Brusselization and the urban impact

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The goal of the P1 research was to unravel the complex assemblage of the spatial construct in Anderlecht. The plurality of space is illustrated by theories on space in the urban context by Henri Lefebvre. These theories offer a useful perspective on the constitution of urban space and its use. Lefebvre (1991) introduced a spatial 'triad', consisting of several interpretations of the concept of space and the dynamic relationship between them:

The first interpretation is the representational space, which is produced by historical processes and events. It is the passively experienced space, the reproduction of conceived symbols, ideals and processes that form an image of the city. This interpretation has to be understood through researching history and society in the particular context of Anderlecht.

The second interpretation is based on the physical elements of space, the representations of space. It is a more analytical perception, which can be understood through mapping or modelling space. This view of space allows for measurement and conceptualization by humans.

The third interpretation of space is the spatial practices. It is the use and appropriation of space, which takes place within the products of the other spatial interpretations. The spatial practices come to existence through the relationship between daily routines and urban reality. It can only be put into expression by displaying empirical material that shows the events and movements in and through space.

All interpretations of space have been touched upon in the P1 research. My research questions for follow-up research are about the development of Brussels as seen through the theorical construct of space by Lefebvre. One of the most radical processes in the history of the city is the series of urban renewal projects which are now commonly known as Brusselization, a pejorative term that is used by urban planners. This research seeks to understand the effects of this top-down modernisation fever on the urban space.

THEMES // RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Understanding of space and spatial 'triad' as described in theories by Henri Lefebvre
What constitutes the social aspects of urban space?

Elaborate on interpretation(s) of space
How does Lefebvre's theory apply to architecture?

Describing Brusselization and the conditions in which the process took place
Why and how did Brusselization happen?

Spatial consequences of Brusselization (using the interpretation of space described by Lefebvre)
What are the spatial consequences of these changes?

APPROACH // RESEARCH METHOD

To document the impact of Brusselization on the urban space, one must understand what 'space' means. In each field of research, space might have a different defenition. In the context of this research, Lefebvre's Production of Space will be the basis for the formation of a theoretical framework.

The key to portraying the construct of space is in understanding that the different interpretations of space require different means of visualisation. In order to determine which product is best suited to portray Brusselization in representational space, representations of space and daily practices, it is vital to thoroughly understand Lefebvre's Production of Space. This book illustrates the complexity of visualising or documenting space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 85-86):

"How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given to this sort of question. What we are most likely confronted with here is a sort of instant infinity, a situation reminiscent of a Mondrian painting. It is not only the codes — the map's legend, the conventional signs of map-making and map-reading — that are liable to change, but also the objects represented, the lens through which they are viewed and the scale used. We are confronted not by one social space but by many indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or unaccountable set of social spaces."

To fully decode the plurality of urban space in Brussels, a variety of research methods must be consulted. A combination of visual material and written material will deal with the complexity of urban space. Together they will form a narrative. The research methods which are best suited to document Brusselization are yet to be determined, they will be derived from literature research.

Furthermore, the process of Brusselization and its impact on urban culture will be discussed elaborately. Prior research has indicated that Brusselization is responsible for an 'urban trauma' (Doucet, 2012) and has penetrated into the collective memory of the city. This means that Brusselization, an architectural/urbanist phenomenon, manifests itself in urban culture. The goal is, however paradoxical, to track down these manifestations of architecture and urban design in things that are not architecture and urban design.

DATA // RESEARCH PRODUCTS

Yet to be determined

Brusselization an explanation

The modernist ideology influenced architecture and urbanism all over Europe in the post-war period. Products of modernism in the built environment are rarely considered succesful, regardless of the urban context. However, no other city has a relationship with modernism that is as dubious as Brussels. The city and its residents were subject to a modernisation fever that had a significant impact on the urban fabric and the identity of the city. The failure of the top-down urban planning approach in Brussels made the city into a an exemplary case study that is full of conflicting constructs. The pejorative term *Brusselization* refers to this inexorable urban development in the post-war period. How come, that Brussels is so paradigmatic for the implementation of modernist ideology? Which conditions made Brussels so susceptible for urban development this radical?

ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY?

Although the term Brusselization is usually associated with the modernisation of the city in the post-war period (Doucet, 2012), processes of large scale demolition are not unfamiliar to Brussels. Twice before had residents of historical parts of the city been victimized by the relentless drift of the authorities to modernize. The pressure of such forces made Brussels into what it is today; both eclectic and fragmented, an epitome of how a volatile society affects cities. Manfredo Tafuri wrote about this specific relationship between history and the built environment. According to Tafuri, by producing tangible expressions, architecture and urban design are the primary exhibits of social, cultural, political and economic circumstances in the historical context of a certain location (Lucas, 2016).

Brussels' first wave of large-scale urban renewal was due to the covering of the river Zenne, which could partly be justified by the necessity to intervene in Brussels' poor living conditions in the second half of the 19th century (Bille & Sørensen, 2016). The affluent population left the inner city, while the lower class struggled with cholera outbreaks (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). Modernisation thus coincided with sanitisation, which is generally considered to be the result of an inevitable need to regain control over the troubed situation that Brussels found itself in (Bille & Sørensen, 2016).

