

## **Urban autonomy and regeneration projects in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, a comparative study of Gent and Liege.**

### **Introduction and research questions:**

This research project wants to contribute to the understanding in which way European cities are able to use or create policy- space in order to adapt themselves to the transition from 'old' to a 'new' economy. Much literature exists already on this topic, as well as on the possible role cities could play in it. Most authors stress the concentration of human capital (GLAESER, SHEINKMAN & SHEIFER, 1995), of creative capital (LANDRY, 2000, FLORIDA, 2002) and of social capital (JACOBS, 1984).

We propose an explorative approach where we look at this process of adaptation in two Belgian cities, in a descriptive sense. Not for the elaboration of idiosyncratic explanations, but to explore the impacts of political parties and politicians on local decision-making. The questions guiding this research are: Who are the decision-makers that decide on urban development projects, which governmental tiers are involved in steering them ? How do decision-makers decide on urban development projects ? Does the content of these projects differ substantially in different cities ? How are urban development projects managed, how are they financed and what kind of policy-instruments are used ? And most important: how can we explain the differences or the similarities we discover ?

In this project, special attention will go to the constitutional, administrative and managerial autonomy of the main actors in the processes of decision making and implementation of Urban Development Projects. This approach is in line with the classical institutional theory on local decision making in Europe, for example, the relations between central and local government relations (PAGE & GOLDSMITH, 1989; PAGE, 1991, WRIGHT, 1988). The complex environment in which these urban policies are elaborated make that, besides constitutional and administrative elements, also the managerial characteristics of the decision-makers becomes important to understand Urban policy.

### ***The selection of the cases.***

We opt in this research for a most-similar approach: cities which share enough characteristics, but differ in others (SARTORI, 1994:17). The industrial heritage, the available educational opportunities and the demographic consequences are essential factors that determine the way cities will adapt to a more knowledge based economy (AUDRETSCH & FELDMAN, 1996 : 635). Because we want to understand how cities use their policy-space to move towards this new economy, it is important to select cases in a more or less similar context.

Our study is focused on two Belgian cities: Gent in the Flanders region and Liege in the Walloon region. As local government regulation was only recently regionalized in Belgium, the main organizational characteristics of our two cities do not differ much. Previous research on industrial past, demographic characteristics and the educational infrastructure of Gent and Liege demonstrated that the similarities between the cities are strong enough for comparison (MARCHAND, 2007). On the other hand, since 1980, economic competences are divided on a symmetric way between the national and the regional authorities. This means that both regions have equal competences. Nevertheless, the way they implement these policies and the resources they use may differ.

## **Theoretical background.**

### ***The study of Urban Development projects as the concrete outcome of the Metropolitan governance response to a changing economy.***

Agglomeration or clustering is the result of micro-economic trade-offs made by individual economic actors. The access to specific service suppliers or a specialized labor market makes that, once situated in a particular place, economies can attract, can cluster with other economies (PORTER M., 1990). To explain this type of agglomeration and clustering, economic geographers roughly speak of 'economies of urbanization' and of 'economies of localization'. Where the former can be supported by a more general policy for promoting the private sector, the latter is more sensitive to local dynamics in a specific economic activity than to support for generic economic activity (HENDERSON V., 1988).

What matters for us is that consequences of economic change take "place" mostly in cities. During the economic crisis in the seventies and eighties, most European cities were confronted with poverty, high unemployment rates and social exclusion. As a result of this, the social dimension of urban policy became central in local urban politics (LE GALES P., 2005). Urban policy stood for 'social' policy and was focused on the social effects of economic change, more than on the economic change itself. But in the mean while, over the last 15-20 years, some cities managed to become more attractive for new economic investors. In some way, these cities were able to adapt to a changed economy, maybe to change their economy. Other cities have more problems. There are many possible and partial explanations for these differences: the regional, national and international policy context, path dependencies, international economic situation, etc... . Some scholars have even serious doubts about the possible impact of city-policy on these dynamics (POLÈSE M., 2005), others believe on the contrary that it is up to the city to cause large changes in the future urban prospects (BOGART W.T., 1998).

