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devices

the role of space in processes of exclusion and normalization

De Coninckplein, Antwerp

Bruno De Meulder, Hilde Heynen

HOUSING AND EXCLUSION

In the *Jaarboek Armoede and Sociale Uitsluting 1999*, the authors claim that the process of exclusion is also evident in the urban space (Vranken, Geldof, Van Menxel, 1999 p.33). A new, socio-spatial organisation of social dominance and marginalisation has emerged, which is visible in the increasing concentration of the most excluded individuals and groups in certain parts of the city. This process of residential segregation is related to shifts on the labour market which work against the unskilled, to growing income inequality and to the inadequate supply of decent, cheap housing. Ethnic discrimination and gentrification can also play an important role in the advancing spatial polarisation between “underprivileged” and “better” neighbourhoods. What is new compared to the previous situation, in the opinion of Vranken et al., is that the possibility of escaping from the underprivileged neighbourhoods seems to be declining.

In other words, our country also seems to be experiencing the beginnings of a process which has led in the United States to pure ghetto formation (Vergara, 1995). According to several authors, economic developments there have given rise to the emergence of a so-called “underclass”, which is concentrated in old, run-down inner-city areas (Lash and Urry, 1994). In particular, the positive effects of economic growth have by no means reached everyone and the situation is particularly troublesome for a section of the black population. In some inner-city neighbourhoods in the United States, problems seem to be concentrated: long-term unemployment, absence of training and skills, a majority of single-parent families, poverty and dependence on replacement incomes, street crime, spatial isolation compared

to other social groups. The difference compared to the former situation of inequality is that the social mobility of the individuals affected is very low, partly because those slightly better situated and those in work leave these neighbourhoods, so that the social dynamics within social life and within churches is affected. The resulting disintegration of the social fabric reinforces the impact of the vicious circle that keeps people in poverty, while the effects of this process are highly visible in the space (Vergara, 1995).
Research in the United Kingdom does not entirely confirm the hypothesis of a growing spatial "gap" in the underprivileged neighbourhoods (Somerville, 1998). Despite the fact that many neighbourhoods can also be found in the United Kingdom where a number of problems coincide (high unemployment rate, large proportion of single parents, many immigrants, substandard quality of housing, etc.), social mobility out of these neighbourhoods does not seem completely non-existent. This does not of course mean that everything will be put right, because it is still possible that, within these neighbourhoods, a distinction could still exist between those who are eligible for all kinds of "inclusion" mechanisms (via employment programmes, rent subsidies, cheap loans, etc.) and those who systematically miss the boar and as a result are and remain genuinely "excluded". However, it is not therefore possible to establish a clear relationship with the residential area. Somerville therefore concludes that, "the role of space at different scales in mediating social exclusion and in "underclass" formation is not very well understood" (Somerville, 1998: 776). The picture is also far from clear when it comes to exclusion mechanisms that are related to housing processes (March and Mullins, 1998). For example, it is not possible to assume a clear link between home ownership and "inclusion". Although most home-owners belong to the economically better-off, situations still occur in which people who own their homes still live in inferior conditions and do not have the resources to change anything. On the other hand, it is not so that those who live in subsidised housing are by definition underprivileged. On the contrary, the allocation of a subsidised dwelling can often make the difference between a bearable and an unbearable situation. For example, this allocation can be a crucial factor for women wanting to leave a violent partner (March and Mullins, 1998; Davis 2001). In this sense, it is not actually true that "housing" by definition is the solution to the "homelessness" problem. In some cases, just the opposite is true and "homelessness" can be a (temporary) solution to the problem of "housing" (for example if a partner is violent or in cases of irresolvable conflicts between adolescents and parents) (Somverville, 1998).
"Homelessness" cannot therefore by definition be equated with social exclusion, although of course we cannot deny that the homeless are in a crisis situation that makes them vulnerable to such mechanisms. Sometimes, however, the mechanisms of exclusion operate in a subtle, barely discernible way, which is related to the perception by the "powerful" (for example, those in charge of housing associations) of the "right to housing" of "applicants" (young people or women, for example). Case studies reveal that the allocation of subsidised housing to women wishing to leave their partners can be delayed or refused based on the conviction that a woman ultimately belongs with her husband, or based on the idea that she will probably change her mind after a short time and leave the allocated house in order to go back

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to her partner (Davis, 2001). Ideological assessments of who most "deserves" a subsidised dwelling are the order of the day in this context.

In general, it is true that women fare less well in terms of housing than men. Research in Flanders confirms that, "out of the total of households that are rented, relatively small and/or relatively uncomfortable, women (female reference persons) [are] over-represented" (Vanneste, 2001). Obviously, the housing situation is first and foremost related to social position and income but the gender difference also plays an important role. Persistent patterns seem to be evident which are prejudiced against women, particularly single women, compared to men. Generally speaking, women live in less pleasant environments, they face limited options and insecurity. Since they generally earn less than men, they can less easily make the transition to home ownership. Gaining access to social housing is often related to whether or not they have to care for children. Sometimes they face restrictions from landlords who do not want to rent to single women or who are afraid of noise nuisance from children (Davis, 2001).

In his contribution to this book, Rob Devos therefore states – not surprisingly – that housing is one of the areas where the battle against social exclusion should be waged. In a new, global model of social protection, founded on the principle of "solidarity" rather than "insurance", the *politique de la ville* is a critical element, he believes. However, little solidarity is evident in today's Flemish housing policy. If all the elements of the housing policy are taken together – social rent, cheap loans, rent subsidy, tax benefits, improvement or remodelling bonuses, assistance with the loan burden, housing bonus – it appears that roughly 40% of the total benefit goes to the top 20% of prosperous Flemish families, while the poorest 20% of families – those who most need the assistance – receive only 10% of the benefit (De Decker, 2000: 28). De Decker reaches this conclusion because his analysis also includes the tax benefits allocated to mortgage holders. From a quantitative point of view, these advantages form the largest volume of housing subsidies, but of course benefit the lower income categories to a much lesser extent. In so far as people on low incomes can afford to buy their own homes at all, this will be a relatively limited investment which by no means generates the same tax deductions as a more expensive home and a larger loan. De Decker therefore rightly asks questions about this ineffective system which actually produces a reverse solidarity, where the lower income group supports the higher income groups, rather than the other way around. He believes that policy-based investment in subsidised housing construction, particularly in rented homes, is wiser and much more effective. As is already known, Flanders only has an extremely low proportion of subsidised rented homes out of its total housing stock (6%), while this is an average of 17% in surrounding countries (as high as 40% in the Netherlands) (De Decker, Goossens, 1999). Some additional catching up at this level – following *Domus Flandria* in the 1990s – would therefore certainly not go amiss.

In addition to direct and indirect subsidies provided by the government in line with housing policy, a number of normative actions are also aimed at counteracting the excesses at the lower end of the housing market. The tax on vacant dwellings and dilapidation is intended as an incentive to encourage owners

to renovate their premises and to put them back on the market. It has brought positive effects, but is currently being questioned by some government partners. The Flemish Housing Code prescribes a number of housing quality standards which homes must satisfy in order to be rentable. Renting homes that do not conform to the Code is a punishable offence. The parliamentary decree fulfils a similar function with respect to renting (student) rooms (see De Decker, Goossens, 1999, for a summary of recent initiatives). These measures undoubtedly represent positive contributions to a housing policy aimed at combating exclusion. However, they are aimed at counteracting the most harmful effects of spatial processes that are related to exclusion, rather than at steering these processes. In this respect, a consistent insight into the way in which the architectural and urban planning aspect of space plays an active role in exclusion processes is lacking. This article is about building up that insight.

