (ACA 1956-1964). In 1960 however, the De-Taeye-premiums for single-family housing were prolonged again (Theunis, 2006) (as they would be until the late seventies), and Amelinckx was never invited for any competition. If there ever was any *rapprochement* between the real estate and public sector, it happened on the sly, behind the official political scenes (Van Hulle, 2000). This can be illustrated in the Antwerp context by what happened at the Avenue Fruithof in Berchem.

Together with some local entrepreneurs, Amelinckx and Etrimo, again were part of a much larger public-private deal between the development firm *Urbana n.v.* and the Berchem authorities (Götzfried, 1980). The firm *Urbana n.v.* had bought a 43 ha noble estate from a noble family of which some 3,5 ha were freely ceded to the municipality of Berchem for the construction of the municipal sports center Het Rooi. The rest of the land would swiftly transform from rural area into a high-density residential neighborhood. As had been the case in Wilrijk, it was again an interwar development plan of August Mennes that was reconverted into legal construction plans in 1955, mainly offering space for single-family housing (Götzfried, 1980). The plan contained a part of a larger metropolitan avenue that Mennes had been planning throughout the entire agglomeration. It is on a plot along this Fruithof Avenue that Collin's Etrimo, without any permission and bluntly ignoring the existing land-use plans, started to build tall standardized housing slabs from 1960 onwards (ACA, 1955-1965). Again following in his footsteps, Amelinckx would do exactly the same. As so-called legal plans were adapted time and again, it could easily be stated that in practice, these property tycoons were *de facto* planning this entire area along the way.

Figure 6. Original Legal 1955 zoning plan (L) adapted to the slabs of Etrimo and Amelinckx in 1963 (R).



Source: Antwerp City Archives – files 285#114 to 285#120.

Note : Amelinckx even built 7 slabs straight into what was at first a public park (upper left).

Again, a socio-economic angle might explain what made these developers get away with these practices.⁴ Berchem was one of the many towns at the outskirts of Antwerp that was very quickly transforming from a rural society into an urbanized one. Since 1959 however, at the eve of the construction of the Fruithoflaan and more generally at a moment Berchem needed to take an urban leap forward, a new law determined that municipalities could no longer receive direct state subsidies for road constructions (Theunisse, 1973). As such, local authorities in the Antwerp agglomeration became increasingly dependent upon loans and the accumulation of their own resources to cope with increasing costs of urbanization (Theunisse, 1973). Thanks to the slabs of Collin and Amelinckx, it only took fifteen years to transform a piece of farmland into a metropolitan parkland that accommodated some 10.000 taxable middle class inhabitants, while establishing a more open and green urban scheme that required less infrastructure than the original 1955 legal zoning plans. Standardization and mass-production had been key research questions (UECL, 2010) ever since Collin founded the U.E.C.L. and it seems not only property tycoons themselves benefited from them.

⁴ The ease with which building violations were accepted suggests the paying of bribes which was relatively common at the time. We have not been able to positively establish the payment of such bribes in this case.

Figure 7. “Le rural urbanisée”: standardization and mass production transform the rural countryside into a premature metropolitan area.



Source: Götzfried (1980).

In a recent comparison, the Avenue Jan De Vos has been contrasted, by Bruno De Meulder, as a preachy effort of social engineering to the Avenue Fruithof that symbolizes a jaunty and pleasurable ‘American way of life’ (De Meulder, 2006). Although mainly conceived as housing for a ‘social middle class’, newspaper articles proclaimed the avenue as the most beautiful and modern one of the entire agglomeration (Götzfried, 1980). Especially Collin’s Mercator Park highly contributed to the pleasant perception of a park city, as its 70 meters wide landscaped gardens visually relate the green Fruithof Avenue to the Rooi sports fields further on. As such, Collin’s project provided the area with an extensive metropolitan horizon for the benefits of all. Arguably, the density that Amelinckx added afterwards stimulated the advent of a broad range of shops and facilities serving a large part of the Antwerp suburb. It quickly became a vibrant and desirable neighborhood. For a while, the optimism of these property tycoons seemed to have managed to deliver their radiant suburban promises at the Fruithof Ave. All that was needed was an urban scheme of a large green boulevard as a collective interface between these standardized housing slabs. Today, however, the avenue seems to have passed its peak, as an increasing amount of commercial spaces are standing empty and poor maintenance standards have left these housing estates with major physical and energetic challenges.

Tableau 5. Parasitic slabs along the highway.

Housing complexes as solitary parasitic inserts into a pre-existing urban fabric.
Consuming the urban rather than producing it.

Source: Van Acker, Maarten – From flux to frame, Designing infrastructure and shaping urbanization in Belgium

Half a century after the decision was taken to tear down the old ramparts around the city, a lion's share of these fortification walls were still standing (De Bruyne et.al., 2009; ACA, 1937). Tearing down the whole construction, filling up the moats and levelling the terrains was simply too expensive to finance with the expected property incomes of the in itself costly *BelleEpoque* boulevards that had been projected by the 1910 Prost plan (ACA, 1937). This made that nothing much happened, and the ramparts remained terrain vague until the late fifties.

It should not come as a surprise that a crafty fox like Amelinckx saw the opportunity in this vague terrain. A specific clause in the Antwerp building code stipulated that exceptions in height and building typology could be made on 'particular' plots that had no clear relation to the existing urban fabric (ACA, 1958b). All terrains adjacent to the old ramparts complied with these rules. Things gained momentum with the 1958 decision to construct a national ring road on the old ramparts (Van Acker, 2014). Left-overs of state property along the construction site that had been in a financial grid-lock for more than 50 years were bought up by François Amelinckx. As early as 1958, he would insert freestanding slabs on seemingly lost plots along the future highway. On remarkable footage of festivities celebrating the grand opening of the ring-road, Amelinckx buildings appear as true billboards of the reigning optimism of the time (De Bruyne et.al., 2009).

These slabs represent Amelinckx's most commonly known part of housing production and they would become instructive for 'parasitic' planning policy of the firm in the seventies. A policy that no longer required any involvement in any urban scheme whatsoever. Standardized slabs were simply injected into a pre-existing, preferably diversified but often unconsolidated urban fabric (Loris, 1976; Blyweert, 1975). The production of

‘Grands-ensembles’ with the agglomeration of Sarcelles as ultimate specter, had to be avoided at all cost. Finite compositions of maximum 3 to 5 slabs in reach of facilities and submerged in a finely grained and low-rise suburban fabric, became the firm’s predominant *modus operandi* (Loris, 1976; Blyweert, 1975). Hardly any ambitions to contribute to the development of new forms of city-ness were left. The Amelinckx-slabs merely became opportunistic inserts in the unfolding process of urbanization.

This rather parasitic position towards the city becomes apparent in several advertisements that were published by Amelinckx throughout the seventies. An add called “Some people live close to their work. And You?” suggests urban proximity praising the strategic location of the dwelling units, next to all kinds of services, shopping centers and employment. However, the image of a solitary tower watchman somewhere in the middle of nowhere hardly evokes any urbanity at all. While well located within the urban network, the Amelinckx-flats had no longer any ambition to contribute to the city as a collective arrangement and as a built fabric. The same ‘parasitic’ logic is at work in a remarkable series of brochures called ‘InfoAmelinckx’ (Amelinckx, 1973-1980). The booklets are a lyrical panegyric to the rich historical legacy of the urban cores around which the company operates. The apartments themselves are barely part of these stories and only appear in a separate insert in the middle of the brochures, as if they never really want to become part of the context that nevertheless gives them luster. Inhabitants of these slabs seem to be no longer treated as true citizens, but as tourists living in their own city (Van Hulle, 2000).

Figure 8. Some people live close to their work. And you? Urban proximity devoid of urbanity (L). Excerpt from InfoAmelinckx (R).



Source: PVV liberal party – PVV magazine n° 58 and Amelinckx – InfoAmelinckx

Note: The sudden insert of Amelinckx products and publicity in the middle of a panegyric of the historical city can be understood as a metaphor for the position of the Amelinckx slabs within the urban fabric.

In the case of Antwerp, this parasitic logic is clearly illustrated on a plot of land along the ring road in Berchem. Here, a number of standardized slabs were successively copy-pasted, piece by piece and without any predetermined urban scheme, engaging also other development firms such as Finspico n.v. along the way. This kind of examples clearly shows that the random implementation of such slabs was not only a typical Amelinckx-practice. It became common practice in the real estate business in Belgium.

Figure 9. Solitary slabs by Amelinckx and Finspico.

Source: drawing by Els Vernimmen, based on several building application files, Antwerp City Archives, files 961#3704 and 961#3157.

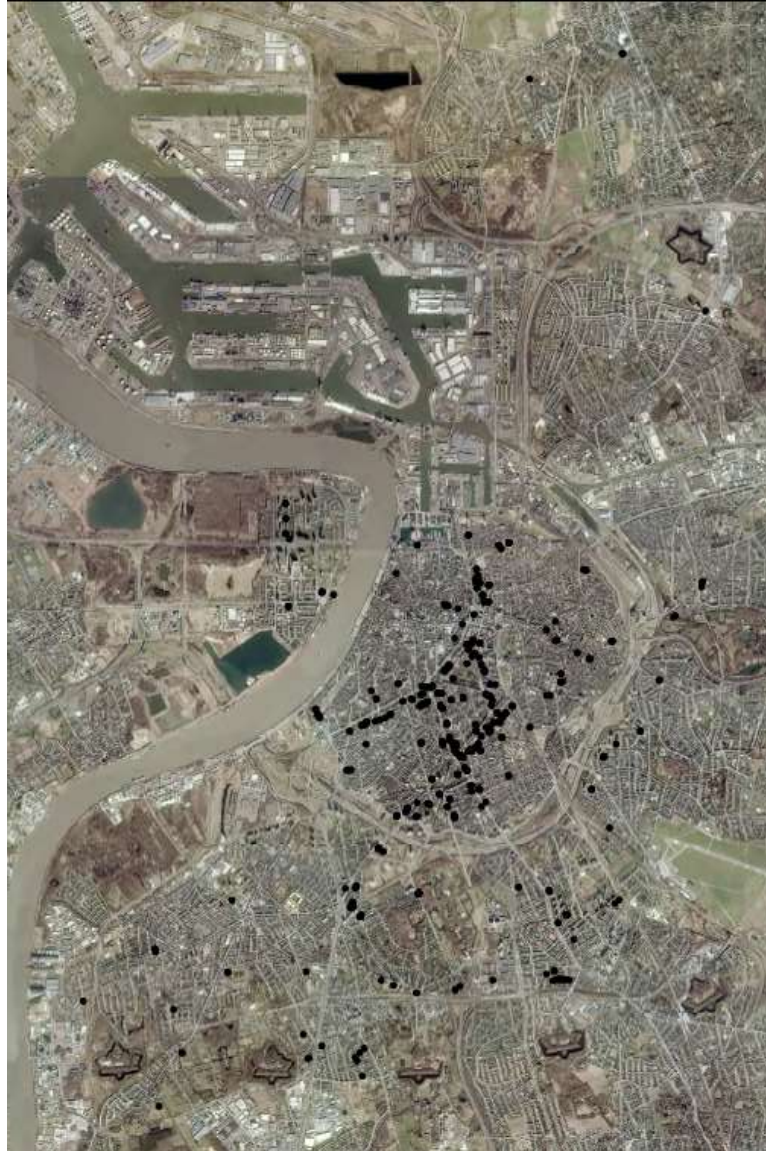
Note: These slabs pop up along the highway in Berchem, without any overall urban scheme or strategy whatsoever between 1964 and 1974; with overabundant, ill-conceived and underused infrastructure, sports fields as a result.

Yet it must be stressed that the position of these slabs was never as random as may seem. Most of them were not only adjacent to the ring-road, but were also located in the vicinity of public transport, benefitting from existing infrastructures. Ever since the De Taeye-law had been implemented, it had granted subsidies for more than 400.000 private homes, that were scattered throughout the country (Theunis, 2006). As early as 1974, the Amelinckx firm stated that in the long future, society no longer would be able to cope with the incredible collective costs of dispersed utilities systems and absurd commuter patterns (Blyweert, 1975). Remarkably, the very same arguments resurfaced in the planning discourse of the late 1990s that accompanied the implementation of the Flemish Structure Plan (Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 1998). However opportunistic the working logics of firms such as Amelinckx may be, they nevertheless reveal a concern for a certain kind of spatial thrift.

Amelinckx has hardly ever built outside the *petite périphérie* of emerging urban agglomerations, always looking for «special» plots along infrastructures of public transport already in place. In doing so, the firm increasingly targeted supposedly «social» customer classes (François Amelinckx, 1970). In many occasions, men like Amelinckx and Collin made deals with local authorities to build and sell apartments at «fixed» prices for a «social» public (Collin, 1964). To guarantee normal profit margins, municipalities provided them with strategic plots at reduced prices. On some occasions the agreements included the construction of facilities such as kindergartens or supermarkets (Collin, 1964; Loris, 1976). This kind of quick deals seems to have been a lot more flexible and effective than applying for the '49 social housing law with its often long thus expensive bureaucratic trajectories (De Meulder et al., 1999). On some occasions local governments even consulted social housing companies to verify whether these private projects met the standards of social housing (ACA, 1972).

Similarly, in this latest stage, Amelinckx hinted at possible ways of interaction with the public sector, referring to the French initiative of the *Plan-Construction* that had been launched in 1971 (Loris, 1976). This platform gathered public authorities, architects, sociologists, researchers, contractors and promoters encouraging experiment and innovation in the field of habitat and housing construction. Needless to say that in Belgium, no such platform ever came into being. Predominant economic imperatives of mass production smothered every attempt to intervene both in terms of architecture and urban planning as the role of design was reduced to nothing (Loris, 1976). It is no coincidence that in this period prominent architects such as Renaat Braem held “Hemelinckx and Atrimo” responsible for building the “ugliest country in the world” (Braem, 1968). Moreover, the architectural scene in general gradually lost its interest in large-scale commercial housing development schemes. As a result, model plans were stacked on sterile ground levels where some miserable greenery didn’t even try to keep the illusion of a park city alive. Today, these parasitic slabs embody the most comfortless and poor legacy of Amelinckx’s activities. Although well-networked into the urban transport systems, they are little more than a logistic setting for an everyday life of «métro-boulot-dodo» which was a strong credo of the firm (Blyweert, 1975). It was exactly this kind of homogenization and alienation of everyday life that was heavily critiqued by people as Lefebvre in the late sixties and early seventies (Schmid, 2012).

Figure 10. Total Amelinckx production in the Antwerp metropolitan region.



Source: Map by Lisa Stroobandt, based on a digital record of Amelinckx building applications from the Antwerp City Archives.

Note: Although the most iconic product of Amelinckx is the free-standing suburban housing slab, the lion's share of his production can surprisingly enough be found in the urban core.

4. Conclusion: urban fortunes and the collective failure to amend the process of metropolitan urbanization.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Study Committee for a Greater Antwerp that answered to the Ministry of Public Works, was asked to develop a general framework for the city's metropolitan future (Studiecommissie ter inrichting van de Antwerpsche Agglomeratie, 1910). Amelinckx's first achievement along the Van Rijswijk Avenue must be understood within the optimism of this emerging discourse on greater urbanism at the turn of the 20th century. As it surfaced in a number of studies and national plans, the expansion of the main metropolitan areas became a pertinent urban question at that time (Ledent, 1937; Otlet, 1937; Brunfaut, 1951). It was this promise of establishing a national state urbanism that triggered Collin to link strategies of private capital accumulation and property development with an overall public planning practice and the mass production of commercial housing. Through cooperative building societies, the social and middle-class masses were invited to actively co-produce their own daily environment under state supervision within public-

private-partnership deals at a national scale (Collin, 1938). Collin's writings at that time breathed a remarkable optimism. Tracing the activities of real estate development firms such as Amelinckx and Etrimo back to their Interbellum roots, gives a surprising insight in their efforts to contribute to a broader urban practice than they are generally accredited for. Looking back at it now, these property tycoons seem to have been waiting for a political context and a public sector that in reality would never cater to their entrepreneurial ambitions.

The 1948 De Taeye housing law made an abrupt ending to the utopian optimism of the interwar days. The law lured away a would-be target audience of these tycoons and came without any clear spatial idea. Given its focus on premiums and tax benefits, the law can be understood within a context of post-war economic recovery that soon established an individualized sprawling suburban landscape. Although these financial regulations gave a broad middle-class direct access to the post-war welfare state, they were by and large insufficient to plan that state efficiently in the long run.

The five tableaus clearly show that property tycoons, in turn, never left their metropolitan field of action. Although earlier interwar planning efforts remained on the table, and were occasionally recollected, they were no longer part of any explicit urban vision or planning culture. Their building activities mainly became part of various logics of economic exchange with local authorities. Strongly politically involved, and almost co-authors of legislative frameworks, property tycoons like Collin and Amelinckx were able to read the links between public and private capital flows and interests in order to capture a significant market of commodified housing. The tableaus follow Amelinckx in his footsteps and reveal a long history and a broad range of public-private property deals involving an anonymous community of developers and private investors that jointly shaped the Antwerp metropolis. It seems that at that time, an amalgamation of mercantile public-private deals were at the very root of urban mutations (Laconte, 1978). A state-administered metropolitan urbanism of the interwar period had been replaced by multiple logics of urbanization, merely fulfilling the direct (urban) needs of local authorities.

It must be emphasized however that this local opportunism was at times nonetheless able to generate urban surplus. The tableaus show that private capital was addressed to cope with the increasing costs of an urbanizing society and often undergirded public utilities such as public transport, infrastructure, utility grids, metropolitan landscapes and even sports centers and commercial main streets, producing unexpected urban fortunes. As such, a general metropolitan condition surfaced as a positive effect out of a multiplication of self-contained mercantile arrangements. Even if these positive externalities (Rémy, 1966; Dehaene, 2013) established a certain urban state of aggregation, they were never able to produce a consolidated metropolis.

Nevertheless, it was the private sector itself that denounced the absence of an urban framework. They understood that the increasing social costs of a welfare-state politics that had caused an ubiquitous sprawling urban landscape would soon grow out of control. In order to prevent this kind of negative externalities, well-conceived planning frameworks seemed indispensable. The tableaus show that at different occasions and in different ways, the private sector reached out to the public sector in order to establish more solid and enduring ways of cooperation. In the end such a rapprochement never really took place and regardless of the fact whether these initiatives were truly genuine, it nevertheless sheds a more nuanced light on the legacy of these property tycoons in terms of urban aspirations.

All the same, these property tycoons have not been bothered too much with creating more interesting working conditions for themselves either. If the tableaus mark Amelinckx's ability to be active within various dynamics of urbanization on different spots at the same time, they also reveal him as a man without qualities (Musil, 1999) that was simply building what the market asked him to. The more Amelinckx was able to build housing units in suburbia, the more units he was able to subsequently build apartments in the urban core due to the process of urban flight he had (co-)produced in the first place. These economic multiplier effects mattered far more for men like Amelinckx than building a consistent overall urban fabric whatsoever. Although in some ways he contributed to establish some sort of metropolitan structure, avoiding *Grands-ensembles* and capitalizing on a pre-existing urban fabric seems to have been an overly optimistic strategy that only postponed pertinent urban questions to a later stage in the process of urbanization. A general planning discourse on infrastructural and cost-

efficiency alone clearly didn't suffice to produce a convincing urbanism on site. The city, in other words, needs a lot more than a logistic and mercantile credo of *métro, boulot, dodo*.

Finally, the observation must be made that architects, urbanists and planners all seem to have failed to discern a pertinent urban project out of the multiple dynamics and processes that Amelinckx was part of. His simultaneous activities in the urban core and in several metropolitan suburbs were all part of the same process of «metropolisation»: together these activities reflect the transformation from a “non-urbanized city and countryside” to the “urbanized metropolis”. Although this kind of transformations and effects of urbanization was at that very moment being theorized by urban sociologists such as Lefebvre (1970) and Rémy (1966; 1974) and targeting «multiplier effects» seems to have been commonplace in real-estate practice (Harvey, 1985, p.85), planners and urbanists all seem to have failed to grasp the shift from an interwar state urbanism to the multiple post-war dynamics of urbanization that shaped the metropolitan territory of Antwerp and beyond. This seems to comply with Bernardo Secchi's assertion that post-war urbanists have failed to grasp the shift from the (stable) «Modern City» to the (dynamic) «Contemporary City», stating that: “it is not the chaotic nature of the (contemporary) city that ought to surprise us, but rather our inability or failure to define each deviation in a sufficiently strict way and within sufficiently enduring timeframes.” (Secchi, 2006).

This paper highlights the collective failure to embed the large scale endeavors of Belgian property tycoons within intelligent (public) urban development schemes. This failure can be understood as one of the reasons why the urban agglomerations in Belgium never transformed into a consolidated metropolitan area. Instead, the recollection of an underrepresented history of private (mass) housing development revealed a metropolitan condition that did not result from a long-lasting integrated urbanism, but that can be understood as a hardly integrated and opportunistic sum of positive externalities that were occasionally and haphazardly produced in the course of urbanization. In the end, what was increasingly lacking in the Antwerp metropolitan region, was an enduring planning culture, creative intelligence and financial mechanisms that were able to determine and couple desirable externalities to an ambitious overall spatial image-guide. And this is exactly what is at stake in today's retrofitting efforts for the twentieth century belt of Antwerp and many other European cities, where public ambitions will highly depend upon the inventive participation of private capital. (Grafe, et.al., 2014; Upmeyer, 2013).

Figure 11. The haphazard urbanity of the Antwerp metropolis.



Source: VAI_Exhibition CityOutsideTheCity, available at <http://www.vai.be/nl/activiteit/tentoonstelling-stadbuitenstad-tot-76>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1908), Map by city engineer Royers, file n° 12#4291, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1929), File on first Amelinckx building permit, file n° 1929#32765, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1937), File on committee for urbanization in Antwerp, file n° MA#88488, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1955-1968), Files on consecutive legal zoning plans for Berchem, files n° 285#114 to 285#120, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1956-1964), Files on public relations of the firm Amelinckx, file n° 672#1627, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1958a), File on only Amelinckx single family houses in Antwerp, file n° 238#740, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1958b), File on Amelinckx building permits along the ring road, file n° 18#38406, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

ACA, Antwerp City Archives, (1972), File on Amelinckx building permits, file n° 103#1422, Antwerpen: Sint-Felixarchieven.

Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed, (2015), Architect Marcel Segers, in Inventaris Onroerend Erfgoed, accessed from <https://inventaris.onroerenderfgoed.be/dibe/persoon/4394> on April 24, 2015.

Amelinckx, F., (1970), Interview in *ZIE Magazine*, June 19 1970, p.14-19, Antwerpen: ZIE.