So, without taking sides in the debate which governmental level provokes what, we start in this project from the assumption that, as the macro-economic settings in the EU adjust and more competences (like environment, education, spatial planning) devolve to the regions, the relevance of urban decision makers will not decrease. On the contrary, if cities want to maintain their attractiveness for economic investors and for their citizens, specific policy-instruments will have to be developed so that people and firms make positive choices, not only to stay in their city, but also to invest, work and live in it. This approach also implies a shift from 'social' urban policy towards a 'social and economical' urban policy. This shift in policy is not just a theoretical one. Large investments in urban infrastructure have more and more the aim to integrate economic demands with the well-being of (part of) the existing or new coming citizens. These urban development projects could be seen as the very concrete outcome of the metropolitan governance response to a changing economy, they serve as "major leverages for generating future growth and for waging a competitive struggle to attract investment, capital and consumers" (MOULAERT F., e.a., 2003). This research will therefore focus on the way such projects are developed and implemented.

Essential in this approach is that we see cities as real political environments and not only as institutional constructions. Cities are areas where one can find demographic, economical and cultural concentrations. These confrontations may provoke conflicts that have to be resolved or can create opportunities that have to be taken up. The way policy-makers steer this urban tissue will therefore be the operational approach in the study of our cases.

### ***The Urban Project: Pluralization tendencies and impact on implementation capacity***

In Belgium, local governments redistribute by courant expenditures about 4,6% of the GNI and they contribute yearly for almost 50% to the gross-fixed capital of all public sectors (DEXIA, 2006). Not surprisingly, these governments are important local regulators and are solicited by their citizens for redistribution and delivery of different daily necessities such as drinking water, sewer maintenance and road or green park infrastructure. But citizens also

rely on their urban governments to regulate implantation of a shopping mall or an industrial business park, at once easy accessible and not too noisy for people who live in the neighbourhood. In the post-war welfare state different functions as leisure, industry or housing were – in order not to interfere too much with each other – separated. The main instrument for this planning policy at different governmental levels was the elaboration of land use plans. These plans organize space by specific criteria and with neatly differentiated color codes: yellow means that the area is suited for agriculture, in the red colored areas housing is allowed and the purple ones are for industrial plants.

The emergence of the European Union and the regulations these supranational institutions developed, made local implementation of all these laws even more difficult. In Belgium, the regional authorities (Flemish, Walloon and Brussels-capital regions) used this European legacy to emancipate their own legislative and administrative ambitions. As they replaced the former national level, they became the new centers of governmental power. From the viewpoint of local authorities, a certain paradox emerged: as competences devolved from the national state to the regions, central power increased but this time embodied by the regional institutions.

Besides strengthening their own regional agencies, the regional institutions also fortified local administrations in order to get policies implemented. Methods of 'good governance' (NPM) were introduced to legitimize governmental activities. As a consequence, since the nineties, local administrations in Flanders professionalized fast. In Wallonia on the other hand, it were more intercommunalities (=cooperation initiatives between local entities for specialised service delivery) that improved their professional capacities. In both regions however, the quality of local service delivery improved. But proliferation of regulations at one hand and 'better' governance on the other, made also that the overlap of all sectoral plans could lead to paradoxes and 'unmanagerialism' when effectively implemented in a real context. To steer urban society, new ways of decision-making had to be found.

This evolution was not unique for Belgium but happened in all European cities. Local policy became more and more the output of a process where not only different actors (public, private, citizens) were involved, but where the interests of different governmental tiers were confronted during implementation of concrete urban projects (multi-level governance). Whereas in the past regulation and decision-making were the role of central administration (CLARCKE, 2006), more urban oriented regulation models are described in recent literature. (MOULAERT, 2002, SWYNGEDOUW, MOULAERT en RODRIGUEZ, 2003, HARVEY, 1989). The state still is an important actor that decides on the overall constraints of economic development and social policy (LOUGHLIN, 2000), but she counts explicitly on collaboration and co-production of local and private actors. Urban policy becomes more and more the output of a governance process (DENTERS & ROSE, 2005).

