

LIFESTYLES AS CENTRIFUGAL AND CENTRIPETAL FORCES IN THE POLYCENTRIC NETWORK CITY OF FLANDERS

Ann PISMAN

Ghent University-Centre for Mobility and Physical Planning, Krijgslaan 281 S8A3, B-9000 Gent, Belgium, e-mail: ann.pisman@ugent.be
and Hogeschool Antwerpen-Department of Design Sciences-Urbanism and Physical Planning, Mutsaardstraat 31, 2000 Antwerpen, e-mail: a.pisman@ha.be

This paper explores the idea of lifestyles, in relation to surveys, data and spatial policy in Flanders-Belgium. First of all the concept of lifestyles is elaborated. Secondly recent and relevant lifestyle surveys in Flanders are highlighted, in relation to the definition of lifestyles, chosen in the first chapter. In the conclusion suggestions are formulated for using lifestyles in various ways in actual planning policy and practices.

Introduction

Several studies have confirmed the idea of Flanders as a strongly urbanised area. In the meantime the Flemish government is defining the urbanised areas by outlining them in zoning plans, implementing the Spatial Structure Plan. This plan from 1997 aims to realise 60% of all new housing in the urban centres and only 40% on the countryside. Nowadays it seems that this perspective will not be realised. Despite the policy to revalue the urban centres, people in Flanders still seem to prefer more rural living environments.

For decades studies try to determine the motives for preferable housing conditions. They often reveal correlations with age, type of household and income. However these indicators cannot fully explain why for example some middle class young families prefer new houses nearby a village and others look for older houses in the city centre. Recently the focus moves from characteristics of individuals towards qualities of the environment (Van Nuffel, 2005), such as natural and historical amenities appreciated by certain groups of people (De Vogelaer, 2004).

If lifestyles 'help to make sense of what people do, and why they do it, and what doing it means to them and others' (Chaney, 1996), lifestyles could also explain the motives for preferable housing conditions. This paper explores the concept of lifestyles in general and in Flanders in particular. If there is a relation between lifestyles on the one hand and different types of living environments (urban, rural, homogeneous, heterogeneous, ...) on the other hand, the concept of lifestyles might be useful in future, more societal and less technically oriented planning.

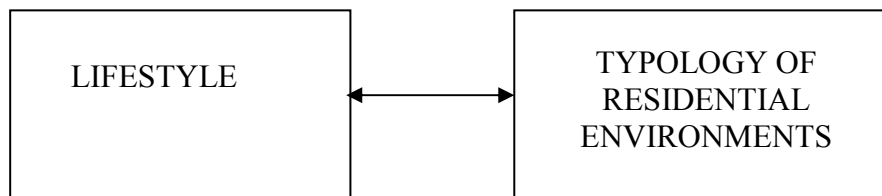
1. Towards a definition of the word lifestyle

For the last decades the concept of lifestyles is very popular. The word is often used to emphasize the complexity of our current individualising society (Beck). The individualisation

process decreased the mental pressure for uniform behaviour on individuals and made the need for individuals to make their own choices grow. In the same time the opportunities to give concrete form to these individual choices have grown. Regarding this, we see that people within groups with similar age, sex, education, ethnicity, ..., have very different behaviour patterns and pluriformity (the co-existence of equivalent value systems) is socially accepted.

In this paper a definition for the concept of lifestyles will be elaborated, related to the use of lifestyles in planning policies. The idea of lifestyles will be used to make an alternative segmentation of the population of Flanders in order to concretise and show the diversity and the impact of the individualisation.

The survey focuses on relations between lifestyles and preferable residential environments or typologies of existing residential environments and aims to give elements for a more societal oriented spatial planning. This focus will determine the operational definition of the lifestyle concept.



The (stratification surveys in) sociology and the (surveys of consumers in) marketing are the two most relevant and historical important disciplines related to the idea of lifestyles.

Sociological roots

Weber(1922) is generally considered as the founder of the concept of lifestyles. Adler (1933), Wirth (1938), Gans (1967), Bourdieu (1979), and Schulze (1992) are a few of the leading sociologists who have concretised the idea of lifestyles in the last 75 years.

In this period we can notice an evolution, from the idea of lifestyles as a very static concept, lifestyles defined by social class or rank, towards lifestyles as a more dynamic concept.

Schulze emphasizes that choices in the Experience Society (e.g. attendance to culture activities) are no longer representative for rank or status but are related to media, fashion, trends, what makes these choices very impulsive and volatile.

