

Living in-between the folds of the city

Introduction

Since -already in the 19th century- the Belgian government started to promote individual home ownership outside the city¹, the Flemish² living ideal of *the individual family house on an individual plot in the green* today still stands.³

Notwithstanding this historically politically stimulated dislike of the city one starts to notice that young families -often with children- are returning to the city.⁴ They do so for diverse reasons and they all seem to find *their plot* in the city where they can realize their (sub)urban dream.⁵

A lot of them buy a house in the 19th century belt which is characterized by a fabric consisting of a myriad of small single-family parcels. This minute parcelled out owner structure shows itself very resilient to the first public efforts of recovery but turns out to be very open and coherent to individual initiative.⁶ The tissue's pattern of long and narrow residential lots is one of the main elements that define the *porousness of the urban fabric*⁷. This *porosity* seems to make the individual initiative become the driving force for the revival of these neighbourhoods.

Or how the weakness of the tissue becomes its strength.

What preceded...

A anti-urban and individual oriented mentality/tradition

Already in the 14th and 15th century there existed two rights in Antwerp: '*burghership*' and '*outside burghership*'. *Burghership* divided the citizens in different groups: the most privileged, the normal inhabitants and finally the immigrants and visitors. *Burghership* was not hereditary and expired when someone left the city or stayed away for too long, depriving her/him of hers/his privileges. If a considerable amount was paid one could acquire the *outside burghership*. Contrary to the *burghership*, the *outside burghership* did allow someone to live outside the city or to stay away for a long(er) time without losing her/his privileges. Nevertheless one remained tributary to the city.

Cities stimulated this statute as it on one hand gave them the possibility to eliminate the concurrence of the countryside, on the other hand allowed them to keep under control the fleeing trade. It certainly (also) was an economical and political measure.

The measure was so popular that even *non-burghers* immediately became *outside burghers*.⁸

During the 19th century, like elsewhere in Europe, the number of inhabitants in the Flemish cities increased exponentially. The better hygienic conditions resulting in a decline of the mortal rate on one hand and the industrial progress and the to this related decline of the homework combined with the lack of alternatives in the agricultural industry on the other, pushed more and more people, who also needed to be accommodated, to the city. Ruthless speculative building, possible thanks to absence of any policy and/or interest, led to miserable living conditions. Only when the ruling class saw threatened its self-interest by the growing danger of diseases, epidemics and social revolution, it started to act.⁹

Around 1890, becoming clear that the extensions, due to their speculative character, resulted in an uncontrollable growth of the urban agglomerations, the resistance against this chaotic urban environment reached a climax. Falling back on beauty of nature, rural community and order, two points of view were honoured: on one hand restructuring the existing city and extending it by well organized extensions in the middle of nature, on the other hand the location of independent, small settlements in close contact with nature (the *garden city thought*).¹⁰

This anti-urban attitude got really accepted after World War I. However, it wasn't sufficient to relieve the existing housing shortage. The shortage increased during World War II because of the construction stop during the occupation and because of the war damage, although it was rather limited in respect to the neighbouring countries. In 1945 the deficiency was estimated at 250000 dwellings.¹¹

In 1948 the *De Taeye* act was approved. The law –strongly rooted in the idea that the state was a '*bad architect*'¹² and in the (catholic) fear for disease, epidemics, moral decay and above all growing socialism¹³ - stimulated the private initiative for the construction of affordable one family houses outside the city.

For centuries a part of the urban life occurred outside the city walls, but in a way one remained faithful to the city and paid a contribution there.

Recently however, one hundred and twenty years of social-economical conflict, in which living in an individual house outside the city was accepted as a general compromise, together with the total lack of planning, did not only draw off the growing middle-class from the city leading to the petrification of the Flemish landscape¹⁴, but it also stimulated their aversion from the dirty, strange and dangerous city.¹⁵

Abandonment of the city

Between the seventies and the eighties, a strong phenomenon of abandonment struck Antwerp. The fabric of the city for the most belonging to the 19th century belt became disused when an important part of the population moved from the city to the country, to the suburban municipalities.

One can see the construction of single family houses peaking between 1964 and 1969 and between 1972-1980¹⁶ while in the same period the Antwerp population is dropping. In 1970 there lived 549146 people in Antwerp, in 1981 only 488425 remained.¹⁷

Smaller peaks can be noticed around 1989 and 1994.¹⁸ In 1991 the Antwerp population had further decreased to 467518. Rock bottom was reached in 2001 with only 445570 inhabitants.¹⁹ Population is growing since then (465596 inhabitants in 2007)²⁰.

Delivered vacant

“The disuse of a part of the city of this size is also the product of a change in relations between industry, production and the city, similar to what in moments that not always coincided, has marked the entire territory of Europe. A lot of (local) industry, that until then had put the parcelling out to its limits, moves towards the outskirts of the city. The availability of production areas outside the city, along with the change in forms of production and the crisis in some sectors, or simply the generational change, open sudden rents in the urban fabric.”²¹

New born porosity²²

“Within a few decades the part of the city that corresponds to the 19th century belt ended up being inhabited by old people [...] and a new population of immigrants. [...] The housing market has registered the decline of the city, its impoverishment due to the loss of the best taxpayers, the deterioration of the public spaces and buildings thereon; at the same time some of the large area belonging to the port have emptied, in the same years the port being definitively separated from the city, moving north up to reaching the Dutch border. [...]

The fabric of the city at this point can be described as very porous and open to new interpretations.”²³

The Flemish living ideal

The fermette: Flemish icon of the single family house on an individual plot in the green

Although more and more other variants are appearing on the market and despite recent results indicating that the *satisfaction of living* on the countryside is less than the one in the city²⁴, the *fermette* remains the cliché of the contemporary Flemish dwelling, the icon of the well organized Flemish way of living.²⁵

The *fermette* is “a (usually) compact, freestanding single family house, 125 à 150 m², with a ‘rural’ character. The archetype has a cartwheel or integrated in the side façade or a least freestanding in the front garden. A friendly garden gnome welcomes you. [...] In the course of time a lot of *fermettes* are enlarged with a veranda, if only to compensate the tightness of the house. Today the front garden has a standard depth of five meters (and integrates the drive for the car), more or less three meters are left over between the side façade and the property border. The depth of the back yard varies, but, it’s getting increasingly limited.”²⁶ Standard having three sleeping rooms and a bathroom²⁷, “it is perfectly fits the ‘average’ two income family (in caricature: mom, dad, one, maximum two children, a dog and cat, two cars, a Miele washing machine and dishwasher).”²⁸

The (semi) detached house or the attached house in an allotment that have very similar ‘standard characteristics’ are the praiseworthy seconds.

The Flemish living ideal starts to become less reachable

There is not only an economical reason –between 1993-2003 ground became three times more expensive and construction cost rose one third²⁹- but people also want more (comfort). As ground prices, construction costs and comfort requirements are rising, the realization of the Flemish dream seems to become more difficult. ‘*The engine of the well organized Flemish way of living sputters.*’³⁰ Between 1990 and 2003 the average size of a parcel went down from 850m² to 700m² ³¹. Today for the same budget one gets a smaller (detached) house and/or less land.



fermette/detached semi-detached attached row house in the city
sources: Van Herck, K & Avermate, T (2006) *Wonen in welvaart*; www.danilith.com; Bomans Bart.