In sum we can conclude that the dynamics of centralisation and decentralisation affect the role of three main group of actors: politicians of different elected tiers whose political discretionary power changed, administrations that became more responsible for policy formulation and implementation and program managers whose focus is the realisation of specific projects (WRIGHT, 1998). Our focus on the local realisation of Urban Development Projects has consequences for the angle from which we look at these implementation processes. Where literature on implementation mainly stresses the right organizational conditions for policy implementation (HOGWOOD B.W., GUNN L.A., 1984), we pay more attention to the remaining role of political parties and their elected politicians in policy implementation. We assume that the influence of political parties is still important in defining that socio-economic urban environment and that this influence will be different according to the position the local section of the party within the broader urban political society (= degree of institutionalization) and within the own national party network (degree of autonomy).

**Methodology and Hypotheses :**

***Assessing the realisation of neighbourhood renewal projects:***

As we assume that Urban Development Policy is being decided while it is implemented, the way the urban actors handle policy conflicts before decision-making and during implementation, might tell us something about the rationalities behind different 'implementations styles' than the formal organization of the governmental structures (HOOD C., 1986). We assume that these different styles: relatively long-lasting, quasi permanent preferences (...) for specific types or combinations of instruments, are not only affected by local contextual contingency, but also in a significant way by differences in political capacity and complexity (HOWLETT M. and RAMESH M., 2003). It is that political capacity and complexity that we want to describe in both cities.

The plural environment in which the process of decision making take place creates specific expectances for the design of the urban development projects. In order to overcome problems of competitive overlap of different sectoral interests, today's urban development projects are to be developed in co-production with the city and her citizens. Functions as housing, leisure and work may hereby be integrated in the same spatial area. The city is no longer object of the land use plans, but becomes the subject of the development process. The Urban project can be seen as an outcome of that process, an innovative instrument to overcome unmanageable problems of redistribution (PINSON, 2002, 2006).

In his doctoral thesis 'Projets et pouvoirs dans les villes Europeennes. Une comparaison de Marseille, Venise, Nantes et Turin.', Gilles Pinson clarifies the characteristics of urban projects by using two ideal-types (PINSON, 2002). The use of this two ideal-types is useful to clarify not only the role of different actors in the project realisation, but also the political capacity and complexity the projects have to deal with. Aim of this description is to clarify the roles and logics of different actors in the project realisation.

	Ideal-type PLAN	Ideal-type PROJECT
Rationality behind	*Rational: the city that we want	*Pragmatic: the city that is possible
Hierarchy between the actors	*Public actors > private actors; (public actors represent citizens)	*Public actors = private actors = civil society
Logic behind the actions	*Deductive framework *Speculation based on studies and general assumptions *Line-implementation	*Inductive framework. * Speculation based on feasibility studies and context analysis. *Plan en implementation in an iterative process.
Institutional nature	*Formal public action based on rules. *Covers (include) the whole city as aggregation level for political decision making.	*Action as outcome of bargaining between stakeholders, incremental development of the project. *Political decision making on project aggregation.
Mechanisms of coordination	*Hierarchical coordination by public actor using general rules.	*Mixed coordination through network, rules, resource coordination, ...
Policy approach.	*The city as a regulator of urban live.	*The city as an entrepreneur, a builder of identities and ambitions.

**Tabel 1: Ideal-Types Plan versus Project (PINSON, 2002)**

### ***Assessing Political parties as steering machines: the party as an organization and as an institution.***

In this analysis, we want to elaborate a typology for the characteristics of political parties and their position in urban networks so that we can conduct comparative research on the way these networks affect economic policies in their urban context. We focus on the leading political party in the city council. As well in Liege as in Gent this is the socialist party. As main characteristics, we look at the degree of institutionalization and the autonomy of their local sections. When analyzing this kind of party-behavior, it is important to take a certain time-scale into account, so that characteristics can be attributed to the party as an institute and not as the result of a single party act in a specific circumstance. Therefore, we analyze party institutionalization over the past thirty years.