Another striking fact is the dual use of the concept of lifestyles, varying between differences in behaviour (attendance to culture manifestations, shopping behaviour, ...) and differences in mental patterns (social class, standards and values).

One of the best known classifications of lifestyles is based on the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who made an analysis of more than thirty different surveys related to lifestyles, such as surveys on income, education, profession, but also on shopping behaviour, attendance to cultural manifestations, journey planning, taste, focussing on possible differences between inhabitants of Paris and of the rest of France. The starting point of Bourdieu is that people make use of two different sources of help to create a social position: economic and cultural capital. Lifestyles can be identified by the differences in economic and cultural capital. He situates lifestyles in a matrix with an economic axe (high

or low status) and a cultural axe (conservative or innovative). Doing this a figure with different lifestyles, resembling to a tree or a Y, can be discovered. On the upper side it shows a cultural and economical elite with many different lifestyles, the bottom side is related to lower status groups with a much more homogeneous lifestyle and less differentiation on the cultural and economic axe. .

Relation with marketing techniques

Marketeers consider lifestyle surveys as a technique to make a segmentation of the market in order to discover segments useful for direct marketing.

Four segmentation techniques can be distinguished in the marketing:

Geographic segmentation makes a segmentation of the market in different geographic units such as countries, regions, cities or neighbourhoods. In relation to the subject of the paper it could be citizens and people living in the country.

Demographic segmentation divides the market in groups on basis of age and other indicators such as: sex, income, generation. In relation to the subject of the paper it could be young people, elderly people, families with children.

Using *Psychographic segmentation* the market is divided into groups with different lifestyles, based on differences in personality and values. Psychography is defined, within the marketing context, as the measuring and categorising of lifestyles, such as in the Values and Lifestyles (VALS)-structure of SRI International: Actualizers, Fulfilleds, Achievers, Experiencers, Strivers, Makers, Strugglers¹.

Behavioural segmentation groups people on the basis of their knowledge about, their attitude against, and their use of or reaction on a certain product. A lot of marketers assume that behavioural indicators (opportunities, advantages, state of use, loyalty, willingness, attitude, a certain amount of use) are the optimal indicators for segmentation. In relation to the subject of the paper groups could be former, potential or actual residents of social housing.

A definition of lifestyles related to the survey

Study of literature learns that there are three major tendencies in defining lifestyles: lifestyle as a segregation of attitude, lifestyle as a segregation of values and finally lifestyles related to a combination of attitude and values.

¹ De VALS (Values and Life Styles) typology is developed by Mitchel. Adults in the US are classified in seven groups using the VALS 2-system on the base of psychological features by answering questions on demographic, personal and behavioural aspects.

The seven classifications are as followed:

- *Actualizers*. Successful, worldwide, active people who dare to take responsibility. Their consumption pattern shows a preference for relatively expansive niche products.
- *Fulfilleds*. Adult, satisfied, calm and thinking people who appreciate sustainability, functionality and value.
- *Achievers*. Successful people who want to make a career and who prefer established products with prestige.
- *Experiencers*. Young, vital, enthusiastic, impulsive and rebellious people who prefer unknown products and unestablished brands.
- *Strivers*. Insecure, doubting people, looking for affirmation, who appreciate fashionable products by which they can imitate the products of wealthier people.
- *Makers*. Practical, independent, traditional and family-oriented people who choose for functional products.
- *Strugglers*. Older, disappointed, passive, worried people with limited budget, very loyal to their favourite brands.

A few definitions can illustrate this:

“lifestyles are styles, manners, ways of using certain goods, places and time, that differentiate people”. (Chaney, 1996)

“lifestyle is the sum total of the values, passions, knowledge, meaningful deeds and eccentricities that constitute the uniqueness of each individual (Adler, 1929).

“Lifestyle correlates to behaviour, attitude, values and standards”. (Van der Knaap, 2002)

This survey focuses on both aspects or sides of lifestyle: an overt (=behaviour, fashionable, outside, open and observable) and a latent aspect (the deeper values, more stable in time). Doing this, overt and latent lifestyles can be distinguished. In this context values refer to important principles, ambitions and ideas on society. These abstract ideas on society are supposed to be stable, sustainable and strongly internalised (Agneessens, 2003).

In general behavioural segmentation (related to overt lifestyles) is more interesting for direct marketing-use, psychographic segmentation (related to latent lifestyles) is more useful for policy and development on a longer term. The main important differences between latent and overt lifestyles, relevant for this survey, are shown in the table below.