THE ROLE OF SPACE

In her contribution to the *Jaarboek Armoede en Sociale Uitsluiting 1998*, Kristel Driessens talks of the "geology of poverty" (Driessens, 1998). She believes that the problems of poverty and social exclusion can be contained not only by a structural (macro-)analysis of figures, but that insight is also needed into the processes at micro-level, involving a study of the living conditions of poor people and an examination of the emergence and history of poverty. This means that, in addition to quantitative research, qualitative research is also needed, based on field work, participatory observations and in-depth interviews. A similar observation also applies, as far as we are concerned, to the role of space in exclusion processes. It is good that the geographical analysis of figures related to poverty has led to the publication of the *Atlas van achtergestelde buurten in Vlaanderen en Brussel* (Kesteloot et al., 1998). However, much still remains to be learned about the underlying reasons why certain neighbourhoods are, remain or become underprivileged and about the precise role of the spatial characteristics of these neighbourhoods in this process – in other words on the influence of urban development and architectural characteristics such as morphological and typological features.

Three thought models

Overall, it can be said that the relationship between space and social processes is viewed in the literature according to three different models (compare Heynen, Loeckx, 1998). In the first thought model, space is seen as a relatively neutral *receptor and reflector* of socio-economic processes. Within this model, the features of space itself are not seen as decisive, but emphasis is placed on the influence exerted by social mechanisms in the areas of labour, capital movements, social relationships, discriminatory practices, etc.. These mechanisms produce many kinds of effects whose spatial repercussions are noticeable. From this perspective, processes of exclusion are not actively influenced by spatial factors, but are translated into spatial effects, such as lack of occupancy or neglect. In the aforementioned studies by De Decker (2000), Vergara (1995) and Lash and Urry (1994), this seems to be the underlying thought model.

The second thought model regards the spatial aspect as a possible *instrument* in bringing about particular social processes. When Mike Davis talks about the "militarization" of space in his analysis of Los Angeles (Davis, 1992), he means precisely this: that urban development and architectural projects are employed in order to bring about or promote processes of exclusion. According to him, the urban space is increasingly being divided up into mutually impenetrable enclaves, which are literally made inaccessible by the construction of walls, by barricading openings, restricting entrances and the installation of security cameras and other surveillance systems. Lyn Lofland also talks of "control by design", in her analysis of the transformations of the public space (Lofland, 1998). She emphasises a number of urban development choices that have ensured that American metropolises increasingly form a series of private spaces which are no longer mutually linked by a vital and jointly perceived public space, but only by functional networks of connecting routes which offer no social added value. She refers to the choice of mono-functional residential areas and special zones for industry and distribution, of houses with garages, of a transport system that gives priority to cars and of large complexes that interiorise social life (shopping malls, sports complexes, mega-hotels, etc.) as factors that have created the new socio-spatial reality of the "private city". Both Davis and Lofland regard the use of architectonic and urban development resources as an element that can bring about processes of exclusion.

However, in our view, the third thought model is the most fruitful for building up a general insight into the mutual interaction between spatial factors and social processes. This thought model regards space as the *stage* on which social processes are played out. In the same way as the staging is to a certain extent decisive in a theatre production, because it makes certain actions and interactions possible or impossible without this influence being decisive for the content of the play, this also applies to the spatial structure of neighbourhoods and towns. The way in which certain neighbourhoods are put together – the size of the houses, the width of the streets, the accessibility of the interior, the presence of squares and public open spaces, etc. – plays a role in their socio-economic evolution. For example, the Soho district of New York – the first district where the process of "gentrification" took hold – is characterised by the presence of industrial properties (lofts), which were the setting for a thriving industry between 1880 and 1920. After this period, the neighbourhood fell into decline and the lofts stood empty – until the nineteen sixties, when a group of artists realised that these spaces were ideally suited for use as studios and cheap housing. After some time, they found that the urban planning purpose of the neighbourhood had changed from an industrial to a residential zone. As a result, it also became attractive for realtors and project developers to carry out conversions and to transform industrial premises into living spaces. This process was so successful that the neighbourhood is now one of the more expensive districts of New York and very few artists can now afford a *pied-à-terre* there. With hindsight, the transformation of the district is due both to socio-economic processes which turned New York back into a residential city and to the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood, which ensured that the available properties could indeed be transformed into attractive living spaces (Rowe, 1997).

A further development of this thought model that space is like a stage can be found in the book by Kim Dovey (1999). Dovey uses the term *framing* to summarise the interactive relationship between spatial factors on the one hand and social processes on the other hand:
"Action is structured and shaped by walls, doors and windows, framed by the decisions of designers. As a form of discourse, built forms constructs and frames meanings. Places tell us stories; we read them as spatial text. The idea of 'framing' contains this ambiguity." (Dovey, 1999, p.1)
However, Dovey confines his analyses to a number of examples of spatial types that are related to modes of the exercise of power (government complexes, parliament buildings) and dominant economic patterns (skyscrapers, shopping malls, suburban housing). Below, we will take as our basis a similar thought model in order to gain an impression of the logics steering the correlation between spatial patterns and processes of exclusion.

Determining factors
In an exploratory study of "The everyday space of poverty and exclusion in the urban landscape" in Flanders (De Meulder and Ryckewaert, 2002), the authors attempt to ascertain the factors that ensure that certain spatial environments lend themselves much more than others to forms of "grey" and "black" housing. "Grey housing" occurs when homes do not meet the regularity criterion, i.e. they do not meet the legal standards, for example because of neglect, the absence of amenities or over-occupancy, or they to not comply with the social standard (for example because they have an outside toilet). "Black" housing forms are related to illegal constructions that often do not comply in terms of comfort (for example, a weekend cottage erected in a woodland area).
It appears that a system can indeed be discerned in the spatial patterns of poverty and exclusion. This system is to a large extent historically determined and has to do firstly with the *location* of an environment. Environments that were (for example, the 19th century belt in the towns) or are (such as remote campsites) peripheral seem to be more vulnerable to processes which lead to a concentration of grey and/or black housing. Secondly, the *structural morphology* of an environment seems to be an important factor. The term "structural morphology" refers to the urban development pattern that gives shape to a certain environment (for example, a set of streets and residential blocks with a certain rhythm and a certain size). Certain combinations of morphological features very often typify spaces of poverty and exclusion. This includes the physical features of the soil (inferior, boggy or unsuitable soils), the legal status of the area (for example, a former field of fire which cannot be built on) and, in particular, spatial features at urban development level. Intervening areas or interstitial zones thus seem very vulnerable, as do enclaves (areas only accessible in a few places and which also provide no rights of way). Areas located in the vicinity of borders (municipal or national borders) or near physical fracture lines (railway, road, river or canal) often set the stage for processes of exclusion.
The factors mentioned so far – location and structural morphology – are spatial in nature. The third

factor is socio-economic and is referred to by the authors as *development mode* and *transformation mode* respectively. This factor refers on the one hand to the historical processes which have led to the emergence of a certain environment (the development mode) and, on the other hand, to the current processes causing a change in this environment. If the development mode reveals a regulation deficit (in other words, if housing production has not been or is not subject to regulation or standards for various reasons), there is a genuine chance that substandard homes will have been or are being built. The transformation mode covers a number of processes that also increase the likelihood of producing an inferior environment, for example vacancy (when certain sites lose their original function), status change (for example, declassification as a primary road), change of use (such as permanent habitation of a campsite), ageing process (lack of maintenance) and de-development (areas where the government is not investing, for example because relatively few voters live there).

The fourth factor – *typology* – is again spatial in nature and refers to the types comprising the housing stock (for example, small terraced houses, small apartments with shared toilet, guest houses, fixed caravans, etc.). It is evident that houses that have been substandard from the start (for example sheds, barracks as emergency housing, etc.) can give rise to the emergence of a space for poverty and exclusion. The factor is referred to here as the fourth because it is usually closely related to the interaction between a number of the aforementioned factors: substandard housing is very often built in peripheral areas which, in some way or other, display a number of elements of vulnerability in their morphology (for example, enclave formation) and have subsequently been subject to a negative development and/or transformation mode.