Amelinckx, F. (1973-1980), *InfoAmelinckx*, Antwerpen: Amelinckx.

Amelinckx, F. (1968?), *Comment vivre dans son appartement*, Antwerpen : Amelinckx.

Blyweert, R., (1975), “Quand le bâtiment va et quand il ne va pas”, Interview in *Bâtiment* n°100, 1975, p. 59-66.

Braem, R., (1968), *Het lelijkste land ter wereld*, Leuven: Davidsfonds

Brunfaut, F., (1951), *La condition municipale*, Verviers : Le Travail.

BRT, Belgische Radio & Televisie (Producer & Director), (1970), Documentary “Luchtkastelen” in *Panorama* 30/09/1970, motion picture, Belgium: BRT

BRT, Belgische Radio & Televisie (Producer & Director), (1985), News item from 07/11/1985, motion picture, Belgium: BRT.

Collin, J-F., (1938), *L'épargne immobilière et sa fonction sociale*, Paris: Librairie générale du droit et jurisprudence.

Collin, J-F., (1964), *Une expérience de logements sociaux*, Bruxelles: Etrimo.

Collin, J-F., (1968), *L'Europe des provinces*, Bruxelles: s.n.

Craeybeckx, Lode, (1930), *Honderd jaar burgerlijke democratie*, Brussel: De Wilde Roos.

De Bruyne, J., et al. (2009), *Groene Singel, geschiedenis van de Antwerpse ringruimte: plannen, verhalen dromen*, Gent: Ludion.

De Caigny, S. (2010), *Bouwen aan een nieuwe thuis: wooncultuur in Vlaanderen tijdens het interbellum*, Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Dehaene, M., (2013), *Gardening in the urban field*, Gent: A&S Books.

Delhay, J., (1946), *L'Appartement D'aujourd'hui*, Liège: Desoeur

De Meulder, B. et al. (1999), "Over de plaats van de volkswoningbouw in de Vlaamse Ruimte", in P. De Decker et al. (eds.), *Huiszoeking. Een kijkboek sociale woningbouw*, Brussel: Vlaamse Gemeenschap, pp. 10-86.

De Meulder, B. (2006), "De Belgische stedenbouw en de belofte van welvaart 1945-1975, 10 punten over de veranderende productie van het wonen", in K. Van Herck, K. et al. (eds.), *Wonen In Welvaart*, Antwerpen:VAi, pp.128-145.

Deroy, D., Frances, M. (2013) *Monsieur Etrimo*, Bruxelles : RTBF documentary.

Deroy, D., Frances, M. (2014), "Il avait un rêve : Faire de chaque Belge un propriétaire", Mr. Etrimo Dossier de Presse, Ixelles : ImageCréation.

De Vos, E. (2008), *Hoe zouden we graag wonen? Woonvertogen en – praktijken in de jaren 1960-70 in Vlaanderen*, Leuven: Leuven University Press.

EPA, Extensa Private Archives, (1930?), Map of Engineer August Mennes on the development of southern Antwerp between Berchem and Kontich, Bruxelles: Extensa.

EPA, Extensa Private Archives, (1910-1985), Information on files concerning sales of housing plots ranging from 1910-1985, Bruxelles: Extensa.

Etrimo (1949a), *Etrimo, Classes Sociales*, Bruxelles : Etrimo.

Etrimo (1949b), *Etrimo, Classes Moyennes*, Bruxelles : Etrimo.

Etrimo (1963), *Comment devenir propriétaire*, Bruxelles : Etrimo.

Extensa (1960), *Extensa n.v. 1910-1960 Verkoop, Aankoop en beheer van onroerende goederen*, Antwerpen: Extensa.

Götzfried, G. (1980), *De fruitthoflaan, een monument*, Antwerpen: Walter Soethoudt.

Grafe, C. et al. (eds.) (2014), *LABXX opting for the twentieth century belt*, Antwerpen: Stad Antwerpen.

Harvey, D. (1985), *The urbanization of capital*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Heyns, M. (2006), "De krotwoning als «sociaal probleem nr.1», De wet inzake krotopruiming van 1953 en de sanering van de oude stadswijken", in Van Herck, K., et al. (eds.), *Wonen in Welvaart*, Antwerpen: VAI.

Kermis, L. (1948), *L'adaption des formules de capitalisation immobilière à l'épargne belge*, Bruxelles : Un toit à toi.

Laconte, P. (1978), *Mutations urbaines et Marchés immobiliers: le développement des immeubles de bureaux à Bruxelles*, Leuven : Oyez.

Ledent, A. (1937), *Contribution à l'urbanisme nationale*, Bruxelles : Ferrogom.

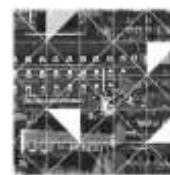
- Ledent, G. (2014), “Potentiels Relationnels, l’aptitude des dispositifs physiques de l’habitat à soutenir la sociabilité. Bruxelles, le cas des immeubles élevés et isolés de logement”, PhD dissertation in architecture & urbanism, Louvain La Neuve: AULLN.
- Lefebvre, H. (1970), *La Révolution Urbaine*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Loris, C. (1976), Les Entreprises Amelinckx S.A., unpublished masters dissertation, Bruxelles, ENSAV.
- Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, (1998), *Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap.
- Musil, R. (1999; (1930-1943)), *De man zonder eigenschappen*, Amsterdam: Meulenhoff.
- Otlet, P. (1935), Plan Belgique, essai d’un plan général, économique, social, culturel. Plan d’urbanisation national. Liaison avec le Plan mondial, Bruxelles: Editions Mundaneum.
- Peeters, L., Dedecker, P. (1997), *Het woonbeleid in Vlaanderen op een tweesprong*, Berchem: EPO.
- Rémy, J. (1966), *La Ville, phénomène économique*, Bruxelles : vie ouvrière.
- Rémy, J. (1974), *La ville et l’urbanisation : modalités d’analyse sociologique*, Gemblou : Duculot.
- Schmid, C. (2012), ”Henri Lefebvre, the right to the city and the new metropolitan mainstream”, in N. Brenner et al. (eds.), *Cities for people not for profit*, London: Routledge.
- Secchi, B. (2006), *Première leçon d’urbanisme*, Marseille : Editions Parenthèses, p.73.
- Smets, M. (1977), *De ontwikkeling van de tuinvijkgedachte in België : een overzicht van de Belgische volkswoningbouw in de periode van 1830 tot 1930*, Brussel: Mardaga.
- Smets, M. (1986), “La Belgique ou la banlieue radieuse”, in *Paysages d’architecture*, Brussel: A.A.M, pp.32-35.
- Studiecommissie ter inrichting van de Antwerpsche agglomeratie, (1910), *Wedstrijd voor het benutten der beschikbare gronden ten gevolge de slechting der versterkte omheining van Antwerpen*, Antwerpen: Studiecommissie ter inrichting van de Antwerpsche agglomeratie.
- Theunis, K. (2006), “De Wet De Taeye. De individuele woning als bouwsteen van de welvaartsstaat”, in K. Van Herck et al. (eds.), *Wonen In Welvaart*, Antwerpen: VAI.
- Theunisse, H. (1973), De Gemeentelijke investeringen en hun financiering in de Antwerpse Agglomeratie, Unpublished PhD dissertation in economics, Ghent: UGENT.
- U.A. (1941) “Groot Antwerpen” in newspaper *Het Vlaamsche Land*, February 29, 1941.
- UECL (1960?), *Les réalisations, le financement, les caractéristiques de la construction de logements*, Bruxelles :UECL
- UECL (2010), *Celebrating 50 years of UECL (later UEPC)*, Bruxelles: UEPC
- Upmeyer, B. (2013), *Monu#19 Greater Urbanism*, Rotterdam: BOARD PUBLISHERS
- Van Acker, M. (2014), *From Flux to Frame, Designing infrastructure and shaping urbanization in Belgium*, Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Van Herck, K. et al. (eds.) (2006), *Wonen in welvaart : woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen, 1948-1973*, VAI, Antwerpen.

Van Hulle, F. (2000), “Binnenhuisurbanisme: over de flatgebouwen van Amelinckx”, in *Utopia: verzonnen steden*, Antwerpen: Daedalus, pp.237-251.

Van Impe, E., Etrimo, N.V. (1935-1970), Online Database voor Intermediaire Structuren website, record last modified date: 26 april 2013, available at http://www.odis.be/lnk/OR_40530.

Van Den Broeck, J. et al. (2015), *Maatschappij, Ruimtelijk Plannen en beleid. Antwerpen Herwonnen stad? 1940-2012*, Brugge: Die Keure.

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Modernist High-Rises in Postwar Antwerp. Two Answers to the same Question

Els de Vos¹, UAntwerpen, Bergium.

Selin Geerinckx², UAntwerpen, Belgium.

Abstract

As recent international scholarship has shown, the Modern Movement was not as coherent as authors such as Sigfried Giedion or Nikolaus Pevsner have claimed. Post-war modernism in particular has many faces. Although architects produced similar housing typologies that are presented in collective works of social housing within the same category, the architects could still take different positions. By means of a comparative analysis of two radical modernist high-rise housing projects in Antwerp, this article demonstrates how the focus of the design of similar projects could still differ considerably. Designed by Renaat Braem, the Kiel housing estate (1953) in the south of Antwerp will be compared with Hugo Van Kuyck's Luchtbal housing estate (1954-1962) in the city's north. Although both complexes are social housing blocks raised on pilotis, they differ in size, concept, architectural quality and degree of detailing, but also in ideology and utopian content. Both architects shared a fascination for Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse and for the Athens Charter (1933), and held a belief in progress and the need for a new idiom. At the same time, however, they have different ways of dealing with modernity. I will employ the analytical framework developed by architectural historian Sarah Williams Goldhagen (2000) to shed light on the architects' different positions on the social and political axes.

Keywords: high-rise buildings; modernism; Belgium; Antwerp; apartment; Luchtbal; Kiel.

¹ Els.Devos@UAntwerpen.be

² selin.geerinckx@uantwerpen.be

Antwerp, an exception in the Flemish landscape

In the aftermath of World War II, Belgium faced a serious housing shortage, like the rest of Europe (Caramellino, Zanfi, 2015; Bervoets, Hard, 2010; Van Herck, Avermaete, 2006; Betts, 2005). Although the majority of the surrounding countries resolutely chose for high-rise buildings to solve the housing crisis, this was not the case for Belgium. The Christian Democrats, who dominated the political landscape, argued for detached single-family homes in the countryside, their electoral territory. The De Taeye Act (29 May 1948) – named after its proposer, the Christian Democrat minister Alfred De Taeye – granted premiums to individual homebuilders and provided a state guarantee for mortgage loans (Theunis, 2006: 67-77). As a result Belgium, and especially Flanders, the country's northern region, witnessed an early rise in home ownership – today 70.4 % of Flemish households live in a home they own (Winters, et al., 2013: 28).³ The Social Democrats, by contrast, mainly promoted high-rise buildings and large housing complexes in urban areas where the employment rate was high.⁴ On 15 April 1949, a second housing act, the Brunfaut Act – named after the Socialist member of parliament Fernand Brunfaut and regarded as the Socialist counterpart to the De Taeye Act – made provisions, not only for regular annual financing in respect of the construction of housing clusters by semi-governmental and recognised social housing associations, but also for street layout, including paving, public utilities such as drainage, and open-space planning, etc. That act was an instrument to promote high-rises, but also clustered low-rise social housing estates. In 1980 about 25 % of the Flemish housing stock consisted of apartments, which shows how high-rise buildings kept a low profile in Flanders (De Decker, Ryckewaert, Vandekerckhove, Pisman, 2010: 42).

In Antwerp, a big harbour city in the north-east of Belgium, however, the Social Democrats, who had been in power since World War II and even before, opted radically for social high-rise housing (Bertels et al., 2010: 54). During the 1920s and 1930s, the Antwerp social-housing companies had realised several high-rises in the urban development form of a perimeter block. They were mostly in an art-deco style and contained communal courtyards (sometimes laid out as communal gardens), offering modern comfort and mostly communal facilities such as dry attics, dirt slides and shops downstairs (Laureys, 2004: 110). From the mid 1920s, the apartment building also became a popular typology among the Antwerp bourgeoisie, but in a more bourgeois version. As architectural historian Dirk Laureys (2004: 110) argues, during the economic crisis of the 1930s the apartment was a cheap and at the same time comfortable dwelling; moreover, a one-floor dwelling reduced the need for domestic servants, and it was a good investment as well. The art-deco apartment buildings were mostly situated near parks and broad avenues or on corners. About 1933 the first free-standing apartment buildings were initiated in the Antwerp region (Laureys, 2004: 112).

The plots of land on which the post-war high-rises were built had already been purchased during the 1920s by the city of Antwerp on the initiative of John Wilms, the alderman of city properties (Strauven, 1983: 65). As a Socialist, Wilms was concerned with the workers' harsh living conditions and pleaded for decent housing. The plots were quite cheap, because they were situated on the city's fringes, some even on the left bank of the Scheldt, the river which divides Antwerp in two. Although during the 1930s an international competition had taken place for the development of the left bank – which Le Corbusier, among others, had taken part in – that side remained untouched until the late 1960s. In the immediate post-war decade, the three recognised Antwerp social-housing companies built and financed a huge housing complex on the other terrains. The city offered each of them a terrain and became a shareholder of each company: Our Dwelling (Onze woning), Good Dwelling (the good house) and S.M. Housing-Antwerp (S.M. Huisvesting Antwerpen). The joint assembly of these companies consisted of Social Democrats as well as Christian Democrats, which resulted in a compromise. On the terrains, a mix was built of low-rise houses for the elderly and large families, on the one hand, and, on the other, apartment buildings for the others. Although the Christian Democrats were not in favour of high-rises, they

³ However, the percentage of Flemish homeowners has fallen by 4.6 % over the past decade. According to figures from the inter-university housing research group 'Steunpunt Wonen', home ownership rates decreased from 75 % to 70.4 % between 2003 and 2013.

⁴ Of course, in reality the distinction is not as clear-cut. There were Socialist mayors who supported the construction of detached single-family houses, and Christian Democrats were also involved in social-housing projects. The Christian Workers' Movement even founded a Christian Central for Housing, an advice and study service and social-housing company, in order to have more influence on the social-housing sector (De Vos, 2012: 45). But these two (opposed) visions help understand the main driving forces of the housing policy.

agreed to them because they expected them to reduce the suburbanisation around Antwerp, including its corresponding loss of citizens.

The social housing company S.M. Housing-Antwerp commissioned the young modernist Renaat Braem, in cooperation with Viktor Maeremans (a Socialist) and Hendrik Maes (a Catholic), for the Kiel housing estate (in the south of Antwerp, near Petroleum South, a petrochemical industrial park); Our Dwelling commissioned the renowned Hugo van Kuyck to design the Luchtbal housing estate on a site in the city's north, near the harbour; The Good Dwelling commissioned the older Jos Smolderen, in cooperation with Hendrik Maes, to develop the Jan De Voslei housing estate (near the Kiel estate) (Strauven, 1983: 66). At first glance, the projects have a lot in common. And yet each project differs in size, design and degree of detailing, but also in ideology and utopian content underlying the project. By means of a comparison between the Kiel housing estate and the Luchtbal housing estate, this article reveals how their modernist architects gave a different answer to the same question of designing an avant-garde, modernist, high-rise social-housing project. I will make use of a framework for analysis developed by architectural historian Sarah Williams Goldhagen (2000: 302-323).

A framework for the analysis of the multifaceted Modern Movement

As recent international scholarship has shown, the early Modern Movement was not as coherent as writers and polemicists such as Sigfried Giedion or Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson have suggested. The modernist architects shared certain ideas and values, but were more diverse than certain canonical presentations of the Modern Movement claimed. This is even more the case for the post-war Modern Movement. In order to systematically analyse the historical reality and complexity of the Modern Movement, Sarah Williams Goldhagen (2000: 302-303) argues that we have to “dig beneath style to get at the movement's generative principles”, which are “interlocking cultural, political, and social dimensions that together constitute the foundation of modernism in architecture”. She developed an analytical framework to position the modernist protagonists on three different axes: cultural, political and social. On the cultural axis, all modernist architects and theorists agree that tradition bears no authority and they all reject the authority of classical precedents. However, some expect that their architecture might lead to a ‘new tradition’, while others are more in favour of a process of continuous invention. On the political axis, Williams Goldhagen (2000: 304-305) distinguishes three branches. First, there are the so-called consensuals, who agree with the existing political and economic order and see it as their task to “revamp architecture so that it effectively supported the extant political and economic institutions”. By means of their modernist design, they have to make people aware of the changing conditions they are living in. The second branch consists of the so-called negative critics, people who disagree with the existing conditions and plead for revolution. The third and last branch, the reformists, are situated somewhere in-between, and they advocate considerable change within the existing political and economic structures. Alvar Aalto and Le Corbusier are placed in that category, because they accepted the conditions, but they believed it was their duty “to create an idiom that would, facilitate social progress and (...) diminish the social injustices, inequities, and conflicts and allay the cultural malaise that capitalism causes” (Williams Goldhagen 2000: 304). However, the three strains have in common that they are convinced of the fact that architecture has a political dimension. On the third axis, the social dimension, architects “agreed that the new architecture should dynamically reflect the essence of their new, industrial age, but they differed on which aspects of this *Zeitgeist* to celebrate; which, if any, to counteract; and which to ignore” (Williams Goldhagen, 2000: 306-307). Some highlighted the dominance of industrial technology and the machine, and hence, rationalisation, while others, such as Aalto, Gray or Taut, sought to situate the users of their buildings socially and historically, in place and time, to create what Williams Goldhagen (2000: 306-307) called “situated modernism”. Stylistically the work of both – the machine-oriented architects and the situated modernists – can be very proximate, while their position on the social dimension can vary considerably. Whereas the former use the open plan for its tectonic rationalism, the latter use it for the spatial dynamism it afforded. To complicate things, one and the same architect can take different stances in his or her oeuvre. In his early work, for example, Le Corbusier focuses more on the machine aesthetic, while his later work, such as Plan Obus in Algiers or Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles, is more characterised by a situated modernism.

The Kiel estate, showpiece of an enlightened Socialist policy

In the Kiel neighbourhood (Zaanstraat), Renaat Braem had the opportunity to realise his version of the Unité d'Habitation of Le Corbusier, the architect with whom he did an internship in 1936-37. The design comprised three residential blocks (A, B & C) holding twelve floors which are positioned around a square, and six lower blocks holding eight floors which are placed two by two in a zigzag. While the former contain 120 apartments each, the latter contain 69, resulting in about 800 units (Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed, 2016).

The first stage comprises the highest housing blocks along with a building for the oil-fired heating system for the heating of the whole estate, and a complex of five shops with a fourth lower building (block DE). During the first stage (1951-55), blocks A, B, C and DE with the shops were built. In a second stage (1955-58), the other lower blocks were built (D1-D4). In order to reduce costs, the heights of the apartments were reduced and an extra floor was added, bringing it to 9 floors. In a later phase, low-rise housing for seniors was developed. The social centre that Braem had provided was replaced by 40 flats for seniors, as they were more necessary, according to the social-housing company.

Figure 1. First sequence (excerpts) from the video Tedium. Study of sunshine on the buildings



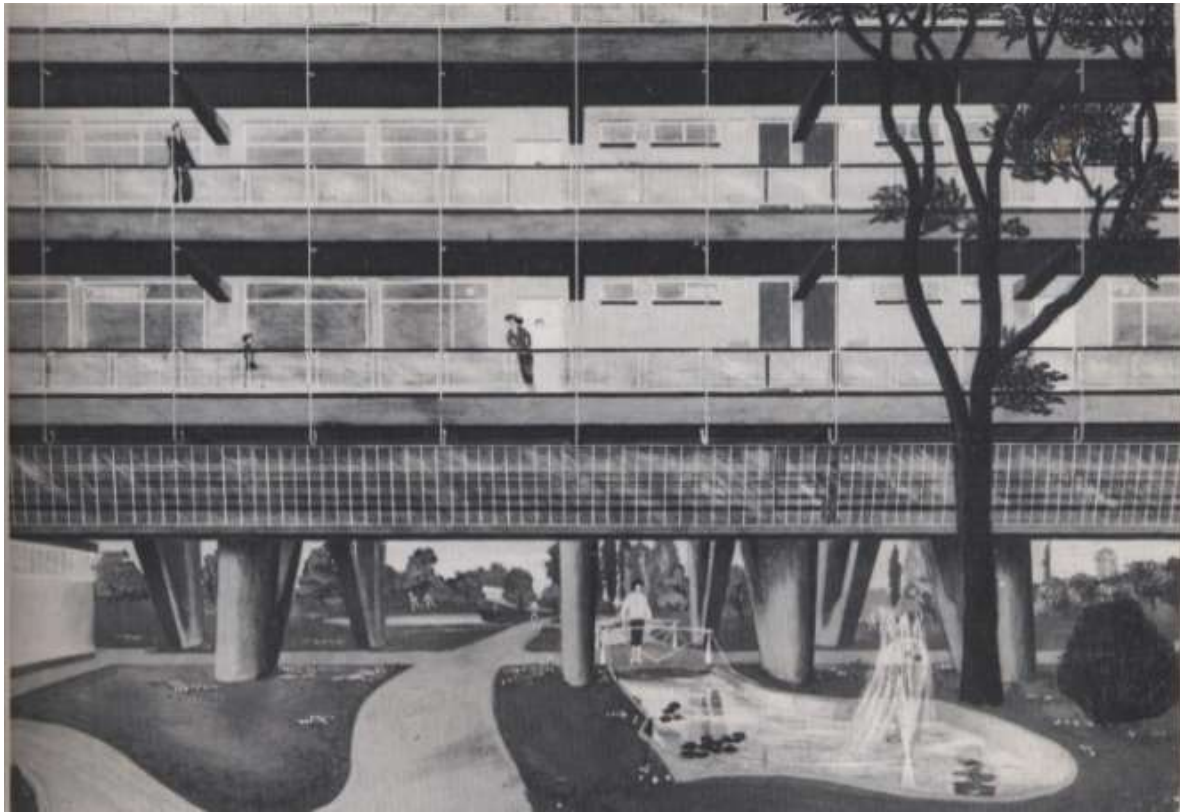
Source: Braem, *Rythme* (1953), p. 13

The commission offered Braem the opportunity to materialise the social utopian ideas that he had developed during his student days. Influenced by the Russian constructivists, he believed that architecture could be a kind of “social condensator” that would lead people away from the pre-existing bourgeois living patterns to a socialist way of living in which communal life was the most important element of daily life (De Vos, 2010: 143). The apartments should be rather minimal, while the communal spaces should be maximised. That was also one of the reasons that he raised his apartment buildings on pilotis, massive columns. The famous Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow designed by Moisei Ginzburg (1928-30), Le Corbusier’s Unité d’habitation (1947-52), as well as Braem’s own designs from his student days (1934), more particularly his buildings from his linear city (Ryckewaert, 2011: 152), have similar features. The idea behind elevating the buildings was to return the ground level to the community as an open public space. While Le Corbusier provided public facilities on the roof of his Habitation, Braem envisaged collective services on the floor, such as a reception hall and conference room, an outdoor playground, a recreation room, and space for shops. Unfortunately, most of them were not realised, although they were important in encouraging community life (Strauven, 1983: 66).