Higher prices force a more efficient use of space

The price increase of the ground could be compensated choosing for a semi-detached (three façades) house or even an attached (two façades) house. The *Confederatie Bouw*³² calculated that, on the average, the surface of land doubles for every “extra façade”³³. So the detached house on 700m² could be realised semi-detached on 350m² or attached on 175m², which approaches ‘city dimensions’.

Instead of building a (reduced) new house, others start to look for different alternatives. Renovation of the existing patrimony becomes more popular. Between 1996-2006 the

amount of building permissions for new buildings in Flanders went down from 22304 to 17531, the amount for renovation on the contrary rose from 13143 to 18137.³⁴

Slightly the existing housing stock in the city moves back to the centre of the spectrum.³⁵ The dominant type within the housing stock is the row house, an ancient, urban dwelling type characterised by a compressed living program between two common walls and a vertical structure.³⁶ In the city two types are common: the deep house and the large house. The former is built on a small parcel, the ridge perpendicular to the street. The latter stays on a large parcel and has the ridge parallel to the street.³⁷

Morphological research on Antwerp showed variable front width – 45% of the parcels has a width less than 6m, 41% has a width between 6 and 12m- while 62% of the lots has a depth varying between 18 and 24m. In other words a parcel with an average width of +/- 6 meters, more or less the average parcel width, has a surface that varies between 100 and 150m².

“The rediscovering of the row house as type contains a hardly used potency and an unexpected richness. Its further development offers a potentially strategic and flexible tool for an urban housing policy focussed on middle-class groups. (see further on in this paper) This doesn't imply that the existing Flemish row house stock wouldn't be a problematic category. [...] For the most part the houses are not the 'qualitative' row house, but they are the heritage of the speculative house-construction of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century: closely packed row houses, a very small mineral yard instead of a garden, too small lots, spatially substandard and structurally worrying.”³⁸

In Antwerp 28% of the parcels is less than 18m deep, most of them are situated in small building blocks³⁹ what means that they have no or very small outside space.

Urban identity⁴⁰

Fragments 01/city people

(H) I was very convinced when I started to live on my own when I was eighteen that the city would be the best place for me to live.

(M) We went to Schoten, outside Antwerp, and lived there for three years in a villa. I really couldn't keep it there. It was too much maintenance in the garden. [...] The children were playing outside but we were missing something and we found it back here in the streets. It is a kind of social live.

Fragments 02/living in the city

(E) I can call my friends and within five minutes I catch them. [...] We do everything by bike.

(M) You can find everything. It is quit handy to live in the city and it is maybe that scale that attracts me the most. [...] There are a lot of facilities and that's a big reason to come back to the city.

Admitted, in certain way they seem to be –especially in Flanders, with its anti-urban mentality⁴¹- an atypical category of inhabitants: middle-class families who still live in the city and whose ultimate living ideal is *not* a detached house in the green outside the city. Urban oriented families who try to combine family live with an *urban identity*: “the *urban family* that can stand some rough handling.”⁴²

Although they can afford a house outside the city they prefer living in the city because of the high level of equipments and services, the proximity of work and the diversity of social contacts. The world within walking distance, not everything the same but a large variety of choices, a pleasant anonymity but at the same time sufficient like-minded people, free of obligations, pleasant tension, that's what makes attractive living in the city: city air makes free. They identify themselves with the city: they *are* city people.

Fragment 03/distinction

(H) I grow up in the countryside and as a teenager I found it very boring. (Ktrn) I grow up in suburbia and it was also very boring and again because of the same thing it was all the same type of middleclass people. Living in a multi-cultural neighbourhood is more complex and much, much more challenging [...] but it is also much more richer.

For those who have their roots in the city, identifying with the city is obvious. Besides them there is a new category of city-dwellers: *yupp*'s, young urban professional parents.⁴³ Mostly having their roots in the suburb, they are often consciously busy creating their own urban identity⁴⁴.

“Identifying oneself with the city as a place to live has a lot to do with appreciating liveliness and diversity. [...] Suburban areas are often described as boring because of the lack of liveliness and diversity. Moreover, these days the suburban ideal being realized by a lot of families, it could be important to distinguish oneself deciding, contrary to the dominating pattern, to live in the city. [...] Identity is also about distinction.”⁴⁵

Fragments 04/demanding

(E) For us it is ok, but for the children... [...] Sometimes I think, I'm in the wrong place

“Strong identification with one’s own city and neighbourhood, also makes one become critical. City and neighbourhood should match the ideal image of their inhabitants. [...] The quality of shops and of public space in general are the most important sources of (negative) identification. [...] When inhabitants do not longer recognize themselves in the neighbourhood they once preferred, when they cannot identify themselves with it anymore, moving becomes an option.”⁴⁶

Fragments 05/responsible

(M) When we went here we found out that the neighbours could mean something, the street could mean something. we would like to invest our time also in the street and that's what we did. At the outside in Schoten they really didn't want us to involve and here you felt everybody said good day, it is totally different.

Striving for an *urban identity*, for being an *urban family* those families become carriers of a new urbanity (again)shaping the city for which they feel responsible. Feeling responsible for the city is inextricably bound up with realizing one’s living ideals –part of one’s personal identity - that on their turn are strongly connected with one’s neighbourhood, as such also contributing to the city’s future.

Notwithstanding they are/feel very responsible, they are also very demanding. But that’s why cities need this difficult target group. “The quality of cities is benefiting from a policy aiming at sections of the population that are highly demanding concerning the city as place to live, groups for who an extra effort needs to be put in, an effort whose results finally help everyone. Urban middle-class families belong to groups that are connected with the city and that can play an important role in the social networks that sustain urban live.

This category distinguishes itself from other target groups of the urban policy. They do not only appreciate the city as a creative place to work and go out, but also place great demands on the city as place to live, on the quality of daily services and on the pedagogical climate. This means that besides an appropriate house, an attractive environment is required.”⁴⁷

They still might be a minority today, maybe they seemed to have disappeared, or at least become invisible, as policymakers focussed on the wealthy and creative class (yuppies, couples without children,...) and the spending tourists but in reality families with children never totally disappeared: Paul and Els never left the city and their children, who are all married today, live close by. Michel grow up in Zurenborg. Today with his wife Christel, he lives in Antwerpen-Noord together with their young children.

Although our sample didn’t mean to be representative it is striking that everybody we interviewed, are all (young) highly educated culturally oriented and engaged people –indeed exactly the people the city is looking for. The city only doesn’t seem to realize that these families do belong to the creative people they want in their city- that consciously came to live in Antwerp. Among the interviewed there were an urbanist, two sociologists, a jazz musician, an agronomist planner, two architects, a teacher,...

Also Albertijn says that most of *his* families are young couples with children but he immediately admits that this is not fully representative. Composing the database they walk through the neighbourhoods looking for new houses, ringing bells, asking people to participate. Immigrants and elderly people f.i. are not so prone to open their houses for strangers. That’s why they are underrepresented. But even if they weren’t, the major part would still be higher educated families with children.

As already said earlier in this text, they choose for the city because of the comfort –“I love the density of the infrastructure: the tramway, the shops, the cultural variety”/“you gain commuting time to stay with your children”- and the added value of the city –“the complexity

of the city is attractive, even if full of conflict”/”although the city sometimes feels dangerous for children it is a worthwhile experience”/”while living outside the city, I felt I missed something”.⁴⁸

Fragments 06/doubts

(E) Anyway to me the city still seems to be a dangerous place for children.

(Ktln) the city is also very dangerous for small children. [...] it is not possible to leave them on the streets alone without supervision.