However, De Schaepdrijver (1993) explains that solving the problematic hygiene did not require such 'disproportionate' measures. The government took notice of Paris' modern boulevards and aimed for a similar result. These ulterior motives led to plans for similar urban interventions *à la Haussmann* in Brussels. The competitiveness and desire for prestige drove Brussels into a a blind spot. Its haste and ambition converted into a reckless approach to urban planning. The end result turned out to be a deception. The boulevards were seen as alienating and land sales and interest in Parisian apartment buildings remained low (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). The 'climax' of the urban plan, the megalomaniac Palace of Justice by architect Joseph Poelaert, was impopular amongst residents of Brussels (Doucet, 2012). It took account for the mass eviction of inhabitants of the popular Marollen district.

The second wave of destruction was originated in the beginning of the twentieth century. Once again, a forceful and undemocratic process of decision-making resulted in the ereasure of the historc city. 40 acres of urban tissue was impaired for the sake of establishing a railway connection between Brussels' northern and southern station (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). While the first urban modernisation project was at least intended to make the city more attractive, the North-South connection lacked any added value for the public.

Even though initial ideas for this project had been discussed since the mid 1800's, the actual completion happened only in 1952 due to many delays. The plan had been imposed on the city by the Belgian national government (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). The project formed a deep cut in Brussels' pentagonal city centre, in which an underground railway corridor is vaulted with overground roads. New building volumes were exclusively offices (Bille & Sørensen, 2016), thereby failing to rehouse 8.800 residents that had been victimized. While the ambition of king Leopold II to recreate Parisian style boulevards guided the strategy for the Zenne project (Doucet, 2012), it had been the American examples of Washington DC and Manhattan that formed the inspiration for the subsequent urban developments in Brussels (De Schaepdrijver, 1993).

The Zenne Project and the North-South railway project outline the intriguing background of Brusselization. The similar approaches to both projects, being top-down and oriented on the larger scale, seemed to have exactly the opposite result as envisioned. Delays, political and financial setbacks caused a suboptimal execution of plans, leading to further rupturing of the urban fabric (Bille & Sørensen, 2016).

BLIND OPTIMISM AS DRIVING FORCE

The extensive history of unsuccesful urban planning policies in Brussels got its apotheosis in the decades after World War II. This final wave of urban modernisation turned out to be specific to Brussels, as a result of a series of events and processes which made the city so susceptible to the modernisation fever that is now referred to as *Brusselization*.

One of the most important factors in Brusselization is the advent of modernist ideology in architecture and urban planning (Ledent, 2019). Although modernism already gained popularity during the 1930's, actual implementation of the ideology in practice was marginal. Economic and political conditions at the time did not enable the ideology to be carried out (Ledent, 2019). Modernism therefore remained utopian and theoretical in Belgium. Although this led to frustration amongst modernist pioneers. Although theoretical, think tanks such as the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*, or CIAM, and Brussels' central figure in prewar modernism Vincent Bourgeois produced visionary proposals for Brussels (Demeulemeester, 2006). Ledent (2019) perceives that his proposals for *Le Grand Bruxelles* and specifically *Le Nouveau Bruxelles* were aligned with the ideals of CIAM and therefore exemplary for pre-war modernist thinking.

This 'heroic' modernism, as Ledent (2019) states, was however not considered to produce defenitive plans, but posed as a base for discussion instead. *Le Grand Bruxelles* was an examplary project for reforming urban development in the existing city, whereas *Le Nouveau Bruxelles* was an example of revolutionary urban planning, as a model for suburban development. Pre-war modernism was marked by ambition, opportunism and persistence, but the actual impact it had on Brussels was very limited (Demeulemeester, 2006).

In numerous Western European cities, World War II formed an important turn in modernist practice. War-torn urban teritorries made way for modernism and its *tabula rasa* approach. Throughout Europe, a wide public interest in architecture and urban planning was awakened (Mumford, 2002). Although Brussels was not one of the cities that had its urban fabric shredded by bombings, the political desire to reform the city was fierce. These changes in political cirumstances opened up new possibilities for modernism in Brussels.

"Belgium had clearly set standards for its reconstruction ambitions, resolutely and unanimously moving towards modernity" (Ledent, 2019, p.198)

At the same time, intensive scientific research during the war increased the technological possibilities and the belief in technocracy (Mumford, 2002). American metropolises, such as New York City, posed as dreamscapes. They showed how architectural modernism was able to grow freely (Den Tandt et al., 2004). Le Corbusier, key member of the modernist movement CIAM declared the desire to see and learn from a country like the United States, a country of great abundance (Mumford, 2002). Western Europe's adoration of American culture after the Allied victory in WW II transformed American cities into self-evident examples of succesful urban planning.

The Allied victory also ensured that economic resources were more at hand, something that lacked strongly in the inter-war period. The Marshall Plan, together with the city's hosting of the 1958 International Exhibition strengthened the Belgian economy and triggered a new wave of rapid urban development (Romanczyk, 2012).

ENABLING BRUSSELIZATION

Construction of the Atomium - a symbol of faith in science and the future. Built for the Expo'58 in Brussels.

The optimism in Brussels towards the economic prosperity sparked sky-high ambitions for urban development. Yet, the illusion of economic invincibility was not exclusive to Brussels, or even Belgium. Neither is the upsurge of modernism in urban planning practice. The devastating impact of post-war urban development is however much more epitomic in Brussels than in other major European cities. How did the persuation of creating the functional city in Brussels turn out different than in other cities?

