

## ***JDS 31 – Abstract for a short presentation***

### ***Victor Bourgeois' leisure infrastructures projects in the province of Hainaut***

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This presentation will investigate Victor Bourgeois's work in the province of Hainaut, in Belgium, on a territory shaped by the presence of the mining industry since the 18th century.

#### ***Study cases***

In 1937, Bourgeois developed an urbanistic plan with 12 interventions dispersed throughout the Borinage region : playgrounds, football fields, swimming pools, schools, etc. Projects aim to improve hygiene and to reinforce the centrality of villages by providing them public facilities. The program is led by an inter-municipality society financed by the OREC (office de redressement économique).

From 1935 to 1946, on behalf of the CIAM, as one of its founding members, Bourgeois realized a theoretical project for Charleroi to exemplify an industrial city improvement process. The proposition focus on green spaces in the city, as anti-pollution screens and leisure spaces. A beach, a wood and a stadium are also proposed in Charleroi's periphery.

#### ***Political context***

Both projects reflect political ambitions whose impact have to be specified. Interviewed about the Borinage project, Joseph Merlot, Minister of public works and reduction of unemployment, called for a proactive policy of territorial organization in opposition to its transformation ruled by the capitalist logic of production. In the context of the economic crisis of the 1930s, the Hainaut is already in confrontation with the legacy of its early industrialization, and simultaneously, seems to develop a proto-welfare spatial structure.

#### ***Territory***

Both projects are context-sensitive. They will be studied in relation to Bourgeois's territorial vision, influenced by a multidisciplinary approach that integrates agglomeration modes, economic flows, and geography (Grulois 2011).

#### ***Architecture***

Finally, projects will be studied as architectural productions. Bourgeois seems to be interested in working with the ground structure, creating topography, and with the theme of open-air classes. Influence of the territorial and localist approach, as well as influence of the CIAM's modernism will be questioned.

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