Vrije Universiteit Brussel

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Urban Autonomy and innovative Implementation of Regeneration Projects in disadvantaged Neighbourhoods

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Presentation index

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- Introduction: a political approach
- Research questions & Operationalization
- Cases: Gent (Brugse Poort) & Liège (Saint-Léonard)
- Conclusions

Introduction

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- Political science & urban planning.

  Formal decisions that steer society.

  Urban planning: very concrete instrument.

Getting to the research question: bridging PS to UP

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- Political parties are institutions for decision-making.
  - On national level, party-structure respond to environment. (Harmell, Janda, …)
  - Local political parties are part of and have their position within that party structure.

- H0: On local level, party structure frames policy outcome.

Hypotheses

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- H1: cities governed by more autonomous political parties develop more autonomous policies

- H2: and invest more in citizen's participation than those with less autonomy

- H3: more institutionalised parties can collect more easily means from central administrations

RQ:

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- Can party-organization explain differences and similarities in Urban Management ?

  1 How can we compare party-organization in a local context ? →pol.science

  2 What is the role of (party) politics in the decision-making and management of UDP ?
  → urban management

Methodology (1):

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Party organization :

– Degree of institutionalism

- Name change, Leadership competition, Electoral stability…

– Degree of autonomy

- Political autonomy within the party

- Degree of discretion in (the local) spending of public money

Methodology (2):

Neighbourhood renewal: making the city neighbourhood attractive again.

- Professionalization of urban government and administration

- Rapid pluralisation of the urban sphere

- Limits of functional rationality

➔ the project reinvented as an interaction between planning and implementing
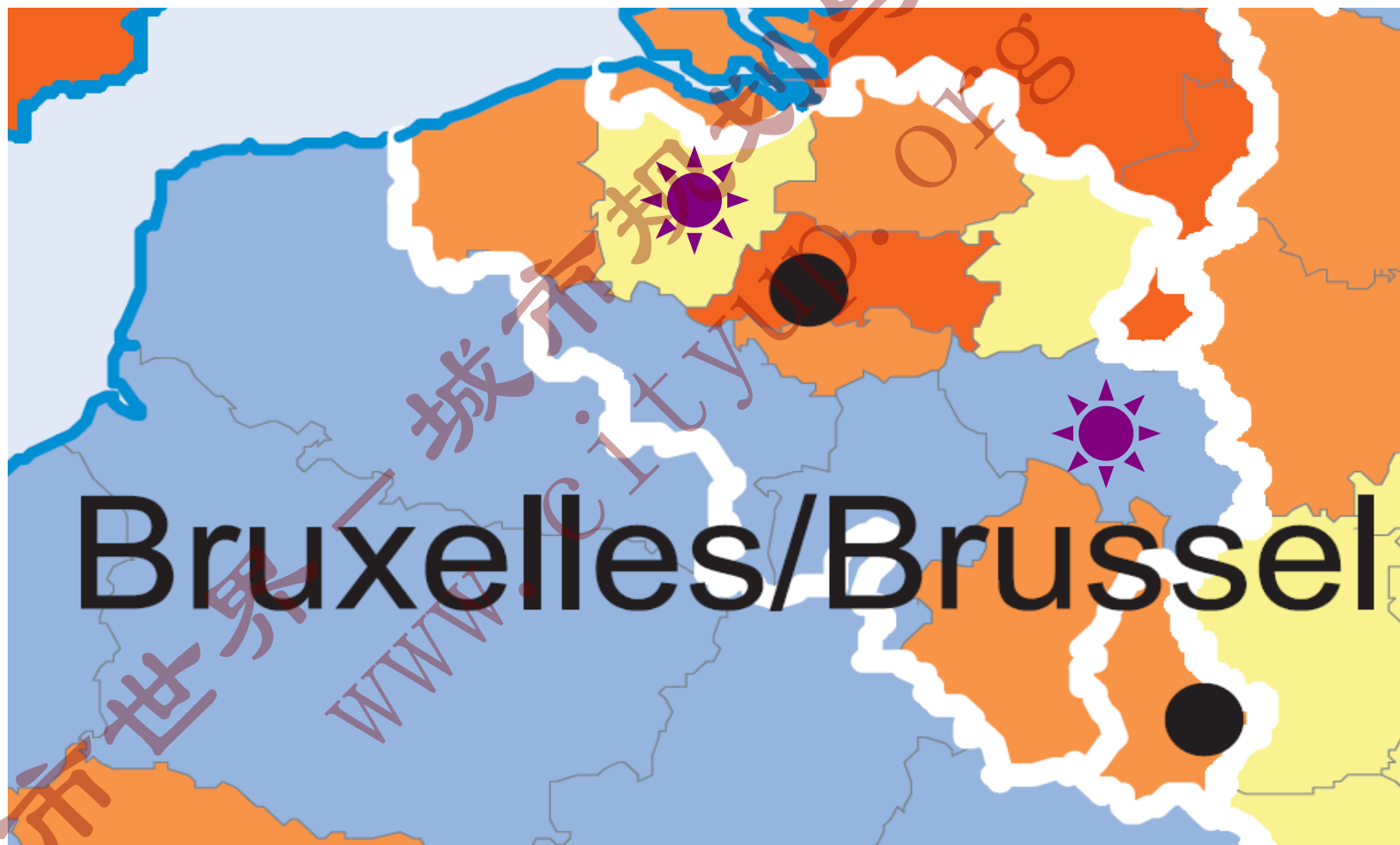
Methodology (2):