Romanczyk (2012) recognizes the uniqueness of the urban transformation in Brussels and describes several key elements in this process. The Expo58 was a crucial event in terms of Brussels establishing its role as Europe's political centre of gravity. The city became the main stage of the European integration by becoming the seat of multiple European political institutions (Ledent, 2019, Romanczyk, 2012).

"Expo58, moreover, symbolized the fact that after twenty years of war and hardship, all the wonders that had happened to the people on the other side of the Atlantic were finally within the reach of Europeans. As a consequence, 1958 is the year of consumerism, of the liberation of the automobile,... 1958 marked the zenith of Americanism in Europe"
(Demeulemeester, 2006, p.20)

The internationalisation of Brussels redefined the economic system of the city. Whereas the industrial economy had been predominant throughout the first half of the 20th century, the knowledge and service economy was on the rise in the second half of the 20th century (Deboosere, 2014). This led to the abandonment of industrial quarters in Brussels, and a dramatic increase in demand for office space.

The keenness of Brussels' local authorities to fulfill the expectations of these European political institutions was redeemed by the 'entrepreneurial' attitude of those authorities (Romanczyk, 2012). Doucet (2012) and State (2015) define this as the 'laissez-faire' attitude towards urban planning in Brussels, which was predominant until 1989. Most symbolic for the 'laissez-faire' attitude was the implementation of the 1962 Town and Country Planning Act, inspired by American urban planning practice.

It enabled developers to build large areas of monofunctional towers within the existing historical urban fabric, thereby allowing block-wide expropriation (Romanczyk, 2012). On the level of the city, there had not been any planning tools that provided political clout. The subdivision of Brussels in nineteen municipalities hindered the ability to establish a shared vision (Bille & Sørensen, 2016). Moreover, the status of the Greater Brussels Region as a federal region did not exist until 1989, which ensured that all political clout was mobilized on a national level (Romanczyk, 2012).

Concluding from that, the lack of systematic urban planning resulted in the inability to accommodate all European institutions into a newly built quarter. Therefore, contrary to the other hubs of European politics, such as Luxembourg and Strasbourg, the European institutions in Brussels are integrated in existing residential areas. The haphazard nature of this type of urban development, made possible by the Act of 1962, is quite specific for Brussels.

THE DESPISED CITY

It is evident that the absence of succesful planning policies in Brussels, the economic optimism throughout the first decades after WW II and the unconditional trust in the future of the 'American' way of living are the building blocks of Brusselization. One important question remains. Why did Brussels have such a marginal interest in preserving the historical city?

After all, in order to build the functional city, the historical city had to be torn down. Iconic buildings and meaningful historical sites were not spared. For example, Victor Horta's *Volkshuis*, considered to be a materpiece of the Art Nouveau style, was demolished in 1965 to make place for a skyscraper (Demeulemeester, 2006). It illustrates the disregard of the city's history and the failure to recognize the unique qualities of the traditional European city.

Of course, the indiscriminate persuation of Americanism, or Manhattanism, dictated the abandonment of faith in the traditional city. However, De Schaepdrijver (1993) indentifies the troubled geopolitical location of Brussels as another main reason which explaines the absence of a willingness to preserve: not only was Brussels barely recognized as capital city during the process of Brusselization, there was also the complete lack of an overarching national identity. Belgium as a nation is characterised as a frail artificial construct, holding together two more outspoken 'nations': Wallonia and Flanders (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). Brussels, in this regard, does not represent a nation. Instead, it represents conflict and disharmony between two. Last, but not least, there is the persisting 'language question'. The city is juggling between Dutch and French (Romanczyk, 2012), symbolic for the mutual misunderstanding between the Flemish and Walloon community. The history of the city is hardly valued by both Wallonia and Flanders. The city's historical sites and site-specific architecture are not seen as elements of a national identity, contrary to Amsterdam and Paris (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). In his book *Brutopia*, Verbeken (2019) describes the 'bruxellophobia', the aversion against Brussels as one of the few things in which Wallonia and Flanders brotherly unite.

Not only does De Schaepdrijver (1993) establish

a link between the willingness to preserve Brussels' architecture and the presence of national identity during the 1960's and 1970's, she considers the link to be visible over a longer period of time. The cultural subdivision and the absence of national awareness therefore seems to be at the root of earlier outbursts of modernisation fevers in Brussels as well. The fluctuations in the extent to which a Belgian national identity is present also led to different attitudes towards postwar reconstruction. The nationwide reconstruction after WW I was aimed at restoring national values and rebuilding the Belgian history.

"The restoration of monuments, the restoration of former townscapes (artificial or not) and the imposed *vieux-neuf* style for architectural façades of urban buildings illustrate to what extent the reconstruction of the First World War was conceived as the personification and formalisation of the national urban community"
(Uyttenhove, 1990, p.53)

This sense of national pride seems strongly connected to the *fin de siècle* in Belgium, the period around the turn of the century leading up to the First World War. A strong national pride developed during this time span (De Schaepdrijver, 1993). The German occupation was therefore strongly seen as an attack on the Belgian national values.