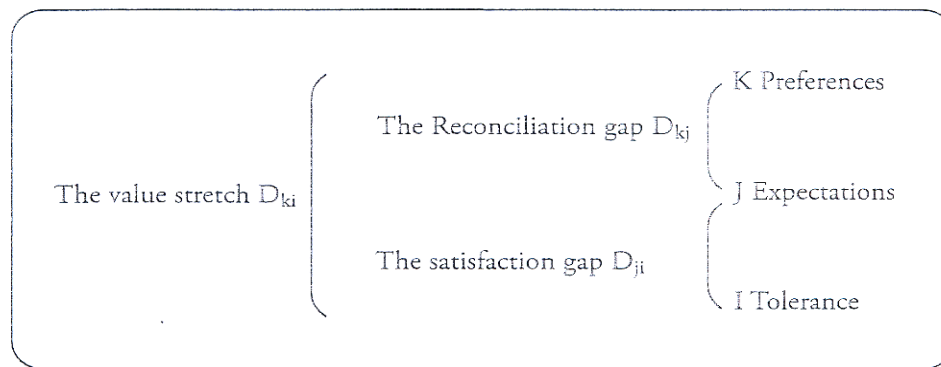
LATENT LIFESTYLE	OVERT LIFESTYLE
Coherent set of values and standards	Coherent set of actions and attitude
More stable	More changeable
Invisible	Visible
Related to individuals	Related to households
Policy relevance	Commercial relevance

Applied on the aspect of lifestyles and living this could mean that an individual (with certain values and standards) moves several times (changes in overt lifestyle) because of external changes in finances, work, ..., without changing his or hers pattern of values or latent lifestyle. For households with more than one person, the effective residential environment is often a compromise between the latent lifestyles of the different household-members. The actual residential area or overt lifestyle can differ a lot from the latent lifestyle of the individual. On a longer term it is possible that value orientations of individuals change by changing social contacts, educations, experiences, ...

Regarding the aim of the survey, the friction between the overt part and the latent part is very interesting (where do people live now? where would they prefer to live according to their value orientation?). The friction between both can be explained by diverse aspects: financial aspects, availability of houses or building lots, ...

Baruch A. Kipnis developed the Value stretch model related to lifestyle design to scale the continuum from preferences to expectations and tolerance.

Within this model *preference* is: the highest level of a given lifestyle attribute one aspires to attain, *expectations*: the level of a given lifestyle attribute a person expects to attain in a short time horizon of five years, assuming he/she is ready to mobilize his/her resources and energy to this end and *tolerance*: the lowest level of a given lifestyle attribute a person is ready to accept, assuming that his/her expectations cannot materialize.



The Value stretch model

(source Schnell and Kipnis, 1989 following Della-Fave, 1974 in Baruch A. Kipnis, 2004)

The reconciliation gap is indicating the difference between the values assigned to a lifestyle attribute at the level of preference and between the values allocated to that attribute at the level of expectation. The satisfaction gap is showing the difference in the value assigned to a lifestyle attribute at the level of expectations and that he/she has assigned to his/her tolerance state. The value stretch finally is the sum of the reconciliation gap and the satisfaction gap. The model of Baruch A. Kipnis can be used to scale and appreciate the difference between attitude and values. Related to the survey this method could answer the question: is the actual residential area of the respondent acceptable in relation to his or her pattern of values?

Finally the survey looks for the spatial relevancy in lifestyle design and for geographic relations between lifestyles and residential areas.

The following examples of relevant surveys in Flanders all give indications of a relation between both aspects.

2. Recent and relevant lifestyle surveys in Flanders

There are only a few surveys on lifestyles in Flanders. The term lifestyles often shows up in publications, but is seldom defined or concretised in a categorisation of Flemish lifestyles. In publications of policy makers (about living, health care, public services, urban policy, ...) the word lifestyles is very popular. They reveal to the idea that the average Fleming does not longer exist but that authorities should orientate themselves to a diverse public, with different lifestyles. Regarding aspects of regional or urban planning the idea of lifestyles is often related to spatial segregation or increasing homogeneousness, without formulating policy suggestions to deal with these phenomena.

The following text gives an introduction to important actors or surveys in Flanders, all related to the idea of lifestyles. Because of the limited expertise in Flanders on the subject it includes also a few surveys in the margin.

Different surveys by WDM-Belgium

WDM is an international service industry with an office in Belgium that creates and uses data to enable clients to find, manage and reach customers in the most profitable way.

