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Wuyts, H.

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Onderzoek

Physical planning at the local level in Belgium

by Herman Wuyts

I. Introduction

The theme 'decision making' is, in political science, if not the most important, then certainly one of the most important themes. The decision making process and the influences on it always have led to empirical research and abstract theory building. Discussions about this theme find their place in the broad framework of discussions about democracy in general and democratic forms of government in particular.

A substantial position in these discussions is occupied by decision making and governmental organization at the local level, notably the level of the municipality, township, commune. This level has, rightly or wrongly, the reputation of being most appropriate to meet the needs of democracy. That the commune is called 'Elementarschule der Demokratie' (A. Klönne), is just an external sign for this. As reason for this reputation are usually mentioned the relatively small scale governmental organization and the relatively short distance between government and governed.

This 'idealistic' image, however, does not always correspond with the reality of communes having to face new tasks with forms of government out of the past. The problem of communal autonomy has sharply been posed, as well in the literature as in practice and the opinions about efficient government and democratic decision making are more in confrontation with each other than, together, in search of a type of commune 'new style'.

In the mean time, however, governmental practice has, almost in whole Western Europe, taken a step to larger entities by the amalgamation of small(-er) communes, this step is justified by the need to tackle new tasks and to give new substance to the excavated autonomy. At first sight priority has been given to an efficient task execution at the cost of democratic decision making, since, in general, the governmental organization itself has only undergone little change.

Nevertheless, something happened on this domain too. Starting from a critical questioning of the functioning of local democracy, theoretical models of intra-communal decentralization and participation have been set up. At

the same time, or maybe precedingly, public and private initiatives have been taken, from advisory councils to action groups, all concerned at involving more people in the decision preparation and decision making process.

This trend first became clear in the sector of city and country planning. Afterwards it spread to other sectors, particularly of social welfare. Thus, there is a real temptation to devote a lot of attention and research to it; it, certainly, is undeniable that such research could be justified, on the condition, however, that the domain involved is a domain where the communes, that face the consultation and participation efforts, have the opportunity to elaborate an own policy and that they effectively did so. This preceeding condition is the starting point for the research this article deals with.

From the juridical and from the actual point of view the communes were able to initiate, on their own initiative, the planning of their territory and even, but this never happened, the planning of a larger territory by setting up a general plan with several communal governments. The juridical basis existed for a long time but was explicitely formulated in the law of March 29, 1962, on the organization of town and country planning.

Up to this law physical planning was left to the initiative of the towns. Since then all Belgian townships with more than 1,000 inhabitants are obliged to set up a general plan and several particular plans to designate and organize their living space.

A general plan is a plan covering the whole territory of the township; a particular plan covers a part of the territory and is more detailed. The law does not indicate the sequence of the planning; a town can first develop a general plan and then set up particular plans, or vice versa, or develop both at the same time. This resulted in the fact that most of the townships started immediately with particular planning (Wuyts, 1975).

The same law provides sectorial and regional plans but, in the first ten years, nobody applied for this possibility so that one can say now that, in this periode, the communes really could develop an own policy, limited, however, by the fact that the central administration of Country and City Planning (Ministry of Public Works) exercises close supervision and is, in fact, the final approving authority, as well for general and particular plans as for changes of a plan.

This article deals with the physical planning at the local level in Belgium, during a 24-year period, from 1946 to 1970. We decided to start the period in 1946 in order to give an insight in the evolution as well before as after the law of 1962. We decided to finish our analysis in 1970, because that's the year in which several townships have been merged into larger entities; in 1977 this has been repeated on a much larger scale.

On December 31, 1961, there were 2,663 townships in Belgium; on December 31, 1970, there still were 2,379 and on January 1, 1977, only 596 were left.

Of these 2,663, 1,445 are included in the analysis since they had more than 1,000 inhabitants in 1961 and still had more than 1,000 in 1970. These 1,445 units are the 'population' of this research.

Looking at the total number of plans made during the period 1946-1970, we find that 12% of the townships have developed a general plan, and 42,83% have initiated one or more particular plans.