This all means that we probably cannot speak of a spatial predestination for the concentration of poverty and exclusion, but that the spatial factors are indeed very important, although they can only really exert their influence in combination with a number of socio-economic processes. In this sense, this analysis confirms the points of departure for the third thought model, where space is seen as the stage, the background against which social processes are played out.

The following case study of the area around the De Coninckplein in Antwerp[1] forms an ideal illustration of the importance of the aforementioned factors. In particular, the crucial operation of the structural morphology of an area is very clearly demonstrated, while the interaction between spatial factors on the one hand and development and transformation modes on the other hand is also clearly portrayed. The case study presents the environment of the De Coninckplein as a multi-layered structure which not only generates the spatial conditions for processes of exclusion, but also combines these in a unique way with the presence of the ordinary, everyday urban life that forms the medium for normalisation tendencies. It is this unique, dual-layered character – where exclusion and inclusion exist alongside and in among one another – that is being put under pressure by the most recent transformation mode currently affecting this environment.

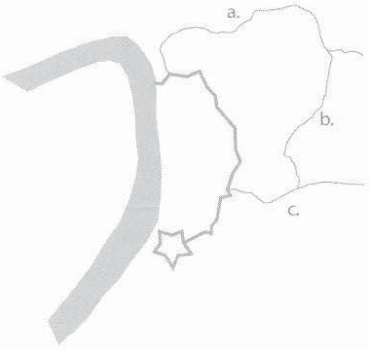
CASE STUDY: THE DE CONINCKPLEIN IN ANTWERP

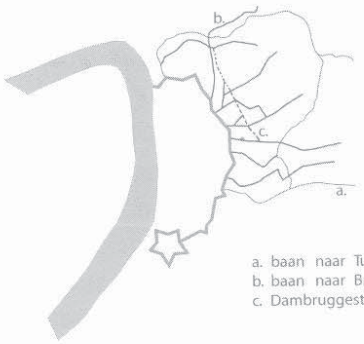
From field of fire to petrifying agrarian structure

The environment of the De Coninckplein in Antwerp is known as a problematic site and in fact, as historical reconstruction shows, this environment has been characterised from its very earliest development by what we would like to refer to as different-ness. This different-ness is related to its peripheral character. On the Verbiest map from 1662, Spanish moats contain the city of Antwerp. The imposing moats create the distinction between inside and outside, between the city and "outside". The area under study, which lies right beside the moats, seems scarcely noteworthy. It is virtually empty, which is also obvious for glacis. A field of fire is nonetheless unusual. Virtually everything is mobile. Nothing has protection. The landscape is open, flat and in sharp contrast to the massive moat. The field of fire seems to have been kept artificially empty as an intervening area, a different kind of vacuum between town and countryside, the shadow of the moat surrounding the city. With a little imagination, it is possible to envisage a specific type of activity taking place in this shadow: temporary events, things that are over quickly and leave no structural traces, travelling trade in the vicinity of the gates, a market or gathering, some rustling on the margins. The spatial no-man's land outlined, characterised by its burgeoning "different" urbanisation with structures of beyond category, is intersected by only few roads and routes. The road pattern can be understood as a system of routes between city gates in the moat and a limited number of crossings over the Schijn, the Potvliet and the Herantal canal. One road, later to become Dambruggestraat, does not fit in with this logic. It can be regarded as the connection between the hamlets of Dam and "Burgerhout". As such, it makes a tangential intersection through the radial pattern commencing at the city gates. This tangential movement thus also breaks away from the one-sided city-hamlet relationship. The hamlet-hamlet relationship also becomes possible. The city is not necessarily the central distribution point. It is possible to avoid the centre, it can be circumvented.

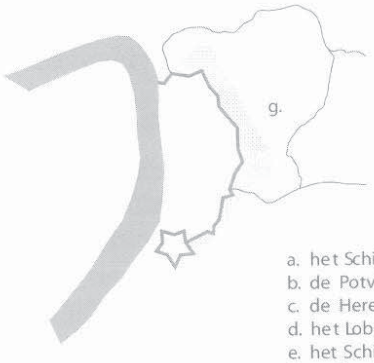
The lifting of the building ban outside the Spanish moat means that a huge building rage floods the surrounding land. The Brialmont fort (site of the present-day Singel) becomes the new military limit of the city. To the north-east of the existing city, the urbanisation of Stuyvenberg, Dam and Borgerhout takes place almost entirely within a period of less than twenty years. With the removal of the Spanish moats, the floodgates have literally been opened. Antwerp, which until then had been confined within the moats, bursts at the seams and the urban area multiplies from one day to the next, an area that is immediately occupied, built and inhabited. The tight residential fabric of the inner city – today known as the nineteenth century belt – is therefore created in one fell swoop. Housing dominates in the nonetheless highly mixed suburb. It swallows up the existing, aforementioned burgeoning urbanisation.

This urbanisation does not take place according to a plan. In so far as we know[2], no plan is drawn up, no spatial strategy developed. Nor are any urban planning rules promulgated beyond the definition of building heights and building lines. It is therefore no surprise that, in the absence of formally designed, urban development plans, the existing agricultural lot and track structure forms the basis for this

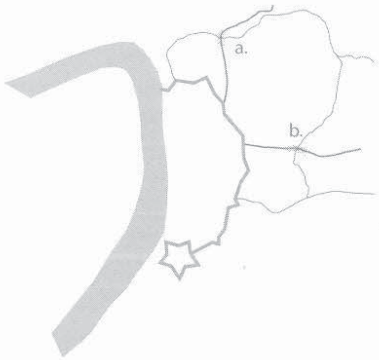




a. baan naar Turnhout
b. baan naar Breda
c. Dambruggestraat



a. het Schijn
b. de Potvliet
c. de Herentalse Vaart
d. het Lobroeck
e. het Schijnbroeck
f. zandrug Stuyvenberg
g. schootsveld



a. kruispunt Schijn/ baan naar Breda, Dambrugge
b. kruispunt Potvliet/ baan naar Turnhout Burgerhout, S. Willebors
c. invulling met fort, windmolens,... .

Map Verbiest, 1662

urbanisation. The "nineteenth century belt" fills up like an ocean of identical speculative "investment properties", modest terraced houses and mansions. It is a diversity of dense coordinates and hollow inner blocks[3] that imply a level of freedom.

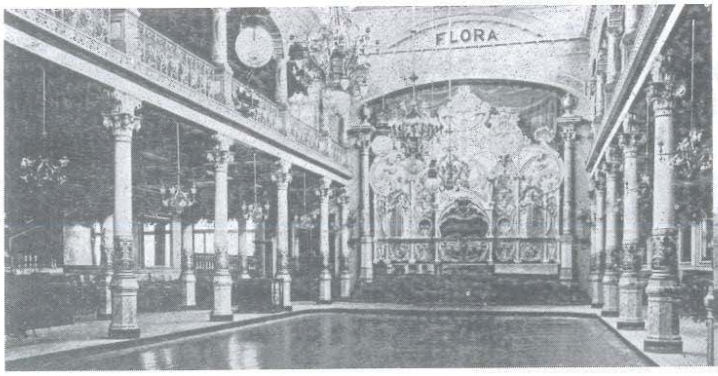
From roughly 1860, the over-populated Antwerp spills over into the suburb. Nonetheless, there is a gap, a clear intervening area between the two entities (city/suburb). The unique subsequent filling-in of the moats is partly responsible for this, as is the specific character the field of fire acquired in the shadow of the moats. The above gap is also related to the method of growth of the suburb. Urbanisation does not advance from the moats to the more distant hamlets. By contrast, the swelling hamlets that have become suburbs grow from their original centres towards the former city wall. In a manner of speaking, urbanisation jumps over the moats, the field of fire and even further to bind itself to the existing hamlets, where use can be made of the existing amenities (church, trade, inns and catering, services and education). This specific urbanisation process implies that the former hamlets quickly acquired a centrality which continued for a very long time as a result of the administrative/political distinction between the