Their conscious choice for the city doesn't mean they don't have doubts. On the contrary under the skin, doubt is often present during the interviews especially when talking about the (young) children.

As much as possible they seem to try to resolve their own doubts but there is also an important task for the city as the responsible for more green, playgrounds and safer and cleaner streets.

(All interviews were made by Prof. P. Viganò and took place in july and august 2005. The author assisted all the interviews.)

Tissue

Concerning the dynamics of change in an urban landscape three aspects are involved: the city plan, the built tissue and the land use. The land use is the most easy to change, the built tissue less because it represents built capital, the most resistant is the city plan.⁴⁹ In other words street patterns and parcel structures are less subject to change than individual houses.⁵⁰

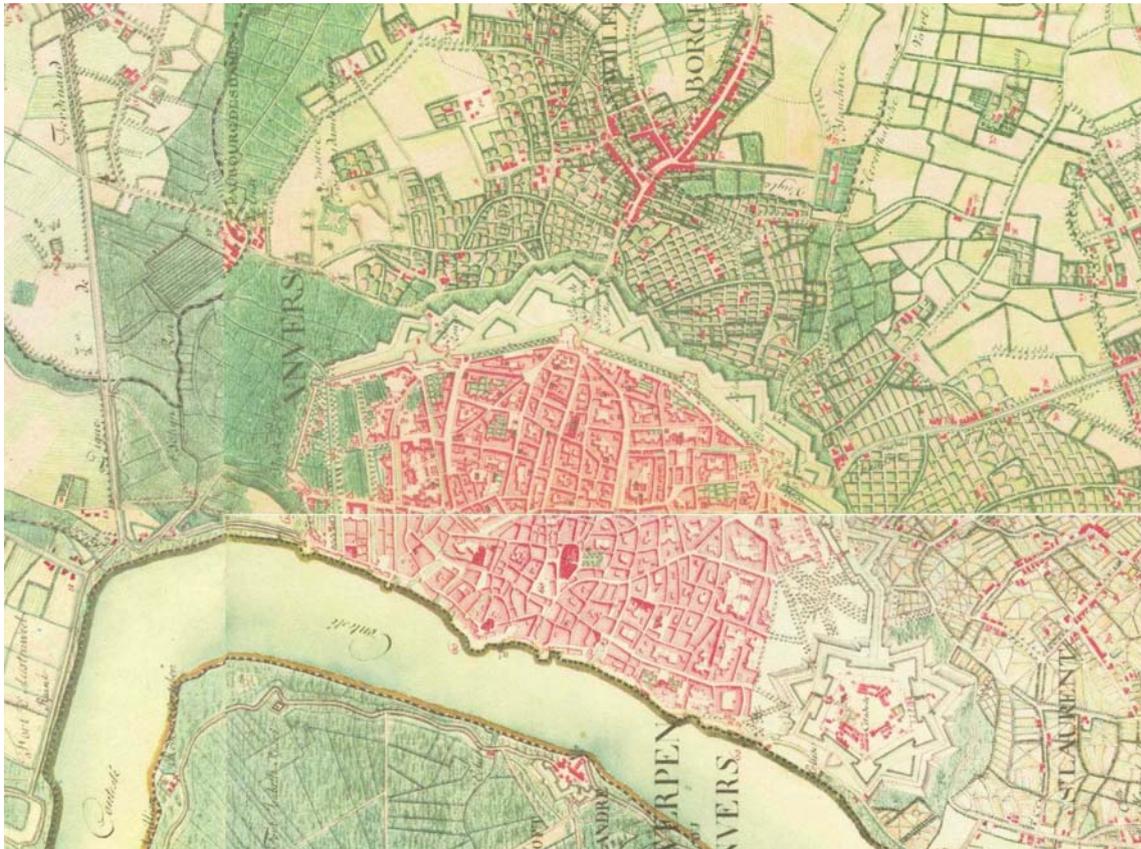
As pointed out by Heynen and De Meulder “the way in which certain neighbourhoods are put together –the size of the houses, the width of the streets, the accessibility of the interior, the presence of squares and public open spaces etc.- plays an important role in their socio-economic evolution.”⁵¹

The location of the area, its structural morphology i.e. the urban pattern that gives form to a neighbourhood -like the pattern of the streets or the rhythm of parcels- and the typology are important spatial factors.⁵² Besides the development modus and the transformation modus, which is a social-economical factor often has an important influence.⁵³

We take into account these factors while looking to the history of the 19th century belt, trying to understand the value of different locations, their structural morphology and the present typologies during their development and transformation.

Development and transformation_1

The Ferraris map of 1775 shows us how the city is *locked in* by the Spanish fortifications dating from the 16th century.



source: Stad Antwerpen, Studio 07

At the beginning of the 19th century it seems that the city, being in some kind of hibernation for a few centuries, wakes up. Population starts to grow exponentially: from 55.000 in 1800,

to 60000 in 1812 and to 112000 around 1860. While the population doubles, the housing stock (inside and outside the city walls) only grows with 30%: from 10500 in 1797 to 13700 in 1856.⁵⁴ In the meantime the expansion of the harbour, military restrictions and the high class claim more and more surface inside the city.

Because of the fortifications and their glacis -585m zone non-aedificandi- it is not possible for the rich to go and live immediately outside the city in a residential district, like happened in a lot of other cities. Instead of moving out of the city, leaving their neighbourhoods to be colonized by the poor, they claim more area forcing the lower class to leave the city and live behind the glacis.⁵⁵ A 5th district rapidly starts to develop outside the city.

When the city around 1860 decides to build new fortifications, demolishing the Spanish fortifications and displacing them by a boulevard 'de Leien', the former glacis is *invaded*.

To illustrate: "to the north-east of the existing city the urbanisation [...] takes place almost entirely within a period of less than twenty years."⁵⁶

Typology

The '*nineteenth century belt*', i.e. the area between former 16th century and the new 19th century fortifications, "fills up like an ocean of identical speculative *investment properties, modest terraced houses and maisons*." The main type of housing is the row house, present in all its possible variants.⁵⁷

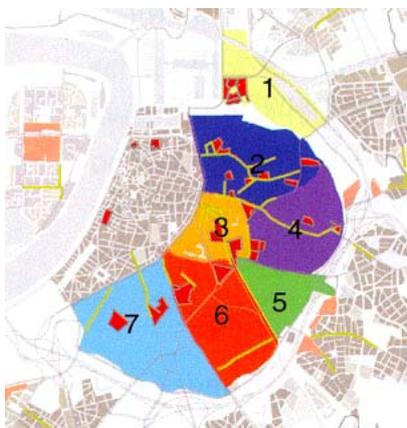
Structural morphology

"The tight residential fabric of the inner city –today known as the nineteenth century belt- is therefore created in one fell swoop. [...] This urbanisation does not take place according to a plan."⁵⁸

A global development plan for this zone has never been made. In his plan Van Bever (1864) only designs the division of the area in blocks, introducing new harbour- and railway infrastructure and continuing some existing streets.⁵⁹

The existing tissue is especially the result of two approaches:

1. a systematic, non coordinated, parcelling out on pure speculative basis resulting in parcel structure of very small and deep lots.
2. a coordinated allotment of four zones: the neighbourhood around the city park, 't Zuid (the South), Zurenborg and Cogels-Osylei, the area around Van Putlei. Four areas that are developed for the wealthy bourgeoisie, often with a semi-detached pattern.