This ascertainment justifies the preceding question to what extent an own policy really existed. Furthermore, it raises the question what elements can have contributed to the fact of having an own policy or not. Since a large number of communes is involved, we have choosen the quantitative approach. We focus, in this study, our attention only on the particular planning and want to find out what attributes of a township or its environment account for variation in the particular planning preferences. The independent variables are a number of elements that, in our opinion, can stimulate to or keep from city-planning. The lack of similar studies, however, at this large scale, brings along with it the risk of including irrelevant factors. The results are all mentioned for they can be the basis for further research; in the case of being irrelevant, they can be excluded in the future; in the case of being relevant, they can be subject of further research.[1]

II. Description of variables

a. Independent variables

To account for the variation in preference of townships for particular planning, we decided to study the impact of seven variables. These independent variables measure characteristics of the townships and their environment.

1. *Province and linguistic region.* 'Province' has been included because of the fact the governor's services play a role in the approval procedure of plans; different attitudes of the people in these offices can influence the willingness of the townships of that province to make more or less plans. E.g. if the provincial office is very critical, it may discourage the townships from developing plans.

'Linguistic region' has been included since the making of plans may be affected by cultural differences whereof this measure could give a first indication.

2. *Population and area.* These figures give an idea of how large a township is. One might assume that the larger the township, the higher the need will be for urban planning.

3. *Population growth.* This criterion is based upon the assumption that a

rapidly growing township needs plans to build new living quarters and infrastructure.

4. *Population density*. Where many people live together on a small surface (= high population density), they will have more needs about life condition which could partly be met by plans.

5. *Socio-economic status*. Not only the township characteristics can be important, but also the kind of people living in the township. To measure this, we have included the median income per family, a measure of the education level in the township and a measure of home ownership.

6. *Economic activity*. A second indication of the kind of people living in a township is their occupation. As measures are included the number of people occupied in agriculture and the number of people occupied in commerce and services, being most typical for urban and rural environment.

7. *Political control of the community*. The last measure but extremely important for the decision making in a township is the kind of political party or parties that govern the town.

b. Dependent variable

Since we focus our attention on particular planning in townships, we use as dependent variable the fact that a township has or doesn't have particular plans, on one side, and the number of particular plans that townships have, on the other.

In the following sections we describe how each of these variables (2), have been measured and how and to what extent they are related to the phenomenon of particular planning. For the analysis we have used both correlation coefficients and percentages.

Table 1: Correlation coefficients of particular plans with selected township characteristics

	Number of townships with particular plans approved in			
	1946-58	1959-64	1965-70	1946-70
'61 Population size	.72	.58	.72	.80
'70 Population size	.72	.61	.71	.80
Area	.18	.15	.28	.23
'61-'70 Popul. increase	.03	.06	.04	.05
Pop. density	.34	.35	.30	.39
Socio-economic				
Median income	.25	.21	.14	.25
Education	.34	.26	.23	.34
Home ownership	−.35	−.32	−.27	−.38
Economic activity				
‰ in agriculture	−.26	−.24	−.20	−.28
‰ commerce & services	.36	.28	.22	.37

Table 1 presents an overview of the correlation coefficients

III. Relations between independent and dependent variables

1. Province and linguistic region

Each township belongs to one of the nine provinces in Belgium and to one of the four linguistic regions: Dutch speaking, French spaking, German speaking and the bilingual Brussels agglomeration. We have used the administrative division of Belgium of December 31, 1970, to decide to which province and to which linguistic region a township belongs. In table 2 we see the number of townships having made Particular Plans.

Table 2: Per cent of township with particular plans by province

Province	% of townships with P.P.	Total
Antwerpen (Antwerp)	58.2	141
Brabant	39.4	251
West-Vlaanderen (West-Flanders)	62.5	176
Oost-Vlaanderen(East-Flanders)	30.8	211
Henegouwen	40.9	237
Luik	35.0	180
Limburg	42.2	116
Luxemburg	41.5	53
Namen	40.0	80
All cities	42.8	1.445

Table 2 shows that the province with the highest number of townships having one or more Particular Plans is West-Vlaanderen (62.5%), the second is Antwerpen (58.2%) and the third is Limburg (42.2%). The smallest number is found in Oost-Vlaanderen with only 30.8% of its townships having made one or mode Particular Plans. Table 3 shows the division per linguistic region.