city of Antwerp and the surrounding communities (Borgerhout, Berchem, etc.). It also implies that the former field of fire, in the shadow of the moats, in fact obtains a dual peripheral character: just outside the scope of the city centre and, at the same time, just outside the pull of the new central points of the suburb: the centre of Borgerhout and the fifth district. The field of fire becomes a double periphery – neither city nor suburb – and will therefore attract the functions that thrive under such conditions.
As stated earlier, the Dambruggestraat occupies a special position in the street pattern. The Dambruggestraat can be regarded as the end of the suburb. Looking from the suburb towards the city, most streets coming from Borgerhout end at this street, which forms the western border of the suburb. This border later became the administrative border between districts (limit of the "5th district"[4]) and still seems to be in use[5]. The part to the west of the Dambruggestraat is apparently no-man's land. The former field of fire is not on the mental map when we think about "districts". It is (and has long been) an area beyond category.
As a result of the nature of the urbanisation, former tracks such as the Lange Beeldekensstraat, are not only the connecting lines between the city centre and the nineteenth century belt; they also fulfil the function in the suburb of collectors of public life. Through a lack of systematically considered locations, the existing roads also become the obvious sites for modern popular culture which found a suitable home here, rather than in the (excessively?) expensive (and already over-full) city centre. Cinemas and dance halls are the most obvious examples of this "modern popular culture", which revolves around music, dancing, moving pictures and light. We can think here of the *Paleis Flora* on the Diepestraat, the *Thalia*, the *Casino* and *den Elysee*; the Lange Beeldekensstraat, which is becoming the main local pedestrian route between Borgerhout and Antwerp, is the site of the *Paleis Alcazar*, which seems to have had its golden age around 1890. The former *Cinema Rubens* (now the *Universele Kerk van Gods Rijk*) forms part of this series, as do ultimately numerous cafes and larger traders (Sun Wah). The right of way provided along these former tracks between city and outskirts, which now form the main local cycle and pedestrian routes, seems an important settlement criterion.

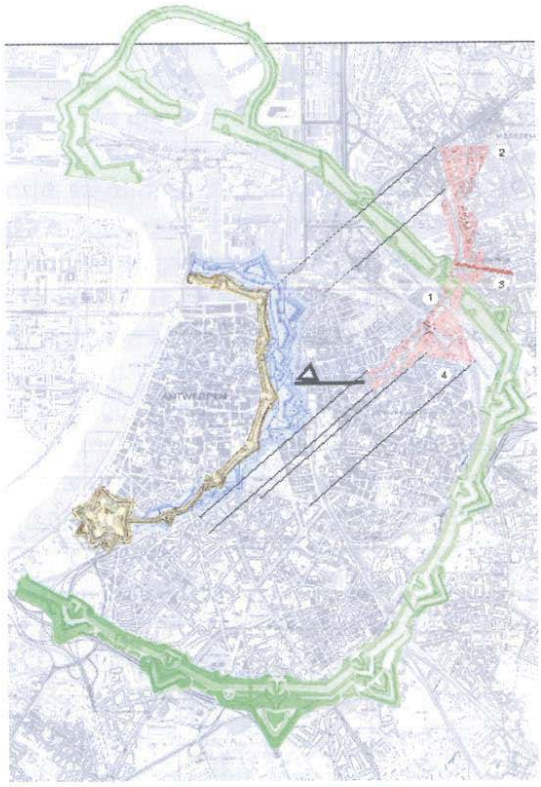
The moats and the railway

With the dismantling of the moats, an enormous vacant zone emerged in one piece between the old city and the new, hastily developed nineteenth century belt, which was entirely government-owned. The Van Bever plan (1865) opted to place a homogenous intervening term between the two areas of the city, between old and new and between city and suburb. The Van Bever plan creates the "Leien" – a wide, entirely uniform boulevard from the north of the city to the very south. The Leien are flanked on both sides by new, uniform building blocks, regularly divided and designed. All the vacant land of the Spanish moats is given a new "useful" purpose as a result. In some places, this goes further than the placement of a screening block and the Leien form the basis for more elaborate urban expansion. So, the Carnotstraat and the Gemeentestraat are rerouted and made part of a major group, perpendicular to the Leien, with the

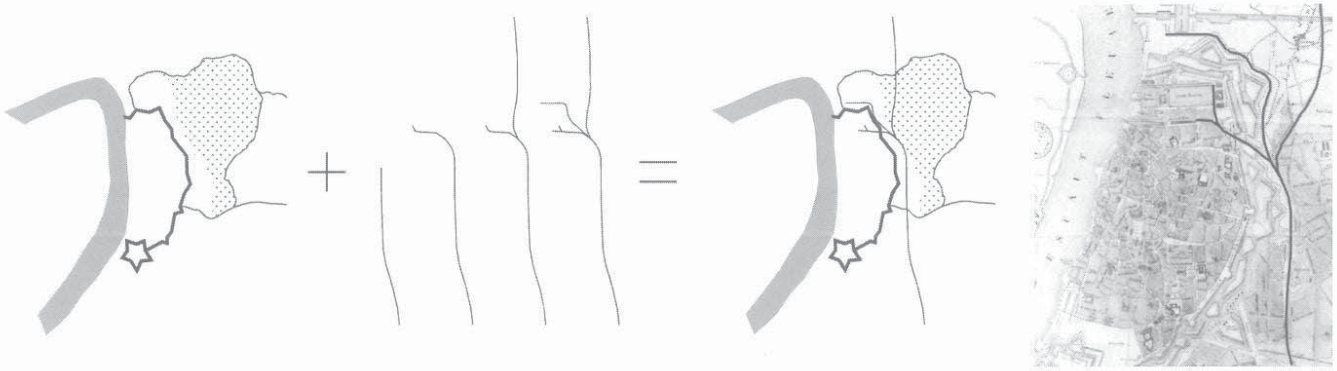
Place du Commerce (present-day Rooseveltplaats) as the hinge between the two systems: the north-south Leien and the east-west axis (Carnotstraat, Turnhoutse Baan). The Carnotstraat becomes the central axis of a geometrical building block structure. In the dog-leg formed by the Leien and Carnotstraat, a somewhat separate area is thus formed around the De Coninckplein, which expands into a special intervening area between the suburb and the Leien and is characterised in part by extremely irregularly arranged building blocks, clearly distinguished from the homogenous, formal building blocks lining the Leien.
The Mechelen (Brussels)-Antwerp railway, once it arrives in Antwerp, was quickly diverted to the north in order to connect to the port. The railway was extended for this purpose, from the original Antwerp-Borgerhout terminus (1836) to the Koninklijke Stapelhuizen, where the railway ends. A route on the field of fire, i.e. against the city wall, was traced from the Antwerp-Borgerhout station to where it intersected the Spanish moats in the north. Seen in the light of the arrangement at the time, this route is logical. In contrast to the rapidly urbanising suburb, the field of fire initially had no buildings or other obstacles. Permanent use or firm claim to the land was largely non-existent. There was therefore nothing here to impede the laying of the railway and its rapid connection to the existing city[6]. The station is developed at the location of the Carnotstraat. Additional land is rapidly occupied in order to accommodate the growing railway infrastructure and additional functions. The original line becomes wide and, alongside the railway line and to the north of the Carnotstraat, a railway siding is created, with workshops and a goods transfer yard (1854). The idea of the field of fire falls out of use, the railway deposits its own urban sediment. The wooden barracks make way for brick, Belgian blue stone, steel and glass.
This simple railway configuration is also rapidly supplemented by the laying of the railway to the Netherlands and two branches to the port. The main line therefore unravels in the area of study in three radiating railway lines, one of which rapidly disappears. Although this railway configuration is only temporary – twenty or twenty-five years at most – it is nonetheless fundamentally important to the morphology of this part of the city, since the greatest wave of urbanisation takes place during this configuration. It can reasonably be assumed that the railway causes a serious fracture and functions as a virtually impenetrable border. After all, the route becomes "private" railway land and, as such, is no longer accessible to the public. The only places where this border is breached and can thus be crossed are therefore very important places in the city structure. On the eve of the demolition of the Spanish moats (and therefore the sweeping away of an impenetrable barrier), they become the new gates to the city. The railway-Carnotstraat/Gemeentestraat level crossing becomes the only entrance to the city for the entire north-eastern section. Further to the north, the three (later reduced to two) aforementioned radiating railway lines form equally impassable obstacles, making the city along that side virtually inaccessible by road. The intersection of the Dambruggestraat by the main line to the Netherlands, also mentioned above, reduces the function of this street, since a whole section of the former right of way is lost. Since the connection is broken, the area becomes a kind of cul-de-sac. Since the railway forms an elongated, virtually unsurpassable body between moat and suburb, it is understandable that the street patterns