Figure 2. Drawing of Braem's Linear City (student project, 1934)



Source: Renaat Braem Collection, Archives d'Architecture Moderne, Brussels.

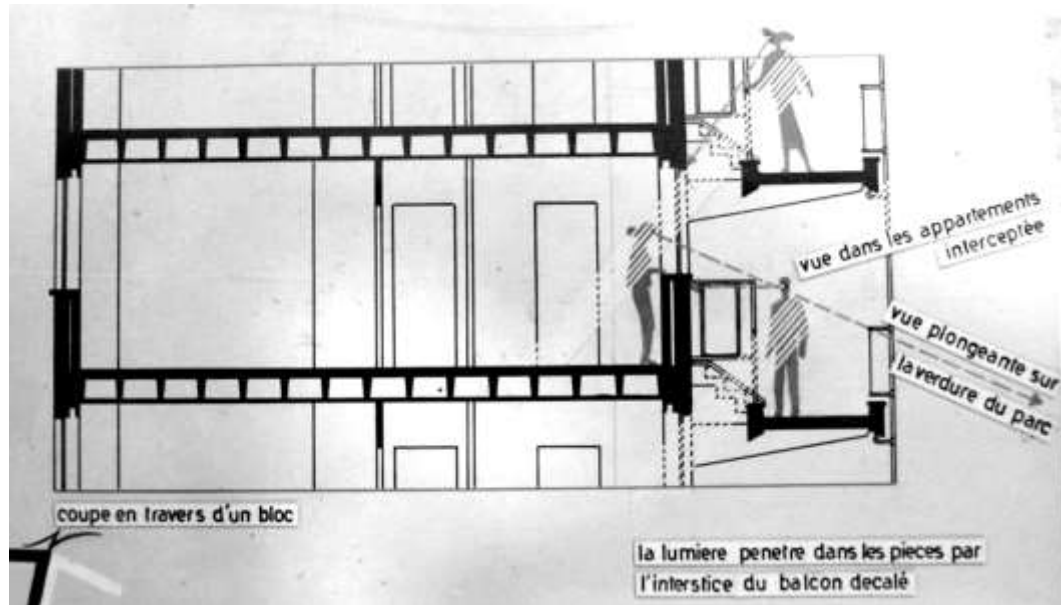
Figure 3. View of a Kiel housing block, drawing by Braem (1934)

Source: Renaat Braem Collection, Archives d'Architecture Moderne, Brussels.

The project was very innovative in Belgium at the time. The zoning plan, which consisted of open housing blocks surrounded by greenery, was designed according to the CIAM doctrine codified by the Athens Charter (1933). However, Braem did not follow the interwar doctrine indiscriminately and did not place the blocks parallel to each other. As he explained, the zigzagged position of the blocks allowed maximum infiltration of light during “the most unfavourable season, winter”, instead of too much sun in the summer and no light in the winter (Maes, Maeremans, Braem, 1954: 50). Also, the windows were proportional to the amount of daylight. He made use of *fenêtres en longueur*, a horizontal band of windows that offered a panoramic view on the landscape. They were applied in the Narkomfin Communal House of the Russian constructivists and were one of the elements that Le Corbusier defined in his famous *Five Points Towards a New Architecture* (1926). But while the apartments in Le Corbusier’s *Unité d’Habitation* were rather small and long, Braem’s were wide and stretched out along the façade. Braem consciously chose for broad apartments with big windows in order to encourage as much as possible the flow of air and (day)light, which was not a luxury in a country with a rainy climate like Belgium. Le Corbusier, on the other hand, preferred small apartments to keep out the blazing sun of Marseilles. For the same reason, among others, Le Corbusier chose for an inner street (an enclosed corridor), while Braem preferred open galleries that served the apartments. The circulation system of the apartment buildings A, B, C and DE happened by means of open galleries which were loosened from the façade and situated a few steps below the level of the apartments (see following image), so that daylight could enter the kitchen window freely along the split between the wall and the gallery. Because of this split level, visitors had no direct view into the apartment, and the residents could easily overlook the gallery from their kitchen window, as well as the green open space around the buildings. Moreover, sunlight could enter directly into the apartment, falling through the gap between the façade and the gallery (see figure 4) Braem saw the galleries as streets, placed for spontaneous social interaction between the neighbours. With colours and integrated art, he aimed to increase the vividness of the ‘streets’ (Sterke, 2010; Braeken, 2010: 186). He succeeded in doing so only

partially, because at the time a caretaker prevented the inhabitants from putting furniture on the galleries in order to sit there (Polaer, 204; De Busschere, 2004).

Figure 4. Study of the relation between the apartments and the open gallery in blocks A, B, C



Source: Renaat Braem Collection, Archives d'Architecture Moderne, Brussels.

Figure 5. Split-level between the galleries and the apartments



Source: Photos by the author, 2006. Note also the use of primary colours in the galleries, creating a vivid atmosphere.

Another difference with Le Corbusier's Habitation was the use of traditional bricks for the façades. Although the bricks were coloured in the same primary colours as the concrete panels in the Habitation, the use of local materials can be seen as a way to connect his architecture with the local context. With the layout of his apartments, Braem tried to give the inhabitants "the greatest possible freedom: freedom of movement, a large view and a life in freedom by means of a comfortable arrangement of space" (Braem 1954: 50 quoted in: Sterken, 2010: 185). The equipment of the flats – including central heating and an equipped bathroom and kitchen with a water boiler – had to free women from household slavery. Braem had opted for a Cubex kitchen, designed by Louis-Herman De Koninck, one of the most famous Belgian modernist architects (Van Nuffel, 2014; Maes, Maeremans, Braem, 1954: 52).⁵ The kitchen, shown for the first time at CIAM in 1930 and manufactured by the firm Van de Ven, was composed of standardised elements: four cupboard types that could be combined in ten different ways (Van Caudenberg, Heynen, 2004: 23-49; Ruegg, 1989: 187-216).

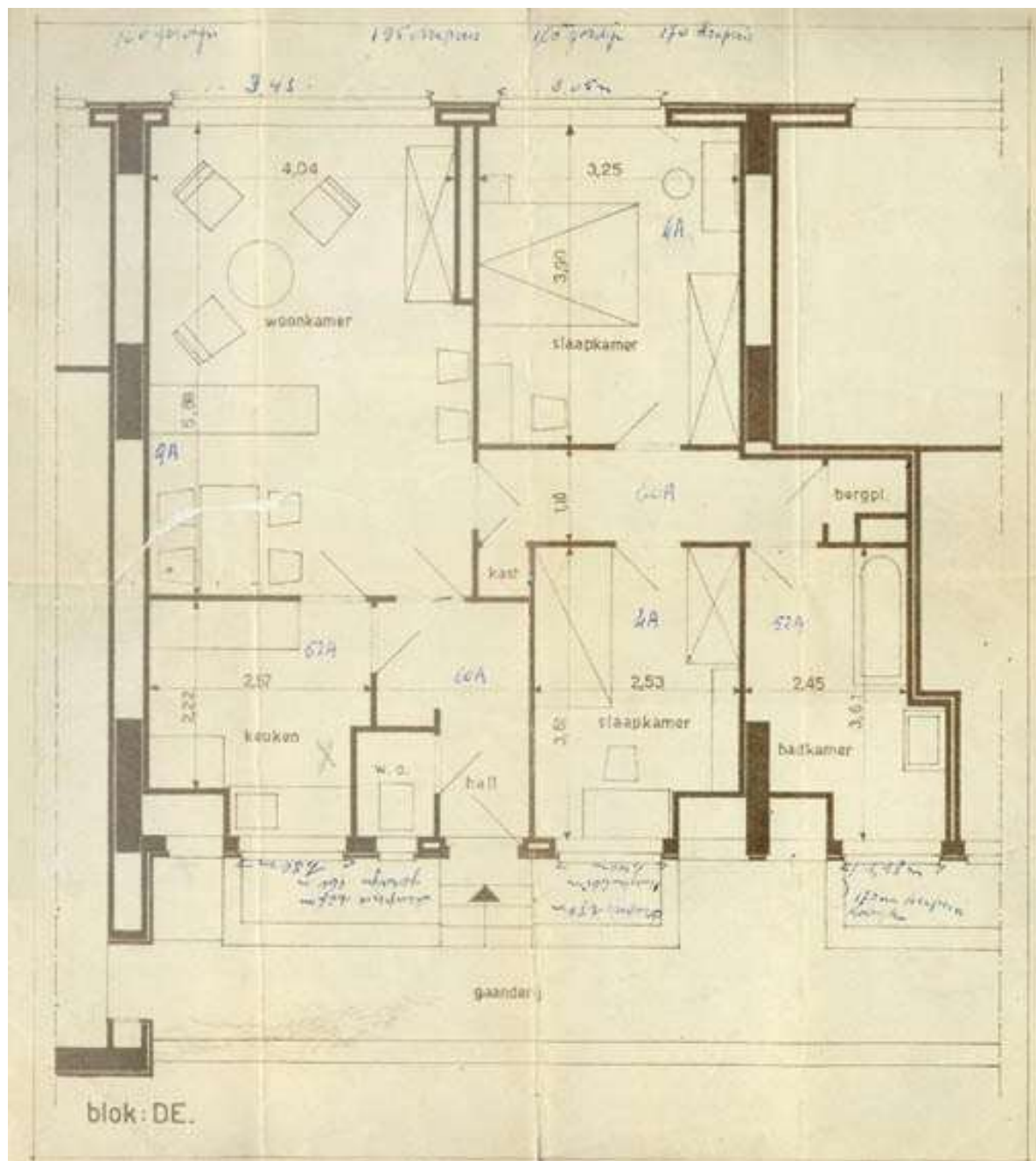
Figure 6. The original Cubex kitchen in an apartment of the Kiel housing estate



Source: Photo by the author, April 2015.

By the same token, the interiors were also designed according to these principles of freedom. Freedom of movement was achieved in the apartment thanks to the layout of the rooms and the furniture arrangement. Serving spaces such as the kitchen or bathroom were kept as minimal as possible, in favour of a large living room that included a dining area as well as a sitting area. Moreover, the dining table was placed with the smallest side against a wall, and not in the middle of the room as was typical for (petit-)bourgeois interiors (see images 7). This literally created more space in the living room. The kitchen was kept as small as possible in order to discourage eating in the kitchen, and to facilitate cooking and other kitchen tasks as in a real laboratory. During his student days, Braem was already fascinated by the laboratory kitchen. A clear division between a day part and a night part structured the layout of the apartment. The inhabitants entered the house through the rear entrance, as they entered besides the kitchen.

⁵ For an in-depth study of the Kiel's original interior layout, see Van Nuffel, 2014: 56-60.

Figure 7. A two-bedroom apartment in block DE

Source: Floor plan of the architects, private collection. Both kitchen and bathroom are fully equipped.

Community life was central, and art had to encourage this. The housing blocks had carefully designed, sculptural entrance halls with two healthy workers as caryatides to welcome the residents. Art sculptures were placed in the open space around the blocks because of their supposed healing effect on the residents. Primary colours such as yellow, red and blue were used to animate the corridors and entrance hall.

Figure 8. Entrance hall

Source: Photo by Jos Gysenbergs.

Like many Socialists, Braem had high hopes for this building. They believed that this architecture would free people from the “traditional parish structures” and would lead them towards socialism (Strauven, 1983, 71). Braem believed that his architecture could restructure the life of the future inhabitants. They could be freed from “heritage and wrong education”. According to Braem, the highest goal of the architect was to “improve the human being by improving his or her environment” (Braem, 1954: 57). He expressed the opinion of *Formes Nouvelles*, a non-profit avant-garde group of (interior) architects, critics and artists, in which he took part (Floré, De Kooning, 2002). During June and July 1953, the association organised in one residential block an exhibition entitled *The New Way of Living (Het Nieuwe Wonen)*, where model apartments were displayed to show the public how to live in modern times. These fourteen apartments were modelled by modernist avant-garde architects and artists like De Roover, Willy Van der Meeren, Emile Veranneman, W. Bresseleers and G. Schenck, among others (Sosset, 1953 a; Sosset, 1953 b; N.H., 1953: 26-27; Floré, 2010, 178-187).

Figure 9. The open public space between the ‘legs’ of the blocks

Source: Photo by Jos Gysenbergs.

The progressivity of the projects can also be deduced from its nicknames: the “blocks on legs” as well as the “margarine blocks”. The latter name was given by local residents who believed that these apartments were so expensive that its inhabitants would only be able to eat margarine and not the real and more expensive butter. In the end, they were more expensive than the target group they were designed for. After all, the budget of the social-housing company was not fixed yet, because the complex was a pilot project of modernist high-rise social housing. That allowed Braem to invest seriously in the building and its finishing. The concrete skeleton frames of the highest blocks, for example, were cast on site. As a result, rent was quite steep, because in those days, the rent of public housing was related to construction cost, and not to the tenants’ income, as is the case today. Consequently, the apartments were primarily inhabited by families with a proper middle-class income, instead of the lower-income, working-class families they were intended for. Civil servants from the city of Antwerp (such as teachers, police officers and fire-brigade officers) constituted the dominant population.

In short, the Kiel estate was designed on the basis of a social-utopian belief that the modernist building would emancipate the workers’ families. It was conceived as a total work of art in which art and architecture were integrated. Politically, Braem took the position of a reformist who wanted to improve the life of his inhabitants. As the first modernist high-rise on that scale, it was perceived as a very prestigious, progressive, avant-garde project, although Braem also incorporated elements (materials and organisations) from the local architecture.

The Luchtbal estate of Hugo Van Kuyck (1954-62)

In the Luchtbal neighbourhood – a site in the north of the city, squeezed between, on the one hand, the harbour and the Albert Canal in the west, and on the other, the motorway (the Noorderlaan) and railway in the east – Hugo Van Kuyck realised a huge high-rise social-housing project (1954-62). The units were designed in the first place to accommodate the workers of the new General Motors car plant on the Noorderlaan.

Architect Hugo Van Kuyck was commissioned to develop the new neighbourhood. He was particularly well acquainted with US corporate culture and plant layout techniques through training he received in the United States and his work as an intelligence officer in the US Army (Ryckewaert, 2011: 91). From 1931 onwards, he lectured at Yale University, an invitation he received after some well-attended lectures of his in Scandinavia on Urbanism in Antwerp (Schelfout, 1988: 29-30). When he was offered a function in an American architectural office in New York, he started an architectural training and received his Master of Architecture at Virginia Union University. After World War II, he coordinated, as a technical advisor for post-war reconstruction in Belgium, study trips to the US organised by the Belgian Office for the Increase of Productivity (Devolder, 2011: 13-15).⁶ The object of those study trips was the construction of buildings and the organisation of the building industry (Belgische Dienst Opvoering Productiviteit, 1957: 125). It was not surprising that Van Kuyck got the commission because he had already built in the Luchtbal neighbourhood before. In particular, he made the so-called Canada blocks (Canadablokken) erected in 1938-39 (Spitaels, Aerts, De Potter, 1995, 39; Vervloesem, Van Herck, 2013: 32).

⁶ That office with the Dutch name Belgische Dienst voor de Opvoering van de Produktiviteit existed from 1951 to 1978. It was established by employers’ organizations and trade unions to raise Belgian productivity to the same level as in America. The office was partly sponsored through the American Marshall Plan (also known as the European Recovery Programme) until May 1956, when the Belgian government took over.

Figure 10. Overview of Luchtbal housing estate

Source: Photo by Frans Claes, Archive social-housing company *Onze Woning* (today, Woonhaven Antwerpen), 1961. Lang blocks at the bottom, the Canada blocks in the middle, and the housing towers at the top (which is the south side of the settlement)

For his post-war projects, more particularly between 1954 and 1960, Van Kuyck followed, even more than Braem, the interwar CIAM doctrine that championed housing blocks, surrounded by greenery, in order to provide ‘the masses’ with an affordable ‘minimum-living wage dwelling’ with sufficient sunlight and air and all modern comfort. His land-use plan was closer to the CIAM doctrine than that of the Kiel estate, as the buildings were placed in an orthogonal grid. In the south, six high-rise towers were positioned in two rows of three blocks, while his so-called Long blocks (Langblokken) in the north, are positioned parallel to each other. Between the two, a large sports field was situated. The Long blocks comprise 9 floors, which is the same number as Braem’s lower blocks, while his towers comprise 19 floors (2 in the plinth and 17 in the brick volume), which is one and a half times higher than Braem’s highest blocks.

Also, the Long blocks were constructed on pilotis. However, unlike the Kiel estate, the ground floor is not completely open, because, at regular intervals, there are cubic concrete blocks which include the entrance halls that lead to at least 16 apartments, 2 on each floor (Spitaels, Aerts, De Potter, 1995, 42). Instead of employing open galleries, Van Kuyck organised the circulation in a more individual and internal manner. Although the entrance cubes are glazed on one side, the buildings are less a-tectonic than the Kiel blocks and instead have a military appearance. The Long blocks in particular look like a military column. They measure 200 metres long, 11 metres wide and 30 metres high (Spitaels, Aerts, De Potter, 1995, 39). The cubes on the ground floor, as well as the projecting balconies at the back and the projecting kitchen volumes in front gave the Long blocks a certain rhythm.

Figure 11. View of the six towers with a playground and sports field in the front

Source: Photo by the author, 2015.

The structure of the blocks was composed by modulated, prefabricated and monolithically cast concrete. Van Kuyck also combined a modern typology of high-rise slabs and towers with a load-bearing structure of concrete, with brick architecture (Ryckewaert, 2011: 42). However, the bricks were not introduced to create a composition of coloured surfaces, as Braem did. They contributed to the more industrial appearance of the buildings. Indeed, Van Kuyck attached utmost importance to industrial construction methods. On the question of how to rebuild the country, the architect had high hopes of “the younger generation, abetted by some of its elders, [which] is receptive to newer ideas on a large scale”, as well as builders and industrials which are interested “in examining the possibility of tackling the problem of reconstruction on a rationalised industrial basis.” “These are probably healthy tokens, and maybe the time is approaching when our men, proud of the traditions of their Flemish and Walloon forefathers, like the great builders of cathedrals and palaces, will plan on a scale which is beyond the vision of the good bourgeois of today. Maybe tomorrow’s towns, integrated with parks and roads, built with the tremendous technical means now at our disposal, will occupy an outstanding place in the history of architecture” (Van Kuyck, quoted in Bogaert, 2013:19).

The floor around the pillars of the Long blocks was paved with concrete tiles, while the ceiling between the beams measuring 1.2 metre high, were equipped with ribbed concrete slabs. Each ceiling of the gallery is painted in one pastel colour, which is hardly noticeable. Costs were reduced through the rationalisation of the construction method, which diminished in turn the number of working hours. That money was invested in the finishing of the building (the bricks), the equipment of the apartments and the technical apparatus. Each apartment contained a fully equipped bathroom and a rational kitchen in order to keep the living room as large as possible.

Figure 12. View of the Long blocks from the other side of the greenery

Source: Photo by the author, 2015.

In his design of the housing estate, Van Kuyck had adopted a similar architectural approach to that used in the industrial area of which it was an extension. As architectural historian Michaël Ryckaert (2011: 42) has explained, the publication photos of the housing estate and the industrial buildings in the architectural magazines of the time convey a mix of 1950s commercial roadside architecture with a traditionalist ‘brick modernism’. The architectural magazines of that time praised that realisation with a fascination for functionalist industrial architecture.

Figure 13. View of the Long blocks

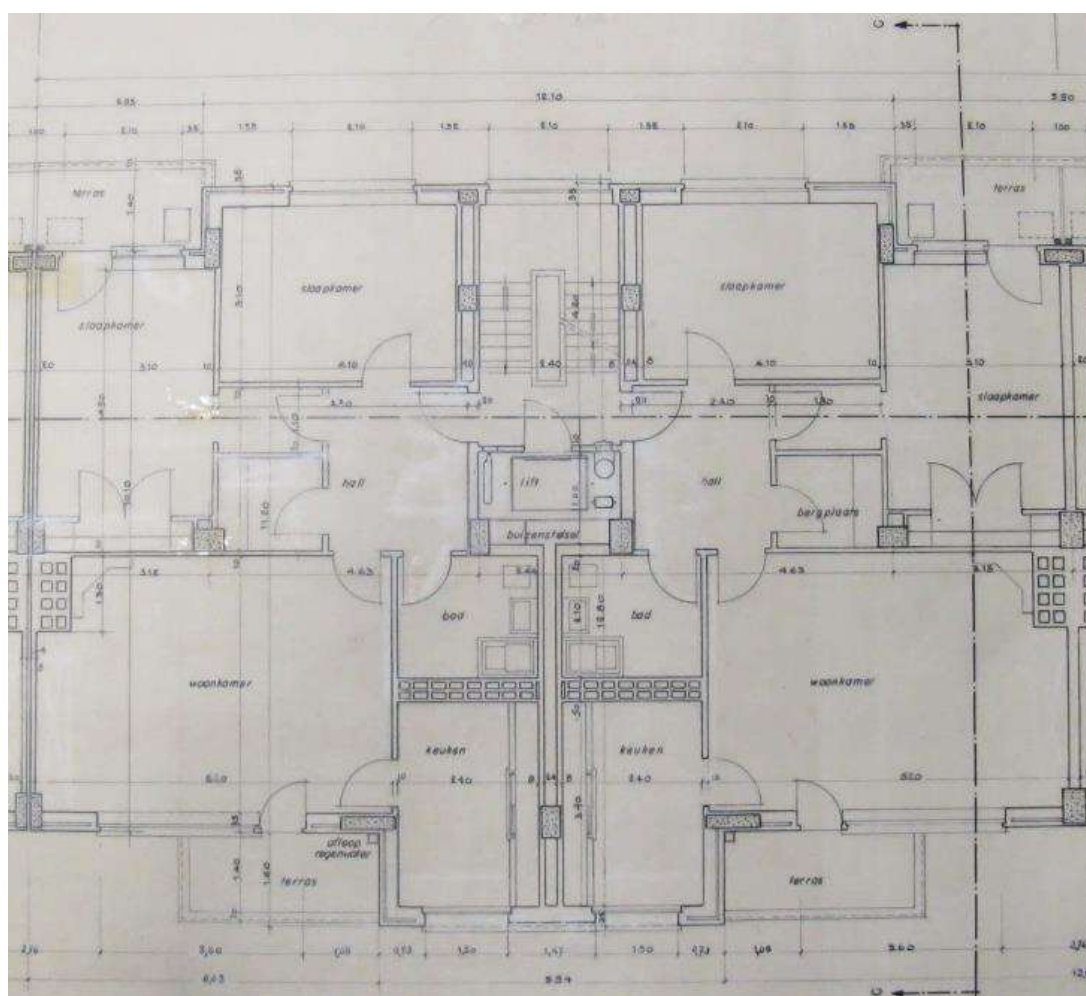
Source: Photo by the author, 2015.