1. Antwerpen-Dam
2. Antwerpen-Noord
3. Diamant (=Stadspark)
4. Oud-Borgerhout (=Borgerhout-intra-Muros)
5. Zurenborg/Cogels-Osylei
6. Haringrode-Oud Berchem
7. Zuid.

Source: sRSA

Location

Roughly the 19th century belt is split up in two parts with a related but different morphology: the speculative disorganized part in the north and the coordinated part in the south. In the middle we see the city park.⁶⁰

We find the modest working-class dwellings in the (poor) north and the middle-class houses and bel-etages in the (rich) south, south-east.

Compared to other European cities, like Barcelona or Paris where the 19th century belt developed according to a concrete plan, the Antwerp 19th century belt has a rather particular tissue. During the 19th century Amsterdam faced a similar problem that was finally countered by the plan of Berlage at the beginning of the 20th century.⁶¹

Being composed out of small individual lots -instead of building blocks- Antwerp today is confronted with thousands of private owners and as much individual properties, which make it for the city difficult to act on a larger scale.⁶²

The individual initiatives on the contrary demonstrate how *the result of the mistakes of the past* (i.e. development without any form of plan(ning)) turns out to be the key for the future: individual initiative as driving force for the city, perfectly in correspondence with the strong individual oriented Flemish way of living. The weakness of the tissue has become its strength.

Research on Amsterdam, studying the different living environments, showed that allotment in individual parcels and the presence of inhabitant-owners are two important conditions to guarantee survival chances on the long term.⁶³

Development and transformation_2

With the exception of the area around the city park -which changed a lot during the '30 when the private middle class houses were taken down and replaced by luxury apartments⁶⁴- still today three of the coordinated neighbourhoods are among the most popular Antwerp districts.

The neighbourhoods around Cogels-Osylei and Van Putlei have always been expensive, exclusive areas and they still are.

Zurenborg and 't Zuid are the most popular among young people and families to live and/or go out. They even might have become too popular: they are *overrated* and prices are going crazy already for some years. While in the city of Antwerp the average price increased with 157% between 1985-1998, prices in Zurenborg tripled and for 't Zuid they were 453% higher in 1998 than in 1985.⁶⁵

Certain areas are slowly becoming priceless. Not necessary only in the sense that there are families that cannot afford it but also in the sense that some people, aware of the opportunities of other (cheaper) neighbourhoods, just are not prepared to pay those high prices although they can afford it.

So some move because they simply have to, others move because they want to. Both groups start to look for cheaper alternatives in the existing housing stock that are mostly located in the 19th century belt. In the case of Antwerp the northern part of the 19th century belt: Antwerpen-Noord, Antwerpen-Dam, Oud-Borgerhout. *The ugly ducklings of the city.*

The weakness of the tissue becomes its strength_1

According to De Decker, young families with two incomes looking for a (economically) attractive place to live in the existing stock of cheap dwellings is a growing phenomenon, although they easily can afford better as well inside as outside the city.⁶⁶ Recent interviews he made with some young families in the Rabot district in Ghent 19th century belt confirmed his hypothesis.⁶⁷

The bad quality of the housing stock in the 19th century belt makes it very *porous*, i.e cheap, leaving those who can afford it a lot of opportunities since they, driven by the quest for an *urban identity* and after having bought the house, still have disposal of a reasonable budget to invest in the renovation of their house. Doing so they upgrade the average quality of the existing housing stock and as such the attraction of the area. As such the *porosity* attracts the attention of other young families but also of the market and the city.

Also in Antwerp there are strong indications confirming this latently present *scenario from below*⁶⁸ in which the individual private initiative becomes the driving force.

Michel Albertijn⁶⁹ confirms for Antwerp what De Decker observes in Ghent. Each year his office *Tempera*⁷⁰ organizes *Buurt-in-Zicht* (Neighbourhood-in-the picture), a series of guided tours along some remarkable houses in the Antwerp 19th century belt showing the potentialities of the districts, refuting their *negative* image. And it works!⁷¹

After 13 years their database *Antwerpen-Noord/Borgerhout intra muros*⁷² contains more than 1000 houses, most of them owned by young families. Each year more families are added. Often the newly added are old walkers who discovered the neighbourhood by *Buurt-in-Zicht* or friends of people who are already in the database.⁷³

In 2004 when they celebrated the 10th anniversary of *Buurt-in-Zicht* they did a small (not representative) random check, demonstrating that the real revival started around the change of the century, 2000/2001. Especially the last three, four years it struck Albertijn how many new houses appeared in his neighbourhood.

Explaining the growing popularity of the area he refers to the real estate prices that are still rather low, allowing the young couples to buy a cheap house and leaving them enough budget for a creative renovation.

Even though *early* signs, a study of the available data starts to reveal some (hopeful) tendencies. Looking at the north of 19th century belt, which is (historically) the most problematic part, we focus on *Antwerpen-Noord and Borgerhout-intra-Muros*. Both are *known* for their low quality housing, low employment rate, a large ethnic diversity, a low level of education and relatively high vacancy rate due to the loss of commercial functions.⁷⁴

Taking a closer look to the data⁷⁵ for the period 2001-2007 (2001= index 100) we see that the population in Antwerpen-Noord (AN: +13,7%) and Borgerhout-intra-Muros (BiM: +9,1%) grew faster than the population in the total city (SA: +4,6%). What indicates they are more popular than the average district.

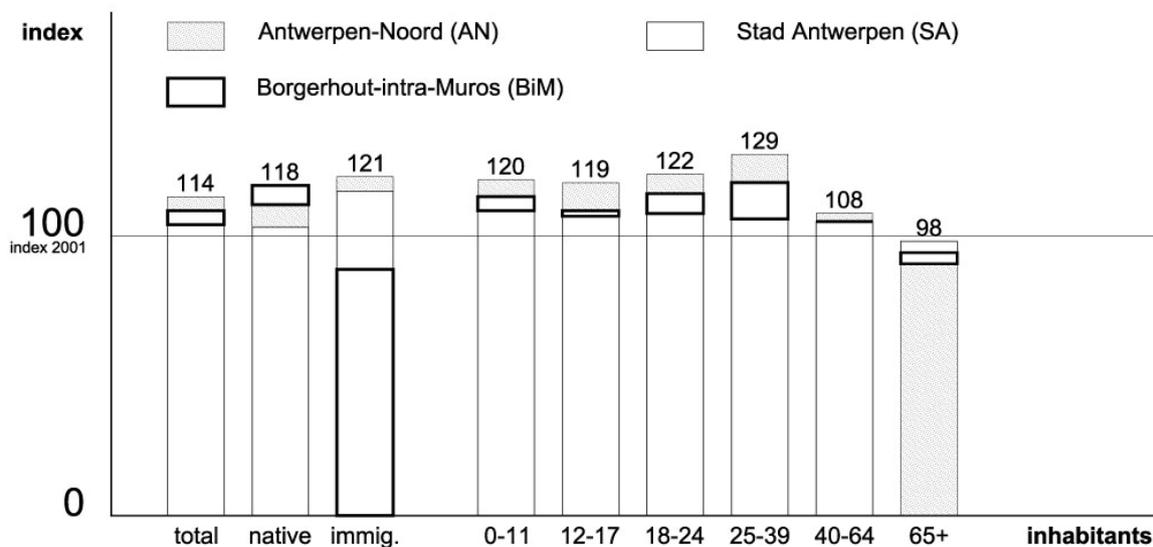
Almost the whole population growth in both districts can be fully ascribed to the age group 0-40 years. In the age groups 40-64 and 65+ the increase is almost equal (40-64 years) or even negative (65+) in respect to city.