Dance Palace Alcazar and Dance Hall Flora



plan Van Bever, 1865



railways fan out in the direction of the royal "Entropot", the harbour extension and the Netherlands (plan Van de Kerckhove, Anvers, ses environs et son agrandissement, 1862)

spoorlijnen en leien
a. de oksel
b. Plac e d u Commerc e
c. Lunette de Herentals

plan Van Bever, 1865

left: planned railways configuration with double station at both sides of the Carnotstraat and infill of abandoned railwaylines to the north of the De Coninckplein (Plan Schepers, 1868).
right: infill tissue after the disappearance of the railwaylines
right page: Dambruggestraat as catch and border

planned on the levelled moats and those that take shape in the suburb scarcely match, but are instead entirely separate. At the time of the development of both parts, it will have seemed to make little sense to align routes to one another since they were permanently separated from one another by the railway. The railway thus creates the distinction, demarcates worlds that develop further according to their own logic. Former continuities are interrupted, broken off. The previously homogenous "empty space" is as a result not only filled, but also becomes fragmented. The presence of the railway, which becomes an internal border, perpetuates and accentuates the peripheral nature which this field of fire had previously acquired. The urbanising field of fire becomes the periphery of the Antwerp inner city, periphery of the suburb (Borgerhout, Stuyvenberg) and, now too, periphery of the station district, which is expressed typologically and functionally in boarding houses, cheap hotels and cafes for business travellers, the hidden base for a marginal red-light area and bars. These typological and functional features, together with the morphological characteristics (hardening of a longitudinally rent agricultural structure) mean that the former field of fire remains distinct from the suburb which, as previously stated, terminates at the Dambruggestraat. This illustrates an initial characteristic of the area. Its opening up no longer takes place through old routes which have a long continuity (linking a chain of hamlets), but rather by inroads that penetrate the urban fabric locally, but do not pass through it. In the dog-leg region between the Leien and Carnotstraat, almost every road is a dead end (slight exaggeration). In this sense too, the field of fire, although centrally located in the city area, is a periphery. It seems like a paradox: an interior periphery in the middle of the city, the end of the world. In more positive terms, it is an enclave.

Filling in the vacant railway

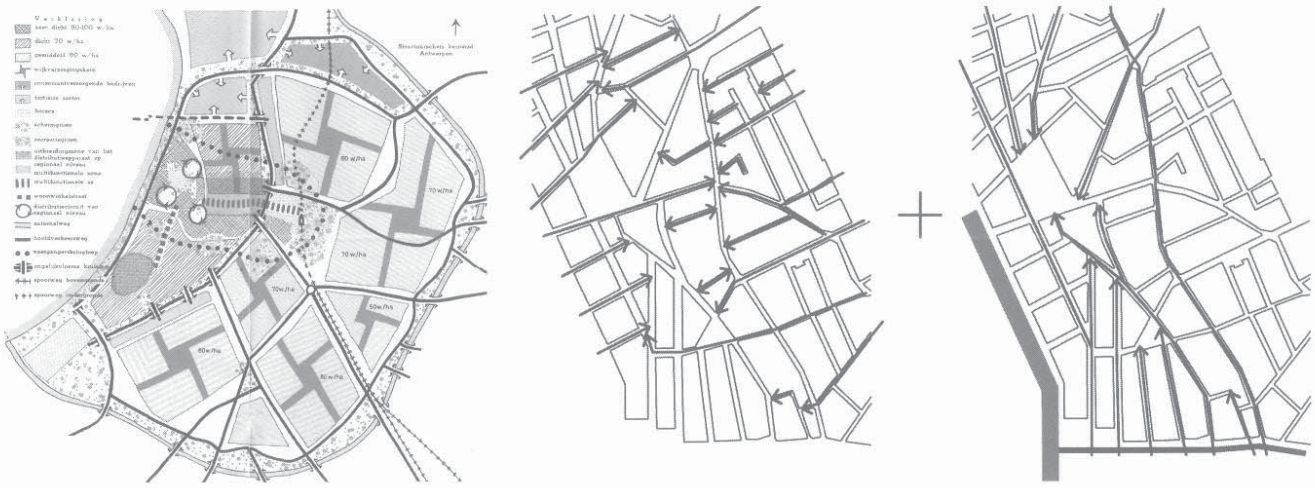
At a certain point, the railway land with workshops adjoining the Carnotstraat is dismantled. The broken up railway line is mainly converted into streets. As a result, a strange additional street pattern emerges in the dog-leg area between the Leien and Carnotstraat, where the route is not dictated by optimum connections, rational density or any kind of urban development reasoning. Ultimately, it is an opportunity for density which is put to good use, without further fuss. The street pattern, the resulting morphology, is simply the result of the re-designation as streets of the vacant railway area. The former railway routes are fragmented into some north-south street segments which bear no relation to the existing street structure, nor do they have any significance themselves as a group. For sometime, the construction of a second station in the centre of Antwerp is discussed, to serve as a terminus for trains to the Netherlands. A large elongated piece of land was reserved for this purpose, the top of which opened on to the *Place du Commerce* and the line to the north, at the Dampoort, branched back around to the circular railway. Once this design had been rejected, the remaining open strip was neatly divided into two. The southern section was occupied by the enormous Koninklijk Atheneum, the more northerly and interior section was simply divided up into building lots, just like the other vacant railway properties.

The resulting street pattern clearly shows distinct separation between adjacent city areas. Virtually no continuity can be seen in the successive street patterns between the inner city, the Leien, urbanised field of fire and suburb. As previously mentioned, most streets running east-west from the suburb end at the Dambruggestraat. By contrast, most streets running east-west in the block structure along the Leien rarely

continue further than these blocks themselves. In the former field of fire, as a result of the incorporation of the railway routes into the street pattern, streets running north-south dominate. Streets running east-west are the exception and only occasionally do they connect directly to the area of the Leien or the suburb. The local east-west connections between the various sections of the city are limited and they are usually take the form of bayonet connections. They form a succession of short, displaced east-west sections of street. The lack of continuity in the east-west route does not prevent these from being very lively commercial routes. This vitality (right of way for pedestrians, cyclists, cars, trade activities, hotel and catering trade) is of course achieved, on the one hand by the restricted number of these east-west routes and, on the other hand, by the functional need for such links.

All of the above means that the zone in the dog-leg of the Leien and Carnotstraat is an unusual enclave, composed of non-identical urban material that does not really fit in with its surroundings. Easy access is provided only from the station area (i.e. in the north-south direction). Unlike what is usually expected in an enclave, its core is anything but homogenous, but rather composed of fragments, pieces of heteroclitic urban material. These result largely from two clearly distinct waves of urbanisation, each with its own logic: on the one hand, the first speculative wave of urbanisation and, on the other hand, the occupation of vacant railway premises. The buildings on this vacant railway land are usually of a different type (more mansions than boarding houses and investment properties, usually wider lots, more regularly divided) than the buildings produced by the previous wave. The high density results in the lack of any open space to speak of. The density consumes the inside of the building blocks located beside the railway as building land; the resulting building block depth is very limited. Public open space is virtually non-existent, except for the De Coninckplein, which can be interpreted more as a leftover space that cannot be built on, rather than as a square. The small triangular surface could indeed scarcely be divided into lots.