Figure 14. View between the legs of the Long blocks at the Luchtbal estate



Source: Photo by the author, 2015.

Figure 15. Plan of two apartments clustered around a combined elevator and stair shaft in Long block B4



Source: City archive of Antwerp.

All rooms, except the kitchen, are situated around a central (dark) entrance hall. The bathroom and living room are located at one side, while the bedrooms are at the other side. A storage space was also provided. The kitchen can only be reached through the living room. As at the Kiel estate, a small rational kitchen was envisaged in combination with a large living room, in order to encourage people to have their meals there. The kitchens that were fitted in the apartments had a lot of affinities with the Bruynzeel kitchens of Piet Zwart, which were in turn influenced by the Belgian Cubex kitchen. However, a mix of cupboards was used and no evidence could be found that it was really his design (Van Nuffel, 2014: 68-69). Nevertheless, it is an indication that Van Kuyck too opted for a rational, working kitchen that was similar to the Cubex kitchen.

Figure 16. Kitchen in a Long block.



Source: Photo by Mieke Van Nuffel, June 2014. The cupboards of the lower part are similar to the Bruynzeel kitchen (1938) designed by Piet Zwart. The left wing of the kitchen was later added by the inhabitants. Although not intended by Van Kuyck, the inhabitants placed a table in the kitchen.

The cooker worked on electricity, while the central heating was warmed with water from the electricity plant of Merksem, a town three kilometres away from the Luchtbal neighbourhood. That ecological way of heating was used until 1977, when they changed to natural gas (Van Nuffel, 1974: 70). Van Kuyck also attached a lot of importance to communal facilities, although the majority of them were more commercial. He designed a supermarket – the first in Belgium – with a car park, a milk bar and a small shopping centre. In 1957, a parish hall was built, and in 1965 a new church and a post office. Later, an urban sports hall, a public library and a cultural centre were added. Considering Van Kuyck's background, it is not surprising that the first supermarket

of Belgium was included in his project. However, because of its limited assortment and rather isolated location from the city and its surroundings, it was not a big success (Spitaels, Aerts, De Potter, 1995: 51).

Conclusion

This study confirms that the two social-housing projects under study had much in common, at least at first glance. Both the Kiel and Luchtbal estates were flagship projects commissioned and financed by two Antwerp social-housing companies. They both had to symbolise the progressivity of the Social Democrats in Antwerp. Stylistically, they are superficially quite similar as they both contain pilotis as well as fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms. The level of comfort in these buildings was unprecedented for its inhabitants, which consisted predominantly in both cases in civil servants of the city. Their apartments shared similar concepts of domesticity. Eating in the kitchens was discouraged in both projects, for example, but encouraged in the living room. In both projects, the surrounding public space was undefined. But in Braem's project, the public space was more organic in both layout and furnishing. Both designers were passionate about architecture, but nevertheless occupied different positions in the analytical framework of Williams Goldhagen. That is especially the case for the political and social axes. Van Kuyck was rather a consensualist modernist who was optimistic about the future of society and who believed that a modern architecture should support the new industrial culture. He was fascinated by industrial techniques and technological process in order to increase housing production and to reduce costs. He aimed to improve architecture so that the buildings would become more efficient instruments serving the existing political and economic structures of society, in this case: solving the housing shortage. Braem, by contrast, was a reformist, who, as a Socialist, criticised capitalist society, but who also believed that he could improve the life of the inhabitants by means of his architecture in combination with artworks. As a real social utopian he believed that his architecture could facilitate social progress and reduce social injustices. On the social axis, Van Kuyck was rather a machine-oriented architect, while Braem was much more a so-called situated modernist. Van Kuyck concentrated his design energies on mass production, rationalism and tectonic expression, while Braem was much more interested in creating an integrated relationship between building and site, and between building and inhabitants. The careful implantation of the Kiel housing estate in the landscape, for example, illustrates this very well. The caryatides at the entrance to one of his main housing blocks is a clear example of Braem's efforts to connect the building with the inhabitants he designed it for: the future workers. To a certain extent, Van Kuyck also connects the housing estate to the inhabitants (a worker in the car industry) by employing a similar industrial idiom as the surrounding industrial environment, but he was less focused on the emancipation of that worker than Braem.

In all Belgian social-housing projects, including the Kiel and Luchtbal housing estates, an important shift in population took place from 1978 onwards. At that moment, the rent of social housing became linked to the income of the inhabitants. That measure drove out the middle-class tenants, while it attracted people with a very low income. Migrant families and other vulnerable groups started to inhabit the social rental houses, resulting in neighbourhoods characterised by a high level of multiculturalism. The Luchtbal housing estate acts more as an enclave, because it is cut off from the city by infrastructure. The neighbourhood is stigmatised; however, the quality of life is pretty good and the green spaces are intensively used. In the Kiel housing estate, multiculturalism is also high. The smaller scale of the project and the cultural attention it recently received make it a more integrated part of the city. In terms of architecture, the Kiel estate has a high-profile architecture which is refined in its volumes as well as in its architectural details. The Luchtbal estate mainly owes its attraction and fascination to its scale and repetition of elements.

According to architectural historian Bruno De Meulder (1997: 39), among others, the Kiel housing estate was "an unrivalled international masterpiece", whose budget was quasi-unlimited, at least for the first phase. The budget of the Luchtbal housing estate was already more restrained, which is also detectable in the façades, while later modernist housing projects (such as Europark on the left bank in the late 1960s) were even cheaper, which resulted in very pragmatic architecture. Instead of improving the quality of modernist high-rise social-housing projects, an impoverishment of the projects can be noticed. During the 1970s, attention moved to the renovation of the historic city centre and apartment blocks retreated into the background (De Meulder, et al., 1997: 39-53).

Recently, the high-rises regained attention in discussions on how to deal with them: refurbishment or demolition? For the two discussed projects, the option of renovation was chosen as they are testimonies of a very specific past and policy, a specific answer to the modernist project. The Kiel housing estate was thoroughly renovated, with respect for the architectural quality. Moreover, the centenary of Renaat Braem in 2010 brought this project, among others, to the attention of a broad public (CVAA, 2010, Braeken, 2010). The renovation of the Luchtbal housing estate was done more roughly, whereby many details were lost.

REFERENCE LIST

- Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed (2016), “Wooneenheid Kiel”, in *Inventaris Onroerend Erfgoed*. Available at <https://id.erfgoed.net/erfgoedobjecten/126553> (30-05-2016).
- Belgische Dienst Opvoering Productiviteit (1957), Constructie van gebouwen. Belgische zending naar de Verenigde Staten [Construction of Buildings. Belgian Mission tot he United States], Brussels, Instelling van Openbaar Nut.
- Bertels, I., Bisschops, T., Blondé, B. (2010), “Stadslandschap”, in I. Bertels, B. De Munck, H. Van Goethem (eds.) (2010), *Antwerpen, Biografie van een stad*, Antwerpen: Meulenhoff, Manteau, pp. 11-66.
- Bervoets, L., Hard, M. (guest eds.) (2010), “Theme Issue: Coping with Modernity: European Ways of Housing in the American Century”, *Home Cultures*, 7 (2).
- Betts, P., Crowley, D. (guest ed.) (2005), “Theme Issue: Domestic Dreamworlds: Notions of Home in Post-1945”, *Europe: Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 (2), pp. 213-236.
- Bogaert, E. (2013), Een analyse van het hoogbouwdiscours: casestudy Luchtbal, Ma. thesis, Architectural Engineering, University of Ghent.
- Braeken, J. (ed.) (2010), *Renaat Braem 1910-2001. Architect*, Antwerp, Brussels: ASA Publishers, VIOE.
- Braem, R. (1954), “Technische toelichting wooneenheid Kiel Antwerpen”, *Bouwen en Wonen*, 1 (2), pp. 50-57.
- Braem, R. (1954), “Over de wooneenheid Kiel-Antwerpen”, *Bouwen en Wonen*, 1 (2), p. 57-65.
- Braem, R., Maeremans, V., Maes, H. (1954), “Technische toelichtingen wooneenheid Kiel Antwerpen”, *Bouwen en Wonen*, 1 (2), pp. 50-57.
- Caramellino, G., Zanfi, F. (eds.) (2015), *Post-War Middle-Class Housing. Models, Construction and Change*, Bern, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang Publisher.
- De Decker, P., Ryckewaert, M., Vandekerckhove, B., Pisman, A. (2010), *Ruimte voor Wonen*, Apeldoorn, Antwerpen: Garant.
- De Meulder, B., De Decker, P., Van Herck, K., Ryckewaert, M., Vansteelant, H. (1999), “Over de plaats van de volkswoningbouw in de Vlaamse ruimte”, in P. De Decker, D. Van Mele, M. Demalsche (eds.), *Huiszoeking. Een kijkboek Sociale Woningbouw* [House search. A picture book social housing], Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, pp.10-86.
- Desombere, P., Spitaels, K., Herregodts, K. (1995), “Architectuur”, in Peeters, L. (ed.), *'45 – '95 Bouwstenen van sociaal woonbeleid. De VHM bekijkt 50 jaar volkshuisvesting in Vlaanderen*. Deel 1, Nazareth: Drukkerij Schaubroeck.

Devolder, K. (2011), *Inventaris van het archief van de Belgische Dienst Opvoering Productiviteit, het Instituut voor Verbetering van de Arbeidsvoorwaarden en het Nationaal Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeidsomstandigheden 1951-2006*, Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief.

De Vos, E. (2012), *Hoe zouden we graag wonen?* [How Would We Like to Live?], Leuven: University Press Leuven.

De Vos, E. (2010), "Living with High-Rise Modernity. The Modernist Kiel Housing Estate of Renaat Braem, a Catalyst to a Socialist Modern Way of Life?", in L. Bervoets, M. Hard (guest eds.) theme issue: *Homecultures*, 7 (2), pp. 134-158.

Floré, F. (2010), *Lessen in goed wonen* [Lessons in Good Living], Leuven: University Press Leuven.

Floré, F., De Kooning, M. (2002), "Formes Nouvelles and the communication of modern domestic ideals in postwar Belgium", Proceedings XIXth conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, Brisbane: SAHANZ.

Laureys, D. (2004), "De architectuur in een stroomversnelling" (Architecture), in D. Laureys (ed.), *Bouwen in Beeld*. (Building in Pictures), Antwerp, Turnhout: Provincie Antwerpen, Brepols, pp. 85- 110.

N.H. (1953), "Het nieuwe wonen", *Ruimte*, no. 1, (Nov.), pp. 26-27.

Peeters, L. (ed.) (1997), '45 – '95 *Bouwstenen van sociaal woonbeleid. De VHM bekijkt 50 jaar volkshuisvesting in Vlaanderen*. Deel 1, Nazareth: Drukkerij Schaubroeck.

Ruegg, A. (1989), "La contribution de De Koninck à l'habitation nouvelle", in L. Herman De Koninck. *Architecte des années modernes/Architect of modern times*, Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, pp. 187-216.

Ryckewaert, M. (2011), "Linear Urbanization Patterns as the Outcome of a National Planning Effort", in M. Ryckewaert, *Building the Economic Backbone of the Belgian Welfare State*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, pp. 148-173.

Schelfout, C.E. (1988), *In het kielzog van Hugo Van Kuyck*, Bonheiden: De Dijle, pp. 29-30.

Sosset, L-L. (1953a), "Een ruim opgevatte manifestatie. De tentoonstelling van de nieuwe huisvesting te Antwerpen-Kiel", *Kunstambachten en kunstnijverheden*, (May) (44), pp. 1-2.

Sosset, L-L. (1953b), "L'Exposition du nouvel habitat. Sa portée, son retentissement, ses leçons", *Rythme* (Oct) (16), pp. 16-19.

Spitaels, E., Aerts, L., De Potter, A. (1995), *Pruis & Apache. Een kijk op de architectuur van luchtbal*, Antwerp: Stadsdrukkerij.

Sterken, S. (2010), "De mens verbeteren door zijn milieu te verbeteren" ("Improving the people by improving their environment"), in J. Braeken, R. Braem, *1910-2001. Architect*, Antwerp, Brussels: ASA Publishers, VIOE, pp. 181-211.

Strauven, F. (1983), *Renaat Braem. Architect*, Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne.

Theunis, K. (2006), "De Wet De Taeye. De individuele woning als bouwsteen van de welvaartsstaat", in K. Van Herck; T. Avermaete (eds.), *Wonen in welvaart. Woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen 1948-1973*, Rotterdam, Antwerpen: 010, VAI/CVAa, pp. 67-77.

Van Caudenberg, A., Heynen, H. (2004), "The Rational Kitchen in the Interwar Period in Belgium: Discourses and Realities", *HomeCultures*, 1(1), pp. 23-49.

Van Herck, K., Avermaete, T. (eds.) (2006), *Wonen in welvaart. Woningbouw en woongecultuur in Vlaanderen 1948-1973*, Rotterdam, Antwerpen: 010, VAI/CVAa.

Van Huffel, M. (2014), *Onderzoek naar het interieur van sociale hoogbouwprojecten in Antwerpen uit de jaren 1950 en 1960* (A research towards the interior of social housing projects in Antwerp in the 1950s-1960s), Ma. Diss., Department of Art, Music and Theater Sciences, Ghent: University of Ghent.

Vervloesem, E., Van Herck, K. (2013), "Archives", in L. Verstraete, B. De Meulder, F. Moulaert, J. De Bruyn, (eds.) (2013), *Scenes from Luchtbal*, Mechelen: Public Space, pp. 32.

Williams Goldhagen, S. (2000), "Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern", in S. Williams Goldhagen, R. Legault (eds.), *Anxious Modernisms. Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, Québec, Cambridge: the MIT Press, Canadian Centre for Architecture, pp. 301-324.

Winters, S., Ceulemans, W., Heylen, K., Pannecoucke, I., Vanderstraeten, L., Van den Broeck, K., De Decker, P., Ryckewaert, M., Verbeeck, G. (2015), *Wonen in Vlaanderen anno 2013* (Dwelling in Flanders anno 2013), Antwerpen, Apeldoorn: Garant.

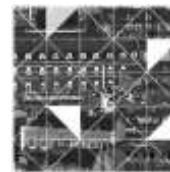
CVAa (2010), *Braemjaar*, Website of the project available at: <http://www.braem2010.be/tentoonstelling> (30-05-2016).

Interviews

Interview De Busschere Alice (pseudonym is used), original inhabitant with a progressive/modernist way of living, Antwerp, 22/11/2004.

Interview Cécile Polaer (pseudonym is used), original inhabitant with a more conventional way of living, Antwerp, 22/11/2004.

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Antes do recomeço: a cidade nas revistas *Arquitectura* e *Binário*

Rui Seco¹, Escola Universitária das Artes de Coimbra, Portugal.

Resumo

Como se processava o debate disciplinar sobre a cidade, que informava a grande expansão urbana em Portugal, antes e depois da revolução de Abril de 1974? De que modo se discutiam a arquitectura e o espaço urbano, quando a falta de habitação era um problema premente, e na Europa se questionava já a cidade produzida no pós guerra?

As questões expostas estabelecem o quadro de desenvolvimento de uma pesquisa realizada a partir das duas publicações especializadas de grande divulgação no país na época abordada, as revistas *Arquitectura* e *Binário*, incidindo sobre o modo como se processavam o debate, a teorização e a exposição de ideias, que neste texto é sinteticamente apresentada.

A temática abordada é entendida como relevante pela sua relação com a prática da transformação da cidade portuguesa, mais do que pela definição de um corpo coerente ou estruturado de ideias, pela organização de diferentes linhas de pensamento ou pela inovação das abordagens. Importa por isso entender o que e como se debatia ou se apresentavam ideias, isto é, como se definia o contexto no qual se desenvolvia o projecto, se desenhava o espaço urbano e o edifício.

O momento novo do pós-revolução, em particular, em que toda a organização da sociedade era questionada e todas as possibilidades pareciam em aberto, inteiras e limpas, constituía um recomeço também para os arquitectos, empenhados em criar o suporte físico para a nova época e a nova sociedade. As reflexões, ideias, modelos ou teorias de que se socorriam para fundamentar o desenho, ante a urgência do momento e a premência de resposta ditadas pelo espírito do tempo, tinham já que estar formadas, sendo, em parte, fruto do contexto de discussão disciplinar aqui abordado.

Palavras-chave: Cidade; Arquitectura; Debate; Portugal; Revolução; Morfologia.

¹ ruisecoc@gmail.com.

A revolução não será televisada mas sim ao vivo, proclamava em 1971 Gil Scott-Heron², trazendo para o registo musical um *slogan* das manifestações de protesto dos negros norte americanos. Esse momento, marcante para a música urbana de intervenção³, estabelecia um protesto contra a cultura de massas e a sua base mercantilista, criticando a transmissão indiferente de imagens, que mostrava a realidade e os problemas sociais entre anúncios, avisos sobre o tempo, enredos de ficção ligeira ou destaques de informação, aplanando a sua importância e retirando-lhes significado.

A revolução seria ao vivo.

Três anos mais tarde, em Portugal, a revolução vivia-se efectivamente nas ruas, mas era ao mesmo tempo fortemente mediatizada, em parte contrariando este postulado. Transmitida para grande parte do mundo, em directo ou em diferido, documentada na imprensa e registada em filme, despertava interesse pelas possibilidades que criava, concentrando atenções enquanto peça do tabuleiro geopolítico da guerra fria.

As revoluções não se faziam mais apenas na rua, mas também através dos media. A mediatização, através da imprensa mas sobretudo através das imagens em movimento, não deixaria de ganhar influência social e importância política, da guerra do Vietname à queda do muro de Berlim, da disputa pelas Malvinas ao 11 de setembro e à escalada do terrorismo.

No período revolucionário, essa visibilidade mediática seria marcante para Portugal, as imagens das armas e das flores, dos soldados e das crianças, registando a passagem a um tempo novo, um dia inicial inteiro e limpo⁴, em que todos os futuros estavam em aberto.

Um tempo em que para além da poesia, também a arquitectura estava na rua.

Cortando o curso do tempo de antes, um grande envolvimento social procurava suprir as privações de um país atrasado, através do fim da guerra colonial, da realização de campanhas de alfabetização e de acção cultural ou, no campo da arquitectura, do envolvimento directo com a população para criar cidade e habitação, interrompendo o funcionamento das escolas de arquitectura, das revistas disciplinares e dos ateliers.

Também a arquitectura se fazia ao vivo.

O momento zero

E também a arquitectura seria mediatizada.

O protagonismo adquirido pelo contexto pós-revolucionário convertia-se igualmente na conquista da atenção disciplinar, sendo o exemplo mais marcante a publicação pela revista *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, uma das

² “You will not be able to stay home, brother (...) The revolution will put you in the driver’s seat, The revolution will not be televised, will not be televised, The revolution will be no re-run brothers, The revolution will be live”, início e final da música. SCOTT-HERON, Gil (1971), “The revolution will not be televised”, [tema musical], in “Pieces of a man” [registo audio LP]. Flying Dutchman. New York.

³ O impacto do tema levou Scott-Heron a ser comumente referido como inspiração para o hip-hop e padrinho do rap (a título de exemplo, refira-se Paul Lester, que assim se lhe refere num artigo em que descreve como The revolution will not be televised tocava na praça Tahrir durante a tentativa de derrube do governo de Hosni Mubarak: LESTER, Paul (2015), Gil Scott Heron: the revolution lives on, (Online) available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/aug/26/gil-scott-heron-the-revolution-will-not-be-televised>, ou Laura Donnelly, aquando do falecimento do cantor: Donnelly, Laura (2011), Gil Scott-Heron, the 'Godfather of Rap' behind The Revolution Will Not Be Televised, dies, (Online) available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/rockandjazzmusic/8543417/Gil-Scott-Heron-the-Godfather-of-Rap-behind-The-Revolution-Will-Not-Be-Televised-dies.html>.)

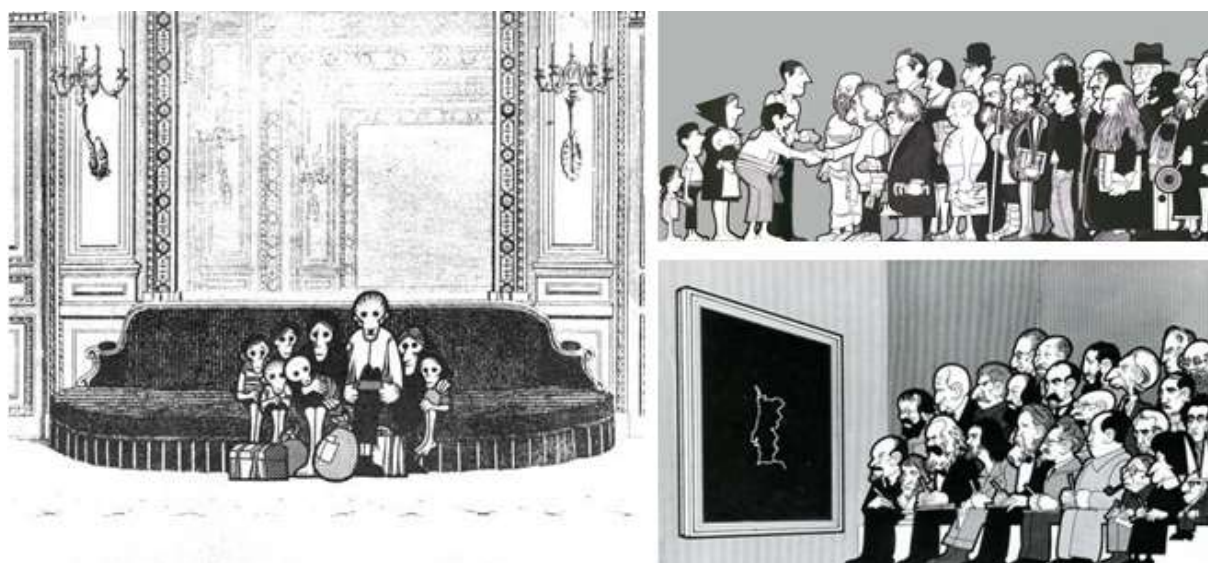
⁴ “O dia inicial inteiro e limpo”, nas tocantes palavras de Sophia de Mello Breyner no poema intitulado 25 de Abril: ANDRESEN, Sophia de Mello Breyner, (1974), “25 de Abril”, in “O Nome das Coisas”, Moraes Editores, Lisboa.

principais referências internacionais na época, de um número dedicado ao recomeço do país no pós-25 de abril, intitulado ‘Portugal an II’, o segundo ano depois desse momento zero⁵.