Table 3: Per cent of townships with particular plans by linguistic region

Linguistic region	% of townships with P.P.	Total
Flanders-Dutch speaking	44.8	820
Wallonia-French speaking	39.7	584
Brussels-bilingual	94.7	19
German-speaking	13.6	22

This table shows that the Brussels agglomeration has a much higher percentage of particular plans than the three other regions. This is due to the low number of townships which are part of it (only 19) and the high population size of each of them. For the other regions it is impossible at this moment to find an explanation for the differences between the regions and even between the provinces. Like for the Brussels agglomeration we will find that variables other than provinces or linguistic region may be more important.

We only can conclude here that Flanders preceeds Wallonia and the German speaking region has the smallest number.

2. Population size and area

To measure the population and area we used the figures of the census of 1961. Our main reason for using these data is that this figure is nearest to the date of the law of 1962. The correlation between population size in 1961 and population size in 1970 is 0.991; this means that we can be sure that there will be no difference in the relationship between population size in 1961 or 1970 and other variables.

Particular plans are distributed as follows over various categories of population.

Table 4: Per cent of townships with particular plans by population size

Population size	% of townships with P.P.	Total number of cities
1000 – 1999	16.7	514
2000 – 2999	31.3	262
3000 – 4999	48.3	269
5000 – 9999	71.5	228
10000 – 19999	90.4	104
20000 – 49999	94.1	51
50000 and more	100.0	17

What we see in table 4 is very important. There is a direct linear relationship between population size and the presence of particular plans. The larger the township, the more likely it makes particular plans. The correlation between population size in 1961 and the number of particular plans between 1946 and 1970 is .80.

Let us check if these strong relationships hold up for subsets of years during this period.

Table 5: Correlationcoefficients between population size and particular plans by periods

Population figure in:	Correlation coefficients with P.P. in: 1946-70	1946-58	1959-64	1965-70	1959.70
1961	.80	.72	.58	.72	.73
1970	.80	.72	.61	.71	.74

In general the trend remains, it is only in the period 1959-64 that the correlation is somewhat smaller. Therefore, population size seems to be a reliable predictor of the number of townships with particular plans. But we also can draw some conclusions about the number of particular plans.

In table 6 we show the division of the townships by population in 1961 and the number of plans in these categories: no plans, 1 to 3 plans, 4 to 6 plans, 7 to 9 plans, more than 10 plans.

Table 6: Per cent of townships with particular plans by population size in 1961 and number of plans

Population size	Categories of number of particular plans: no plans	1–3	4–6	7–9	10 and +	Total	Number of cities
1000 – 1999	83.3	14.4	1.9	0.4	0	100	514
2000 – 2999	68.7	28.6	1.5	1.1	0	100	262
3000 – 4999	51.7	39.0	7.4	1.5	0.4	100	269
5000 – 9999	28.5	48.2	13.6	6.6	3.1	100	228
10000 – 19999	9.6	41.3	22.1	16.3	10.6	100	104
20000 – 49999	7.8	9.8	11.8	21.6	49.0	100	51
50000 and more	0	0	17.6	5.9	76.5	100	17
all townships	–	–	–	–	–	100	1445

In each category of townships we find that there is a decreasing percentage of cities having no plans, and an increase in the percentage of cities having many plans. For example, while less than one per cent of the cities in the size category 1000-1999 have more than six plans, 27 per cent of the cities having population size in 1961 between 10,000 and 19,999 had more than six plans while 74 per cent of the 68 cities of size 20,000 or more had six or more particular plans. The increasing number of particular plans among cities in this latter category is particularly striking and the question arises what the reason is for and the meaning of such plans in these cities.

Our conclusion here will be: the larger the number of inhabitants, the more townships make at least one plan and the more they make a higher number of plans. The correlation is a direct linear one.

Concerning the area of the township we notice a slight positive relationship with the particular plans in the period '58-'64 (only .15) and a little higher in the period '65-'70 (.28). This means that the importance of the area is slowly growing and that larger townships are more inclined to make plans. Since the relationship is rather small, it is impossible to draw more conclusions. The low correlation coefficient, however, might be due to curvilinearity. We will check for this later on.

