

Authors: Ann Pisman, Georges Allaert, Piet Lombaerde

Different neighbourhoods but also different people?

Case-study realised in four neighbourhoods in Flanders, searching for differences and relations (inter)between the physical characteristics of the areas and the lifestyles of their inhabitants.

In the past planners often tried to describe inhabitants demographically or socio-economically. In other fields researchers use the concept of lifestyles to explore consumers diversity.

In Flanders, the concept of lifestyles in planning is relatively new. The issue addressed by the paper is focussing on the relations between lifestyles of inhabitants and characteristics of their physical environments. The idea that there is a relation between residents and neighbourhoods has been studied before by researchers as Wirth, Bourdieu, Rapoport amongst many others.

A field study is carried out in four housing areas in Flanders, sampled from a cluster analysis. Two different methods are used. On the one hand the physical appearance of the neighbourhoods is analysed, as seen by a non-resident. On the other hands a representative selection of inhabitants is questioned on their appreciation of their neighbourhood and on their lifestyle-characteristics.

This approach results in maps and pictures of the neighbourhoods, and in lifestyle-groups based on the quantitative analysis of the survey. The confrontation of both sources examines relations between inhabitants and neighbourhoods. A first analysis learns that a relation can be confirmed but not for all the lifestyle-themes, and that there are meaningful differences in homogeneity of the population in the four neighbourhoods.