Neighbourhood renewal Project:

- Used rationality

- Hierarchy between the actors

- Logical framework of actions

- Institutional nature of decisions

- Mechanisms of coordination

- Policy approach

Selection of the Cases

3. **The cases: Liège, Saint Léonard**

10.000 inh, 30% unemployed, 50% one-person households, mixed origins
New central government's grants for urban development
Opening to the rest of the City, positive Image building and attracting new economy
Mostly financed by regional and federal government. Many projects with different project-owners (incL private). Development process creates own timeframe.
Citizen's participation during elaboration of plan. Afterwards subsidies for local ngo's.

3. **The cases: Gent, Brugse Poort**

10.000 inh., poor quality of housing, densely occupied, mixed origins
Planning incentive: availability of new planning instruments to the city
Introducing open space, positive image building, creating urban structure (backbone with services)
Mostly financed by regional and federal government. City leads the whole renewal program, urban development agency & financial management.
Citizen's protest turned over towards positive participation. Afterwards community-building through service delivery.

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Rationality behind the project:	Pragmatic implementation of directives in line with general goals as quality housing, neighbourhood facilities, social capital building.	Rrational translation of politically well defined goals: min. quantity green area, quantity & quality housing, service delivery, urban structure & hierarchy.
Hierarchy between the actors (city government / inhabitants)	Participation during project development; City tries to change citizens attitude into positive collaborative one through support of ngo's; Public actors remain within public responsibilities: redistribution of grants	Participation during project development and implementation City tries to build up a community. Civic actors are involved in implementation and maintenance. Public actor acts as private actor trough development agency.
Logic behind the actions	Inductive framework: Ad hoc implementation : Feasibility depends on analysis by private sector, no real iterative relation with plan (because there is none). Local authority empowers associations.	Deductive framework: Feasibility depends on mobilisation of public resources, project elaboration based on studies and general assumptions of community building,

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Institutional nature	Public action based on rules, distribution of grants does not depend on product delivery but on general principles	Project development with involvement of and bargaining with stakeholders (citizens, Regional housing agencies).
Mechanisms of coordination	Hierarchical coordination by public actor using general rules. (inspections, grants) Important role for double mandated politicians in project leadership Coordination between local services is not easy	Hierarchical coordination by public actor using resource coordination. Important role for local civil servants in project leadership. Coordination between local and central services is not easy.
Policy approach.	The city as a regulator of urban society. Empowerment of civil society through financial support of associations; Public investments focussed on housing.	City as coordinator and entrepreneur. Identity building as strategic goal. Public investments focussed on public infrastructure (green and gray), housing and service delivery.

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3. Conclusion: Hypothesises

H1: cities governed by more autonomous political parties develop more autonomous policies.	
Liège +	*Gent* +++
Pragmatic implementation of central government's policy. City is one actor among others	Use of new planning instruments to define and implement own urban policy City is leading actor

3. Conclusion: Hypothesises

H2: cities governed by more autonomous political parties invest more in citizen's participation than those with less autonomy	
Liège +	*Gent* +++
Participative process during elaboration. Subsidies for associations (pol. party legitimation)	Participative process during elaboration and implementation. Development of neighbourhood service delivery (city administr. Legitimation)

3. **Conclusion: Hypothesises**

H3: more institutionalised parties can collect more easily means from central administrations	
Liège +++	*Gent* +
+/- same amount of central governmental support as in Gent Less visible (support ong's) Direct: implementation of central Governm. policy	+/- same amount of central governmental support as in Liège Visible changes : infrastructure Indirect: professionalization of financial staff to mobilize resources.

3. **Conclusion: Hypothesises**

To conclude:
Cities have more or less the same ideas of how to redevelop a neighbourhood. Participation and community building is important. Existing citizens have to stay and new middleclass incomes are invited to move to the city-centre.
The instruments they use and the way they implement these instruments can vary a lot.
The way the political parties that hold power in the city are organised may explain these differences: they not only choose and use the instruments for neighbourhood-renewal but also to stay in power.

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