In the section 'province and linguistic region' we found that some provinces (Antwerpen and West-Vlaanderen) have much more townships with particular plans than the other provinces. In the section 'population size and area' we now find that population size is extremely important because of the fact that large townships 1) are more likely to make plans and 2) make more plans. Why do these provinces have more townships and more plans? Is it due to the influence of provincial instances (remember that they play a role in the procedure of plan approval) or is it due to the population size of the townships?

To be able to compare the provinces we use percentages tables. In the first table we compare the provinces by looking at the number of townships with particular plans without taking into account the number of particular plans. To make the comparison easier we reduce the number of categories per populationsize and distinguish: 1,000-1,999, 2,000-4,999, 5,000-9,999, 10,000-19,999, 20,000 and more.

Looking at table 7 we see that the influence of population size is quite similar for the nine provinces in the categories of population size of 5,000 to 9,999 inhabitants, 10,000 to 19,999 and 20,000 and more inhabitants. The lowest percentage is 57.5 (Oost-Vlaanderen) and the several 100% figures we find are due to the low number of townships in that category in the concerning province, e.g.

(a) category 5,000-9,999: Luxemburg 100%: is only 2 townships; Namen 100%: is only 7 townships
(b) category 20,000 and more: 100% in West-Vlaanderen, Oost-Vlaanderen, Henegouwen and Luik concern respectively 5, 8, 9 and 6 towns.

Important conclusions can be drawn when we consider the two other categories of population size between 1,000 and 1,999 and between 2,000 and 4,999 inhabitants.

For the last one it is still difficult to discover some influence. Nevertheless, two figures are exceptional:

- the 18.7% of Oost-Vlaanderen is far below the percentage of the other provinces. Since Oost-Vlaanderen also has the lowest total percentage we can assume that the provincial instances have a negative influence upon the fact of making particular plans or at least that they do not urge their

Table 7: Per cent of townships with one or more particular plans by population size and province

Province	% and total number of townships in categories of inhabitants										Total number	
	1 – 1999		2 – 4999		5 – 9999		10 – 19999		20000 +			
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Antwerpen	36.4	22	45.5	55	65.7	35	92.3	13	87.5	16	58.9	141
Brabant	16.1	93	32.0	97	80.8	26	86.7	15	95.0	20	39.4	251
West-Vlaanderen	25.5	55	67.2	67	93.7	32	94.1	17	100.0	5	62.5	176
Oost-Vlaanderen	7.0	57	18.7	91	57.5	40	86.7	15	100.0	8	30.8	211
Henegouwen	14.1	92	41.1	73	58.3	36	88.9	27	100.0	9	40.9	237
Luik	10.8	74	33.3	63	67.9	28	100.0	9	100.0	6	35.0	180
Limburg	4.8	42	53.5	43	77.3	22	83.3	6	66.7	3	42.2	116
Luxemburg	28.1	32	55.6	18	100.0	2	0	1	–	–	41.5	53
Namen	27.7	47	41.7	24	100.0	7	100.0	1	100.0	1	40.0	80
All townships	16.7	514	39.9	531	71.5	228	90.4	104	92.6	68	42.8	1445

smaller townships to develop particular plans.

- with 67.2%, West-Vlaanderen occupies the highest position. It is more than 10% higher than the second (Luxemburg with 55.6%). West-Vlaanderen also has the highest total percentage (62.5%) so that we can assume these provincial instances have a positive influence upon the fact of making particular plans or at least that they encourage their smaller townships to do so.

The category of population size between 1,000 and 1,999 inhabitants divides the nine provinces in 2 groups: the provinces Antwerpen, Luxemburg, Namen and West-Vlaanderen have more than 25% of their townships having made particular plans, this is almost 10% higher than the highest figure in the second group of Brabant, Henegouwen, Luik, Oost-Vlaanderen and Limburg (Brabant has the highest % here: 16.1). Untill now, we only have considered the fact of having particular plans or not having such plans. But, can we also find any influence of the provincial instances upon the number of particular plans a township makes? In section two 'Population size and Area' we found that there is a direct linear relationship between the number of inhabitants and the number of plans a township makes. If there is no influence of the provincial instances on this point, we have to find the same results in each province.