Within the 0-40 years age group, the 25-39 years age group is the fastest growing category as well in the district itself (AN: 28,8%; BiM: 18,5%) as in respect to city tendencies (SA: 5,5%). The 25-39 years are closely followed by the 0-11 (AN: +20,0%; BiM: +14,2%; SA: +9,0%) and the 18-24 years (AN: +22,0%; BiM: +14,5%; SA: +7,9%).

The simultaneous growth in the 0-11 and 28-39 age group does strongly suppose that more young families are settling in those parts of the city.

Studying more carefully the prevailing tendencies according to nationality we see that the autochthonous inflow in Antwerpen-Noord is 8,2% higher than global inflow in the city. In Borgerhout-intra-muros it is even 14,7% higher (AN: +11,3%; BiM: +17,8%; SA: +3,1%). The immigrant inflow on the contrary is only 5% higher in Antwerpen-Noord and is even significantly lower (28,1%) in Borgerhout-intra-Muros. Thus both neighbourhoods have a

higher native inflow than the city but while there is still an inflow of immigrants in Antwerpen-Noord, we notice a rather significant outflow in Borgerhout-intra-Muros.



source: Dspa

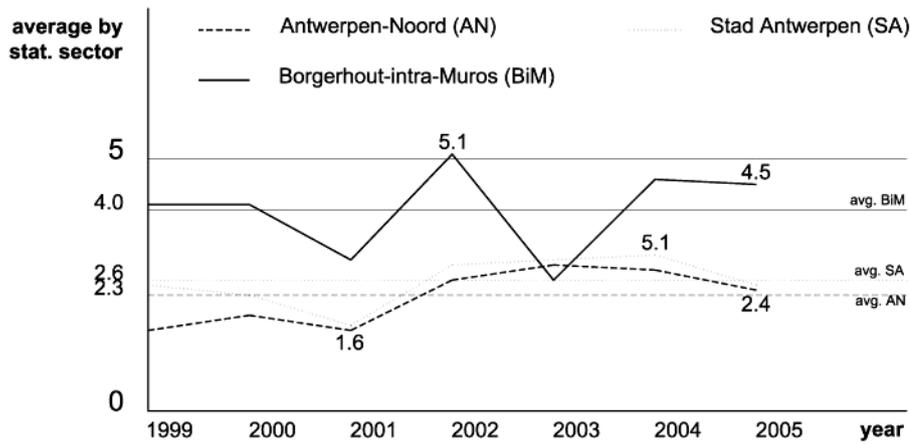
Out of this observations one cannot conclude whether the young families arriving in Antwerpen-Noord have a native or an immigrant origin. For Borgerhout-intra-Muros the situation is much more clear: a big inflow of natives and a significant outflow of immigrants shows mainly native families are finding their way to the neighbourhood to settle down.

Although not representative, broadly speaking the *Buurt-in-Zicht (BiZ)* database (source: Tempera) supports the above made observations.

Counting the average amount of BiZ-families by statistical sector for both areas (AN: 35,1 fam.; BiM: 67,8 fam.) and comparing these figures to the total average by sector for Antwerpen-Noord and Borgerhout-intra-Muros together (45,8 fam.)

Knowing that Albertijn estimates that 90% of *his* families are Flemish⁷⁶, we can consider the 13 years old, non representative database to be a kind of *standard of value* for the different neighbourhoods. Doing so, one notices the popularity of Borgerhout intra Muros while, as noticed before, it is less clear how Antwerpen Noord is evolving.

Focussing on the evolution of building permissions for renovation (period: '99-'05, source: Stad Antwerpen) confirms the upward spiral in which Borgerhout intra Muros finds itself. The average amount of building permissions for renovation by statistical sector for total Antwerp is 2,6. For Borgerhout-intra-Muros we note an average of 4,0 while for Antwerpen-Noord is it only 2,3. The building permissions don't reveal any clear tendency for Antwerpen-Noord.



source: Stad Antwerpen

What we do notice in Antwerpen-Noord is that around the new urban landscape park SpoorNoord, which is in full development, there are some sectors in which there are on the average (3,0; 3,1; 3,3 by sector) more requests for building permissions than average (2,3). Two of those areas correspond with more popular BiZ-sectors in Antwerpen-Noord. This could indicate a growing popularity of the area around the future park, which intuitively isn't impossible. However, based on the available data it remains a strong hypothetical supposition.

(Sub)urban

Starting from the Graz case studies⁷⁷ we see how the different renovation projects, being in fact different experiments on an individual parcel and different variations on the *row house* type, end up to be the most personal expression of living in the city: *the horizontal house* [4] is a fortress with tree patio's, *the six floors of happiness* [3] have a transparent stone garden on the ground floor and a roof terrace, *the house of the stacked houses* [1] has a park and *the double house* [2] encloses an intimate city garden.



source: Studio 07

In the end -although being convinced city people- they all live in a single family (row)house with a garden/private outdoor space. *Family-house-garden*: the presence of those pre-eminently suburban characteristics is striking and at the same time very interesting as it shows that essential living qualities (like f.i. calm, private garden,...) that *for some reason* are standard linked to the suburb can also be found in the city.

There is no doubt that this conclusion incorporates a major opportunity for the city to create an opening to those that are (undeservedly) devoted to the '*modern extravagance*', '*luxurious classic*' or '*nostalgia of the past*'⁷⁸ of suburbia.

The weakness of the tissue becomes its strength_2

Besides it becomes clear that contrary to what the architectural yearbooks do suggest, there is a lot of (private) experimenting to find new living concepts within the urban tissue. Especially the (Antwerp) 19th century belt turns out to be a real laboratory for new solutions. What we see is the private initiative taking over one of the important action fields of the public indicated by Loeckx and Schreurs.⁷⁹ They suggest the necessity of “project of punctual interventions systematically showing the renovation possibilities of the different common types of city dwellings, serving as an example” because “for innumerable slummy corner houses, empty upper floors, to small parcels, etc... it matters to realize some inventive and yet affordable solutions.”⁸⁰ That is exactly what those separate private initiatives are showing us.

The role of the city

Luc Deleu was right when he emphasized that small-scale interventions are the pre-eminently tool for the 19th century belt but that administratively they are often discouraged instead of encouraged⁸¹. The rigidity of some old, out of date building prescriptions is indeed a problem. Our case studies confirm this problem as not all the new concepts 100% match the prevailing rules.

On one hand the city should support and stimulate those initiatives maybe by subsidizing them but even so by profoundly evaluating every case, allowing deviations on the existing prescriptions if necessary. On the other hand the city should learn from them, ameliorating their own interventions in the tissue.

Therefore a vigorous *grond- en pandenbeleid* (plot and dwelling policy) is a must. Apart from being an instrument to deal with vacancy and decay, it can become an innovative tool to experiment with and show new dwelling concepts: the project by *Huiswerk architecten* is a good example of this policy.



source: www.huis-werk.be

Contrary to most of the private projects the *Huiswerk project* is very visible in the street scene. It opens itself to street life, standing there as an image of change/innovation. It makes readable some of the dynamics going on in the tissue and it demonstrates that the government can be a ‘good architect’.