The aforementioned urban geography identity of double periphery, the character of an enclave, the internal heterogeneity and the clear distinction from the "normal" and much more homogenous urban fabrics of the inner city, the Leien and the suburb gave the area around the De Coninckplein a special quality. The vicinity of the De Coninckplein rapidly became "the back of the station" as a result. After all, from the immediate vicinity of the station an entire series of streets running north-south pierce the texture hidden behind. As a result, the area serves as an appendix, a second-class development lurking behind the smart façade of the Carnotstraat, Rooseveltplaats, Koninklijk Atheneum, etc, where anything can be dumped for which at first sight there is no room: multi-storey car parks, a flea market and all kinds of entertainment and recreation. The development around the De Coninckplein, however, formed more than "the back of the station". The critical mass created here by the various forms of nightlife slowly caused the neighbourhood to develop into the entertainment district of Antwerp. It therefore created its own kind of centrality. The night side of Antwerp finds its niche beside the representative and central hall of the city (station, Astridplein, Rooseveltplaats). Day and night, in sight and in shadow, standard and standardlessness, rule and liberty, order and disorder, the complementary two-in-one nature of life are on display side by side. The vicinity of the De Coninckplein



left: the environment of the De Coninckplein as exception in the XIX century belt of Antwerp (Structuur Schets kerstad, 1971)
right: interweaving of east-west / north-south

is indeed, in this sense, a heterotopia, a place which, in Foucault's terms, falls outside the normal pattern and where all other places are simultaneously presented, disputed and reversed (Foucault, 1967).

The mingling of the ordinary and the unusual

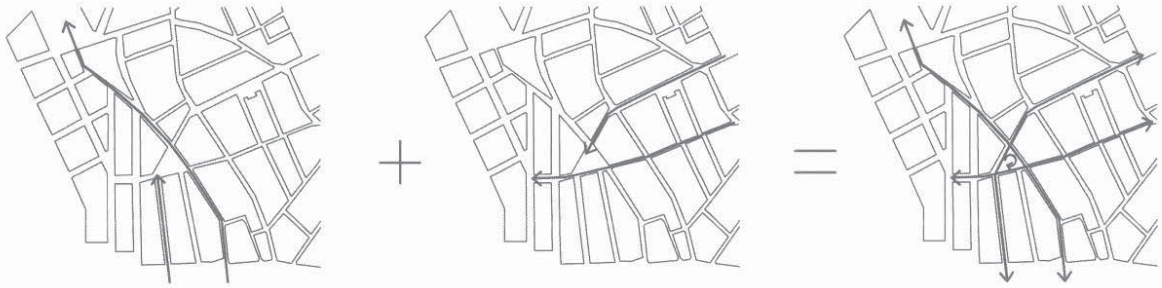
The planning surveys usually state dryly that this is a zone for nightlife. In one and the same movement, this is confirmed as a purpose in the planning documents, possibly supplemented by the no-commitment intent to introduce recreational green space into the surrounding area,[7] which points to the subconscious dissatisfaction of the planners – usually representatives of the nice middle classes – with the different nature of the area.[8] The somewhat strange position of this "entertainment district" between two nineteenth-century residential areas (Stuyvenberg and De Leien) was not really questioned in classical urban development planning. The scale paradox of an interior enclave surrounded by housing fabric where "aggravating" urban public functions nevertheless found a home, was simply accepted as a permanent fact as far as we are aware. Nevertheless, we can refer here to a conflict of scale of the first order between urban city pull on the one hand and the ordinary, everyday residential area on the other hand. This conflict of scale has apparently remained latent until recently[9].

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the fabric around the De Coninckplein acted like a sponge in absorbing a large number of cafes, bars, cabarets, gay clubs, more traditional dancing venues and discos, restaurants, cinemas and probably also gambling halls, betting shops and other entertainment opportunities, together with boarding houses (some rented by the room) and other inferior speculative residential buildings, second-class hotels for "transients", business travellers and even more fleeting city

visitors, brothels, amenities for night owls, businesses and similar and, finally, a small red-light district on the corner. The inferiority of the building stock has continued to the present day: a grim multi-storey car park, a block of studio apartments that seems to be the present-day version of the bleakest tenement blocks of the nineteenth century. It could be said, with some exaggeration, that the marginal or, more correctly, the different settles in the folds, fractures and splits produced by the grinding together of different pieces of urban material. The inconsistency that is produced by fitting together ordinary residential streets and speculative property apparently facilitates an entirely special kind of urban life. It cannot be catalogued. It combines differences and mixes all kinds of things together: ordinary and unusual, white and black, yellow and blue, admissible and inadmissible, the seemingly strange combination of celebration and misery, entertainment and exploitation. The latter probably has to do not only with the natural attraction of extremes and opposites, but also with the morphology which mingles multiple north-south inroads in fits and starts with east-west routes.

This interweaving of two directions, which support two different forms of use, perhaps means that extremes more readily come into contact with one another. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. Two types of urbanism are connected here as a matter of course. This can be caricatured on the one hand by the routes running east-west for the everyday, the ordinary, housing, for the normal in a manner of speaking. As previously mentioned, the east-west direction is also about routes (between suburb and inner city). On the other hand, the north-south inroads are for the unusual, the a-normal, the exceptional, for breaking out of the everyday routine in celebration and entertainment, for letting off steam, the unique moment. Both systems (north-south and east-west) interweave at the De Coninckplein in a way which is more reminiscent of a collision. The east-west routes become confused and entangled with fragments from the north-south access roads.

A crush zone? As a result of this confused interweaving of the two systems (the ordinary and the unusual), different worlds are involved with one another and the possibility thus arises of allowing the complementarity of the two to be asserted. This implies that, despite the district's nightlife speciality, it still does not function as a ghetto. The district does not operate as one large exclusionary zone, threads of ordinary life also run through it. By merging the two systems, the possibility of a kind of manageable balance arises. A certain social control is exercised by the ordinary over the unusual and, at the same time, a refuge is provided for the other, the unusual that can do its own thing, that invites and entices the ordinary, challenges and breaks through the narrowness of the right-minded. A balance is possible between the two worlds because the space allows for ambiguity and makes alignment feasible. Anyone can fit in here since the entertainment district is squeezed in between the ordinary fabric, that even partially runs through it and, therefore, to a certain extent, by definition nobody's presence is suspicious or to be stigmatised. By definition, nothing is inadmissible and nothing is fully unambiguous. This is an essential difference compared to a ghetto, which has much more simple codes and is much less accessible. In the vicinity of De Coninckplein, you can just as easily be on your way to high school as to the covered



the De Coninckplein as turntable

market or the cabaret. Conversely, the presence of "just anyone" does not go unnoticed. You are never entirely hidden here. Different behaviour patterns can thus exist alongside or, more correctly, in among each other without conflict. Thus, a certain tolerance has emerged with respect to the "aggravating functions" we referred to earlier. The theatre of exhibition and being hidden at the same time has done its job. Jean Rémy referred to these zones rather as "*espaces à faible légitimité*"[10].

A maelstrom of other worlds

The De Coninckplein itself plays a special role in the merger of two differently oriented grids (east-west and north-south), with their own peculiar interpretations (the ordinary and the other worlds). Both the St. Elisabethstraat and the Lange Beeldekensstraat (both east-west) connect in the triangular shape of the square with two north-south inroads. Two east-west lines and two north-south lines each run into one line, which doubles the intensity of the meeting between east-west and north-south, in a manner of speaking. The De Coninckplein is like a funnel that mixes everything together like a whirlpool. In this sense, it can perhaps be defined as the turntable that mixes together the various other worlds (those of the bar patrons, partygoers, China Towners, transient residents, Africans today, others tomorrow). The De Coninckplein is after all not the only nightlife centre. At the same time, everyone fits in here, right down to the mother taking her children to school and every Tom, Dick and Harry going to the high school. As a result of the mixture of various worlds, the De Coninckplein is not so much a heterotopia, a place for the other (where the other is the opposite or complement of the one), but rather an allotopia, the topos of all kinds of different worlds – three, four, five and many more besides.