Our calculations indicate a simular trend in each of the provinces. The number of particular plans is small and mostly in the category of 1 to 3 for townships with population size between 1,000 and 1,999 inhabitants. In the second category (2,000-4,999) we find sometimes 1 or 2 townships with 4 to 6 particular plans, in the third category (5,000-9,999) this number increases and sometimes a town ship already has 7 to 9 particular plans, in the category with 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants the number always increases and in the category of more than 20,000 inhabitants most townships have more than 6 particular plans and usually even more than 10.

These findings suggest that the provincial instances have an influence on the townships of their province to make plans, but also that the number of plans is determined by other factors such as population size and some others as we will see in the following sections.

We also have tested the assumption that to belong to a linguistic region could have an influence upon the making or not making of plans. This, however, is not true. Because of the small number of townships which belong to the bilingual Brussels agglomeration (only 19) and which belong to the German speaking region (only 22) we only compared the Flemish and Walloon region. These figures do not suggest that the fact of being part of one of these linguistic groups is important to make plans. The difference we found in the previous section of province and linguistic region – when we

said that Flanders always preceeds Wallonia – is true but due to the province and not to the linguistic region. The clearest proof for this is that both the provinces with the highest percentage of townships having made particular plans and the province with the lowest percentage of townships having made particular plans are Flemish provinces, namely West-Vlaanderen and Oost-Vlaanderen.

3. Population growth

We measured the population growth by calculating the difference between the population figure of 1961 and the population figure of 1970 and dividing this result by the number of inhabitants of 1961. In this way we find comparable figures. Our expectation for this variable was that there should be a positive correlation between it and the plans. But this relationship doesn't exist. The only possible conclusion is that populationgrowth is a variable without any importance.

4. Population density

The population density is the number of inhabitants in 1961 by square kilometer of area. Here we found some significant figures. The correlation coefficients for density and particular plans are:

Table 8: Correlation coefficients between number of particular plans and density by time period

1946 – 1958	.34
1959 – 1964	.35
1965 – 1970	.30
1946 – 1970	.39

These figures suggest that townships with higher population density are more likely to have particular plans. However, another fact urges us to be carefull, namely that the correlation coefficient between population density and population size is .54. It is in the next part that we will search for the independent influence of each variable. There we will be able to interpret these figures more exactly.

5. Socio-economic status

In this category we include three different measures of characteristics of the

people living in the township.

The first one is the median income per family based upon the taxreturn. One can assume that more wealthy people will more insist on measures from the township government for the environment they live in; one of these measures could be urban planning.

The second is the education level in the township. We use the per thousand of persons, age 14 or more and having completed their education with university diploma, both men and women, or which higher technical diplomas, only the men. We assumed that the higher the number of these kind of diplomas would be, the more the township government would be urged to set up plans and maybe the higher the number would be, too. The reason herefore is that one can assume that the problems of country and city planning are too complex to be understood without having reached a high level of education. This of course, will depend from the way in which these problems are presented to the township population. If they are presented very technically, this assumption can be true. If they are presented in a logical and understandable way, high diplomas will not be necessary maybe. Later we will come back to this aspect but now we wanted to test this assumption anyway.

Our third measure in the socio-economic domain is the degree to which the dwelling units in a township are occupied by their owners. Again about the same assumption has been made here, namely that people who live in their own home are more interested in protecting the environment eventually by township plans.

We consider each of the 3 variables separately.

(a) the median income is positively correlated with particular plans over the whole period 1946-1970 (.25). The correlation is not very strong, even less strong in the separate periods (i.e. 1946-58: .25; 1959-64: .21; 1965-70: .14) but yet it indicates that our assumption can be right. It can be considered as normal that people with more financial resources and fewer financial problems spend more time and energy on problems which do not touch them financially. But the contrary also can be true that urban planning is used for financial purposes. This first assumption means that people with sufficient financial resources to live without financial problems do not have to spend their leisure time to gather more finances. Maybe they do, however, but it is also possible that they spend more time and energy on problems of environment than can be spent by people with financial problems.