The spatial quality of the public space in the 19th century belt is a well known problem. Streets are in the first place thought as a space of traffic: good signalisation, fluent traffic, as much parking space as possible and... a small pedestrian walkway⁸². In other words:

attraction below zero. No wonder that a lot of private owners prefers to orientate their house to the inside like a fortress in the city.⁸³ The invisibility of the private projects might be the biggest challenge for the city. As well kept secrets they lie carefully hidden in the speculative tissue of the 19th century belt.

Conclusions

This paper focussed on young high educated families with children who decide to live in the city. We approached the phenomenon from two sides: from a historical point of view and from an urban economical point of view.

Historically we pointed out the importance of the characteristics of the urban fabric composed out of individual lots on one hand and the porosity of the tissue on the other.

We showed how, in the case of Antwerp, the porosity was the result of some general phenomena (local industry leaving the city etc...) and of a historically grown anti-urban tradition, that still lasts today.

This anti-urban tradition went hand in hand with the realisation of the *Flemish urban dream*: a detached single family house outside the city in the green.

From an urban economical point of view we showed that, although it is becoming more difficult to realise *the Flemish living ideal*, families who decide to live in the city are driven by a quest for an urban identity in the first place and they do not at share the *Flemish urban dream*.

While it becomes much more difficult to realize this dream, the urban tissue opens up, offering a lot of possibilities, bringing the existing housing stock more to the focus.

Because they are porous some parts of the city start to become very open to small scale changes. The veiled parcel structure turned out to be problematic while trying to realize larger recovery projects in the past. We showed that this *weakness from the past* is the strength of today turning the 19th century belt into a laboratory. What we proved on the basis of four interesting case studies that turned out to be urban in terms of location but suburban by conviction.

We demonstrated that driven by individual initiative even the most problematic Antwerp neighbourhoods slowly start to ameliorate and that today, contrary to two years ago⁸⁴ when this phenomenon was not readable from statistics, the first shifts are clearly visible.

Concerning the role of the city we plead for more flexible and personal approach of upcoming individual initiatives. We encouraged the city to go on with the *visible individual* projects they are realizing. We also encouraged them to deal more profoundly with the problem of the public space and to look for initiatives simulating people to live towards the street instead of towards the inside of the block.

Above all we indicated some positive tendencies, that make us hope for the best for the future.

Bibliography

Albertijn, Michel & De Vroey, Leen (2006) *Inspirerende renovaties in de stad : nieuw leven voor Antwerpen-Noord en Oud-Borgerhout : 73 ideeën voor stadswoningen en herenhuizen*, Tielt: Lannoo

Benjamin, Walter (1990), *Stadsgezichten*, Utrecht: Veen

Crivit, Robert (2005) "Stedenbeleid in de 21^{ste} eeuw? Een gesprek met Linda Boudry en Pascal De Decker.", *Oikos*, No. 35 (fall)

Colenbrander, Bernard (1999) *De verstrooide stad*, Rotterdam: NAI uitgevers

Coppens, Luc (2004) "Analyse. Waarom wij los van elkaar willen wonen", *De Standaard*, Vol. 81, No. 208 (September)

De Decker, Pascal (2006) *Is the Belgian housing model crumbling off?*, paper for the Conference Home ownership in Europe: policy and research issues, Delft, 23-24 November 2006

De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

Devos, Rob & Vanmarcke, Luc (eds.) (2003) *Uitsluiting – Insluiting. Kanttekening bij een beleid van sociale integratie*, Leuven: Acco

de Waal, Jan & Milanovic, Mirjana (1998) *Intens wonen. Veranderlijkheid van het Amsterdamse wonen*. Amsterdam: Coördinatie-team Optimalisering Stedelijk Grondgebruik

Dillemans, Roger & Loeckx, André & Neuckermans, Herman (1993) *Wegwijs wonen*, Leuven: Davidsfonds

Heylen Kristof; Leroy Marie; Vanden Broucke, Steven; Vandekerckhove, Brecht; Winters, Sien (2007) *Wonen in Vlaanderen. De resultaten van de Woonsurvey 2005 en de uitwendige Woonschouwing 2005. Samenvatting*, Brussel: Departement Ruimtelijke Ordening, Woonbeleid en onroerend erfgoed

Janssens, Philippe & De Wael, Paul (2005) *50 jaar Belgische vastgoedmarkt 1953-2003: waar geschiedenis tot toekomst vergroeit*, Roeselaere: Roularta Books

Karsten, Lia (2003) "Family Gentrifiers: Challenging the city as a place simultaneously to build a career and to raise children.", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 12 (November)

Karsten, Lia & Reijndorp, Arnold & van der Zwaard, Joke (2006) *Smaak voor de stad. Een studie naar de stedelijke woonvoorkeur van gezinnen.*, Den Haag: Ministerie van VROM

Leysen, Christian (2003) *Antwerpen: onvoltooide stad*, Tielt: Lannoo

Pellegrini, Paola & Viganò, Paola (eds.) (2006), *Prototypes of idiorrhythmical conglomerates and shared spaces. Comment vivre ensemble*, Roma: Officina Edizioni

Pittillion, Filip (2006) *Bouwblokprojecten als instrument in de poreuze stad. De 19^{de} eeuwse gordel als labo*, unpublished master thesis.

Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

Smets, Marcel (1977) *De ontwikkeling van de tuinvijkgedachte in België. Een overzicht van de Belgische volkswoningbouw 1830-1930.*, Brussel: Pierre Mardaga

Stad Antwerpen with Studio Secchi-Viganò and Iris Consulting (external team) (2006), *Strategisch ruimtelijk structuurplan. Antwerpen Ontwerpen*, Antwerpen: Stad Antwerpen, stadsontwikkeling

Van Herck, Karina & Avermate, Tom (2006) *Wonen in welvaart. Woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen, 1948-1973*, Antwerpen: VAI/CVAa; Rotterdam: 010

Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

¹ Kesteloot, Christian (2003) "Verstedelijking in Vlaanderen: problemen, kansen en uitdagingen voor het beleid in de 21^{ste} eeuw" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

Smets, Marcel (1993) "Stedenbouw en maatschappelijke ontwikkeling" in: Dillemans, Roger; Loeckx, André; Neuckermans, Herman (1993) *Wegwijs wonen*, Leuven: Davidsfonds

² The analysis of the Flemish urbanisation history shows us that the legendary "brick in the Belgian stomach" is mainly a "Flemish brick".

Kesteloot, Christian (2003) "Verstedelijking in Vlaanderen: problemen, kansen en uitdagingen voor het beleid in de 21^{ste} eeuw" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

³ Coppens, Luc (2004) "Analyse. Waarom wij los van elkaar willen wonen", *De Standaard*, Vol. 81, No. 208 (September)

see also AXA (2004) *De baksteenbarometer van AXA. Een studie naar de houding van de Belg ten aanzien van wonen. Deel 1: over het baksteengevoel van de Belg*, www.axa.be/pdfs/Bricindex_nl.pdf

⁴ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

see also De Decker, Pascal (2006) *Is the Belgian housing model crumbling off?*, paper for the Conference Home ownership in Europe: policy and research issues, Delft, 23-24 November 2006

see also De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

⁵ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

Viganò, Paola (2006) "The porous city: prototypes of idiorrhythmical conglomerates" in: Pellegrini, Paola & Viganò, Paola (eds.) (2006), *Prototypes of idiorrhythmical conglomerates and shared spaces. Comment vivre ensemble*, Roma: Officina Edizioni

⁶ De Decker, Pascal (2006) *Is the Belgian housing model crumbling off?*, paper for the Conference Home ownership in Europe: policy and research issues, Delft, 23-24 November 2006