Este dossier temático apresentava uma abordagem que contrapunha autores portugueses, alguns já com um papel activo no debate crítico, à perspectiva a partir do exterior de alguns dos mais influentes críticos do momento. Assim, podemos encontrar José Augusto França, Manuel Vicente, Carlos Duarte, Duarte Cabral de Mello, Nuno Portas, Nuno Teotónio, Gonçalo Byrne e Raúl Hestnes, e também Bernard Huet, Vittorio Gregotti e Oriol Bohigas. Entre o passado sob a ditadura e as experiências recentes em liberdade, eram sucessivamente apresentados diversos períodos de análise, enquadrando a evolução da arquitectura portuguesa e o contexto em que se desenvolveu. Eram depois exploradas linhas de trabalho pessoais de alguns arquitectos – Nuno Teotónio e João Paciência, Vítor Figueiredo e Álvaro Siza – e desenvolvidas reflexões sobre a prática da arquitectura, o seu papel no 25 de abril e o programa SAAL, a fuga ao sistema instituído, que colocava os arquitectos directamente em contacto com os habitantes numa procura comum de soluções para o problema de falta de habitação e de cidade.

Como culminar de toda a análise, era publicado um debate sobre o SAAL, os arquitectos e o seu futuro, entre diversos participantes e Bernard Huet, enquanto ilustrações de João Abel Manta comunicavam expressivamente aspectos da situação política e social.

Figura 1. Aspectos da situação política e social.



Fonte: Ilustrações de João Abel Manta, João Abel Manta, publicadas na *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* nº 185.

A súmula da *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* sobre os dois anos do novo Portugal, não sendo caso único⁶, constituiu um ponto importante na mudança do debate sobre a arquitectura e a cidade portuguesas, estabelecendo uma reflexão de síntese, que transmite a percepção de um ciclo que termina, e simultaneamente lançando a sua internacionalização, que ganharia máxima expressão no protagonismo que viria a adquirir posteriormente Álvaro Siza.

Na realidade, os autores apresentados faziam já parte do universo publicado no país anteriormente, alguns deles, como Carlos Duarte e Nuno Portas, ligados ao grupo que tinha tomado a dianteira do debate e da divulgação na

⁵ “Portugal an II”, dossier temático na revista *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* nº 185, de maio-junho de 1976.

⁶ A título de exemplo, nesse mesmo ano e também em França, Christian Topalov publicava “La politique du logement dans le processus révolutionnaire português (25 avril 1974 – 11 mars 1975)” na revista *Espaces et Sociétés* nºs 17-18.

revista *Arquitectura* desde o final dos anos 1950. No decurso do período revolucionário, sobretudo com o programa SAAL, tinham tido a oportunidade de colocar as suas experiências e conhecimentos ao serviço das populações carenciadas, procurando contribuir para a construção de uma sociedade renovada.

Um mundo recomeçado a partir da praia pura

Era o tempo de participar e de fazer, mais do que de reflectir.

No campo do debate disciplinar, as implicações eram díspares. A revista *Arquitectura*, que pode ser apontada como a principal referência na época, esmorecia e logo em junho de 1974 cessava mesmo a publicação, com apenas dois números editados depois do 25 de abril. Por outro lado, a *Binário*, mantinha a sua actividade regular, de modo quase impassível.

Carlos Duarte, no editorial da primeira *Arquitectura* após a revolução, expressa a “esperança no mundo que vamos construir”, para o qual seria necessário um “esforço sem precedentes (...) de mudança radical do quadro anquilosado e doentio em que nos temos movido” e refere uma mensagem enviada pelo Sindicato dos Arquitectos à Junta de Salvação Nacional em que se propõem a “lutar pelo direito à habitação, combater a especulação fundiária e imobiliária, contribuir para a definição de uma política de solos e habitação”⁷, preocupações que resumem os principais pontos de mobilização dos arquitectos, para além do desempenho da sua actividade criadora.

A poesia de Sophia de Mello Breyner expressa bem o espírito da época, a convicção num “mundo recomeçado a partir da praia pura, como poema a partir da página em branco”⁸.

Nesse recomeço, também os arquitectos se propunham a tomar parte.

No entanto, sobressai uma diferença. Sophia diz que o poema não se programa, é regrado por uma disciplina própria. A arquitectura e a cidade, por oposição, são uma criação simultaneamente individual e colectiva, estruturando-se em torno de um mundo existente. São transformação de uma realidade.

Para a prática dos arquitectos, as realizações configuram parte de um todo em evolução, e necessitam de linhas de continuidade e conjugação.

Numa Europa já reconstruída da guerra, questionava-se a cidade produzida e contestavam se os modelos que tinham suportado o desenvolvimento urbano das últimas décadas, num debate marcado pela crítica, sem que fossem desenvolvidas novas propostas. O momento não era já de realizar, e a própria discussão mudava de perspectiva, passando de manifestos e programas propositivos para um âmbito analítico, de observação e reflexão sobre as existências⁹.

Sem a premência de desenvolver novos modelos e propostas, a discussão tornava-se menos orientada para a produção, alargava-se e abria-se a outras áreas do conhecimento, envolvendo uma base socialmente menos restrita.

⁷ Editorial da revista *Arquitectura* n.º 130, de maio de 1974, assinado por Carlos Duarte, director a partir do mês de abril, contando com José Saramago como chefe de redacção.

⁸ Poemas citados: Revolução - Descobrimento - “Revolução isto é: descobrimento/ Mundo recomeçado a partir da praia pura/ Como poema a partir da página em branco (...)” e Liberdade - “Um poema não se programa/ Porém a disciplina/ — Sílabas por sílabas — / O acompanha/ (...)— Como se os deuses o dessem/ O fazemos”. (ANDRESEN, Sophia de Mello Breyner, (1974), “O Nome das Coisas”, Moraes Editores, Lisboa.

⁹ O modernismo tinha sido marcado por textos programáticos e propositivos, dos escritos de Le Corbusier à Carta de Atenas, e desde a viragem para a década de 1960 tinham vindo a ganhar expressão obras de observação e análise, de Christopher Alexander a Robert Venturi, de Aldo Rossi a Kevin Lynch, para citar apenas alguns textos directamente relacionados com a análise física das estruturas e do espaço.

No nosso momento zero, porém, “esperar tantos anos torna[va] tudo mais urgente”, parafraseando Sérgio Godinho num tema então em voga¹⁰. Ante a necessidade esmagadora de construir de imediato, eram necessárias referências para a criação de espaço urbano, o tempo não se compadecendo com o desenvolvimento de novas teorias de organização do espaço ou com o florescer do debate direccionado para a idealização urbanística.

Nesse sentido, as propostas que os arquitectos tinham em mãos eram trabalhadas em função das suas próprias referências, ancoradas na sua cultura e informação e na sua prática profissional anterior. Eram essas as ferramentas de que se socorriam para desenvolver os seus projectos.

Uma observação do conjunto da obra produzida pelo programa SAAL é demonstrativa da diversidade de abordagens, que pode ser interpretada como falta de coerência mas também como uma combinação entre os diferentes contextos de cada uma das operações, a interacção com os destinatários e a sensibilidade dos autores.

Antes do momento zero, da oportunidade real de acção proporcionada pela revolução, o modo como se debatia contribuíra para a preparação desse futuro.

Importa, nesse sentido, perceber o contexto em que se desenrolava o debate, sobretudo a partir dos títulos periódicos, as revistas *Arquitectura* e *Binário*, centrais na discussão e divulgação de conhecimento.

Com uma corda atada ao pé

A revista *Arquitectura* vinha a aprofundar a sua vertente teórica desde o final da década de 1950, com a sua terceira série, afastando-se da inventariação de obras e projectos para abarcar temáticas diversas sobre a arquitectura, a história e a sociedade, dentro dos limites impostos pela censura¹¹.

Continuando a ser publicados e discutidos projectos, a sua escolha demonstrava uma linha evidente, tanto no que se refere a autores como a tendências, no sentido da valorização do neo-realismo mediterrânico e do organicismo, enquanto é apresentada uma novíssima geração do movimento moderno¹². O bloco das Águas Livres, de Nuno Teotónio Pereira, moradias de Vítor Figueiredo e Manuel Taíña, o bairro da Chamusca de Bartolomeu Costa Cabral, a Casa de Chá de Álvaro Siza, o pavilhão de ténis da Quinta da Conceição, de Fernando Távora, o conjunto da Federação das Caixas de Previdência do Funchal de Chorão Ramalho ou alguns projectos para Olivais Norte são exemplos de obras apresentadas entre 1959 e 1965, com grande sentido de actualidade, que eram no contexto internacional acompanhadas por outras de autores como James Stirling, Hans Scharoun, Leonardo Benevolo, Alvar Aalto, Josep Antoni Coderch ou Martorell, Bohigas e Mackay. É no entanto de salientar a publicação pela revista de obras de carácter menos próximo destas orientações, de que são exemplo obras de Maurício Vasconcelos, Formosinho Sanchez, Pires Martins e Palma de Melo, Carlos Manuel Ramos, João Andresen, Victor Palla e Bento d’Almeida, bem como no plano internacional a moderna arquitectura brasileira e a obra de Le Corbusier, destacada no momento do seu falecimento.

Os sentidos de evolução do modernismo são uma preocupação expressa por Nuno Portas, que desenvolve a ideia de que a modernidade arquitectónica e urbanística se autonomiza do vocabulário empregue no projecto, sendo

¹⁰ Sérgio Godinho (1974). *Liberdade* (tema musical).

¹¹ Carlos Duarte afirma terem sido frequentes os cortes feitos pela censura em textos referentes “a problemas da habitação social, do ensino e na série de entrevistas” (editorial da revista *Arquitectura* n.º 130, de maio de 1974). A terceira série da revista *Arquitectura* tem início em 1957.

¹² É Nuno Portas quem promove a discussão sobre o conteúdo e significado do espírito moderno, a partir das obras de uma novíssima geração, elegendo-a como uma das preocupações centrais da revista, manifestando preocupação ante a “encruzilhada de caminhos” de desenvolvimento do modernismo, que impossibilitaria a “procura comum de uma síntese” a nível internacional e intergeracional. Em Portugal, afirma pretender lançar o diálogo, a partir do trabalho da geração formada “em plena revisão do conceito de modernidade” e assinala nesse contexto o papel da Escola do Porto (Portas, N., 1959), “A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no movimento moderno em Portugal”, *Arquitectura* n.º 66, dezembro, pp. 13-14).

“possível e necessário“ defini-la no plano da metodologia, “no modo de conexão do acto criador com os processos de conhecimento da realidade”¹³.

As abordagens críticas e teóricas desenvolvidas na revista são abrangentes, extravasando o âmbito da arquitectura para abarcar os domínios da teoria, da história, da sociologia, da semiologia, do planeamento, da paisagem, do património, da habitação social, da construção, dos congressos, da organização dos arquitectos e do seu papel social.

No que respeita à cidade, demonstra grande actualidade a publicação de artigos como “Uma Cidade não é uma Árvore”, de Christopher Alexander, “Sociologia da Habitação, métodos e perspectiva de investigação”, de Paul Chombart de Lauwe, “Semiologia e Urbanística” de Roland Barthes e “A paisagem e a obra do homem” de Christian Norberg-Schulz.

Apesar das dificuldades com a censura, os temas prementes da situação do país vão sendo introduzidos e aprofundados: a sublocação de fogos, a evolução do problema da habitação, a reivindicação de uma política de habitação, o desenvolvimento de habitação social e o seu modo de financiamento, os Planos de Fomento, os bairros clandestinos, e mesmo as consequências dramáticas das inundações de 1967 na região de Lisboa, que o regime em grande parte silenciou e que revelavam o problema escamoteado das construções precárias que grassavam nas maiores áreas urbanas.

De facto, verifica-se uma dicotomia de abordagens, entre uma aproximação concreta aos problemas da actualidade verificados no país, nos planos social, da arquitectura e da cidade, e um olhar mais distanciado ante a cidade do futuro e de contextos menos próximos, tanto geograficamente como a nível de desenvolvimento. O Habitat 67, os Archigram e o mundo do futuro, projectos de grande escala, próximos do metabolismo, para diversas latitudes, do médio oriente à Ásia ou aos Estados Unidos, a nova dimensão e o urbanismo espacial, são apresentados múltiplas vezes, normalmente de forma sumária, mas mostrando uma das vertentes marcantes da arquitectura na década de 1960: o afastamento das visões mais utópicas relativamente à possibilidade de realização, num processo de idealização progressivamente mais abstracto, que se afasta da resolução dos problemas do presente e se identifica com os domínios da ficção tecnológica e científica, para os quais existe uma apetência da sociedade e dos meios de comunicação, em plena era da corrida ao espaço.

Claramente em contraste é publicado o artigo de Coderch « Não é de génios que precisamos agora »¹⁴, solicitando aos arquitectos que não pensassem tanto em cidades para o ano 2000 e que trabalhassem com uma corda atada ao pé, para não se afastarem da terra em que têm raízes. Uma aproximação concreta, reflectida na apresentação de planos em realização para diferentes zonas do país – Plano Director da Península de Setúbal, Plano Subregional de Armação de Pêra, Plano da Aldeia do Vau, Plano de Vilamoura, Planos de Olivais e de Chelas, Plano do Centro de Aveiro – e na constatação de experiências de planeamento de países próximos, como Inglaterra, França e Espanha.

Paralelamente, diversos artigos abordam temas relacionados com a cidade, como o automóvel e o trânsito, os equipamentos, a paisagem e a imagem da cidade, a arte urbana, os bairros antigos, os estudos históricos e patrimoniais e os estudos sobre arquitectura evolutiva.

Estas aproximações, realizadas de modo não sistemático e no quadro de uma vasta e prolífica edição, marcada por domínios muito diversificados, não estabelecem a cidade como uma questão dominante na *Arquitectura*.

O papel social do arquitecto e a divisão entre os pequenos gabinetes e as grandes estruturas, associadas ao desenvolvimento do mercado imobiliário no período marcelista, estão entre os temas fracturantes, colocando dificuldades no momento em que a classe se procura organizar colectivamente. Importantes são também as questões relacionadas com as metodologias de projecto, a sistematização e industrialização da produção, o controle de custos e a rentabilização de recursos, de áreas, sistemas de distribuição e processos de construção.

¹³ Nuno Portas, Op. Cit.

¹⁴ Josep Antoni Coderch (1961), “No son genios lo que necesitamos ahora”, *Arquitectura* nº 73, dezembro, pp. 3-4. (Publicado em castelhano na revista).

A questão da habitação para o maior número, a resposta ambicionada a um problema social emergente de grande carência, era justificadamente crucial.

Contrariamente à irregular periodicidade da *Arquitectura*, a revista *Binário* distingue-se pela sua edição certa e constante, que começa em 1958¹⁵, exceptuando-se um interregno entre janeiro e agosto de 1959, a que corresponde uma mudança da direcção, que deixa de ser dos irmãos Manuel Taíña (arquitecto) e Jovito Taíña (engenheiro), passando a ser do engenheiro Aníbal Vieira.

Desde o início, declara pretender constituir um espaço de informação sobre todos os domínios relacionados com a construção, encarada de forma unitária, da escala do objecto à do edifício ou da via de comunicação, cruzando especializações¹⁶, e desenvolve uma linha editorial eclética. Ilustrativamente, no que respeita à arquitectura, pode referir-se a publicação dos grandes conjuntos lisboetas da segunda geração modernista - av. Infante Santo, av. EUA -, o hotel Ritz e a Biblioteca Nacional de Pardo Monteiro, obras de Rodrigues Lima, a reconstrução de Le Havre por Auguste Perret, a casa de Eduardo Anahory na Arrábida, a moderna arquitectura brasileira, La Tourette e a unidade de habitação para Berlim de Le Corbusier, o bairro Hansaviertel e obras de Minoru Yamasaki, mas também trabalhos de Buckminster Fuller, James Stirling, Atelier 5, Gio Ponti ou o plano de Kenzo Tange para a baía de Tóquio.

Esse eclectismo manifesta-se também nos temas abordados, abarcando desde os materiais de construção à acústica, ao cálculo estrutural, ao design, à arquitectura, ao urbanismo ou às infraestruturas.

Não pretendendo declaradamente construir um discurso global de síntese sobre a cidade, vai na realidade também publicando vários artigos com relevância sobre o meio urbano e a sua transformação, de que são exemplo a infra estruturação urbana através da rede de metropolitano de Lisboa e das pontes sobre o Tejo em Lisboa (que a *Arquitectura* também publica) e da Arrábida no Porto, a construção da cidade universitária de Lisboa, o Plano Director para a mesma cidade ou as análises da evolução de Coimbra e Porto¹⁷, tal como as tendências de criação de ruas pedonais, estacionamento subterrâneos, centros comerciais e hipermercados.

São também de assinalar textos de âmbito muito díspar mas com interesse disciplinar, sobre, por exemplo, as novas cidades inglesas (por Rafael Botelho) e francesas, sobre o plano de Brasília, sobre a “evolução histórica do conceito de cidade” (por José Huertas Lobo), sobre as primeiras ideias para La Défense (texto de Robert Auzelle), sobre o ensino do urbanismo (Almeida Garrett), o zonamento, a Carta de Atenas ou o futuro das nossas cidades (por Constantinos Dóxiadis).

Por entre a diversidade de temas, autores, projectos, arquitectos, desenvolvimentos teóricos e acompanhamento da actualidade, a *Binário* desenvolve praticamente duas décadas de actividade editorial, passando da ditadura para a democracia quase sem assinalar as mudanças profundas que se verificam na sociedade, até fevereiro de 1975, momento em que publica uma comunicação do Secretário de Estado da Habitação e Urbanismo, Nuno Portas, sobre a definição de uma nova política urbana, baseada na “mobilização popular dos mal alojados”, provocando “pressão sobre o aparelho burocrático da administração”, de modo a evitar a retirada das zonas centrais das cidades, e utilizando tecnologias de construção alternativas ao “sector industrial anteriormente privilegiado”, que dariam lugar a “formas de arquitectura urbana, a tipologias de habitação e a imagens do espaço urbano em nada semelhantes aos novos conjuntos residenciais dos países mais desenvolvidos”.¹⁸

¹⁵ A revista *Binário* foi publicada entre abril de 1958 e maio de 1977, com 216 números editados, incluindo alguns duplos. Com uma periodicidade mensal, parou a actividade ao décimo número (janeiro de 1959), retomando passado meio ano (agosto), com a nova direcção.

¹⁶ Editorial do primeiro número da *Binário*, de abril de 1958.

¹⁷ A cidade do Porto é dedicado um número monográfico com textos de diversos autores (AAVV (1960), “Porto, estudos e realizações”, in *Binário* n.º 26 (1960), novembro, pp. 361-406, Lisboa); sobre Coimbra é publicado sucessivamente um texto de Carlos de Almeida em números sucessivos (Carlos de Almeida, 1960), “Um problema premente: a urbanização de Coimbra”, in *Binário* n.ºs 24, 25, 27, 28, setembro, outubro, dezembro, janeiro, Lisboa).

¹⁸ A comunicação de Nuno Portas é dirigida à 1ª reunião preparatória da Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre os estabelecimentos humanos (Habitat), agendada para Vancouver no ano seguinte (Portas, Nuno (1975), “Uma nova política urbana”, in *Binário* n.º 197, fevereiro, pp. 60-62, Lisboa).

A página em branco no estirador

É ainda Portas, no mesmo texto, que coloca “o problema da viabilidade da reprodução das soluções e da sua avaliação pelas massas”, ao assinalar a resistência da classe técnica para romper com os modelos cristalizados¹⁹, posição que reflecte a sua aproximação às experiências sul-americanas de produção de habitação, frequentemente recorrendo à auto-construção, e a sua identificação com as soluções de arquitectura evolutiva. Estas metodologias seriam no entanto, ainda durante o programa SAAL, objecto de resistência no norte do país, e em Lisboa de difícil ajustamento à maior densificação requerida pelas operações, pelo que não teriam a aplicação generalizada que o seu mentor esperaria, excepção feita a algumas experiências do SAAL no sul do país e, posteriormente, aos casos bem conhecidos do bairro do Zambujal, de Francisco Silva Dias, e da Malagueira, de Álvaro Siza.

A enunciação da assunção da forma urbana como resultado do próprio processo, ao contrário da inspiração em modelos cristalizados, não espelha porém a evidência da indisponibilidade de modelos de referência, depois da constatação já aberta e generalizada à cidade modernista.

É também essa a leitura que se pode inferir da análise das publicações realizada. À diversidade de abordagens teóricas contrapõem-se exemplos excessivamente longínquos ou demasiado específicos, como função de contexto determinado.

Não estavam já disponíveis modelos para a cidade.

Nesse sentido, é curiosa a apresentação na revista *Arquitectura*, precisamente pela mão de Nuno Portas, no verão de 1968, de trabalhos desenvolvidos por alunos do curso de arquitectura da Escola de Belas-Artes de Lisboa, com o programa ‘Ideias para a zona central de Olivais’, já que constituem uma possibilidade de aferição do tipo de solução valorizada, face à ausência de outras referências próximas²⁰.

Os projectos apresentados demonstravam uma coerência assinalável, tanto no que se refere à estruturação e organização como à linguagem, podendo referenciar-se àquilo que dois anos mais tarde Luís Cunha designaria como arquitectura celular e megaestruturas urbanísticas²¹, em que uma profusão de elementos e volumes justapostos remete para concepções internacionais da época, de que o Habitat 67 constituiria a alusão mais evidente.

Figura 2. Trabalhos seleccionados de alunos da EBAL, ‘Ideias para a zona central de Olivais’.



Fonte: Revista *Arquitectura* n.º103.

¹⁹ Nuno Portas, Op. Cit.

²⁰ “Ideias para a zona central de Olivais, Lisboa: trabalhos de alunos da Escola de Belas-Artes de Lisboa no ano lectivo 1966-67”, publicado na *Arquitectura* n.º 103, de maio-junho de 1968, correspondendo à apresentação de trabalhos de alunos desenvolvidos sob a orientação dos docentes Nuno Portas e Carlos Manuel Ramos.

²¹ Luís Unha (1970), “Reflexões sobre as megaestruturas urbanísticas e a Arquitectura celular”, *Binário* n.º 147, dezembro, pp. 264-265, Lisboa.