Non of this seemed to be the case during and after the Second World War. Reconstruction was driven by a strong aversion agianst history and its architecture (Uyttenhove, 1990). The sense of national pride evaporated, along with the individualist attitude. By embracing the ideology of work and collectivity after the war, the government laid out a fertile base for the implementation of modernism.

The Ideals of Modernism in Postwar Brussels

The International Exhibition of 1958 was a turning point for modernism in Brussels. The ideals of modernism seemed to be fully embraced in architecture and urban planning. The Expo58 is the manifestation of hope and trust in the modern way of living. The outspoken ambitions of modernism in terms of the impact it was supposed to have on Belgian society is broadly discussed. The explicit interest in everyday life of modernism provides an interesting base for researching the implications of Brusselization on the social construct of space. Therefore it is crucial to highlight the relationship between Brusselization and modernism and the discrepancies between the utopian pre-war 'heroic modernism' and the implementation of modernism in Brussels after World War II. Also, this chapter will highlight the positioning of the modernist ideology in Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* and vice versa.

THE MODERN REVOLUTION

As discussed in the previous chapter, modernism in Brussels failed to have an impact in the early days of modernism. Only after the war, when many urban areas were disrupted by the war, modernism gained a foothold in Western Europe. The promising example of modernism in the United States became the *modus operandi* for building the new world. The aim of this chapter is not to provide a general summary of modernist theories in architecture and urban design, but to outline the specific history of modernism in Brussels' practice.

The origins of the revolutionizing ideas behind modernism are to be found after World War I (Ledent, 2019). In Brussels, urban development was based on European planning paradigms until the 1950's (Den Tandt et al., 2004). Whereas the *Hausmann-style* modernisation in Paris was the inspiration for 19th century urban planning, it had been the early proponents of modernist ideology such as *Bauhaus*, *De Stijl* and CIAM that guided the formation of urban proposals during the inter-war period. As argued in the previous chapter, modernism in urban planning was subject to inertia. The utopian ideas of Victor Bourgeois did however form the basis of subsequent projects (Demeulemeester, 2006).

The proposals by Victor Bourgeois do not merely comply with CIAM, Bourgeois' visions helped to shape CIAM ideals, considering his active membership in the movement (Ledent, 2019). Still, differences in pre-war modernist proposals are strikingly present. Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin,* dating from 1925, fully discarded the existing urban fabric (Verpoest, 2011). Therefore, in *Plan Voisin,* Paris was inflicted with a large, clear-cut intervention to make place for the modern city. This complete rejection of the existing urban fabric was seen as the only way to deal with the 'problems of the city.' Modernist architects argued that traditional cities were struggling with rapid urbanisation, the emergence of the automobile and poor living conditions (Bullock & Verpoest, 2011). Le Corbusier for example declared that the city could no longer be seen as an organism that evolves along with nature. The traditional city was seen as an act against nature (Grulois, 2011). Urban studies should no longer be conducted, with the sole exception

being the studies aimed at denouncing the flaws and weaknesses of the existing cities, as argued by Le Corbusier (Grulois, 2011).

In terms of urban reformation, Bourgeois positioned himself not as anti-urban as his CIAM peer Le Corbusier. In his scheme for *Le Grand Bruxelles*, he pleaded for preservation of the existing urban fabric (Ledent, 2019). According to Bullock and Verpoest (2011), there is more to Bourgeois' preservation efforts. He envisioned a harmonious relationship between the old and the new city. Strategic interventions outside the inner city, Brussels' pentagon, could relieve the historic patrimony of the aforementioned 'problems of the city'. In *Le Grand Bruxelles*, he created a hierarchical system of traffic flows. By seperating the *canaux de promenade* for pedestrians from the *autostrades* for motorized traffic, he reformed the entire traffic system of the city (Ledent, 2019). Just outside the city's 'pentagon', Bourgeois substituted the urban fabric of the *Noordwijk* for widely spaced high-rises. This reinvented part of the city was set to attain the role of city centre, since both of Brussels' main railway stations were projected in the area. The northermost station served as an international hub, the other served domestic connections (Ledent, 2019).

The sympathetic attitude of Bourgeois towards the historic city is reinforced by his concern for the future of the historic patrimony. Strict regulations imposed by city sevices to manage the urban aesthetic and retain architectural qualities were advocated by Bourgeois (Verpoest, 2011). Ironically, he even expressed his concern regarding the disturbing influence of new buildings in the inner city. In retrospective, a very legitimate concern. Although simultaneously, Bourgeois waived the sentimentalism of clinging to historic buildings. If a building was outdated or dysfunctional, a new modern building should take its place. The new building must however attest to the values of the urban site (Bullock & Verpoest, 2011).

This empirical and vitalist variant of modernism, supported by Bourgeois, was quite distinctively Belgian in prewar context (Grulois, 2011). This variant however seemed to have faded away at the expense of the technocratic model, promoting the scientific objectification of urban planning. Victor Bure, the first director of Belgium's urban planning department, claimed that technocratic models enabled authorities to make decisions 'on behalf of the public opinion' (Grulois, 2011). This statement symbolises the undemocratic turn that modernism took in Belgian urban planning practice.