Viganò, Paola (2006) "The porous city: prototypes of idiorrhythmical conglomerates" in: Pellegrini, Paola & Viganò, Paola (eds.) (2006), *Prototypes of idiorrhythmical conglomerates and shared spaces. Comment vivre ensemble*, Roma: Officina Edizioni

⁷ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

⁸ Loots, Ilse (1993) "De stad als netwerk: stedelijkheid versus territorialiteit" in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁹ Smets, Marcel (1977) *De ontwikkeling van de tuinvijkgedachte in België. Een overzicht van de Belgische volkswoningbouw 1830-1930.*, Brussel: Pierre Mardaga

¹⁰ Smets, Marcel (1977) *De ontwikkeling van de tuinvijkgedachte in België. Een overzicht van de Belgische volkswoningbouw 1830-1930.*, Brussel: Pierre Mardaga

¹¹ Theunis, Katrien (2006) "De wet De Taeye. De individuele woning als bouwsteen van de welvaartstraat" in Van Herck, Karina & Avermate, Tom (2006) *Wonen in welvaart. Woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen, 1948-1973*, Antwerpen: VAI/CVAa; Rotterdam: 010

¹² Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

¹³ As already mentioned: the industrialisation went together with a speedy urbanisation, which went together with "a huge densification of bad housing, forming the frame for diseases and epidemics, moral decay and above all encouraging socialism. The powers in force tried to counter these developments by –among others- two spatial strategies. On one hand they tried to increase the mobility of the workers; on the other hand they promoted home ownership outside the city."

De Decker, Pascal (2006) *Is the Belgian housing model crumbling off?*, paper for the Conference Home ownership in Europe: policy and research issues, Delft, 23-24 November 2006

¹⁴ Vanhole, Kamiel (2006) "Hoe het land versteende" in Van Herck, Karina & Avermate, Tom (2006) *Wonen in welvaart. Woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen, 1948-1973*, Antwerpen: VAI/CVAa; Rotterdam: 010

¹⁵ Kesteloot, Christian (2003) "Verstedelijking in Vlaanderen: problemen, kansen en uitdagingen voor het beleid in de 21^{ste} eeuw" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

¹⁶ Janssens, Philippe & De Wael, Paul (2005) *50 jaar Belgische vastgoedmarkt 1953-2003: waar geschiedenis tot toekomst vergroeit*, Roeselaere: Roularta Books

¹⁷ source: Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek (NIS) (National Institute for Statistics)

¹⁸ Janssens, Philippe & De Wael, Paul (2005) *50 jaar Belgische vastgoedmarkt 1953-2003: waar geschiedenis tot toekomst vergroeit*, Roeselaere: Roularta Books

¹⁹ source: Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek (NIS) (National Institute for Statistics)

²⁰ source: Databank Sociale Planning Antwerpen, (Database Social Planning Antwerp). Available at: www.dspa.be

²¹ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

²² Porous/porosity was a metaphor first used by Walter Benjamin when he described Naples. Benjamin, Walter (1990), *Stadsgezichten*, Utrecht: Veen

The image of the porous city is one of the seven images that Bernardo Secchi and Paola Viganò used in their structure plan for Antwerp to describe the city. Stad Antwerpen with Studio Secchi-Viganò and Iris Consulting (external team) (2006), *Strategisch ruimtelijk structuurplan. Antwerpen Ontwerpen*, Antwerpen: Stad Antwerpen, stadsontwikkeling

²³ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

²⁴ Mobility problems and the absence of all kind of services like shops, restaurants, cinema's are cited the most.

Coppens, Luc (2004) "Analyse. Waarom wij los van elkaar willen wonen", *De Standaard*, Vol. 81, No. 208 (September)

²⁵ De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ Heylen Kristof; Leroy Marie; Vanden Broucke, Steven; Vandekerckhove, Brecht; Winters, Sien (2007) *Wonen in Vlaanderen. De resultaten van de Woonsurvey 2005 en de uitwendige Woonschouwing 2005. Samenvatting*, Brussel: Departement Ruimtelijke Ordening, Woonbeleid en onroerend erfgoed.

AXA (2004) *De baksteenbarometer van AXA. Een studie naar de houding van de Belg ten aanzien van wonen. Deel 1: over het baksteengevoel van de Belg*, www.axa.be/pdfs/Bricindex_nl.pdf

²⁸ De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

²⁹ Over the last ten years (1993-2003) ground prices in Flanders tripled (+208%) while building costs followed the inflation trend raising +/-30%. Now ground makes half of the budget, compared with a third in 1993.

Janssens, Philippe & De Wael, Paul (2005) *50 jaar Belgische vastgoedmarkt 1953-2003: waar geschiedenis tot toekomst vergroeit*, Roeselaere: Roularta Books

³⁰ De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

³¹ Janssens, Philippe & De Wael, Paul (2005) *50 jaar Belgische vastgoedmarkt 1953-2003: waar geschiedenis tot toekomst vergroeit*, Roeselaere: Roularta Books

³² <http://www.confederatiebouw.be/index.nl.asp>

³³ Coppens, Luc (2004) "Analyse. Waarom wij los van elkaar willen wonen", *De Standaard*, Vol. 81, No. 208 (September)

³⁴ bouwvergunningen, gedetailleerde cijfers per gemeente (1996-2006), www.statbel.fgov.be/figures/d65_nl.asp

³⁵ De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

³⁶ "The row house varies from the tight workers house over [...] the *bel etage*, etc... to the stately *maison* and the master house. [...] The dwelling program is developed as a connection of spaces each level and a vertical stacking of levels that usually create functional distinction (day/night zone or in the *maison*: servant's space, reception space and private rooms). The property line along which the front façade is erected, marks the strong division public space (street) and the private space (house and backyard). This doesn't prevent that within the house itself a shade of more public to private spaces is expanded.[...] As spatial organization grid it proved to be sufficient enough to absorb the whole range from the workers house 'till the *maison*."

De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

³⁷ Loeckx, André & Verpoest, Luc (1993) "Typologie van de woning" in: Dillemans, Roger & Loeckx, André & Neuckermans, Herman (1993) *Wegwijs wonen*, Leuven: Davidsfonds

³⁸ De Meulder, Bruno & Loeckx, André (2003) "Wonen op zoek naar stedelijkheid, dichtheid en duurzaamheid. Debatten, realiteiten, perspectieven" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

³⁹ in his master thesis Filip Pittillion distinguishes four categories of building blocks:

	depth block (m)	surface (m ²)	depth parcel (m)
S	db < 36	s < 5000	< 18
M	36 < db < 100	5000 < s < 10000	max. 24.
L	100 < db	10000 < s < 20000	max. 24
XL	200 < db	20000 < s	var./max. 50

Pittillion, Filip (2006) *Bouwblokprojecten als instrument in de poreuze stad. De 19^{de} eeuwse gordel als labo*, unpublished master thesis.