We look at parties in the first place as organizations with a certain structure that can be seen as an “abstract entity, apart from their momentary leaders” (SARTORI, 1968: 293). We also look at parties as ‘institutions’, defined as regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive systems (SCOTT, 2001:51). This means that the legitimacy of their acting is not only based on their formal competences, but also on the normative and cultural-cognitive dimensions of their decision-making process (SCOTT, 2001:60). In order to define parties as institutions, we should be able to study them over a significant time scale. In these cases we study the institutional characteristics over the past thirty years as we take 1976/1977 as starting point.

### ***Hypotheses***

In this paper we look the neighbourhood renewal initiatives “*Zuurstof voor de Brugse Poort*” in Gent and “*Saint-Léonard*” in Liege. Here the city has to deal in an integrated way with a lot of different policy domains in a direct relationship to their own citizens. *Our basic assumptions are that (H1<sup>o</sup>) cities with more autonomous political parties will develop more autonomous policies and (H2<sup>o</sup>) invest more in citizen’s participation than those with less autonomy.* More autonomous local parties might be less preoccupied with the implementation of central government policies and so will try to develop own answers to the problems in their city. They rely more on direct citizen’s support for that policy and probably invest more in participation. On the other hand, *(H3<sup>o</sup>) more institutionalized parties can probably collect more easily means from different central administrations for implementation or service-delivery* because they might have more direct connections and ties with politicians on the central level.

### **The Case, part one: the degree of institutionalism and autonomy of the socialist party in Gent and in Liege.**

#### ***Degree of institutionalisation***

To study parties, we rely on the important international survey on political parties, in which Janda elaborated an analytical framework to compare political parties in different national settings (JANDA, 1980: 3-173). However, we will have to check some parameters for their use in local circumstances.

Institutionalism can be operationalized by combining some organizational characteristics with the measurement of their political and governmental stability. As organizational characteristics, we look at the way leadership competition is organized and at discontinuities such as splits, mergers and name changes. The relative mean variation in the amount of seats they occupy in council and in their electoral support gives us an idea of their political (in)stability (JANDA, 1980: 19).

Following our previous research we can conclude that both parties are very institutionalized. Nevertheless, two of three criteria indicate that the PS is a more institutionalized party in Liege than the SP.a is in Gent. Only the indicator on leadership competition gives no discretionary information in this case. An overview is shown in table 2 (MARCHAND K., 2007)

Degree of institutionalization : PS in Liege compared with SP-a in Gent		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>SP/SP-a</b>
<i>Namechange</i>	+++	+
<i>Leadership comp</i>	++	++
<i>Electorale &amp; gov. Stability.</i>	+++	++

**Table 2: degree of institutionalization of Flemish and Walloon Socialist Party**

### ***Degree of autonomy***

An important indicator for autonomy of a political party is the way their party finances are organized. In Belgium, this is regulated by law. Since 1989 all groups in Parliament are financed by public money. Private sponsoring of political parties is strictly limited and all parties have to make their budgets and accounts public in annual reports. Another key indicator is the access the local politicians have to resources for public spending. Belgian cities have financial resources that they collect within their own responsibilities (local taxes, retributions for service delivery), public money (funds) they get from central government for organizing their tasks as decentralized authorities and grants. The money they collect themselves can be used as they want and local politicians are for the spending of that money only accountable to the city-council. Grants are additional and have to be spent for the execution of tasks or projects specified by the central government. Funds can be used in a more discretionary way, but not freely. Often, an approval of central government is required before they can spend it.

Our previous research points out that *the socialists in Gent are a more autonomous section than their homologues in Liege*. The concentration of power within the Walloon socialist federations, which unify local sections in a certain area, make municipal politicians very dependent of them. This autonomy of Gent is enforced by a higher degree of discretionary power in the spending of public money on city level. Our overall conclusion is that where socialist in Gent are a more autonomous section of a less institutionalized Flemish socialist party, socialists in Liege are a less autonomous section of a more institutionalized Walloon socialist party (MARCHAND, 2007).

### **The Case, part two: recent Urban Projects in Gent and Liege.**

The focus in this comparison is to find out who the decision-makers are that decide this neighbourhood projects and which governmental tiers that are involved in steering them ? How are these projects managed, how are they financed and what kind of policy-instruments are used ? The analysis of the two cases is based on document analysis and interviews with key actors (aldermen, civil servants,...). In this section we provide a description of both projects whereas in the concluding section we will compare the logics behind in order to find indications for our hypotheses.