The plan for *Le Nouveau Bruxelles,* drafted by Bourgeois in 1930 is more similar to the revolutionary urban planning of his CIAM peers. As in Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin,* Bourgeois rejects all pre-existing urban structures and landscape (Ledent, 2019). The *Nouveau Bruxelles* was projected north of the city, creating an autonomous urban ensemble consisting of four residential zones seperated by a public green zone for recreation. The projected development was totalling a staggering 25.000 dwellings, accommodated in free standing mid-rise apartment buildings. Furthermore, the plan relied on the strict functional seperation, adhering to the CIAM concept of the functional city (Ledent, 2019).

LOSING MOMENTUM

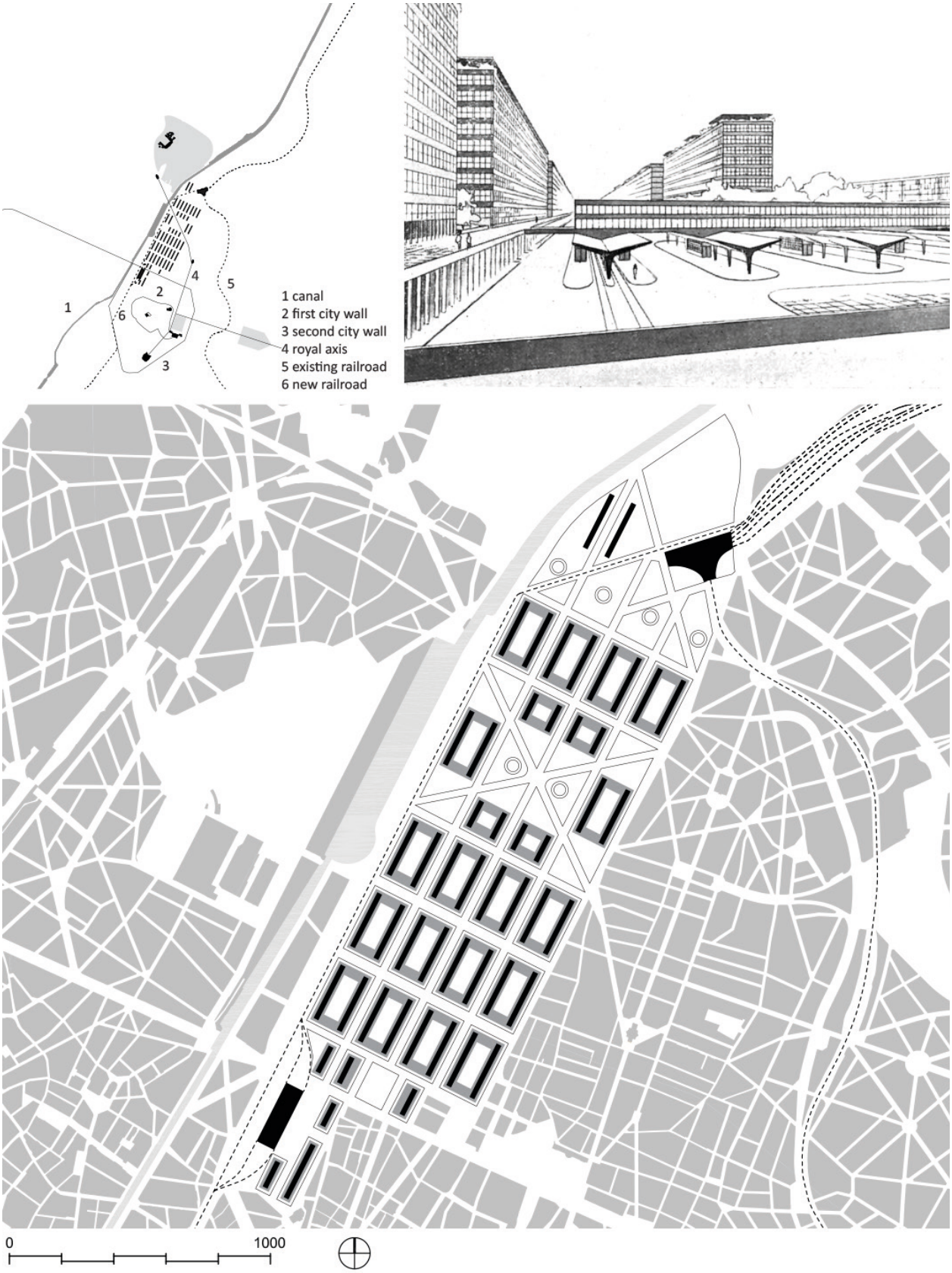
The mass-architecture revolutionary mode of urbanism was distinctive for inter-war modernism (Ledent, 2019, Mumford, 2002). The lack of political influence of CIAM brought to light that the ambitions of modernism were however not within reach.

"Yet the attempt to change the perception of CIAM from that of an avant-garde to an elite group of planning experts had a serious shortcoming. Whereas Lenin had successfully led a group of activist intellectuals to real power after the Russian revolution, by 1939 it was becoming clear that CIAM was less likely to achieve an equivalent role in urbanism" (Mumford, 2002, p. 132)