The company is specialised in lifestyle-survey² en geo-marketing³.

They did profile- and lifestyle-analyses based on socio-demographic and consumer related datasets for the energy sector en the so-called FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods)-manufacturers. Actually they created a consumer dataset with information of over 1,6 million households. Using statistical techniques, they combined hundreds of features on consumers and households collected in inquiries, to a smaller number of general descriptions or types. In the WDM lifestyle analyse they created consumer profiles related to: interests and hobbies, media, food and drink, using of brands and money-businesses.

A lot of marketing aspects have a geographic component: descent of customers, response on marketing actions, relation between customers and target groups, location of prospects and competitors, local service areas, ... WDM presumes that neighbourhoods with similar demographic, social and socio-demographic characteristics, are inhabited by individuals or households who share a common lifestyle and who behave similarly. To deal with the geographic information WDM developed the MOSAIC-typology, based on a geo-demographic classification. Residential areas are divided into segments of streets with an average of 25 households. This group of households is classified into one of the 30 MOSAIC-types.

GEO-INFO is a database, developed by WDM Belgium, with socio-demographic, socio-economic and socio-geographic information on residents and households in Belgium. It is available and compound in different levels. (segment of street, neighbourhood, villages, municipals) and contains information on number of residents, number and composition of households, age of residents, number of residents or households in relation to the MOSAIC type or the social class, ...

WDM is a commercial company that, by order of other companies, describes lifestyles in relation to consumption or attitude. WDM assumes a direct link between attitude (what they call lifestyle) and living area. They combine behavioural segmentation and geographic segmentation in their surveys.

'On the relation between social relations and attitudes, values and standards' by Hans Waeye, Filip Agneessens and Daniëlle De Lange (Ghent University)

Academic survey based on the APS-surveys⁴ and the European survey on values. Since 1996 the Flemish authorities organise each year an inquiry on 'social-cultural evolution in Flanders'. The values, attitudes and behavioural patterns of 1500 Flemish residents are analysed in relation to societal themes with a policy relevance.

The authors identify four orientations of actions, related to social integration: communitarism (orientation on the community), solidarism (orientation on equality), utilitarism (orientation on utility) and expressivism (orientation of the own person).

Communitarism refers to the appreciation of habits, standards, values, and traditions.

Solidarism refers to the aiming for equity and the dedication to poor people. Expressive individualism expresses the attention for individual autonomy on aesthetic and non-material means. Utilitarian individualism refers to the acting out of self-interest.

² "Lifestyle-analyses focus on differences in leisure-activities, interests, consumption behaviour, holidays of possible customers." (www.wdm.be)

³ Geo-marketing is a socio-geographic technique of segmentation, which allows to localise and analyse markets and to determine market groups related to geographic units.

⁴ APS = Administratie Planning en Statistiek, recently changed in SVR (Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering)

The survey does not focus on a direct link with geographic aspects or living. The scientists do emphasize the geographic relevance of the living area, related to the aspect of interactions with neighbours, which are more intensive in rural areas.

Academic quantitative survey that, using psychographic segmentation, discerns four orientations for actions. In line with the definition of lifestyle these orientations can be considered as latent lifestyle-groups. The survey doesn't include a geographic segmentation but the data include geo-references which make it possible to make this segmentation.

Liveability-surveys and inhabitant-surveys in the 'Westhoek' by Frans Thissen by order of the Province of West-Flanders.

This survey was started in the middle of the nineties and was funded by the European 5B program for development of rural areas. This fund was used to set up a large theoretical liveability-survey in the Westhoek (a very rural part of the province of West-Flanders) and to realise some related projects.

This survey has not created a real lifestyle-categorisation, although a typology of villages is suggested, based on characteristics of the former and new inhabitants of these villages. The survey focused on three socio-demographic parameters of the population (age, number of members in the households, income). The villages were divided into dynamic and stagnating villages. The dynamic types have a population characterised by more younger families and relative higher incomes. Secondly the aspect of residential and housing choice preference was added. Some of the dynamic villages were preferred by young families because of the proximity of employment centre or the opportunities to realise new houses. The other dynamic villages were chosen because of their natural, landscape or recreational qualities or their specific cultural or historical patrimony. The stagnating villages were all very small villages or villages with an extreme loss of functions (local shops or services, local employment).