It can be understood from the above that the vicinity of the De Coninckplein, despite the fact that it includes a fair amount of housing (boarding houses, rooming houses and other speculative housing construction, including the aforementioned recent substandard studio complexes) has never been listed as a genuine residential district and was also never planned as such. The latter is confirmed, for example, by the local lack of what are normal facilities for residential areas, such as a primary school.[11] Other

the African diaspora on the De Coninckplein

provisions and facilities that play an important role in the "normalisation" (and therefore disciplining) are also absent. It seems to be a blind spot in the social infrastructure of Antwerp, a non-existent place, a neighbourhood excluded from the social fabric.

Given the over-representation of the hotel and catering business in its heyday, the district probably always attracted a great deal of marginal housing and produced accommodation for temporary or very fleeting use, in other words has provided a home for housing that to a certain extent supported the "aggravating functions". (We may wonder whether it was not one of the exquisite biotopes where nomadic living in the city took hold[12]).The proportion of this type of housing did not benefit the picture of the ordinary residential area. The report, *Kansarmoede in de Grootstad Antwerpen*[13] describes the neighbourhood as follows, "De Coninckplein, Dambruggestraat": little space adjacent to dwellings, old stock, high vacancy rate (over 12% in 1987), many "aggravating functions" and hotel/catering. Despite the fact that the area was not listed as a residential district, it was nonetheless one of the most dense residential areas of Antwerp (statistically above 90 dwellings/hectare with peaks in some building blocks of 130-180 dwellings/hectare[14]). The figures may be a little excessive due to phenomena such as multiple-occupancy dwellings, boarding houses, rooming houses, brothels and similar, but they are still very high.

The paradox is striking. One of the most densely populated residential districts of Antwerp was not perceived as such, probably because the initial function of the area dominates the collective image of the district and suppresses all other images. On the synthesis map in the survey from which we also obtained the residential density figures, it is characterised as "concentration for entertainment (hotel/catering)". The most dense residential area of Antwerp is not a residential area. *Ceci n'est pas un quartier* - and the normalisation offensive to which the residential suburb of Stuyvenberg was subjected, is omitted here. No inclusive disciplinary equipment[15], such as a primary school, no subsidised housing. Is this the dumping ground for everything in the city that cannot be fixed, for the population for whom all (inclusive) normalisation offensives are a waste of time from the outset? Is this confused heteroclitic space also the place for the population that is kept outside the great integration machinery of reformism or that slips

through all the nets of the welfare state institutions, for the population groups who unwittingly form a blind spot in the network of our welfare state? African asylum-seekers and lost causes?

Living in allotopia

It is difficult to deny that the district has had its heyday, that the best is over. We assume that these were the nineteen fifties and sixties. We have no real explanation for the multiple causes of decline in the area. We briefly mention some additional points which might have something to do with this decline. For example, the absence of government investment is characteristic of this area. Just outside the crushable zone, for example in Stuyvenberg, investment has been made and is still being made in subsidised housing construction. In fact, since its creation, the entire nineteenth century belt has been subjected to redevelopment, renovation, revaluation and many other improvement operations driven by the government. In the crushable zone itself, in the intervening area around the De Coninckplein, government intervention is not present or is at least much less evident.

This absence did not automatically imply abject poverty in the area. The absence of government-backed normalisation operations did after all mean, at the same time, that the place was a kind of no-man's land and therefore became a sanctuary for the "other" in a knee-jerk reaction. For a very long time, a special kind of dynamics of private entrepreneurship (café operation, hotel trade, bars, dance halls, cinemas, brothels, gay bars) dominated the property market and the development dynamics of the area. The crushable zone, one could say, was the territory of the different private initiative. Certainly since the end of the nineteen eighties, this private initiative has fallen on hard times. It may well be that this has been associated with disinvestment in the public domain. Several reasons can be given for this disinvestment. Since most of the access routes into the "crushable zone" are only inroads (which are dead ends or side streets off other streets), only very few streets have supra-local importance or are acknowledged and recognised as such. The area cannot therefore benefit from investment in this attractive category of work. Investments in the area have no supra-local use and are therefore not made for longer periods.

Given its status of no-man's land, position of internal periphery between the Leien and suburb, ownership is limited. More than this, as a result the district becomes a favourite spot to dump aggravating infrastructural work. This was the case in the nineteenth century when the main sewers had to be laid[16]; it was also the case in the nineteen seventies when the metro shafts were sunk[17]. Since the 1960s, the north-south rail connection has been buried underground here, complete with new motorways, viaducts, etc., above ground. It goes without saying that these works, which became a permanent prospect as a result of the railways, without ever taking any credit for them, created a climate of insecurity which did anything but promote other sustainable and structural investments in the vicinity (either private or public). The everyday adaptations to the fabric did not progress, the transformation flow stalled and came to a standstill. Under such conditions, new construction is marginal. At the most, investment is made in a quickly written-off facelift for the bar.

So, the area missed the investment boat. While metro work and the like is undertaken just outside the "crushable zone" to launch reasonably integrated urban rejuvenation operations (subsidised housing construction in the widened St. Elisabethstraat, together with the laying out of a little square beside the metro station and the renovation of the community school), (underground) infrastructural work does not really lead to anything in the crushable zone. For example, the St. Elisabethstraat is not widened to the west of the Dambruggestraat, although this has been envisaged as far back as anyone can remember (a Special Building Plan (BPA) from the 1930s). The intention is carried out to the east at the same time as the metro work, but it is not carried out to the west. The difference between suburb and crushable zone perpetuated. One becomes normalised, the other continues to be different. As a result, the dominant transformation mode around the De Coninckplein becomes one of degradation and ageing.

Hidden from private and public investments and interest, the vicinity of the De Coninckplein was of course additionally vulnerable. The drain and decline against which city centres have been battling since the Second World War and which assumed grave proportions following the economic crisis of the 1970s, is understandably evident first and hardest here. This underlies the fact that, during the nineteen nineties, a new transformation takes place, which grasps the decline and ageing as a possible condition for the installation of a new rhythm of life and a new kind of cosmopolitan urbanism. The crushable zone increasingly becomes a vacant refuge as time passes. The range of cinemas, dance halls, discos and cafes declines. Today, the vacancy is filled by the African diaspora. In this crushable zone which nobody claims, out of the blue and without formal intervention, but much more spontaneously, a new point of centrality emerges, a gathering hub which picks up the thread of the history of use of the place and reinterprets it. A landing place for Africa in the metropolis. Hairdressers, bars, informal economy, telephone stores, burial ceremonies and other celebrations, export and import, *African rafia* is displayed on a board. The grey surroundings take on warm colours. Still, there is also talk of dislocation. The African diaspora does not live here. This is its meeting point. The De Coninckplein is one of the places where the nomadic life briefly connects, only to leave just as quickly for the left bank, where it spends the night, for yet another environment where work is usually sought in vain and yet another place where, thanks to philanthropic establishments, clothing (generally cast-offs), food, etc., are found.