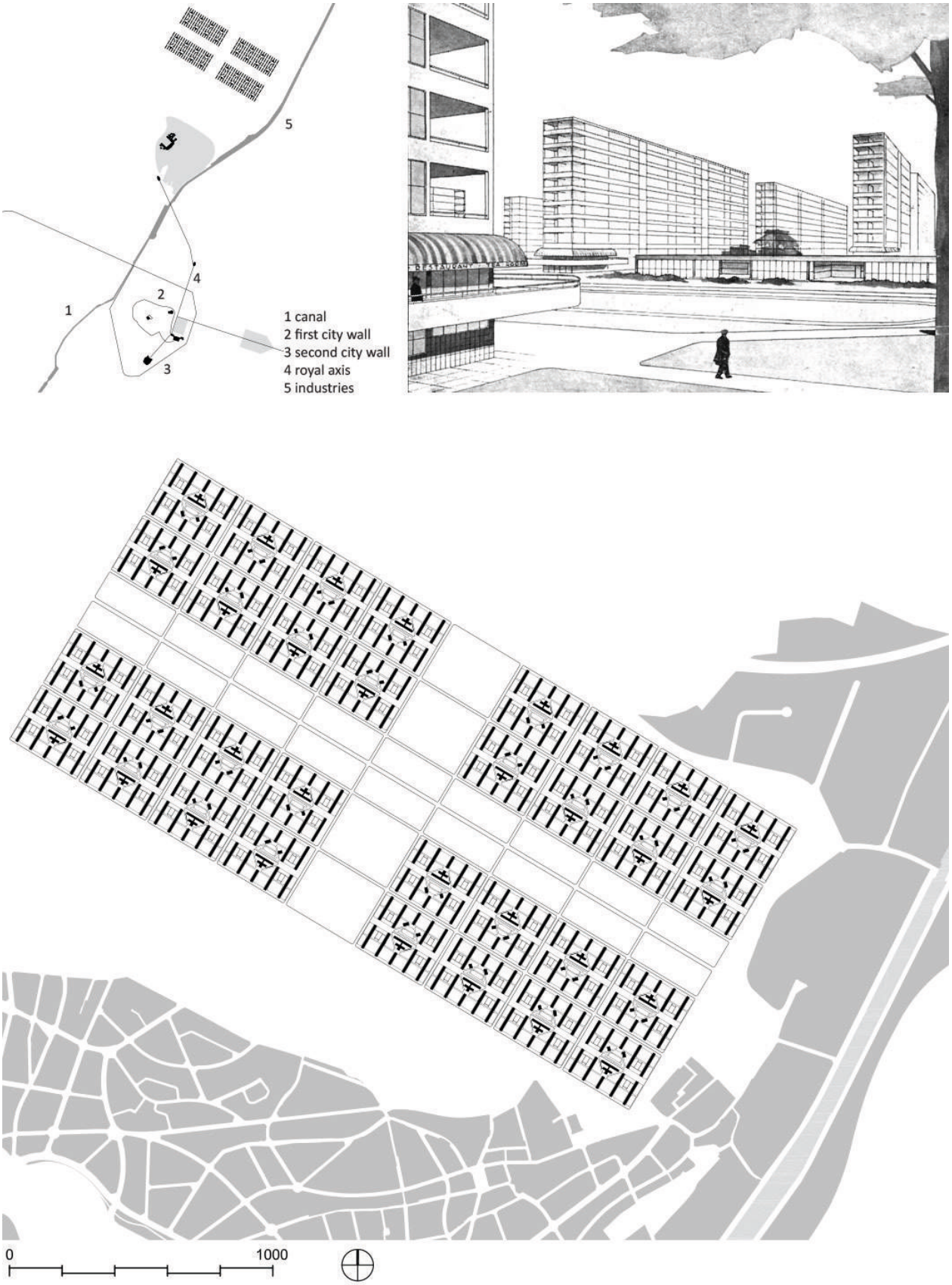
The passage demonstates the two crucial turns in Belgian modernism. The perceived 'failure' of the inability to transfer the authority to an elite group highlights the ambition to exclude citizen participation in urban planning processes in order to mobilize technocratic standardized planning tools for decision making. Also, the passage shows the desire for revolutionizing the the architectural and urbanist practice.

It was only in the 1950's that modernism came to be fully endorsed by society, although it was already seen as a promising ideology in the years shortly after the Second World War. In this period, Belgian architect Hugo Van Kuyck expressed his trust in modernism, but simultaneously perceived hindrances.

"Here would be the place to answer the question, "How are we going to rebuild?" I would not dare to venture an answer, but I think that those who believe in renewing the patrimony of our country along progressive lines and with modern means will have a hard fight on their hands, as there is still a latent reaction against all radical thinking … maybe the time is approaching when our men, proud of the tradition of their Flemish and Walloon forefathers, like the great builders of cathedrals and palaces, will plan on a scale which is beyond the vision of the good bourgeois of today" (Van



Victor Bourgeois' proposal of reforming the city - Le Grand Bruxelles, 1929



Victor Bourgeois' proposal of the revolutionary city - Le Nouveau Bruxelles, 1930

FROM DREAM TO DISPERSION

The postwar breakthrough of modernism in urban planning and architecture coincided with the instigation of CIAM to have members installed in important political positions or other influential positions in the practice. Victor Bourgeois reported in 1945 to CIAM that in Belgium, the majority of important positions had been taken up by members of the congress; making way for modernity in the reconstruction of the country (Mumford, 2002). Besides the fact that political involvement of CIAM-members was necessary to mobilize modernist ideas, modernism in turn also often served political ideologies. For example, Belgian socialists saw in *Bauhaus* an antidote to counter the Art Nouveau and its 'bourgeois ornamentalism' (Den Tandt et al., 2004).