Although this academic survey hasn't created a lifestyle-categorisation, this might be an interesting example, because of the categorisation of the villages, using characteristics of the inhabitants (socio-demographic) and characteristics of the area (natural or cultural qualities, local services, ...) at the same time.

'Younger people in relation to living in Flanders. Residential situations, residential preferences and residential needs'. Survey by Ann Verhetael, Frank Witlox and Nele Tierens by order of the survey-centre Child and Community.

This survey examined existing data⁵ in combination with new data from an inquiry by more than 4000 younger people (age 12 and 18) through the high schools. The inquiry included open and closed questions on the house as well as on the housing areas and asked for their residential preferences when they would live independently.

The junior population was segmented by differences in urbanisation of their actual residential area, identifying city centres, neighbourhoods from the 19th century, agglomerations, 'banlieues', living areas for the forensics and the rural areas.

⁵ Data from the socio-economic inquiry of 1991

The residential preferences were gathered in four categories:

- 'everything in the neighbourhood' (close to friends, family and acquaintance, close to work, shops and services)
- 'mobility' (connected to public transport or high ways, parking possibilities)
- 'liveability' (residential area with a lot of parks or public place, road safety, quiet, safe and clean neighbourhoods)
- 'living in the actual neighbourhood'

The collected data (actual neighbourhoods in relation to residential preferences) allow to define lifestyle-groups, but the survey design didn't focus on the theme of lifestyles.

There was no real lifestyle-categorisation in the survey. The survey made a geographic segmentation (actual residential area) of a demographic segmented population (youth). The inquiry on preferable residential areas is related to behavioural segmentation or psychographic segmentation.

'Tolerance in relation to living in social housing' PhD-research in Political Sciences by Bob Cools.

The research is based on study of literature, discussions with local actors and ground survey in Manchester, Rotterdam, Antwerp and Lille.

Bob Cools, as a socialist and former mayor of the city of Antwerp, advances in his PhD-research that the compulsory cohabitation in social housing complexes regularly leads to frictions, tensions and conflicts. The opposite and conflicting lifestyles are the source of these frictions. He pleats for a policy in social housing related to lifestyles, instead of the actual policy where people are assigned into buildings on pure administrative or chronological basis. People with different lifestyles have other cultures, religions, manners and customs, with a strong ethnic link. He suggests four cohabitation-models using lifestyles: the multicultural model, the exotic or exogenous model, the cohabitation or saturated model and the social supervised model⁶.

Within an academic context a lifestyle-typology is designed, not based on quantitative data. The ethnical aspects are very dominant in the typology and it is not clear if either behavioural elements or psychographic elements were used. The research focuses on suggestions for policy in social housing, especially on the assignation of residents in existing social housing complexes, and has little relevance for regional planning.

⁶ (according to VHM info 52, October 2003, p. 16-19)

Multicultural model: housing complexes with a very heterogeneous, multicultural population. Flemish expertise learns that autochthons and the more and more Eastern-Europeans want to move from these buildings.

Exotic model: buildings with a very heterogeneous, multicultural population and with a seemingly high tolerance (the house-regulation is not respected).

Cohabitation model: buildings with a majority of autochthons, especially elderly people, and with a strictly respected house-regulation. Completely acclimatized allochthons can live in these buildings only if they can guarantee the quiet, saturated way of living.

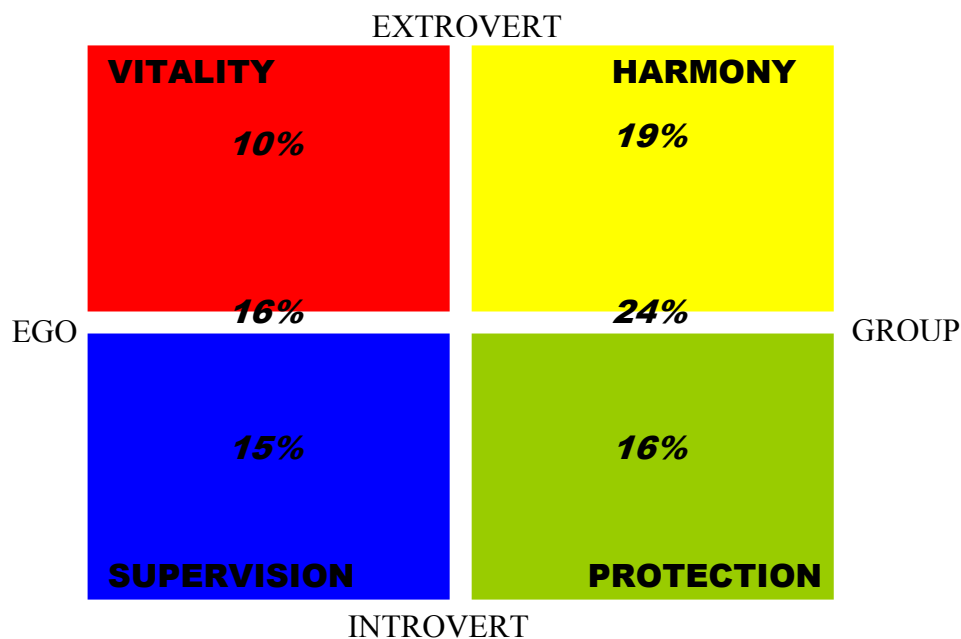
Social supervised model: building with risk-tenders under a strict supervision.

