

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
INTRODUCTION	11
A ‘booming’ nineteenth-century construction sector	11
Defining general contractors	14
Telling the story of general contractors	16
A comprehensive account of general contractors in Belgium	18
PART 1	
THE EMERGENCE OF THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR (1870-1930)	25
The economic context of the Belgian construction sector	26
Structural outline	29
1 STARTING UP AS A GENERAL CONTRACTOR	31
Context of emergence	31
Background and profile(s) of Belgian general contractors	33
Bricklayers and carpenters as ideal general contractors?	34
Other construction trades and the broader building sector	37
Preconditions for creating a general contracting company	41
Having sufficient capital and technical equipment	41
Legal context of establishment as a general contracting business	48
Spreading risks	50

Functioning of a general contracting company.....	52
Organisational insights	52
Combination of public and private construction projects	52
Regulations on the execution of public works.....	54
Regulations on the execution of private works	56
Building for the market.....	58
Mixed profile of specific works and general contracting projects	59
Conclusion	63
2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL GENERAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION	65
Context of establishment.....	65
<i>Fédération des Entrepreneurs</i>	66
International position.....	68
An organisation of general contractors	69
Bottom-up organisation.....	69
Organic growth and transformation processes	72
International embedding.....	74
Goals and specific points of attention.....	77
Public tenders.....	78
General building specifications	82
Code of ethics	85
Ways to achieve goals	86
(Inter)national conferences.....	86
Various publications.....	89
Consultation with the government	90
Conclusion	91
3 GENERAL CONTRACTORS, ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS. INTERACTION AMONG BELGIAN BUILDING ACTORS.....	95
Re-examining construction tasks and responsibilities.....	95
Interaction on shifted tasks and responsibilities	100
Conflicting interests	104
Disputes about responsibilities	104
A monopoly on design?.....	105
Architects as omnipotent supervisors and experts.....	108

Rapprochement 110
 Establishing joint committees 110
 Exchange of knowledge 114
 Conclusion 117

PART 2
ACTUAL DEMARCATIION OF THE PROFESSION
OF GENERAL CONTRACTORS (1930-1970) 119

From economic depression (1930s) to the Golden Sixties 120
 Structural outline 125

4 RATIONALISED GENERAL CONTRACTING COMPANIES
IN AN INCREASINGLY INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT 127

“Mechanisation and rationalisation have taken over
 the construction industry” 127
 Achieving a rationalised operation of general contracting companies 133
 Functioning and management of general contracting companies 133
 Accounting and cost calculations 133
 Planning the execution phase of a construction project 135
 Increased attention to training 136
 Mechanisation 138
 A rational construction site organisation 146
 Follow-up of the building process 146
 Spatial organisation of the construction site 147
 Risks and safety issues 149
 Profile of belgian general contracting companies 155
 Conclusion 161

5 SPECIALISATION AND HOLISTIC TENDENCIES
IN THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION 163

From one national association to a diversified field
 of professional organisations 163
 Growth of the *Fédération nationale Belge du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics* 163
 Activities during the Second World War 168
 Establishment of the *Confédération nationale de la Construction* 170
 Representation in a diverse range of committees 175
 International embedding 178

Goals of action	180
Continued attention to public tenders and building specifications	180
Obtaining a legal demarcation of the profession of general contractor	182
Licensing of contractors	183
The <i>vestigingswet</i> , introducing professional requirements	187
Focus on the rationalisation of the Belgian building industry	191
Ways to achieve goals	194
Conclusion	197
6 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REAL ESTATE PROMOTERS IN A CONTEXT OF INCREASING INTERACTION	199
Adapted legal context for construction tasks and responsibilities	199
Evolution in the triangular model of construction partners	202
Real estate developers	207
Frictions and cooperative intensions in the construction sector	212
Tensions among Belgian building actors	212
Cooperative initiatives	213
Conclusion	216
BUILDING A PROFESSION	219
BIBLIOGRAPHY	225
Archival sources	225
Public archives and libraries	225
Private archives	227
Printed sources	229
Literature	231
LISTS	245
Abbreviations	245