#### ***Saint-Léonard à Liege:***

Begin nineties, the Walloon region developed a new policy for territorial management. The general idea was to define *Zones d'Initiatives Privilégiées* (ZIP): areas for privileged initiatives in which the city tries to tackle problematic situations. Within this framework, the city can propose specific neighbourhoods or *Quartier d'Initiatives* (QI) as places for concentrated investments. More than 30% unemployed, 35% mono-parental families, 50% one-person households and a weak economic potential in general justified the recognition of Saint-Léonard as 'privileged' neighbourhood.

Through this recognition in 1996, the city could obtain grants up to 90% for acquisition and investments in housing, corresponding infrastructure and green areas and up to 60% for investments in commercial or other collective equipments. The region also paid for the elaboration of a concrete project that had to be defined in a participative way with the

inhabitants and the employment of a project manager whose major task is to prepare and coordinate that project and to animate the urban renewal. The final version of the project, the '*Schéma Directeur*', was approved by the city council in 1997 and by the Regional Government in 1998 and serves since then as reference for urban investments in the neighbourhood.

The project defines some general goals as to open up the neighbourhood to the rest of the city, to improve the image, the quality of life and the public equipments in the neighbourhood and to attract new economic activities. Instead of translating these goals in specific land-use plans, the city opted to elaborate a lot of specific projects and to assemble them in a directive scheme (*schéma directeur*). The first realisations began around 2001 with the construction of a new public square and the renovation of the old beer brasserie Haecht into centre for NGO's and community services. Most of the projects focus on housing and are financed by the Regional Government or private investors. For the new neighbourhood business park, the intercommunality for economic development of the region of Liege (SPI+) is also involved.

In general we can conclude that the policy is a complex sum of many projects in which a lot of different actors are involved. The realisation of these projects depends mainly on the availability of grants (up to 90%) from the regional government or on private initiatives. For community building, the city used an aid program that the federal government started in 2000. The aim of this federal policy is to provide additional money to the five major cities in Belgium for the realisation of concrete urban projects. Apart from some investments in the Haecht-building, Liege used most of these grants to strengthen their own personnel and redistributed the rest to neighbourhood associations. Since 2004 however, the federal administration tries to direct the city to use the grants more for investments instead of personnel or redistribution. Cities and also Liege, have now to propose a three-year investment scheme to the federal administration.

In 2005, the city employed a new project-manager in order to coordinate all initiatives in the neighbourhood with each other and with the diverse central administrations. A lot of projects, of which the study phase started some years ago, came in 2007 into realisation. Other resources, such as European Objective 2 funds, are also used for specific subprojects. The implementation process is supported by urban inspectors that visit property-owners and try to convince them to meet minimum quality standards. The city administration invests in some own projects such as street renovation at the main 'entrances' in the neighbourhood. In sum we can conclude that even without well defined priorities in the directive for the neighbourhood, the renewal framed its own timeframe. The availability of financial resources and the complex coordination are the main constraints for renewal dynamics in Liege.

As for citizens participation, we can detect two phases. The first one during the elaboration of the *Schéma directeur* in which the population was consulted for the proposition of renewal projects and a second one during which the city wanted to improve social cohesion in the neighbourhood. A tight social network always existed in the neighbourhood but it was rather anarchy-minded than government-minded. Through community-building and support of local associations, local politicians and the administration hope this attitude may change. This policy is not typical for Saint-Léonard neighbourhood. Traditionally, the links between local politicians and grass-root organisations is rather strong in the Liege area, but because no local politicians live in Saint-Léonard, this approach was new for the neighbourhood.

### ***Brugse Poort in Gent***

The neighbourhood-renewal in Gent is more linked to the urban planning policy. Beginning in the nineties, the city focussed on the renewal of the city centre and the provision of new locations for business and small industrial plots, for example Trefil-Arbed (DEMOOR e.a. 2007). One of the critiques of that policy was that more attention had to go to the poor neighbourhoods in the older 19<sup>th</sup> century belt such as Brugse Poort. As the regional

government developed new planning instruments like Structural planning, Gent immediately used it for the formulation of an overall urban development policy. Besides the spatial translation of the greater developments dynamics, this plan also foresees in more quality standards that the city wants to see implemented in their neighbourhood. These standards include, among others, the availability of social housing, public services and green area (e.g. minimum of 10m<sup>2</sup> green area/citizen within 400m).