Este é um caso invulgar de apresentação de propostas no âmbito da discussão disciplinar, de exposição de soluções, uma excepção num contexto dominado pela análise crítica, a que raramente corresponde o desenvolvimento de ideias propositivas materializadas em espaço e forma.

Para o arquitecto que participava na revolução ao vivo, habitando a substância do tempo, a premência da resposta fazia-se no campo descoberto da ausência de referências comuns, de possibilidades de sincronização. Criar cidade era necessariamente uma dificuldade.

O dossier ‘Portugal an II’ reflecte essa evidência, ao assinalar percursos individuais de autores que pensam a arquitectura e a cidade de um modo pessoal, que constroem o seu mundo e as suas referências autonomamente, preenchendo a página em branco no estirador como a poetisa, sílaba por sílaba, linha por linha, fazendo emergir o projecto.

O território urbano na sua generalidade, no entanto, não se viria a desenvolver com o mesmo uso criterioso dos instrumentos, da palavra, da arquitectura.

A cidade lida a partir da escrita

A procura do contexto em que se processava a prática da transformação urbana a partir da leitura dos periódicos da época permite desenvolver algumas reflexões.

A enumeração de artigos relativos à cidade, na realidade publicados ao longo de centenas de números das duas revistas, não traduz uma notoriedade particular do tema, quer no caso da *Arquitectura* quer da *Binário*. Outros temas obtêm um maior destaque, para além da óbvia apresentação de projectos e obras construídas, como as questões relativas à rentabilização de recursos e à industrialização da produção, ou seja, a resposta ao problema de escassez de habitação que esmagava a sociedade portuguesa.

Quanto ao espaço urbano e à sua forma, constata-se a inexistência de uma discussão sistemática, ou sequer recorrente, aspecto ainda mais evidente no que respeita à criação de referências formais e de organização que pudessem ancorar o desenvolvimento urbano então tão necessário no país. Esta escassez é em si mesma um aspecto relevante na definição do contexto da transformação urbana.

A constatação da ausência de uma discussão alargada que balizasse a prática, face à indisponibilidade de modelos estáveis ou de fácil aplicação para o desenho da cidade, reforça a importância dos trajectos individuais, da aquisição pessoal de referências e de desenvolvimento de soluções operativas. O entendimento destes percursos constitui assim um importante tema para uma melhor compreensão da transfiguração da cidade portuguesa.

BIBLIOGRAFIA

AA.VV. (1976), “Portugal an II”, *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* nº 185, pp. 2-8, maio-junho, Paris.

AA.VV. (1960), “Brasília, capital do futuro”, *Binário* nº 22, pp. 222-254, julho, Lisboa.

AA.VV. (1960), “Porto, estudos e realizações”, *Binário* nº 26, pp. 361-406, novembro, Lisboa.

Alexander, C. (1ª ed. 1965), “Uma cidade não é uma árvore”, *Arquitectura* nº 95, pp. 22-29, janeiro-fevereiro 1967, Lisboa.

- Almeida, C. (1960), “Um problema premente: a urbanização de Coimbra”, *Binário* n°s 24,25,27,28, setembro, outubro, dezembro, janeiro, Lisboa.
- Andresen, S.M.B. (1974), *O nome das coisas*, Moraes Editores, Lisboa.
- Auzelle, R. (1961), “Resumo das ideias expressas”, *Binário* n° 30, pp. 131-141, março, Lisboa.
- Bandeirinha, J.A. (2007), *O Processo SAAL e a Arquitectura no 25 de Abril de 1974*, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra.
- Bandeirinha, J.A., Sardo, D., Moniz, G. (editores) (2016), *74-14: Saal and architecture*, Edarq Ces Museu de Serralves, Coimbra.
- Baram, M. (2014), *Gil Scott-Heron: pieces of a man*, St. Martin’s Press, New York.
- Barthes, R. (1968), “Semiologia e urbanística”, *Arquitectura* n°s 105-106, setembro-dezembro 1968, Lisboa.
- Becker, A., Tostões, A., Wang, W. (organização) (1997), *Arquitectura do Século XX: Portugal*, Prestel, Lisboa.
- Botelho, J.R. (1959), “As novas cidades inglesas”, *Binário* n° 10, pp. 1-14, janeiro, Lisboa.
- Castells, M., entrevista por Portas, N. (1974), “La question du logement au Portugal démocratique”, *Espaces et Société*, n°s 13-14, pp. 199-207, outubro-janeiro, Paris.
- Coderch, J.A. (1961), “No son genios lo que necesitamos ahora”, *Arquitectura* n° 73, pp. 3-4, dezembro, Lisboa.
- Coelho, E.P., Passos, M.A., Vasconcelos, J.C. (vários anos) Algumas entrevistas a Sophia. Compilação de entrevistas a Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen. (online) disponíveis em <http://purl.pt/19841/1/1970/1970.html>.
- Correia, N. (2012), “O início da 3.ª série da revista arquitectura em 1957 a influência das leituras de Casabella Continuidade e Architectural Review”, *Revista de História da Arte*, n.º 10, pp. 79-93, IHA-FCSH-UNL, Lisboa.
- Cunha, L. (1970), “Reflexões sobre as megaestruturas urbanísticas e a arquitectura celular”, *Binário* n° 147, dezembro, pp. 264-265, Lisboa.
- Dioxiadis, C. (1961), “O futuro das nossas cidades”, *Binário* n° 39, pp. 712-718, dezembro, Lisboa.
- Donnelly, L. (2011), Gil Scott-Heron, the 'godfather of Rap' behind The Revolution Will Not Be Televised, dies, (Online) available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/rockandjazzmusic/8543417/Gil-Scott-Heron-the-Godfather-of-Rap-behind-The-Revolution-Will-Not-Be-Televised-dies.html>.
- Duarte, C. (1974), “Editorial”, *Arquitectura* n° 130, p. 1, maio, Lisboa.
- Fernandez, S. (1988), *Percursos: arquitectura portuguesa 1930-1974*, FAUP, Porto.
- Garrett, A.A. (1961), “O ensino do urbanismo”, *Binário* n° 31, pp. 192-196, abril, Lisboa.
- Godinho, S. (1974), “Liberdade” [tema musical], *À queima-roupa* [registo audio Long Play]. Sassetti. Lisboa.
- Lauwe, P.C. (1960), “Sociologia da habitação, métodos e perspectiva de investigação”, *Arquitectura* n° 68, pp. 41-50, julho, Lisboa.
- Lester, P. (2015), Gil Scott-Heron: the revolution lives on, (Online) available at <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/aug/26/gil-scott-heron-the-revolution-will-not-be-televised>.
- Lobo, J.H. (1960), “Evolução histórica do conceito de cidade”, *Binário* n° 23, pp. 269-278, agosto, Lisboa.
- Lynch, K. (1ª ed. 1960), *A Imagem da cidade*, Edições 70. Lisboa.

Norberg-Schulz, C. (1968), “A paisagem e a obra do homem”, *Arquitectura* nº 102, pp. 52-58, março-abril, Lisboa.

Portas, N. (1959), “A responsabilidade de uma novíssima geração no movimento moderno em Portugal”, *Arquitectura* nº 66, pp. 13-14, dezembro, Lisboa.

Portas, N. (1968), “Ideias para a zona central de Olivais, Lisboa: trabalhos de alunos da Escola de Belas Artes de Lisboa no ano lectivo 1966-67”, *Arquitectura* nº 103, pp. 110-121, maio-junho, Lisboa.

Portas, N. (1975), “Uma nova política urbana”, *Binário* nº 197, pp. 60-62, fevereiro, Lisboa.

Portas, N., Mendes, M. (1991), *Arquitectura Portuguesa Contemporânea: Anos Sessenta/ Anos Oitenta*, Fundação de Serralves, Porto.

Rossi, A. (1ª ed. 1966), *A Arquitectura da cidade*, Edições Cosmos. Lisboa.

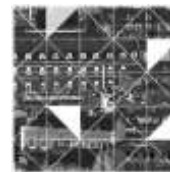
Scott-Heron, G. (1971), “The revolution will not be televised” [tema musical], *Pieces of a man* [registo audio Long Play]. Flying Dutchman. New York.

Topalov, C. (1976), “La politique du logement dans le processus révolutionnaire portugais (25 avril 1974 – 11 mars 1975)”, *Espaces et Sociétés* nºs 17-18, pp. 109-136, março-junho, Paris.

Tostões, A. (coordenação) (2004), *Arquitectura Moderna Portuguesa 1920-1970*, IPPAR, Lisboa.

Venturi, R. (1ª ed. 1966), *Complexidade e contradição em arquitetura*, Martins Fontes, São Paulo, 2004.

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Recording the optimistic. An audiovisual approach to the city of Lisbon by its architecture school in the 1980s

Leonor Matos Silva¹², DINÂMIA'CET-IUL, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Portugal.

Abstract

With the revolution of 25 April 1974, Portugal initiated a unique cultural journey that paralleled, in the architectural field, the questioning of the modern movement that occurred since the aftermath of World War II. The academic context was a particular mirror for this criticism. The director of the Lisbon architecture course pronounced its engagement in “a sort of counter-culture”; the cultural critique that occurred, however, was more of a fortunate accident.

In fact, an optimistic post-traumatic euphoria was a common element in some of the most radical pedagogical expressions that took place. In the face of the ‘creative’ productions that unfolded under the Lisbon architecture school in the 1980s, we acknowledge an unconventional form of expression that leads us to question whether a particular identity frame has characterised Portuguese architectural culture and its interrelation with the city of Lisbon ever since. This paper provides evidence for such a claim by examining previously untapped primary sources – testimonies and documents – that relate directly to Lisbon’s architecture course between 1976 and 1986 and which have informed background research for a PhD. Three videos from the School’s archives were analysed to demonstrate how students related to the topic of urbanity, specifically that of Lisbon, via this particular form of art.

Key-words: Architectural education; Lisbon; audiovisual; video; faculty of architecture; contemporary architectural culture

¹ leonorcms@gmail.com.

² The author would like to acknowledge the collaboration of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon. The author must particularly express her gratitude for the testimonies of José Gorjão Jorge and João Redondo. This essay has been developed with the support of Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (SFRH/BD/80535/2011) as part of the POCH - Human Capital Operational Programme in conjunction with the European Social Fund and National Funds of the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 1974, after 48 years of dictatorship, Portugal entered a new era of democracy. The post-revolutionary period presented a unique opportunity for debate and transformation in the university sector, and Lisbon's architecture school is an ideal example of this phenomenon.

This essay has its origins in an ongoing PhD research project that is investigating the importance of the ten years that followed a revolution in the architecture course of the Superior School of Fine Arts in Lisbon. In this thesis, it will be argued that the School has had a profound though largely unnoticed impact on Portugal's cultural history. This proposition will in part be supported by an account of some relevant initiatives that were taken in the period from 1976, when classes restarted, to 1986, when the 1957 curriculum was taught for the last time and the Superior School gave way to the autonomous Faculty of Architecture. The analysis presented here derives from an in-depth study of one of these initiatives: the conception, creation and materialisation of an audiovisual section³ within the School. The implementation of an audiovisual approach to the city of Lisbon by its architecture school, we argue, supports our belief that the city of Lisbon itself became a dominant setting and object of study in the school's educational programme after the revolution of 25 April 1974.

The ultimate purpose of this essay is to present some of its academic works in the context of a critical analysis of the School's phenomenology in the period under consideration. In the first section, we address some of the social and political factors that led to the creation of a 'video section' in the School, in 1982. In the second section, we focus on three videos selected from the present Faculty of Architecture's Multimedia Centre's collection⁴, considering (1) authorship (by one or more architecture students) and (2) date of production (between 1980 and 1990). In the conclusion, we will argue that these objects denote both an underlying cultural awakening and a general sense of optimism.

1. The Lisbon School of Architecture in the 1980s – A cultural insight

Throughout the 20th century and until the mid-1980s, the official teaching of architecture was confined to the Superior School of Fine Arts in Lisbon and its counterpart in Oporto. Therefore, when a revolution erupted, the suspension of classes in the Lisbon school's first section (architecture course) had a major social impact (Silva, 2011). Student general assemblies vigorously debated the installation of democratic rule (ESBAL, 1974). The detachment of the architecture course from the second section (painting and sculpture courses) and the creation of two separate departments was one of the controversial issues, since it set the practical framework for how the *beaux-arts* pedagogical system should be reevaluated (Taveira, 2014). An alternative proposal, put forward by Nuno Portas, was to establish a new school. This proposal, which became the main polemic (Fernandes, 2013), gained legitimacy because it was supported by the fifth transitory government⁵. Portas proposed the elimination of the first section, implying a turnaround in the existing pedagogical structure. In 1976, however, architecture classes officially reopened under a legal Dispatch (FAUL, 1976), issued under the sixth government⁶, that repudiated this attempt by mirroring the outcome of the revolution within the School, favouring the School's internal prominent political faction.

This option, on the one hand, would ensure continuity, since it acknowledged the creation of an architecture department within the pre-revolutionary purpose of integration in universities (George, 1982:17). On the other hand, this outcome would represent an exception that needs to be clarified.

Among the factors that support the singularity of this period, one is particularly significant in the context of the present video analysis. Although the Architecture Department (DA) would become a Faculty of Architecture

³ This section had various informal designations.

⁴ Centro de Multimedia da Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade de Lisboa.

⁵ Nuno Portas was appointed by Avelãs Nunes, the Secretary of State for Superior Education of the fifth government, as a member of an implementation committee for a new school; the design of its pedagogical structure was one of his responsibilities as head of this committee.

⁶ The fifth and the sixth governments are specifically mentioned here since there was a significant political change in the transition between them. In fact, the first five transitory governments form a series. The third to the fifth in particular can be seen as part of a radical left-wing trend, while the sixth was already moving towards a European-type democracy.

(FA) integrated with the Technical University of Lisbon in 1979⁷, the School's facilities continued to be based in Saint Francis Convent, at Chiado, Lisbon, until December 1993 (FAUL, 1994). It therefore had a close relationship with the other fine arts courses, sharing the medieval building with the historical city as background. This meant that the Lisbon School of architecture developed its own identity even though, in practice, it 'followed the line' of a single director and did not engage in a participative form of management, as suggested in the 1974 discussions⁸. In the present context, it is important to be aware that the revolutionary debate of the mid-1970s had little impact, although the School's embeddedness within the external cultural environment, and the conduct of the institution's leader, were significant.

Augusto Brandão's role in the direction taken by the Lisbon school of architecture from 1975 to 1992 is of particular importance for this analysis. Research has shown that, in terms of leadership, he understood where and how he could play an effective role. In some ways, he was a step ahead of his time; in hindsight, his actions mark him out as a strategist and visionary⁹.

During the 1974 crisis, Brandão became a staunch supporter of Frederico George, a senior professor who was the only academic capable of uniting all the internal political factions. George's support, in turn, was essential if Brandão was to successfully advocate for the re-opening of the course. From then on, although George assumed the formal leadership position, Brandão effectively managed the School. By 1986, when Portugal entered the European Economic Community (EEC) and architectural education was liberalised¹⁰, Augusto Brandão had unquestionably been the School's core.

In respect to the institution's formal structure, he had chosen to administer it "like an enterprise" (Brandão, 1981). Having sensed early on the cultural environment into which the School was going to emerge, Brandão engaged in 'liberal' conduct. He was supportive of many teachers' agendas¹¹ and of requests from students, individually or as a group¹². He would positively favour rival parties (Silva, 2015), encouraging the school population to acknowledge his 'inclusive' tactics¹³.

Brandão understood the risks of following liberalism's fundamental principle of taking account of minorities¹⁴; that is, he knew that adopting a *laissez-faire* approach would open the way to experimentation and to getting it wrong, or not getting it done at all, which ultimately led to peer disrespect. Order was important, as was clear in several formal school activity plans (e.g. FAUL, 1982). Brandão would eventually adopt an aggressive external discourse, providing an official narrative to justify his 'liberal' course of action. For instance, as early as 1981, he claimed to the media that the School was engaged in "a sort of counterculture":

⁷ Decreto-Lei 489-E/79, 21 de Dezembro. (Decree Law 489-E.79, 21 December).

⁸ In 1974, groups of politicised students took direct action by, for instance, expelling some teachers from their classes.

⁹ Augusto Brandão graduated with honours in architecture from the Lisbon school in 1957, becoming an assistant professor at the same School the following year. His influence was apparent during the revolutionary crisis. From 1978 to 1991 he assumed several formal academic positions: president of the governing board of the architecture course, a member of the implementation committee of the new Faculty and, later, president of its pedagogical and scientific board (various dates). From 1992 on, he left public teaching to continue his career in private architecture schools. (Brandão, s.d.).

¹⁰ The first private university architecture course (Cooperativa Lusfada) was authorised under the Despacho 135/MEC/86, 21 de Junho. (Ministerial Dispatch 135/MEC/86, 21 June).

¹¹ On some occasions, Brandão supported events proposed by the teachers, such as the post-modernist Symposia, organised by Tomas Taveira (Silva, 2015).

¹² For example, a letter to a state office stated: "We hereby manifest this Faculty's interest in putting forth internships for our new graduates in the urban planning field". (FAUL, 1984). Student engagement, however, was low. During the period in question, rates of absence from class by both students and teachers were very high (Silva, 2011).

¹³ This included various self-aggrandising events, such as spectacular, American-style graduation ceremonies (Silva, 2016).

¹⁴ "Liberals often have been wary of democracy ... because of fears that it might generate a tyranny by the majority. One might briskly say, therefore, that democracy looks after majorities and liberalism after unpopular minorities." (Britannica, "Liberalism", 2014).

By intervening actively in the city of Lisbon, the School creates a sort of counterculture, since it calls into question the existing architectural culture. ... That is the renewing vitality that turns a university institution into an unsatisfied and globally critical one.¹⁵ (Brandão, 1981)

Various official statements from the 1980s all suggest the same: on the one hand, an official branding for the Lisbon school; on the other hand, a reaction against the cultural hegemony of the Oporto school¹⁶. As previously explained, Brandão's agenda in relation to self-image was essentially reactive: If the smaller Oporto school was culturally prestigious because its size gave it a kind of elite status then the Lisbon school's pedagogical openness – either intentional or accidental – was a reasonable image to project.

The post-revolutionary Lisbon school of architecture faced complex problems, of which education was just one. In this context, if individuality, free enterprise, experiment, novelty, and the like helped the institution to stand out, Brandão would support them. In the absence of consistent disciplinary roots, the outcome of this 'liberal' conduct was, in the end, incoherent, resulting mostly in architectural styling, pedagogical disintegration and favouritism. Being essentially undisciplined, some radical pedagogies that emerged spontaneously in this context actually represent brief signs of a cultural shock, desynchronised from the 1960s¹⁷.

Brandão's conception of a video section (FAUL, 1982)¹⁸ is a good example of a cultural accomplishment that shows, if nothing else, that he intended to be technologically and culturally up-to-date¹⁹. This, together with the students' artistic drive, would lead the architecture school to resemble a forum – something akin to a video store. This idea is well expressed by Richard Brody (2015) in his account of Tom Roston's essay *I Lost It At the Video Store: A Filmmakers' Oral History of a Vanished Era*. He compares the film-school generation of Scorsese, De Palma, Spielberg and Lucas with the French New Wave, suggesting an underlying dialectic between the orderly educational system and "autodidactic methods". Since the Lisbon architecture school's 'video section' did not adopt a specific didactic programme, comparing a video store with a film school is like comparing an architecture school with architectural practices; in those days, students worked in both:

Then, when these younger filmmakers went to film school, video stores were a kind of counter-programming, an assertion of values and of personalities different from those found in their studies. They exalted the anti-academic values of disorder, spontaneity, and enthusiasm. (Brody, 2015)

In fact, while actual architecture education was practised in real life – mostly in offices with senior architects in charge – then the Lisbon architecture school represented a site that proposed an implicit radical pedagogy. On another level, if participating in an architecture course was an autodidactic experience, then learning was about the amount of engagement and satisfaction one extracted from its possibilities. In the end, the question of optimism was decisive for a cultural embedment within the Lisbon school in the 1980s.

¹⁵ "Com a sua acção de intervenção na cidade de Lisboa, a escola cria uma espécie de contracultura, na medida em que põe em causa a cultura arquitectónica existente. ... É essa vitalidade reformadora que faz da instituição universitária uma instituição insatisfeita e crítica do mundo circundante".

¹⁶ The silent North-South scholarly dialogue is fundamental to understanding architectural culture in the 1980s. (For an account of the 'outspoken' mediatic history, see Figueira, 2015). In the following decades, this action-counteraction would fade due, among other reasons, to the proliferation of architecture schools, which helped to soften reactivity to societal change.

¹⁷ We support this thesis on the basis of Beatriz Colomina's work as well as Pedro Bandeira's research on pedagogy. Specifically, Colomina's (2012) 'Radical pedagogies' project states that "pedagogical experiments played a crucial role in shaping architectural discourse and practice in the second half of the 20th century". Similarly, Pedro Bandeira, who studied what went on 'behind the scenes' of the mainstream School of Oporto, observed "other narratives, certainly smaller, but that represent a counterculture, a radical pedagogy, or self-taught trajectories identified with a critique of everyday life and demonstrated in projects, in interventional actions, in performative gestures, and in movements of insurrection or irony" (Bandeira, 2014:12).

¹⁸ Brandão had already asked the Gulbenkian Foundation for financial support to acquire filming equipment as early as 1979 (FAUL, 1979).

¹⁹ Michael Newman points out that video technology was introduced as an instrument for architectural education in the USA as early as the 60s: "Before it was a consumer technology, videotape was in use in a variety of contexts other than television production ... In the later 1960s, the Chicago Tribune reported that videotape was widely used in 'education' ... The National Education Association published a how-to book in 1968 entitled *Portable Video Tape Recorder: A Guide for Teachers*, detailing myriad uses and techniques" (Newman, 2014: 22).

By 1984, the ‘video sector’ was already in the habit of living in the present, that is, major events were recorded with no long-term purpose. It is precisely this practice of recording “everything”, regardless of its immediate utility, that makes today’s archive an important testimony to this optimism.²⁰

2. Recording the optimistic - Video Analysis

The methodology for the present study of FAUL’s archives involved collecting all material that would, firstly, generate better understanding of the institution’s history and, secondly, identify a focal area. To that end, we began by reviewing all of the video production listings and previewing a sample of those that seemed relevant and interesting. The video archive, however, contained little information about the production of any of the materials from the 1980s. The credits make reference to title, authorship and date, but these are all questionable. Nonetheless, the materials presented here contain significant information in their own right. Aside from the content of the creative videos (we did not include films of conferences or classes), the fact that they do not comprise a coherent assemblage of work supports the optimism thesis, in the sense that they were not subject to quality controls or standardisation, although some might have been cut from the archive to reduce its size along the way.