The second assumption means that wealthy people might have financial interest if they have properties that can be depreciated or increased in value by the plans a township makes. No matter what assumption is right, we have to take it into account and to check if median income is correlated with

planning or not.

(b) education has a stronger correlation with particular plans than median income. For the whole period 1946-70 the correlation is .34, and for each subperiod the correlations are: 1946-58: .34; 1959-64: .26; 1965-70: .23. Here too, the assumption we made above could be true. More educated people can have more interest for problems which do not seem to touch the every day life. This of course, doesn't mean that these problems do not touch the every day life.

(c) home ownership doesn't fit these set of assumptions. There is an overall negative correlation with particular plans meaning that townships with a high proportion of home ownership have less particular plans. For the whole period the figure is –.38 and for the reparate periods it is respectively –.35, –.32 and –.27. This may appear surprising to the reader, but actually it is very logical. In another part, we shall consider the interdependency of the independent variables, since the highest figures of home ownership are found in townships with fewer inhabitants meaning that this may really be a function of population size.

The correlation coefficients between these various measures of socio-economic status and particular plans are much lower than those with population size. Among these townships there is a fairly strong positive relationship between population size and socio-economic status, meaning that even these moderate relationships may simply be a function of population size. We shall examine this possibility more directly in the next section.

6. Economic activity

In this section we pay attention to the occupation of people. To avoid a too complex image we only have taken into account three occupations which seem us to be typical for 2 kinds of townships, the more rual one and the more urban one.

We have chosen the per thousand of people working in agriculture and the per thousand of people working in commerce and services. This ‰ is not the per thousand of the entire population of a township but the per thousand of the active population i.e. of the labor force living in the community. It does not reflect the number of persons working in the community but possibly not living there. Our expectation is that the more people are occupied in agriculture the less plans we will find and vice versa. This expectation is based upon the assumption that in townships with more agricultural activities, people do not feel so much the need of making urban plans to solve problems of constructing new roads, or new neighbourhoods because these problems may be not existing. Another assumption, on the contrary, is that these town-

ships want to make plans to keep their township agricultural, to protect their farming land against industrialization. Whatever the ideas be, in both cases people may be interested in plans or not. And this has to be checked.

The figures affirm our expectations. Agriculture in each period is negatively correlated with particular plans –.26 in 1946-58; –.24 in 1959-64; –.20 in 1965-70 and –.28 overall. Although these figures are rather low, they do not invalidate our assumptions. Even if they do not say anything else, this is important. Commerce and services on the contrary are overall positively correlated, .37 (for the smaller periods: .36, .28, and .22). Again these figures are only prudent indicators of a direction but as such they are important.

For this section too, we have to make the same reserve as for the previous section, namely that these variables will be highly correlated with population size and will not predict as much as the figures seem to suggest even if they are not high.

7. Political control of the community

Since general and particular plans have to be set up by the township government, the composition of this government may be extremely important. The people in power in a township have to make the decision of either to set up urban plans or not. If they decide to do so, they can have much influence on the planning procedure and the approval procedure too.

The decision to set up plans or the influence exercised upon the plans can proceed from the fact of belonging to a certain party if country and city planning is an important issue for that party or it can proceed from the personal interest of the people in power. In the last case we cannot find it out at this stage of the study.

In this section we try to find out if the kind of party or the kind of coalition of parties which rules the township is important for the phenomenon of general and particular plans in these townships. We have focused our attention on the people who really have the political power in the township: the executive committee of the township council. For each of the 1,445 townships we have taken the composition of this committee – checking if one party is in power or a coalition and in both cases which parties. Since we are interested in trends we have accepted some technical conventions, because of the fact that at the local level we find many other parties than the traditional national ones.

– So we have considered as CVP-PSC (3) i.e. the christian democrats, all parties with this name and the parties the name of which is clearly indicating that they belong to the same family;

– we followed the same procedure for the

BSP-PSB (4) i.e. socialist party
PVV-PLP (5) i.e. liberal party
KPB-PCB (6) i.e. communist party

– the VU (7) is the flemish nationalist party

– all other parties are included in the category 'other'.