For the Brugse Poort, this meant adding public space to an area with virtually no green space. Little squares and parks were supposed to give “oxygen” to the densely occupied neighbourhood. These parks and squares also perform an important function in the community as places where people meet, eat and play. There also had to be invested in better housing and various typologies of housing in a quarter with only poor quality housing without gardens. Mobility was improved by creating a neighbourhood as a safe pedestrian and cycling area and the provision of some parking space. Also the spatial structure in the quarter had to change because the lack of spatial hierarchy was seen as problematic. The projects foresees a new backbone in the centre of the neighbourhood that relies the most important public services and parks and squares. The different actions include a second hand shop, a crèche, schools, two theatres, a library, a social health-centre several little parks and squares and an important public park called Green Valley)

This park was the first initiative around Brugse Poort. The park of 6 ha that is created on former factory grounds, is situated at the edge of the neighbourhood. A first study proposed 1/3 occupation for housing and 2/3 for green area and provoked a lot of protest in the neighbourhood, supported by environmental organizations. In the end, the city and her citizens made a compromise for 90% green area and only 10% housing. That protest mobilization would be very useful during the preparation of the later project. Not only the neighbourhood citizens were willing to invest in the maintenance of the Park, but they became also a respected discussion partner for the elaboration and implementation of the overall project. In a later phase, the city could arrange with a popular theatre group to move to the neighbourhood. Their functioning is seen important for the improvement of the social cohesion, but they also played an important role in the citizen's mobilization, identity building and participation in implementation.

In the preparatory phase, till 2002, an external study elaborated that comprehensive project. (STAD GENT\_02, 2003) The aim was to add structure to the urban environment and the improvement of the functional and social mixture. The city stresses that the “cross-sectoral” approach by the project group and the involvement during the elaboration of several municipal services and local actors is one of the major innovations of the project. The project of Brugse Poort is managed by one of Gent's five program-directors who are responsible for a certain territorial area in which strategic projects (cfr. Strategic planning) are defined. Thematic programs, such as digital gap between citizens, are implemented in a more horizontal way. To maintain a policy close to their citizens, the city invested in personnel that function as interlocutors between the central city-administration and the neighbourhood. The discussion and approval in the city-council in 2002 added a political dimension to the project as expropriation was involved. The two-years preparation and the established canals for participation with the neighbourhood made however that only slight adaptations were necessary.

For implementation the city also used grants from regional, federal government and European union (STAD GENT\_01, 2008). Gent used federal grants for the arrangement of the new park (Green Valley) and for the acquisition of some older houses for demolition (in order to create public space). A Flemish decree on Urban renewal projects made extra important financial resources available in 2003 for investments in the other projects in the area. During implementation of former projects, the city decided to set up a professional staff for financial management of urban projects. This was necessary as they wanted to use as efficient as possible all means the different governmental tiers had available for urban



improvement. Another important decision of the city was the set up of an autonomous agency for Urban development that could more easily acquire and develop land than the city administration. This availability of sufficient resources shortly after the planning phase and a concentrated implementation during the few years following the first investments made that the neighbourhood changed quickly and that generated support for the next steps in implementation. Still, important investments in social housing (with support of Flemish government and social housing companies) and street-infrastructure are to be done. Here coordination with other governmental tiers is not always easy because Gent wants to implement rather quickly.

**Comparative analysis:**

To compare the two projects, we use Pinson’s description of Plan versus Project ideal-types. It is important to stress that these cases can not be extrapolated to the actual and more general policy making in those cities. Both policies are the outcome of a policy process that started mid nineties and came to implementation during 2002 – 2008. Cities are intelligent organisations that learn and adapt to new circumstances, that is why we study different projects in those cities.