With the fading of one phase and dawning of the following phase in use since the 1980s, a certain alienation and tearing the place from its context took place as well as perhaps a certain coarsening, so that the "aggravating functions" that were the subject of the planning discussion, evidently exceed the threshold of acceptability. The Winkelhaakstraat was transformed, for example, from a "Belgian window prostitution street" into an aggressive street prostitution district, with Albanian and African women in particular. The ambiguity of the interweaving of people's city and entertainment city becomes gradually narrowed into a one-dimensional picture over time. The interweaving becomes disrupted. The mutual complementarity between the people's city and the entertainment district no longer functions. The people's city is drained and comprises more marginal housing as time progresses, slum landlords' properties where campaigns such as Krot seem to have had virtually no effect. The entertainment district increasingly crosses the thresholds of the acceptable (aggressive drugs

scene, etc.). The manageable balance referred to earlier has become unmanageable.
This latter point perhaps explains why the vicinity of the De Coninckplein has recently and suddenly reappeared on the policy map after being absent for an eternity. Neighbourhood development and community work initiate renovation. The urban pilot project, which is supported by the European Union, puts the place on the formal policy map following an eternity of private and government interest and leads to all kinds of intervention: redesign of the De Coninckplein, implementation of the Permeke project, "cleaning up" the Winkelhaakstraat, construction of a hip "design centre" (the Winkelhaak), management of the commercial streets such as the Dambruggestraat (which had become notorious because of the regular murders of shopkeepers and "mafia style" settlements[18]), a fashionable design shop is subsidised to open a branch opposite the design centre and a little further down, the St. Jansplein is being redesigned. New housing was built on the edge of the area by Domus Flandria in the former field of fire; service flats are being built, both around an interior square (and therefore actually facing each other, looking inwards, resulting in a weak relationship with the context). The new central library for the city of Antwerp will be on the De Coninckplein. Instant gentrification. Permeke, central library, design centre: the city of Antwerp has felt the (secondary) centrality of the place and wants to use it to generate instant normalisation. Exit Africa?
It is possible, but not very likely. After all, it is quite conceivable that the spatial patterns built up over the centuries, which allowed exclusion and inclusion to co-exist in a unique way, are more persistent than recent attempts at gentrification and exclusive normalisation. For this reason, it seems to us that the challenge consists of appropriately tying in the formal actions, which are largely planned and implemented from above, with the local dynamics which became evident with the African invasion and other equally fragile phenomena, so that both developments – the local development dynamics and the process of change initiated from above – can mutually strengthen one another, despite frictions, rather than working against each other. It is evident to us that connecting to the existing, subscribing to the highly exceptional developmental history which characterises the place offers more guarantees of a rich urbanism than ignoring its individuality, that more opportunities lie hidden in a lively urbanism in the (re-interpretive) use of the allotopia than in rigorously "normalising" the environment.

NOTES

1 This research was conducted as part of a research assignment given to the OSA (Urbanism and Architecture Research Group) of the Social Impulse Fund. The research project was entitled, *"Hier doen wij dat zo. Locale vertogen en praktijken met weerslag op de stedelijke ruimte. Een bijdrage tot geïntegreerd buurtbeheer"* ("Here we do it like this". Local exposés and practices with repercussions for the urban space. A contribution to integrated neighbourhood management).

2 See, for instance, Binnemans R. and Van Cauwenbergh G.(1975), *Atlas van Antwerpen. Evolutie van een stedelijk landschap van 1850 tot heden*, Antwerp; Uyttenhove P. ed. (1993), *Tussen kant en wal. De 19de eeuwse gordel van Antwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*, Antwerp, (including the contribution by Tijs R., *De ontwikkeling van de 19de- eeuwse gordel rondom het Centraal Station*. A cartographic examination, from the cadastral plans by C.J. Van Lyere of 1698 to the map from 1866 by J. Van de Kerckhove, published by F. Tessaro, pp 179-183; Lombaerde P., *Op zoek naar de identiteit van de 19de- eeuwse gordel te*

Antwerpen. Problemen bij de interpretatie van de plattegronden en het voorbeeld van de wijk Stuivenberg, pp 184-193; etc.).

3 As a result of the dissimilar lot structure used as a starting point and the irregular cutting up, density and building method (street, *cul-de-sac*, etc.) of these lots, alongside shallow building blocks (just two lots of minimal depth pushed together), many "large" building blocks also occur, where the cheaper interior land is used for public amenities (such as the Sacred Heart church, the public baths and school). The informal interior of the superior or irregular building blocks in other words forms a sanctuary within which all kinds of programmes can be accommodated. Sometimes, rather than involving large building blocks where the spacious interior is filled with workplaces and other kinds of volume, by contrast a wave of speculative housing construction takes place which encapsulates the existing buildings (the beyond-category elements mentioned in the previous paragraph).

4 Map "*Nieuw Plan der Stad Antwerpen*", 1885, Henri Claes, published in *De Panoramische droom. Antwerpen en de wereldtentoonstellingen 1885 1894*, 1930, Antwerp, 1993, p. 50.

5 In the structural plan for Antwerp, the map sheet for the stuyvenberg oud-borgerhout master plan ends at the Dambruggestraat. "Structuurschets stuyvenberg-oud borgerhout", in Planologische Dienst Stad Antwerpen, *Antwerpen Herwonnen Stad. Synthesenota Globaal Structuurplan Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1990, pp. 52-53.

6 The latter was an enforced condition because of patent legislation. Moreover, the field of fire was probably also largely levelled, further simplifying the laying of the railway, which was of course laid as flat as possible. In other respects, a railway is not in conflict with the basic requirement of a field of fire. Trains do move over the field of fire, but then they are gone. The field of fire as an obstacle-free open space remains undeveloped.

7 See, for example, *Survey-synthesekaart centrumfuncties kernstad Antwerpen* and *Structuurschets kernstad Antwerpen* in "Schelde-Dijle" Study Group, *Leidraad voor de ontwikkeling van de kernstad Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1971, appendix.

8 Between the normative planning lines, we read: in fact, this environment, where just about everything comes together and where life is a mess, has no right to exist, it would be better to sweep it away and replace it with green, nature, purity and innocence. A Garden of Eden rather than a place of ruin. However, this is only a subconscious dialogue, it is never turned into concrete plans.

9 Only very recently and apparently with great difficulty, window prostitution ceased in the Winkelhaakstraat, officially because of the nuisance caused by this aggravating function. The rejuvenation of the neighbourhood envisaged via the European-subsidised Urban programme is allegedly mortgaged by this prostitution.

10 The presence of the port probably contributes to the success of a kind of two-fold urbanism around the De Coninckplein. The port represents a similar duplicity on the mental map of Antwerp residents: bringer of both prosperity and ruin. Just as the mariners' district was a cultural interface between city and port, the station area is an interface between city and railway, an interface where, as we said, several worlds settled. At the same time, the mariners' district seems to be acquiring another significance. The mariners' district, the image of which is dominated by prostitution, seems to be carrying the can for the unacceptable, the taboo. The environment of the De Coninckplein, where prostitution does not dominate mentally or in reality but forms one of the many entertainment functions and where, moreover, a healthy dose of ordinary, innocent urban functions take place, to some extent retains a two-fold character. The De Coninckplein finds a more acceptable purpose: this is where you go out if you are from Antwerp. The mariners' district (Schipperskwarter) is for the sailors and other "alien" folk.

11 Primary schools, map no. 16, in "Schelde-Dijle" Study Group, *Leidraad voor de ontwikkeling van de kernstad Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1971, p. 42.

12 Radkowski, de, G. H. (2002), *Antropologie de l'habiter. Vers le nomadisme*, PUF, Paris.

13 Marynissen R., Poppe E., Van Hove E. (1987), *Kansarmoede in de grootstad Antwerpen. Een atlas en een gezamenlijke probleemaanpak. Deel 1. De kwaliteit van het wonen*, U.I.A. & King Baudouin Foundation, Antwerp, p. 73.

14 Housing densities 1968, map 15 in "Schelde-Dijle" Study Group, *Leidraad voor de ontwikkeling van de kernstad Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 1971, p. 39.

15 Fourquet F., Murard L. (1973), *Les équipements du pouvoir. Villes, territoires et équipements collectifs*, 10/18 «Recherches» n. 13.

16 See, for example, maps in: J. Van De Venne (1895), *Jozef Lefebvre en zijn werk*, Antwerp, J. Mussly.

17 See, for example, Ministry of Traffic. Bestuur van het vervoer, *Het openbaar vervoer in het Antwerpse*, no place or date given.

18 *We komen van ver* in «De Standaard» 15/09/2002.