Already since the beginning of the 1930's, Le Corbusier however expressed sceptisism regarding the political invlovement in architecture. According to Mumford (2002), Le Corbusier was prepared to work for authorities of several political orientations and even private parties. In his ambition to modernize architecture, he was not reluctant to collaborating with the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy or Vichy France. The only political requirement was the elite position of the authority, in order to override opposition.

Symbolic for his belief in the revolutionary power of architecture, Le Corbusier compared architecture to religion (Mumford, 2002). He pleaded for independency of the field of science, disconnected from political ambitions. Instead, he aspired to redefine CIAM as a movement that gave a 'spiritual component' to shaping the built environment (Mumford, 2002). The physical environment was envisioned to support the emotional and material needs of mankind, guiding it towards spiritual growth. Mass housing in free-standing buildings were seen as 'temples of daily life' (Jencks, 2012).

These humanist aspirations were later reflected at the Expo58. The World Exhibition showed how modernity and scientic progress could offer hopeful promises for daily life of Belgian citizens (Floré & De Kooning, 2003). Earlier confrontations between science and daily life were primarily negative, dominated by anxiety and fear. The Second World War and its nuclear apotheosis promoted an image of science as a threat. The Expo'58 and the tangible examples of modern living by demonstrating model homes and futuristic visual material (Floré & De Kooning, 2003). The hosting of Expo58 opened up a great opportunity to dissipate the concern of CIAM that modernity was to abstract for the common man, leading to a lack of understanding what the full potential of the modernist ideology could comprise.

Floré and De Kooning (2003) instead argue that the exposition of modern domesticity lacked a coherent vision. The concept of collectivity and social ambitions that CIAM represented since the 1950's did not show at Expo58.

More specifically, it reveals the increasing conflict between a modernist perspective, which very much insisted on the moral content of the home, and a consumer perspective, promoting instantly accessible dreams. As the presentations by these groups, which were meant to stimulate 'good' living, lacked a coherent approach, the tempting power of the commercially oriented participants is not to be underestimated.

(Floré & De Kooning, 2003, p.337)

The reason for the diffusivity of CIAM's 'heroic' ideals at the Expo58 dates back to a few years before the World Exhibition. The failure of CIAM to fully mobilize the ideology in the mind of the common man is in retrospective not surprising. The postwar meetings of CIAM were characterised by the inability to reach consensus on the main themes and the direction that modernism was supposed to represent (Mumford, 2002). In their search to reinstate the prewar *elan* of the avant-garde modernist ideology, the CIAM was confronted with internal fickleness in the late 1940's. The many faces and representations of the modernist doctrines did not help to convey a single unambiguous modernist paradigm to the public. So whereas the influence of modernism started to grow, the content of the ideology simultaneously started to disperse.

A multitude of conflicting interests afflicted CIAM in the postwar years. The issue of political representation in modern architecture, such as in socialist realism startled the avant-gardists such as Le Corbusier and Gropius (Mumford, 2002). Also, there was no consensus on the aesthetic of modern architecture (Uyttenhove, 1990). Regionalist movements, primarily present in Scandinavia and Switzerland, advocated the use of local building materials and building techniques to sustain regional conciousness. Also Belgian modernists, such as Bourgeois and De Ligne were sympathetic towards this 'humanized' form of functionalism. This softened version of the ideology was described by the British writer James Maude Richards as the 'New Empiricism' (Mumford, 2002) A rationale behind this modernist branch was provided by Swedish architect Sven Bäckstrom:

People gradually began to discover that the 'new objectivity' was not always so objective, and that the houses did not always function so well as had been expected... It was difficult to settle down in the new houses because the 'new' human beings were not different from the older ones... It was realized that one had to build for human beings as they are, and not as they ought to be"

(Bäckstrom, as cited in Mumford, 2002, p.165-166)

Others were convinced of this 'new objectivity', or *Neues Bauen*, promoting a unified global aesthetic of modern architecture. It had primarily been the original members of CIAM, such as Le Corbusier and Gropius that had been particularly keen on standardization of architecture and its aesthetic, as pursued by followers of the 'International Style' (Mumford, 2002).

The revival of the empirical branch of modernism therefore was an unwelcome phenomenon to these 'founding fathers' of CIAM, who still intellectually dominated the course of the congress. It was the critique from Bruno Zevi in 1949 that Mumford (2002) considers to be illustrative for the disfunctional practice of the congress. According to Zevi, the empirical movement lacked representation in the CIAM, since many young architects, propenents of this movement, have structurally been excluded from the congress. According to Grulois (2011), the frictions between the empirical and the objectivist approach undeniably influenced urban planning practice in Belgian modernism.

TOWARDS MODERNIST PRAGMATISM

The search for a commonly accepted avant-garde direction of CIAM members eventually led to the efforts of addressing the issue of the urban public space and the aim of architecture to form the basis of social collectivity. This course formed the basis for later explorations of new forms of public space (Mumford, 2002). By studying *core* and *habitat*, the congress was increasingly concerned with the human aspect of architecture and urban planning. At the congress of 1956 in Dubrovnik, in a final attempt to revolutionize, Le Corbusier sided with CIAM members that would later form Team X (Jencks, 2012).