The criteria for inclusion of particular videos in this collection were: they all had a number of features in common and therefore represented a unique group in the archive’s legacy; they were executed in the 1980s; and there was reason to hypothesise that they were grounded in a scholarly experience of celebration (although this was sometimes distorted by the aesthetics of the film itself, as we will see). Specifically, for the following analysis, the videos were selected according to three main common features: having the ‘historical city’ as a subject²¹; being informed by experimentalism; and having a contemporaneous character.

1.

Title: Tedium [Original: Tédio]

Authorship: António Rocha

Collaboration: Maria João Araújo

Music by: Epic Decline [original: Ocaso Épico]; Author’s nickname: ‘Farinha’

Year of production: 1983(?)

Length: 20’07

Type of film: Animation (Archived as School Work)

Description:

This video comprises a series of drawings organised as a story board and filmed with a fixed camera that zooms in and out. A colour filter and a strong soundtrack were added in post-production. It is divided into two parts: the first is an introspective narrative and the second is more experimental.

The first drawing shows a stylised Portuguese modernist neighbourhood. There is insufficient information to determine whether it is central European modern (1930s generation) or late modern. The importance of this drawing is, precisely, the imaginary city – where all modernisms converge into one, and all influences and idealisms add up to minimal expression. Hence, modernism is an historical aspect here, an imaginary past, and

²⁰ Today, the archive contains more than 2596 titles, most of which are records of school life.

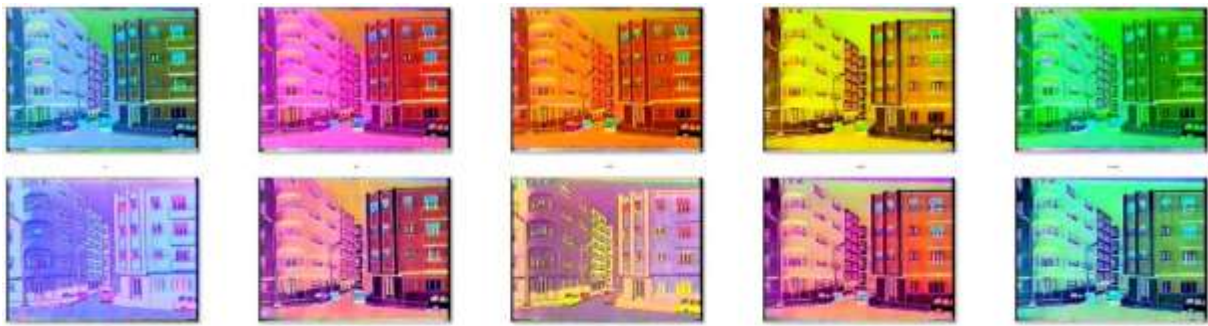
²¹ ‘Historical city’ is here used following Telles (1987: 15).

not a purpose. In that sense, this animation feature could be grounded in the historical city of Lisbon, which was a basic urban reference for all students at the Lisbon school of architecture.

The first five minutes have a long, monotonous soundtrack. The fixed image is partly dynamic because of a rapidly changing colour range, which introduces an element of suspense and the expectation of a narrative to come (Figure 1). The next frame marks a shift to the interior of an apartment via movement of the camera over a drawing that includes a street, a building façade and an open window. A new image shows the interior of the apartment: the back of a sofa turned to a TV screen, where a man seems to be sitting and smoking. (We get to see only his foot and hand) (Figure 2).

The second half of this video starts when the camera zooms in to the TV screen, after which the viewer is presented with eleven minutes of ‘textures’—cloths, wall paper or construction surfaces. At first, these images induce a psychedelic impression, but gradually formalise into identifiable objects, such as flowers.

Figure 1. First sequence (excerpts) from the video Tedium.



Source: FAUL's Archive.

The camera fixes on a drawing in a five-minute sequence of changing background colour and repetitive electro-acoustic music.

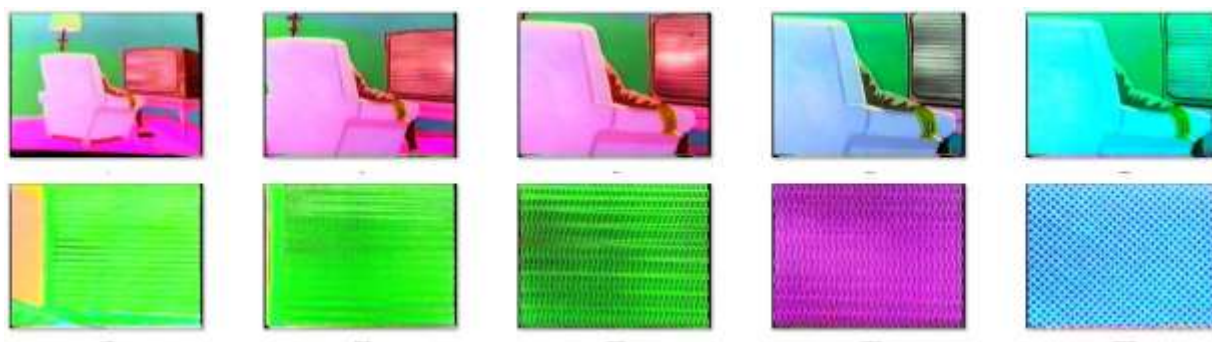
In the second half of this first experience, all connection with architecture ceases and the video merely explores the technical and artistic potential of the medium (zoom in/zoom out, colour range, soundtrack).

At this point, an appropriate question would be: If this film were to be found away from the archive of the Lisbon school of architecture, what does it relate to? One possibility is that it is a ‘telefilm’, as the author describes it in the beginning; that is, a film produced to appear on a TV screen. In that case, although very close to computational imaging, it would have an animation or music video purpose.

Nonetheless, the final product also has the appearance of video art. Although there was at that time “scarcely any interest in multimedia”²² (Pinharanda, 1995: 626), Ernesto de Sousa had presented videos in his art performances as early as the 1970s and, in 1985, just two years after it was founded, the Modern Art Centre of the Gulbenkian Foundation (CAM) in Lisbon had also supported a two-week multimedia event involving a number of artistic and technological performances.

²² “um raro interesse pelo multimédia.”

Figure 2. Last figurative image of the video *Tedium*.



Source: FAUL's Archive.

The drawing and camera are still, but the TV screen shows an uninterrupted sequence of colourful texture-like images.

An analogy that could help to clarify the influence of contemporary pop culture on the scholarly environment is *Money for Nothing*, a 1985 Dire Straits' music video (Barron, 1986). Part of *Tedium*'s imagery is connected to it²³. Furthermore, *Money for Nothing* represented an overvalued prospect of prosperity that had not existed before MTV – a sign of social optimism that would be portrayed by music video clips and by video broadcasting itself²⁴. In *Tedium*, by contrast, the light image of optimism is avoided: colour and music are aggressively varied and dense. Its title was probably added after it was produced, as in a viewer warning. This video nonetheless shows the meaning of initiative and optimism in a practical sense, regardless of the object's substance.

2.

Title: The Place Where I Was Born [Original: O Lugar Onde Nasci]

Authorship: Paolo Sousa and Margarida Corvo

Year of production: 1988

Length: 20'52

Type of film: Documentary (Archived as School Work)

Description:

The first scene of this video is the filming of a reproduction (photocopy) of the Largo de São Carlos (Saint Charles' Square) during which a fixed camera zooms in to the rear tower of Basilica dos Mártires. The transition to the second scene – the streets of Lisbon – is accomplished through a *raccord* (match cut) over this tower (Figure 3). From then on, the video combines footage of the city of Lisbon's historical sites with frames of posters of each of the School works that were exhibited under the title "The City of Pessoa".

Fernando Pessoa was a famous poet born in Largo de São Carlos in 1888. Therefore this video (and the School works) probably had as its theme the city where the poet lived his everyday life, i.e., the historical city of Lisbon.

²³ Cf the first image in Figure 2. The *Money for Nothing* music video includes pieces of a computerised animation of vivid colours and patterns. In the middle of a living room, a man sits on a sofa next to a standing lamp and a dog, in front of a TV that plays images of Dire Straits.

²⁴ The song and lyrics of *Money for Nothing* were inspired by an encounter between Mark Knopfler, the lead singer of the band, with a man working in a household appliance store. In a conversation about TV, at a time when MTV broadcasting was becoming popular, the man claimed that being famous and playing music was not real work.

The Largo de São Carlos is a favourite film location, followed by the Chiado, as well as Baixa and some areas of the waterfront such as Santa Apolónia and Belém.

The video is 20 minutes long, almost all of which is recorded with a hand-held camera. Anonymous people and transport, and modernist Portuguese architecture, figure prominently in the city.

The recorded images are very dynamic, indicating extensive post-assembly work in which interior and exterior images alternate. The interior shots were made with a fixed camera focused on the panels of School work that displayed photographs and photocopies of a real and imaginary city of Pessoa.

The music is smooth jazz, in the style of the time. Sometimes it becomes less even in character, seemingly synchronising with images that correspond to the invigorated Lisbon city of the 1980s, teeming with people and traffic.

Figure 3. First scene of the video *The Place Where I Was Born*



Source: FAUL's Archive.

Raccord over the tower of Basilica dos Mártires from the Largo de São Carlos.

Although architecture provided the motivation for this piece and it was produced within an architectural pedagogical context, architecture and the city are clearly excuses to experiment with film. In that sense, it is an experimental film. The students are, in fact, trying to explore their script and the techniques they know – the *raccord* being one of them – and, possibly, drawing on their cultural references (Figure 4). The video camera is not used to interpret the occupying space or to substitute for it (for instance, in brainstorming sessions) as part of the design process. Rather, it is an instrument for registering and documenting the architect's previously gathered ideas and self-conception of the object he is filming – here, the urban space. Therefore, it could be characterised as a documentary film²⁵.

²⁵ As listed, this film is classified as a School work. In Portuguese architecture school, the final studio class assessment was usually a presentation of the student's pathway through a combination of drawings, models, posters, portfolios, etc.. In this context, a video could have been accepted as the medium for a final presentation.

Figure 4. Sequence from the video *The Place Where I Was Born*.



Source: FAUL's Archive.

This scene closely resembles one from Manoel de Oliveira's *Lisboa Cultural* (1983).

Filming the city, with its ever-present movement, is an old²⁶ as well as a contemporary practice. In this film, movement and the metropolis are transmitting an idea of contemporaneity. The city of Lisbon, as the capital, is depicted to highlight its vibrancy and scale, but there is also a clear effort to present an image of psychological openness. Despite the narrow streets and traffic, openness is portrayed by the inclusion of views from elevated locations across the distant Tagus. These contrasts are part of the 1980s' idea of Lisbon as a new cosmopolitan centre, renewed after decades of shutdown. The ubiquity of the old and the dirty are merely details – optimism stands out, represented by the rapid transition between filming locations and emphasised by the sensual, sometimes vibrant musical soundtrack.

3.

Title: Harbour Station (Rocha de Conde de Óbidos) [original: Gare Marítima (Rocha de Conde de Óbidos)]

Director: José Gorjão Jorge

Director's Assistant: João Redondo

Script: Luísa Pacheco Marques e José Gorjão Jorge

Texts: Luísa Pacheco Marques, José Gorjão Jorge e Michel Toussaint

Producer: Quevídeo

Year of production: 1990

Length: 16'06

Type of film: Documentary (Archived as a Faculty of Architecture Production)

Description:

Among the three videos here examined, this is the best documented. Its credits are complete, and its history can be traced through old correspondence involving the Faculty of Architecture. We were also able to add the testimonies of José Gorjão Jorge, the film's director (assistant professor at the Lisbon school) and of João Redondo, architecture student, who worked closely on the film as director's assistant.

²⁶ As Luís Urbano states, filming the city – observing, registering and representing the metropolis – occurred early on in filmmaking. As an example, Urbano points to the Lumière brothers and their particular concern with movement (Urbano, 2013: 70).

Although it is clearly a documentary film about an established city riverfront, it was described by the Faculty's director at the time as an 'architecture film' (FAUL, 1990). This video is rigorously designed and carefully executed; it is, without doubt, an aesthetically pleasing and serious explanation of an architectural piece. The question of whether it is a film about an architecture piece or an 'architecture film' depends not only on the focal object, but also on the recording process – should the video represent the director's point of view of that specific work of architecture, or should the video camera be an extension of a three-dimensional live incursion into the historical city?

Figure 5. Scene from the video *Harbour Station* (Rocha de Conde de Óbidos)



Source: FAUL's Archive.

Excerpt from travelling across the ground floor interior of Pardal Monteiro's modernist foyer.

As in the first video analysed in this essay, the film's experimental nature is reflected in its ability to make the Faculty of Architecture address a building in terms it had not used before; that is, video might have been used in the School environment since the early 1980s, but cameras had not previously been handled at this level of professionalism.

This film is the product of a complex workforce, most of whom came from outside the School²⁷, but it was unlikely to have been created if it had not been for the mind-set of the promoters from within.

Both its technical and architectonic elements justified sending the video to the FIFARC²⁸ festival in France. Should all these steps – imagining the film, executing it, exposing it abroad – have actually been considered experimental, and not just circumstantial, then a 'video section' might have become consolidated from the 1990s on, based on what its Director at the time, Troufa Real, claimed as the School's "interest (...) in continuing this video series about our architecture"²⁹ (FAUL, 1990).

²⁷ This video was produced with the financial aid of not only the CAM (Centre of Modern Art) but also the National Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries [Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses].

²⁸ Festival International du Film d'Architecture, d'Urbanisme et d'Environnement Urbain de Bordeaux.

²⁹ "Interesse ... em continuar esta série de videogramas sobre a nossa Arquitectura".

Figure 6. Scene from the video *Harbour Station* (Rocha de Conde de Óbidos)



Source: FAUL's Archive.

Film of the upper arrivals platform through silent, slow motion shot from a high vantage point.

If nationalism was the official predicate under dictatorship, then after the revolution, anything that would invoke Portugal's empire – like this film object³⁰ – was most likely not consensual. The contemporary debate on Portuguese architecture in the 1980s and early 1990s was about freedom at what cost? Yet the crisis was quickly overcome, followed by the emergence of a new sense of respect for the country's built environment, to the extent of hosting an international EXPO on its capital's riverfront in 1998. In this context, the idea of making a documentary about a 1940s modernist harbour station was contemporary.

In addition to this renewed engagement with celebrating the past, there was a clear interest in different techniques of film making – travelling and Steadicam being the most widely explored (Figures 5 and 6) – and in different languages (visual, audio, literary, etc.), reflecting the School's interest in semiotics that began in the 1970s. For instance, in the first part of the film there is no narrative: The building itself is described exclusively by the assemblage of moving images and radiophonic excerpts. In the second part, the camera is placed on a boat leaving the harbour and a narrative voice describes the building's history (authorship, dates, etc.). On another level, although the building served to bring multitudes together, at various times the only soundtrack is silence; this highlights the building's archaeological character, as if in rehearsal for the later narrative description.

Conclusion

Research to date suggests that a clearer picture of architectural education in Lisbon in the 1980s will enrich our understanding of contemporary Portuguese culture.

This essay had its origins in the Conference Optimistic Suburbia and, in particular, its sub-theme Outside looking in: Visions from others – art, literature, cinema and music. It examined the establishment, and some of the outputs, of a video section within Lisbon's school of architecture through an analysis of three videos, mostly executed on its own initiative and using its own human and technical resources. In doing so, the first part of the discussion provided cultural insight into the factors that made their accomplishment possible.

On a deeper level, a more speculative hypothesis was presented in relation to the videos' production. Scaling and objectivity, however, lead to the conclusion that is summarised in the paper's title.

Recording the optimistic is indeed one way of describing the audiovisual work of students of the Lisbon school of architecture. It summarises what the school had to offer from 1976 to the end of the following decade, and the three videos analysed in this paper are a reflection of this because they used the historical city as their main

³⁰ The Harbour Station's building, by architect Pardal Monteiro, was the facilities for the departure and arrival from the African colonies.

resource and they provide evidence of diversity and experimentation within the school. Moreover, these materials indicate that the school was part of a contemporary landscape in which radical pedagogies flourished, as in many schools around the world.

NOTES

The images of the video footage presented in this essay have not undergone any digital modification.

All quotes and terms in the original language (Portuguese) have been translated by the author.

BIBIOGRAPHY

Books

Brandão, A. (s.d.), *Desenhos*, Lisboa: Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa.

Brandão, A. (1981), “Intervindo na cidade como contracultura”, *O Primeiro de Janeiro*, Porto.

Brandão, A. (1981), “Esta Escola tem de funcionar como se fosse uma empresa”, *Diário Popular*, Lisboa (21.12.1981).

Colomina, B., et al (2012), “Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education”, *The Architectural Review*, London (28.09.2012).

Bandeira, P. (2014), *Porto School: B Side*, s.l., Documenta.

Barron, S. [director] (1986), *Dire Straits: Money for Nothing*, London: Phonogram Records.

Brody, R. (2015), “The Video Store as a Film School”, *The New Yorker*, October 2. Available at <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/the-video-store-as-film-school>

Decreto-Lei 489-E/79, 21 de Dezembro. [Decree Law 489-E.79, 21 December]

Despacho 135/MEC/86, 21 de Junho. [Ministerial Dispatch 135/MEC/86, 21 June].

Figueira, J. (2015), *Periferia Perfeita. Pós-Modernidade na Arquitectura Portuguesa. Anos 1960-1980*, Lisboa: Caleidoscópio.

George, F. (1982), “Discurso do Professor Frederico George em 1977”, *Jornal Arquitectos*, 8/9 (Agosto 1982).

“liberalism” (2014), *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.

Newman, M.Z. (2014), *Video Revolutions. On the History of a Medium*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Pinharanda, J.L. (1995), “O declínio das vanguardas: dos anos 50 ao fim do milénio”, *História da Arte Portuguesa*, Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores.

Silva, L.M. (2015), *Arquitectura em VHS. Trabalho de investigação em curso*. Available at <http://arquitecturaemvhs.blogspot.com>.

Silva, L.M. (2011), *Cultura arquitectónica em Lisboa. Um olhar a partir da ESBAL/FAUTL no período de 1975 a 1990*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Arquitectura, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa.

Silva, L.M., [2016; in press], “When did Chiado burn? Creative scenes on dry land. Chiado and the School of Fine-Arts before 1988”. In P. Costa, P. Guerra (org), *I’ll Be Your Mirror. Creative Milieus and Cultural Scenes in Contemporary Urban Spaces*.

Telles, G. (1987), *Lisboa. Entre o Passado e o Futuro*, Lisboa: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia.

Urbano, L. (2013), “Filmes de Cidades”. *Histórias Simples*, Porto: AJDJAC.

Archives

Pinto, L.’s Personal Archive

ESBAL, 1974. Estrutura de Ensino. Seminário. 22.05.74. A) Resumo das Intervenções. Typed memo.

2.2 FAUL’s Archives

FAUL, 1976. Despacho 7/76 e 7A/76, assinado pelo Secretário de Estado do Ensino Superior A. Brotas. [Legal Dispatch 7/76 e 7A/76, signed by Secretary of State for Superior Education A. Brotas].

FAUL, 1979. Ofício com a Referência 1/DA 340 30 para o Presidente da Administração da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, por A. Brandão, 27 Agosto 1979. [Correspondence by A. Brandão, 27 August 1979].

FAUL, 1982. Relatório das Actividades do Departamento de Arquitectura da ESBAL no Ano Lectivo 1981/1982. Perspectivas para 1982/1983 por Augusto Brandão, 28 Junho 1982. [Activities Report by A. Brandão, 28 June 1982].

FAUL, 1984. Solicitação para Comissão de Coordenação Regional de Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, por Augusto Brandão, 16 Outubro 1984. [Correspondence by A. Brandão, 16 October 1984].

FAUL, 1990. Ofício com Referência 13 MAR. 90 - 00280 do Presidente do Conselho Directivo à Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, por Real, J., 13 Março 1990. [Correspondence by Real, J., 13 March 1990].

FAUL, 1994. Relatório de Actividades e Plano de Desenvolvimento, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Janeiro 1994. [FAUTL Activities Report and Developing Plan, January 1994]

Jorge, J. [director] (1990), *Gare Marítima (Rocha de Conde de Óbidos)*, Filme Documentário. [Film documentar by Jorge, J].

Rocha, A. (1983), *Tédio, Trabalho Escolar*. [School Work film documentary by Rocha, A.].

Sousa, P., Corvo, M. (1988), *O Lugar Onde Nasci*, Trabalho Escolar. [School Work film documentar by Sousa, P., Corvo, M.].

Interviews

Brandão, A. (2013), Interview by the author, 2013.03.15.

Jorge, J. (2015), Interview by the author, 2015.02.23.

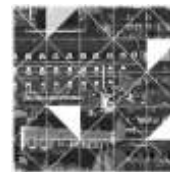
Fernandes, J. M. (2013), Interview by the author, 2013.03.07.

Portas, N. (2014), Interview by the author, 2014.10.29.

Redondo, J. (2016), Interview by the author, 2016.04.23.

Taveira, T. (2014), Interview by the author, 2014.05.21.

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Casas em série, construções temporárias e lotes vazios. Os subúrbios através da arte contemporânea.

Margarida Brito Alves¹, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal.

Sumário

Na arte do século XX é claramente identificável uma ampla transposição das tradicionais fronteiras definidas entre diferentes categorias artísticas e, em particular, o desenvolvimento de transferências entre arte e arquitectura.

Com efeito, o processo transgressivo que ao longo das décadas iniciais do século XX determinou as primeiras vanguardas foi recuperado e consolidado a partir do segundo pós-guerra através das dinâmicas criadas pelas neo-vanguardas - nas quais podemos reconhecer uma deliberada convergência entre os campos convencionalmente estabelecidos pela arquitectura e pela produção artística. A partir dos anos 1950, assistiu-se à afirmação de uma zona de contacto entre estas duas áreas: um território nebuloso, definido não apenas por uma mútua influência, mas também pela partilha de um léxico tectónico.

Num contexto determinado por deslizamentos entre diferentes media, e em articulação com as revisões do modernismo que começavam a emergir, foi então que a prática artística, de certo modo funcionando como uma heterotopia, se constituiu como um espaço de crítica, capaz de analisar, confrontar e problematizar tanto a arquitectura como as diversas formas de desenvolvimento urbano. Ao revisitar e discutir os seus modos de operar e questionar as suas soluções, até certo ponto, a arte expandiu o debate sobre a produção arquitectónica e o planeamento das cidades.

Recuperando algumas das referências teóricas centrais que definem este processo, e partindo do trabalho de vários artistas – na sua maioria norte-americanos, tendo em conta a particular expressão que este tipo de propostas teve nesse contexto –, este artigo procura discutir os múltiplos modos através dos quais a arte contemporânea problematizou a expansão urbana e a periferia.