⁴⁰ Karsten, Lia & Reijndorp, Arnold & van der Zwaard, Joke (2006) *Smaak voor de stad. Een studie naar de stedelijke woonvoorkeur van gezinnen.*, Den Haag: Ministerie van VROM

⁴¹ Kesteloot, Christian (2003) "Verstedelijking in Vlaanderen: problemen, kansen en uitdagingen voor het beleid in de 21^{ste} eeuw" in: Schets, Liesje (ed.) (2003) *De eeuw van de stad. Over stadsrepublieken en rastersteden: voorstudies*, Brussel: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap

⁴² Karsten, Lia; Reijndorp, Arnold; van der Zwaard, Joke (2006) *Smaak voor de stad. Een studie naar de stedelijke woonvoorkeur van gezinnen.*, Den Haag: Ministerie van VROM

⁴³ Karsten, Lia (2003) "Family Gentrifiers: Challenging the city as a place simultaneously to build a career and to raise children.", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 12 (November)

⁴⁴ Karsten, Lia; Reijndorp, Arnold; van der Zwaard, Joke (2006) *Smaak voor de stad. Een studie naar de stedelijke woonvoorkeur van gezinnen.*, Den Haag: Ministerie van VROM

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

⁴⁹ Colenbrander, Bernard (1999) *De verstrooide stad*, Rotterdam: NAI uitgevers

⁵⁰ Loeckx, André & Verpoest, Luc (1993) "Typologie van de woning" in: Dillemans, Roger & Loeckx, André & Neuckermans, Herman (1993) *Wegwijs wonen*, Leuven: Davidsfonds

⁵¹ De Meulder, Bruno; Heynen, Hilde "De rol van de ruimte bij processen van uitsluiting en normalisering. Een toelichting aan de hand van een uitgewerkte case study (De Coninckplein, Antwerpen)" in: Devos, Rob & Vanmarcke, Luc (eds.) (2003) *Uitsluiting – Insluiting. Kanttekening bij een beleid van sociale integratie*, Leuven: Acco

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ the developmentmodus refers to the historical processes that have led to the realization of a certain environment, the transformationmodus are the current processes that produce the change of it.

De Meulder, Bruno; Heynen, Hilde "De rol van de ruimte bij processen van uitsluiting en normalisering. Een toelichting aan de hand van een uitgewerkte case study (De Coninckplein, Antwerpen)" in: Devos, Rob & Vanmarcke, Luc (eds.) (2003) *Uitsluiting – Insluiting. Kanttekening bij een beleid van sociale integratie*, Leuven: Acco

⁵⁴ Leysen, Christian (2003) *Antwerpen: onvoltooide stad*, Tielt: Lannoo

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ De Meulder, Bruno; Heynen, Hilde “De rol van de ruimte bij processen van uitsluiting en normalisering. Een toelichting aan de hand van een uitgewerkte case study (De Coninckplein, Antwerpen)” in: Devos, Rob & Vanmarcke, Luc (eds.) (2003) *Uitsluiting – Insluiting. Kanttekening bij een beleid van sociale integratie*, Leuven: Acco

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Lombaerde, Piet (1993) “Op zoek naar de identiteit van de 19^e eeuwse gordel te Antwerpen. Problemen bij de interpretatie van de plattegronden en het voorbeeld van de wijk Stuivenberg” in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁶⁰ Desbruns, Valérie (1993) “Woontoestanden in de gordel: de hoognodige bezinning” in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁶¹ Wagenaar, Michel (1993) “Een interpretatie van het stedelijk groeiproces: de cartografie van de Amsterdamse expansie, 1850-1940” in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁶² Related hereto Paola Viganò notes that “the starting up of projects for recovering the large disused areas has been very slow and today, at least twenty years on from when begun, these are still at their outset.” In Viganò, Paola (2005) “No Vision” in: De Michelis & Marco; Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

⁶³ de Waal, Jan & Milanovic, Mirjana (1998) *Intens wonen. Veranderlijkheid van het Amsterdamse wonen*. Amsterdam: Coördinatie-team Optimalisering Stedelijk Grondgebruik

⁶⁴ Desbruns, Valérie (1993) “Woontoestanden in de gordel: de hoognodige bezinning” in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁶⁵ source STADIM, DSPA, available at www.dspa.be

⁶⁶ De Decker, Pascal in Crivit, Robert (2005) “Stedenbeleid in de 21^{ste} eeuw? Een gesprek met Linda Boudry en Pascal De Decker.”, *Oikos*, No. 35 (fall)

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

see also De Decker, Pascal (2006) *Is the Belgian housing model crumbling off?*, paper for the Conference Home ownership in Europe: policy and research issues, Delft, 23-24 November 2006

⁶⁸ Viganò, Paola (2005) “No Vision” in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

⁶⁹ Michel Albertijn grow up in the city, in the Zurenborg district. Since twenty years he lives in the Antwerpen-Noord district. As director of Tempera, he looks at the evolution of his neighbourhood as well with the eye of a professional as with the eye of an inhabitant.

⁷⁰ Tempera is an office led by Kathleen Hoefnagels and Michel Albertijn. Their core business is adapted research on labour and city renewal. www.tempera.be

⁷¹ The most inspiring examples are now put together in publication they made with the city to promote the area.

Albertijn, Michel & De Vroey, Leen (2006) *Inspirerende renovaties in de stad : nieuw leven voor Antwerpen-Noord en Oud-Borgerhout : 73 ideeën voor stadswoningen en herenhuizen*, Tielt: Lannoo

⁷² The district of Borgerhout can be split up in two parts: one inside the 19th century Brialmont fortifications, also called Borgerhout-intra-Muros, and one outside, Borgerhout-extra Muros. As mentioned in this paper, the Antwerp 19th century belt is situated between the 16th and 19th century fortifications.

⁷³ interview with Michel Albertijn. See also, (2007) "Huisjes kijken met Buurt-in-Zicht", *De Standaard*, Vol. 84, No. 137 (june)

⁷⁴ Vanderमotten, Christian; Kesteloot, Christian; Ippersiel, Bertrand, e.a. *Dynamische analyse van buurten in moeilijkheden in de Belgische stadsgewesten*, available at <http://www.grootstedenbeleid.be/content/what/expertise-development/knowledge-production/researches/atlasnl.pdf>

⁷⁵ only if otherwise indicated all the data are coming from the *Databank Sociale Planning Antwerpen* (Database Social Planning Antwerp). Available at: www.dspsa.be.

⁷⁶ Conversation with Michel Albertijn, June 2007. Interview by the author.

⁷⁷ For the No Vision? research by Paola Viganò, in which the author was collaborating, some young families were interviewed and four of them with their house were taken as case study to investigate the hypothesis of a *scenario from below*. The four cases were called *the horizontal house, the house of the stacked houses, the double house and the six floors of happiness*.

Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis & Marco; Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

⁷⁸ Loeckx, André (2006) "Wonen uit de fabriek. De vele levens van de bungalows van Danilith-Delmulle" in Van Herck, Karina & Avermate, Tom (2006) *Wonen in welvaart. Woningbouw en wooncultuur in Vlaanderen, 1948-1973*, Antwerpen: VAI/CVAa; Rotterdam: 010

⁷⁹ Loeckx, André & Schreurs, Jan (1993) "Naar een open stad" in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ Heynen, Hilde (1993) "Discussies over complexiteit, geschiedenis en ontwerp" in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁸² Loeckx, Andre & Schreurs, Jan (1993) "Naar een open stad" in Uyttenhove, Pieter (ed.) (1993) *Tussen kant en wal. De 19^e eeuwse gordel van Anwerpen: elementen voor een cultuur van de stad*. Antwerpen: Studio Open Stad

⁸³ Viganò, Paola (2005) "No Vision" in: De Michelis, Marco & Pakesch, Peter (eds) (2005) *M City European Cityscapes*, Koln: Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König

⁸⁴ We are referring to the research made for Paola Viganò's No Vision, summer 2005.