The views of the new generation however broke with the conventional ideals of modernism. Team X rejected the concept of the functional city and the 'dull' abstractions of CIAM. The focus on the human aspects of architecture, as well as the contextualist approach of Team X were seen as the antidote to the impersonality of functionalism (Jencks, 2012). The disagreement between the old and new generation was the final blow for CIAM. Shortly after, in 1959, a conclusive congress was organized in Otterlo, The Netherlands. In the form of Team X, a new avant-garde direction was established, as Le Corbusier had hoped. Ironically, it meant that modernism had lost its forum. The driving force to the discourse of modernism was dismantled.

The ideological fragmentation did not yet lead to the 'death' of modernism, but it certainly destabilized its unequivocalness. Gold (2007) mentions the misconceptions of historians regarding modern architecture, who often refer to modern architecture as if it was a singular movement. The dissolution of CIAM might be seen as a liberation of modernist discourse. Modernism was increasingly prone to interpretation, alteration and appropriation. CIAM's concepts were adapted whether by generational conflicts or political divisions (Moravánszky, 2019).

It is therefore evident how the indecision on the part of CIAM discourse was reflected at the Expo58 in Brussels. The exhibition took place simultaneously with the dissolution of the congress. As Floré and De Kooning (2003) indicated, the lack of convincing architectural ideology provided opportunties for commercial parties to win over the hearts and minds of the public. The act of 'world modernisation' fell prey to economic speculation and market-driven development in the 1960's (Jencks, 2012). It no longer belonged to an intellectual elite. While CIAM promoted architecture and urban design as the guiding fields to modernize the city and daily life, in postwar Brussels, it was the capitalist model that dictated the process of modernisation. Sterken (2011) describes this shift to pragmatism in Brussels' public housing practice.

Determined by economic constraints rather than humanist aspirations, the issue of public housing demanded a pragmatic attitude towards architecture. Thus, rather than asking *why* a dwelling should be as cheap as possible, Groupe Structures asked *how* this could be done. Modelling the home to the laws of mass production, it substituted the notion of architecture as the product of artistic creativity and individual expression for a well-planned, collaborative effort based on economic reasoning and industrial planning.
(Sterken, 2011, p.34)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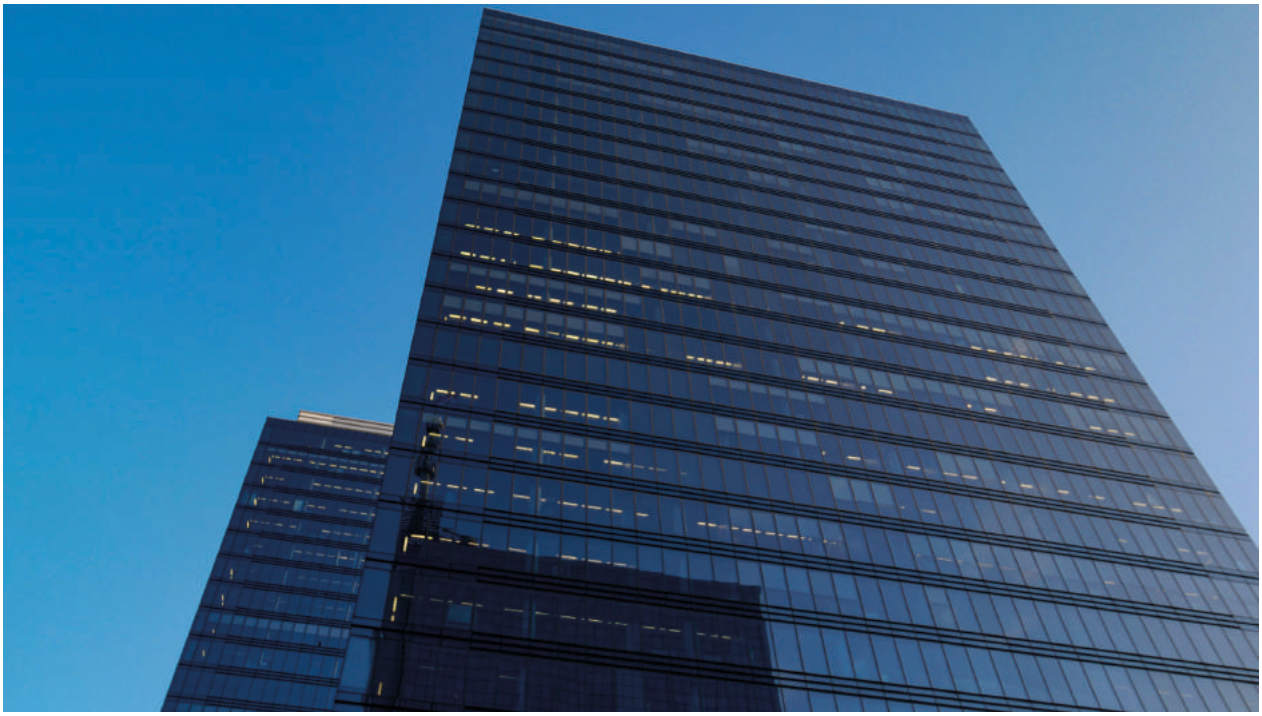


WTC
ZONE
P


VOGUE
Droguerie Higuet


THE
FUTURE
IS
EUROPE


DRINK
Coca-Cola
ICE COLD


METROPOLE
GRILL


UGG

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