	Saint Léonard in Liege	Brugse Poort in Gent
Rationality behind the project:	Pragmatic elaboration of “ <i>schéma de développement</i> ”, directives in line with general goals as quality housing, neighbourhood facilities, social capital building.	Plan starts from rational translation of politically well defined goals: min. quantity green area, quantity & quality housing, service delivery, urban structure & hierarchy.
Hierarchy between the actors	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: Feasibility depends on analysis by private sector, but no real iterative relation with plan (because there is none). Local authority wants to empower associations. Ad hoc implementation of “ <i>schéma de développement</i> ”.	Deductive framework: Feasibility depends on mobilisation of public resources, project elaboration based on studies and general assumptions of community building, local authority wants to create co-production as tool for community building.
Institutional nature	Public action based on rules , distribution of grants do not depends 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, ) 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 live. Empowerment of civil society through financial support; Public investments focussed on housing.	City as coordinator and entrepreneur. Identity building as strategic goal. Public investments focussed on public infrastructure (green and gray) and housing.

**Table 3: Description projects using Pinson's Ideal-types (PINSON, 2002)**

Where Gent uses a Plan-based rationality to elaborate the project, they change to a more project oriented during implementation. During implementation, Gent changed her role from regulator to urban entrepreneur as the city takes up the leadership in the implementation. In Liege, the two rationalities are also present, but in an inverse way. Here the elaboration follows the Project-rationality whereas for implementation more Plan-oriented logics as line hierarchies and general regulations are used.

### **Conclusion.**

By comparing the two timeframes within the descriptions and the project/plan typology, we see in both cities responses to Federal or Regional initiatives. In Liege the neighbourhood renewal is clearly elaborated within the Regional framework of Zones for Priority Initiatives (ZIP). In Gent this influence is indirect. Here the city uses the availability of new planning instruments to anchor their policy goals as basis for further projects. Once the Flemish regional government developed a regulation for the financial support of urban projects, Gent will use it to implement her existing project. Implementation follows shortly after decision in city council. The establishment of an autonomous agency for Urban development that can acquire, develop and sell back land, overcomes possible procedural problems. Both cities also welcome the grants from the federal government. Our first hypothesis (H1°) seems to be valid in this case.

As for our second hypothesis (H2°) we see that in Gent as well as in Liege the renewal plan was elaborated through citizen's participation. Citizen's participation is seen by both cities as an asset in order to increase the effectiveness of the neighbourhood renewal plan. But also after the elaboration phase, both cities try to keep up the ties with their citizens. They do so for different reasons. In Gent they want to create a new neighbourhood identity and improve the sense of community and therefore they invest in local facilities and even in a social theatre that can mobilize people. In Liege the existing associations don't have too many problems to mobilize their members but the problem is that they have a rather negative attitude towards the authorities. This may explain why Liege opts for direct financial support to those associations. Autonomy or institutionalization of parties alone can not explain these local aspects. But the way both cities organize this citizen's support also reflect another aspect. By improving the services at neighbourhood level, Gent seeks support for their policy as a City that addresses to every citizen in the neighbourhood. In Liege, the support of associations can be seen as an attempt of the politicians that decide on the subsidies to bind the members of the associations to the political party. Here, autonomy and institutionalization might provide an explanation that is more in line with our second hypothesis (H2°). Further research on the role that local politicians see for themselves will probably confirm or not if H2° can stand in this case.

In Liege, implementation takes longer. This has to do with the fact that the plan facilitates and directs projects, but the city is not so much involved in a pro-active way as in Gent. The renewal is more dependent on initiatives of Regional agencies and private sector. Other initiatives are less visible, such as the support of local NGO's or the investments in own personnel. Also, projects need a certain preparation time (study, coordination). In Gent this study time was invested before definition of the project. In Liege however, as the subprojects were only defined in a directive way, this study phase came afterwards. As for the access to financial resources of central governments, we see some differences. Not in the overall amount of money, but in the way the cities organised themselves to mobilise it. In Liege these grants are mobilised through sectoral implementation of central policy. In Gent, the city administration had to set up a specialised financial staff to manage and coordinate the different central resources. So our third hypothesis (H3°) might be only partly valid as this difficulty can be overcome by professionalization of the local administration.

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