Palavras-chave: Arte e Arquitectura; Periferia; Heterotopias.

¹ leonorcms@gmail.com.

Numa imagem fotográfica captada em Bayonne – New Jersey, em meados da década de 1960, vemos uma sequência de casas, idênticas, apenas diferenciadas por pequenas variações de cor. Num mesmo ciclo de imagens, podemos reconhecer uma realidade semelhante em Staten Island, Westfield, ou em Minneapolis; encontrar instantâneos registados em estações de serviço de auto-estradas; depararmo-nos novamente com construções em série, ou observar, simplesmente, pormenores dessas construções. Casa após casa, após casa, após casa.

Homes for America, é o título de um trabalho de Dan Graham, inicialmente apresentado em 1966, no Finch College Museum of Art² de Nova Iorque, como uma projecção de *slides* que reunia cerca de vinte imagens que registavam diversas realidades suburbanas norte-americanas.

No final desse ano, uma parte dessas mesmas imagens seria publicada na revista *Arts Magazine*, enquanto documentação de um artigo, da autoria do próprio artista, sobre os empreendimentos de construção anónima, standartizada e massificada, desenvolvidos no pós-guerra, e no qual eram criticamente problematizadas a ausência de conexão dessas construções com as comunidades locais, assim como a exclusão de características regionais ou individuais.

O carácter projectual e modular, tal como as noções de serialidade e de repetição, que nesses anos determinavam o trabalho de diversos artistas do designado minimalismo norte-americano – como Donald Judd, Dan Flavin ou Robert Morris –, eram desse modo subversivamente levados a um outro plano, distanciado do espaço heterotópico dos museus e das galerias de arte, e dirigidos a um quotidiano urbano – mas estabelecendo contudo um paralelo entre arte e arquitectura, que revelava correspondências entre ambas as práticas.

Não deixa aliás de ser interessante recordar que foi exactamente no mesmo ano – em 1966 – que Robert Venturi publicou *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, o seu “suave manifesto” em favor de uma “arquitectura não directa” (Venturi, 1995:1) – no qual recuperava uma série de valores que tinham sido suprimidos perante a codificação e o reducionismo de um modernismo ortodoxo, e assumia uma posição de tolerância perante a dinâmica urbana que lhe era contemporânea, como evidenciava a sua célebre afirmação “Main Street is almost right” (Venturi, 1995:146). Com efeito, nesse livro era desenvolvida uma argumentação que viria a contribuir decisivamente para o debate em torno de uma revisão da linguagem arquitectónica, e do pós-modernismo norte-americano em particular. De resto, esta publicação antecipava os casos de estudo que o próprio Robert Venturi, em parceria com Denise Scott Brown, desenvolveria poucos anos mais tarde com um grupo de alunos: *Learning from Las Vegas*³, de 1968, e que viria a traduzir-se num livro, com o mesmo título, publicado em 1972, e *Learning from Levittown*⁴, de 1970 – tratando-se justamente de análises centradas na observação do crescimento de algumas cidades e subúrbios norte-americanos, tal como acontecia no trabalho de Dan Graham e de vários outros artistas.

O desenvolvimento urbano do pós-guerra era assim submetido a um duplo olhar, crítico, que evidenciava uma renovada proximidade entre arte e arquitectura.

Na verdade, na sequência das transgressões, deslizamentos e contaminações entre categorias artísticas que desde cedo pontuaram o século XX, a arquitectura vinha a constituir-se como uma referência na produção artística – um processo que podemos mapear através das muitas dinâmicas introduzidas pelas primeiras vanguardas, mas que adquiriu mais clara expressão a partir dos anos 1960, já no âmbito das neo-vanguardas.

² No contexto da exposição *Projected Art*, organizada por Elayne Varian, e que decorreu entre 8 de Dezembro de 1966 e 8 de Janeiro de 1967.

³ *Learning from Las Vegas* consistiu num projecto de investigação conduzido por Robert Venturi e Denise Scott Brown, que contou com a participação de alguns dos seus estudantes da Yale School of Art and Architecture e que procurava desenvolver uma análise “desprovida de juízos de valor”. O projecto incluiu uma primeira fase de estudo, com a duração de três semanas, seguida de um período de quatro dias passados em Los Angeles e dez em Las Vegas.

⁴ *Learning from Levittown* ou *Remedial Housing for Architects* foi um projecto de investigação desenvolvido em 1970 por Robert Venturi e Denise Scott Brown com alguns dos seus alunos, e que tomou como matéria de análise a habitação social suburbana de New Haven. De acordo com Denise Scott Brown, o objectivo do projecto seria “colocar os estudantes a pensar realisticamente em vez de ideologicamente acerca da habitação social”. O resultado deste estudo foi sintetizado na exposição *Signs of Life: Symbols in the American City*, organizada em 1976 na Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, em Washington.

É pois sobretudo no contexto do pós-guerra que podemos distinguir uma deliberada convergência entre os campos tradicionalmente definidos como arte e como arquitectura, tornando-se aliás evidente a configuração de um território não apenas de mútua influência, mas de justaposição, e até de partilha de um mesmo léxico construtivo, senão mesmo arquitectónico – tal como, no caso norte-americano, exemplificavam as obras de artistas como Mary Miss ou Alice Aycock.

Não é assim de estranhar que, perante os sucessivos desdobramentos de uma prática como a escultura, Rosalind Krauss, no seu texto de 1979, «Sculpture in the Expanded Field», tenha precisamente identificado a arquitectura como um dos vectores de contenção para definir o supostamente expandido “campo da escultura” – que tentava então (ainda) demarcar.

Esta manifesta convergência ganhou consistência ao longo das décadas seguintes, e é essencialmente nesta linhagem que podemos inscrever o trabalho de muitos artistas⁵ que não apenas exploraram a relação entre arte e arquitectura, mas agiram criticamente na arquitectura e questionaram as, muitas vezes, anónimas e desordenadas, formas de desenvolvimento urbano.

É assim neste quadro mais amplo que podemos situar *Homes for America* de Dan Graham, mas também diversas outras obras da sua autoria que procuraram problematizar a arquitectura, e os subúrbios em particular, tal como mostra *Alteration to a Suburban House*, produzida em 1978, e que, assinalando uma necessária revisão, estabelece um confronto directo com a linguagem da arquitectura moderna.

Trata-se de um projecto que apenas foi formalizado em maquete e que consiste na substituição da fachada de uma casa por um plano de vidro, e pela colocação de um espelho no seu interior, paralelo a esse vidro, que bissectava longitudinalmente o espaço habitável. Essa intervenção diluía as fronteiras entre espaço público e espaço privado, dado que, ao mesmo tempo que expunha uma parte de um quotidiano doméstico aos olhares exteriores, transportava igualmente para um miolo interior a reflexão das dinâmicas de rua. Ao desconstruir a idealização da habitação nos subúrbios norte-americanos, este projecto funciona como uma declarada provocação a obras como a de Mies van der Rohe – e talvez mais especificamente à manifesta sobre-exposição da Farnsworth House, construída em 1951, nos arredores de Plano, no Illinois, e cujas fachadas tinham a particularidade de serem integralmente formalizadas em vidro, dissolvendo a fronteira entre interior e exterior. Dan Graham estabelecia assim um diálogo mediado com a arquitectura moderna, mas definia sobretudo uma possibilidade de a revisitar criticamente através de uma certa ironia.

A relação entre espaço público e espaço privado foi também explorada por Gordon Matta-Clark, como é evidente em *Splitting*, produzido em 1974, e que correspondeu ao acto de serrar ao meio uma tradicional habitação de dois pisos situada na Humphrey Street em Englewood, uma zona de New Jersey.

Colocando igualmente em causa uma noção idealizada de habitação, os dois cortes paralelos, realizados pelo próprio artista, eliminaram a separação entre interior e exterior, introduzindo uma abertura que possibilitava uma comunicação não controlada entre ambos os espaços, e revelando, desse modo, o ambiente doméstico, usualmente afastado dos olhares exteriores.

A prevista e iminente demolição da casa em questão estabelecia à partida que os resultados da operação do artista estavam inevitavelmente condenados a desaparecer – tal como, também a desaparecer, estava o próprio bairro tradicional em que a construção se situava, perante as transformações decorrentes de especulação imobiliária.

Abordando a casa como um *ready-made*, Matta-Clark apropriou-se de um objecto preexistente através de uma aparatosa intervenção, mas problematizou sobretudo uma série de questões – sociais, políticas, urbanas e arquitectónicas – que desde cedo caracterizaram a sua obra.

⁵ Ver, por exemplo, Gill Perry, *Playing at Home. The House in Contemporary Art*, London: Reaktion Books, 2013, ou Imogen Racz, *Art and the Home*; London/ New York: I B Tauris, 2015.

Com efeito, o interesse de Gordon Matta-Clark por temas relacionados com a arquitectura, levou-o, em 1974, a formar, com Suzanne Harris e Tina Girouard, o colectivo Anarchitecture, que procurava dinamizar a discussão sobre as ambiguidades e a transitoriedade do espaço. Apesar de tomar a arquitectura como um dos seus principais campos de referência, a noção de *anarchitecture* introduzia-lhe contudo uma disfunção, referindo-se sobretudo a espaços e a práticas que lhe eram tangenciais ou complementares.

Estas preocupações eram já identificáveis em trabalhos como *Bronx Floors*, desenvolvido entre 1972 e 1973, e que consistiu na subtração, ilegal, de secções dos pavimentos, paredes e tectos de edifícios abandonados, situados numa zona então particularmente problemática de Nova Iorque. Esses fragmentos foram apresentados na *Green Gallery*, a par de fotografias que registavam os espaços de onde tinham sido extraídos, após a intervenção do artista – documentando a sua proveniência mas também a precariedade da habitação no Bronx.

Gordon Matta-Clark chegou aliás a interessar-se pelo próprio sistema imobiliário, tendo adquirido, ao longo de 1973, um conjunto de cinco terrenos situados em Queens e em Staten Island que tinham sido colocados à venda nos leilões da instituição pública *City of New York*. Revelando no entanto as consequências do sistema, esses terrenos resumiam-se a reduzidos lotes residuais ou intersticiais, resultantes do próprio planeamento urbano da cidade.

Tratavam-se de espaços sobrantes, alguns mesmo inacessíveis, sem qualquer interesse do ponto de vista comercial, e que se tornaram propriedade do artista através de um processo burocrático – mas que não visavam, nem permitiam sequer, qualquer usufruto. *Reality Properties: Fake Estates*, a designação desse projecto, consistiu na compra dos lotes em questão e na organização de “documentação escrita sobre a parcela de terreno, incluindo dimensões exactas e localização, e talvez uma lista das ervas que ali crescem”, integrando ainda “uma fotografia à escala real da propriedade”, tal como recordou Pamela M. Lee (Lee, 2001:99).

Como exemplifica este trabalho, o próprio desenvolvimento urbano das periferias, muitas vezes desregrado e caracterizado por zonas de expansão industrial foi objecto de reflexão na obra de diferentes artistas, tais como Ed Ruscha, que, em 1966, apresentou *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* – um conjunto de imagens formalizado como um desdobrável, no qual era reproduzida uma sequência fotográfica dos edifícios então existentes numa secção do *Sunset Boulevard* em Hollywood –, ou Robert Smithson, que em Dezembro de 1967 publicou, na *Artforum*⁶, o ensaio *The Monuments of Passaic*, no qual descrevia uma viagem de autocarro que fez até à sua cidade natal em New Jersey.

Esse ensaio de Smithson era acompanhado por fotografias que registavam uma paisagem em transformação, revelando um olhar estético sobre infraestruturas, como os suportes em betão para uma auto-estrada em construção; como uma ponte, em aço e madeira, votada ao abandono; um conjunto de tubos de drenagem, ou um guindaste.

Elevados à condição de “monumentos” (Lejeune, 2011: 367) – e assumindo designações como *The Bridge Monument Showing Wooden Sidewalks* ou *The Great Pipe Monument* – estes elementos eram perspectivados como parte integrante da própria história da paisagem. Como parte de um processo entrópico, em constante fluxo, capaz de estabelecer uma dialéctica entre passado e presente. Através dessa leitura, Robert Smithson relacionava-se com um tempo em ampla extensão e com um espaço em sucessiva reconfiguração, oferecendo uma visão desdramatizada sobre uma paisagem indiferenciada.

Chegado à localidade, onde não reconhecia um “centro”, mas apenas um recorrente “vazio” (Smithson, 1996: 72), perante a observação de lojas, restaurantes ou parques de estacionamento, Smithson anotava a banalidade e a vulgaridade do tecido urbano construído, assumindo contudo uma aceitação condescendente dessas construções. Provocatoriamente, chegava a questionar se Passaic havia “substituído Roma enquanto cidade eterna” (Smithson, 1996: 74), – uma pergunta que encontraria claras ressonâncias numa formulação de Robert Venturi, que, em 1972, descreveria Las Vegas como fonte de inspiração de um novo tempo e como um local a

⁶ Robert Smithson, «The Monuments of Passaic», *Artforum*, vol. VI, N.4, New York, Dec. 1967, p. 48-51.

partir do qual se poderiam tirar lições, afirmando que “visitar Las Vegas a meados dos anos 60 era como visitar Roma em finais dos 40” (Venturi, 1972).

Levando por diante a comparação, ainda em 1967, Smithson distribuiria na Dwan Gallery um folheto, no qual, sob o título *See the Monuments of Passaic New Jersey*, convidava o público a participar numa visita guiada à localidade: “*What can you find in Passaic that you can not find in Paris, London, or Rome? Find out for yourself. Discover (if you dare) the breathtaking monuments on its enchanted banks*” (Smithson, 1996: 356).

É esta estetização da periferia que, avançando para o contexto alemão, podemos igualmente identificar nas fotografias de Bernd e Hilla Becher – que, a partir da década de 1960, registaram séries de edifícios e de estruturas industriais, produzindo imagens que apresentavam como “esculturas anónimas”. Ao documentarem uma paisagem periférica em transformação, essas fotografias salientavam a decadência, mas também a beleza, dessas construções, ao mesmo tempo que denunciavam a destruição de todo um património não apenas industrial, mas igualmente social e cultural.

Todas estas abordagens, que marcaram as décadas de 1960 e 1970, constituíram-se como referências para muitos artistas que emergiram em diferentes contextos ao longo das décadas seguintes e que têm vindo a revisitar e a problematizar incisivamente a arquitectura e as dinâmicas urbanas.

Um exemplo amplamente referenciado é o da britânica Rachel Whiteread, autora do mediático e controverso projecto *House*, desenvolvido em 1993 – que se localizava num bairro do East London e que acabou por ser demolido no ano seguinte após acesa polémica⁷ –, mas, desse mesmo ano, vale a pena destacar o vídeo *How do we know what home looks like? The Unité d’Habitation de Corbusier at Firminy*, produzido pela norte-americana Martha Rosler.

Gravado em Firminy-Vert, esse vídeo, que assumiu um carácter documental, revisitou uma das unidades de habitação projectadas por Le Corbusier, procurando analisar as alterações e “melhorias” que ao longo do tempo foram sendo introduzidas no edifício pelos seus habitantes. Através de entrevistas a diferentes moradores, Rosler questionou a capacidade de resistência do idealismo subjacente ao projecto, quando confrontado com sucessivas vivências quotidianas.

Nesta linha, podemos também assinalar a obra do catalão Domènec, que num claro exercício de citação, e até de irrisão, tem vindo a elaborar réplicas de estruturas modernistas que procuram reactivar a reflexão em torno dessas propostas. Ao catalisar uma releitura do modernismo, e denunciando os seus fracassos, o artista resgata por vezes construções que nunca saíram do projecto, ou que tinham sido destruídas, dotando-as de novos usos.

É esse o processo que podemos reconhecer em trabalhos como *Domestic*, de 2000 – uma fotografia que regista uma maquete da Unidade de Habitação de Le Corbusier simbolicamente abandonada no meio de uma floresta –; *Unité Mobile (Roads are also Places)* – um vídeo com origem numa irónica intervenção realizada a 25 de fevereiro de 2005 na Unidade de Habitação de Marselha, que fora projectada em 1947; ou *Superquadra - Casa Armário*, de 2007 – e que consiste na recriação de dois enormes blocos residenciais projectados por Lúcio Costa em Brasília, através da sua adaptação a uma escala de abrigos individuais.

É ainda dentro destas coordenadas que podemos salientar a obra de Los Carpinteros, um grupo cubano inicialmente constituído em 1991 por Dagoberto Rodríguez, Marco Castillo e Alexandro Arrechea, e que produz esculturas e instalações que cruzam processos da arquitectura e do mobiliário, reconhecendo a primeira como uma “fonte de obsessão” (Los Carpinteros, 1999).

⁷ Após dois anos de preparação, e com o apoio do Artangel Trust, no Outono de 1993, Whiteread betonou o interior de uma casa vitoriana num bairro do East London, criando um volume maciço que, depois de ter sido removida a estrutura exterior da casa que lhe servira de molde, se revelou como um negativo dessa construção. Ao transformar um espaço privado em público, e ao dar matéria ao que anteriormente era vazio, sem que o volume deixasse contudo de ser identificável enquanto habitação, a escultura constituía-se como uma construção fantasma – o que desagradou a muitos dos habitantes do bairro e suscitou fortes polémicas, levando a que *House* acabasse por ser demolida em Janeiro de 1994. Para aprofundar esta questão, ver o catálogo Rachel Whiteread – *House*, London: Phaidon, 1995.

Entrando directamente em diálogo com o desenvolvimento urbano contemporâneo, em 2000, na Bienal de La Habana, Los Carpinteros apresentaram pela primeira vez *Ciudad Transportable*, uma instalação constituída por um conjunto de estruturas executadas em alumínio e tecido, que, numa escala reduzida, recriava uma configuração urbana que reunia diversos equipamentos – tais como um bloco de habitação, uma fábrica, um hospital, um edifício militar, uma universidade, uma prisão, uma igreja, ou um armazém. Tratava-se de uma proposta que estabelecia os elementos mínimos para o funcionamento de uma cidade e que reintroduzia uma certa componente utópica. Definida como um modelo para uma cidade nómada, a instalação foi depois apresentada em locais como Nova Iorque, Los Angeles e Xangai.

Já em 2007, no Faena Arts Center em Buenos Aires, Los Carpinteros apresentaram *El Barrio*, um caótico aglomerado de casas formalizadas em cartão que problematizava o crescimento exponencial das periferias e a ausência de planificação das cidades contemporâneas – tomando a escultura justamente como um lugar de crítica e ironia.

Por último, é ainda de evidenciar o trabalho da artista e arquitecta eslovena Marjetica Potrc, que, propondo alternativas para as actuais políticas de expansão urbana, explora uma vertente colaborativa e relacional, objectivada em reconfigurar dinâmicas sociais através da definição de modos alternativos de construir e de habitar – e que muitas vezes se constitui como uma crítica aos códigos modernistas. É esse o caso das três séries de desenhos expostas em 2007, na galeria londrina Blow de la Barra: *The Great City of Medellin* – que, tomando como caso de estudo a evolução de uma cidade na Colômbia entre os anos 1950 e 1980, cartografava a transformação de um promissor meio industrial moderno num contexto com sérios problemas de violência e de droga –, mas também de *Hybrid House: Caracas, West Bank, West Palm Beach* – apresentado em 2003 no Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art em Lake Worth, e que se definia como “um caso de estudo arquitectónico” que, ironicamente, justapunha estruturas habitacionais precárias provenientes de três contextos diferenciados.

Como nos mostram todas estas propostas, a produção artística tem vindo a constituir-se como um território a partir do qual a arquitectura e o desenvolvimento urbano podem ser problematizados. Tratam-se de formalizações que funcionam como heterotopias, espaços simultaneamente dentro e fora, tal como nos propôs Michel Foucault no seu ensaio *Des Espaces Autres* – originalmente apresentado como conferência em 1967 e publicado em 1984.

Com efeito, nesse texto, por oposição à “grande obsessão com a história” que determinara o século XIX, o autor identificava uma obsessão com “o espaço”, notando estar na época “da simultaneidade”, “da justaposição”, “do próximo e do longínquo, do lado a lado, do disperso” (Foucault, 1994: 752). Michel Foucault reconhecia então uma sobreposição de regimes espaciais que o conduziu à noção de heterotopia – um espaço heterogéneo, com várias camadas, real, mas determinado por relações invertidas. Desse modo, enquanto a utopia seria um espaço sem lugar real, a heterotopia corresponderia a um espaço de representação, de contestação, e de inversão da realidade - mas que com ela se articula.

Nestes termos, é assim enquanto heterotopia que a produção artística tem vindo a assumir-se como um lugar de crise, afirmando-se como um espaço complementar, e até de extensão, para a reflexão em torno das práticas urbanas e arquitectónicas, actuando criticamente sobre a realidade construída.

BIBIOGRAPHY

- AA.VV. (1992) Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, *Architectural Monographs* N.21, London/ New York: Academy Editions / St Martin's Press.
- Battcock, G. (1995) *Minimal Art. A Critical Anthology*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press.
- Brower, M. (2001) *Dan Graham. Works 1965-2000*, Porto: Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves.
- Brown, D. (1992) "On Houses and Housing", Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, *Architectural Monographs* N.21, London/ New York: Academy Editions / St Martin's Press.
- Brown, D.S., Izenour, S., Venturi, R. (1972) *Learning from Las Vegas*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Diserens, C. (2003) *Gordon Matta-Clark*, London / New York: Phaidon.
- Foucault, M. (1994) "Des Espaces Autres", *Dits et Écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. IV – 1980-1988, Paris: Gallimard.
- Graham, D. (1967) "Homes for America", *Arts Magazine*, N. 41, New York, pp.20-21.
- Krauss, R. (1979) *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, October, Vol. 8, New York: The MIT Press, pp.30-44.
- Lee, P.M. (2001) *Object to be Destroyed*, Cambridge – Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Lejeune, A. (2011) "Un «Tour des monuments de Passaic» (1967), l'image de la cité selon Robert Smithson", *L'Espace Géographique*, 4 (Vol. 40), Paris, pp.367-380.
- Lowinger, R. (1999) "The Object as Protagonist", entrevista de Rosa Lowinger a Los Carpinteros, *Sculpture Magazine*, Vol. 18, N. 10.
- Perry, G. (2013) *Playing at Home. The House in Contemporary Art*, London: Reaktion Books.
- Racz, I. (2015) *Art and the Home*, London/ New York: I B Tauris.
- Smithson, R. (1996) "The Monuments of Passaic", in J. Flam (org.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press.
- Venturi, R. (1995) *Complexidade e Contradição em Arquitectura*, São Paulo: Martins Fontes.