'The Flemish housing-consumer. A research on the housing experience of the potential building clients for Vooruitzicht.' Survey by The SmartAgent Company, by order of Vooruitzicht, building and developing-company (Antwerp)

The SmartAgent Company, a commercial Dutch company, experienced in market and lifestyle-surveys in the Netherlands, made by order of Vooruitzicht, a survey on the evolution in residential preferences of the Flemish inhabitants in the Flemish Diamond. They focused on the potential clients for Vooruitzicht (minimum income, interest in new buildings, plans to move within five years, ...).

The survey design had three levels. First of all they organised meetings with groups of households. Afterwards they did 4.500 telephone-conversations with households in the Flemish Diamond (specific geographic area in the Flemish Spatial Structure Plan) in order to make a selection of potential clients. Finally a written inquiry was sent to a selected population (450 ex.).

Using the BSR-methodology the population was divided into different psychographic customer segments or lifestyle-types (symbolised by colours: red, red/blue, blue, yellow, yellow/green, green) and housing concepts were developed. Lifestyle-groups are identified on the base of a sociological dimension (how is the individual related to the society), a psychological dimension (how does the individual cope with tensions in cohabitating) and a cultural dimension (how is the individual related to the common values and standards).



Lifestyle-clusters with their portion in the population

(Source: The Flemish housing-consumer. A research on the housing experience of the potential building clients for Vooruitzicht.)

The research reveals that there is a relation between lifestyle-concepts and housing concepts. The combination of both aspects gives indications for the market-potential of Vooruitzicht.

<i>Comfortable</i>	<i>Eminent</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Modern / New</i>	<i>Collective</i>	<i>Urban</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to services • No maintenance • Extra services • Comfortable, complete house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status • Open / capacity • Luxury • Homogeneous population • Unequivocal architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open / capacity • Calm • Greenery • Traditional architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provocative • Distinguishing architecture • Special geography of the house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong social network • Homogeneous population • Low-rise buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to services • Dynamic • Central • Special architecture, with variation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxury • Traditional architecture • Balcony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special architecture and geography of the house • Expandable • Delightful houses 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special façade • Ecological • Expandable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional architecture • Bungalows • M2 are not important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic area • Attainable • Balcony

Housing concepts based on the SmartAgent company

The SmartAgent Company, a commercial Dutch company, did a quantitative research on a limited population in a part of Flanders. They used psychographic segmentation for the design of the lifestyle-groups and geographic segmentation for the relation between lifestyles and housing concepts.

Conclusion and thesis for further research

In this paper the idea of lifestyles is explored, theoretically and by showing some relevant surveys in Flanders. The surveys prove that the idea of lifestyles can be related to planning and that we can find or create datasets in Flanders in order to identify (aspects of) lifestyles. In the following months these ideas on lifestyles will be checked in some case-studies in different parts of Flanders. Finally the aim is to introduce the idea of lifestyles in actual planning policy and practices. Based on the theoretical part of the research, it is possible to formulate a thesis: lifestyles can be introduced in planning policy and practices on three different levels: the normative, strategic and operational level.

Certainly there is a need for more elaborate research on this thesis, but a few actual thoughts can be expressed. On the normative level, the idea of latent lifestyles suggests relations between the value patterns of the population and the value patterns of the planning. In the actual planning context in Flanders value patterns of planning are not exposed. On the strategic level lifestyles could lead to different calculations of housing demand, making use of evolutions in value patterns or of frictions between latent and overt lifestyles. Lifestyles in relation to housing concepts, could help to implementate generic spatial principles like interweaving or intensification on an operational level.

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