We only use, for the political variable, the periods 1959-64 and 1965-70 because we only have the political data, composition of the committee, of the period after the elections of 1958 (period 1959-64) and of the period after the elections of 1964 (period 1965-70). The analysis of this section will be divided in two parts: a first one on the number of townships having made plans and a second one on the number of plans the townships have made.

(1) The number of townships having particular plans.

(a) *The period 1959-1964:* In table 9 we give the percentage of townships having made one or more particular plan and the party or coalition of parties by which the township is ruled. For a better interpretation of these figures we also give the percentage of townships without particular plans and the total number of townships ruled by that party or coalition of parties.

Table 9: Per cent of townships with various types of political control by particular plans in 1959-1964

Party or coalition in power	% townships without particular plans	% townships with particular plans	Total number of townships
CVP-PSC	80.0	20.0	616
BSP-PSB	76.9	23.1	242
PVV-PLP	76.2	23.8	21
KPB-PCB	100.0	0.0	2
Other	87.0	13.0	361
CVP-PSC/BSP-PSB	60.7	39.3	28
CVP-PSC/PVV-PLP	60.5	39.5	38
CVP-PSC/Other	82.9	17.1	35
BSP-PSB/PVV-PLP	74.2	25.8	31
BSP-PSB/KPB-PCB	100.0	0.0	2
BSP-PSB/Other	84.2	15.8	19
PVV-PLP/Other	84.6	15.4	13
2 others	88.2	11.8	17
3 parties	65.0	35.0	20
All townships	80.3	19.7	1445

For this period we do not have any township in our 1,445 where the Volksunie has a representative in the executive committee, at least not under that name.

This table allows us to draw two conclusions.

Looking to the highest percentages of townships with particular plans we

find them in the categories CVP-PSC/BSP-PSB, CVP-PSC/PVV-PLP and 3 parties. These categories contain two elements: first, they are all coalitions which suggests that coalition may be favorable for urban planning; and second, they are coalitions of the three traditional parties (8) (the coalition BSP-PSB/PVV-PLP has the fourth highest %: 25.8); the 35% of the '3 parties' is not an exception since always one or even two of these 3 parties are the traditional ones; the fact, however, that 3 parties are in power indicates a high degree of differentiation of the political power and logically a high competition. Although this only concerns 20 townships, considered together with the other coalitions mentioned above, it affirms the assumption that political competition is favorable to the fact of making particular plans.

(b) *The period 1965-70:*

Table 10: Per cent of townships with various types of political control by particular plans in 1965-70

Party or coalition in power	% townships without particular plans	% townships with particular plans	Total number of townships
CVP-PSC	72.4	27.6	446
BSP-PSB	84.8	15.2	243
PVV-PLP	81.5	18.5	27
Other	87.7	12.3	439
CVP-PSC/BSP-PSB	61.1	38.9	54
CVP-PSC/PVV-PLP	57.1	42.9	35
CVP-PSC/KPB-PCB	100.0	0.0	1
CVP-PSC/VU	50.0	50.0	2
CVP-PSC/Other	84.5	15.5	58
BSP-PSB/PVV-PLP	96.2	3.8	26
BSP-PSB/KPB-PCB	75.0	25.0	4
BSP-PSB/Other	87.2	12.8	39
PVV-PLP/Other	71.4	28.6	14
KPB-PCB/Other	66.7	33.3	3
VU/Other	100.0	0.0	1
2 others	74.1	26.9	27
3 parties	80.8	19.2	26
All townships	80.0	20.0	1445

For this second period again we find the highest percentages in coalitions between the 3 traditional parties. The 50% of the coalition CVP-VU is not significant since it concerns only 1 township. Most important also here are the coalitions CVP-PSC/BSP-PSB and CVP-PSC/PVV-PLP. So, our conclusions of the first period seem to be affirmed. However, we have to be careful here. If each of these parties would be very interested in urban plans,

why do we find than much lower percentages in townships where they are alone in power? This fact suggests that the element of being part of a coalition is more important than the element of belonging to one of the traditional parties.

2. *The number of plans townships have*

The number of particular plans a township has, has no relationship with the kind of party or the kind of coalition of parties by which the township is ruled. The differences we find in the various parties or coalitions have to be explained by variables other than the political control in the community.

IV. Conclusions

1. As we could, already, see in table 1 some independent variables can help us to understand why some townships make particular plans and why they make a certain number of particular plans. In the analyses of the data we found that this is true for the independent variable 'population size' as well for the fact of having particular plans as for the number of particular plans a township has. This, even, diminishes the importance of the variable 'province'. Some importance has to be attributed to 'population density', 'median income', 'education' and 'commerce and services'.

We cannot draw the same conclusions for the independent variables 'area' and 'linguistic region', 'population growth' or 'home ownership' and 'agriculture'.

The political variable suggests that the element of being part of a coalition is important for the fact of making at least one particular plan but not for the number of particular plans.

2. In the analysis we suggested several times that the absence of any relationship would be due to curvilinearity. To examine this possibility we have broken down each independent variable into six approximately equal parts to be able to make cross-tabulations. We didn't find any curvilinear relationship.

3. We also know that some correlations may be a function of 'population size' which showed to be the best predictor of the number of cities that make plans and the best predictor also of the number of plans. We therefore computed partial correlations between 'all particular plans' and various characteristics controlling for population size in 1961. In our brief space we cannot report the complete results of this procedure (see therefore Wuyts, 1975). So we have to restrict ourselves to the most important elements:

(a) the independent variables – median income, agriculture, population growth, have no or almost no independent influence on the phenomenon of particular plans in townships

(b) five independent variables – area, population density, home ownership, education, commerce and services – have some importance, meaning that they have some independent influence on the explanation of number of particular plans

(c) two of them – education and commerce and services – together with population size are a good predictor of the number of particular plans a city has.

4. We have used for our analysis the 1,445 townships. We know however that only 619 have at least one particular plan and that 826 haven't. So, the question arises if the results might be different if we recompute relationships among only the townships which have particular plans.

On this basis of our calculations we found the trend and the importance of the independent variables to be exactly the same.

Consequently, our conclusions can stand.

Against the background of these conclusions further research on participation in the domain of city and country planning is possible and appropriate, for this research showed to what extent a policy or an opportunity to elaborate a policy really existed, and, thus to what extent the basic condition for participation was present in the communes.

This participation research, however, requires a separate report.

Notes

1. In more recent years much more attention has been devoted to the elaboration and approval of sub-regional plans, set up for a considerably larger territory. At the local level the most recent evolution takes the direction of 'structure plans', which are not the subject of any law; this means that townships can feel much more free to adapt the plans according to the evolution of needs and ideas of 'the last minute'. In this article physical planning is limited to the activity of the Belgian townships on the domain of particular plans since 'structure plans' are a more recent phenomenon, sub-regional plans are set up by the central government and general plans at the local level are more exception than the rule.

2. One may ask why we did not include a measure of the degree of urbanity as an independent variable. It can be assumed that the higher the degree of urbanity is, the higher the number of cities would be with one or more particular plans and the higher the number of particular plans. Actually, this is true. We have made these calculations. For degree of urbanity we have used the 'way of life' urbanity-index computed by M. Van Naelten (1970) of the Catholic University of Leuven. Out of 48 variables on 1) landscape and physical aspects, 2) economic activity, 3) demographic characteristics, 4) educational and social class levels, 5) professional structure and activity rates, 6) commuting, 7) behavioral characteristics and 8) welfare and wellbeing, he has used the 19 variables with the highest loading to compute a unique degree of urbanity as 'way of life' for each township in Belgium. Since we found 5 of our independent variables back in the 19 of this urbanity

measure, we had to make a choice: or, include these 5 variables and exclude the degree of urbanity, or, include this degree of urbanity and exclude these 5 variables. It was impossible to use both of them at the same time because they overlapped each other. We have decided to exclude the 'degree of urbanity' and to include the 5 other variables since we can explain more variance with the individual items than with a factor score.

3. Christelijke Volks Partij – Parti Social Chrétien.
4. Belgische Socialistische Partij – Parti Socialiste Belge.
5. Partij voor Vrijheid en Vooruitgang – Parti de la Liberté et du Progrès.
6. Kommunistische Partij van België – Parti Communiste Belge.
7. Volksunie.
8. Traditional parties are the christian democrat, socialist and liberal party.

References

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