GLOBAL CITY-REGION BRUSSELS

LANGUAGE, POLICY & IDENTITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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PREREQUISITS / DEFINITIONS

Definition of “urban” along different criteria:

- Demographics: inhabitants
- Housing: number of constructions
- Its administrative function: markets, regional centers, social & cultural sphere
- Individual political actor (“a political system as such”) → Urban Governance Research

Traditional views on the state see it as the centre of a hierarchic territorial command and control system with a domestic economical function as “rain maker” and an international political function in the global system – the city has in this system a subordinate position.

Due to the fact that Belgium was since its rising in the 19th century a “decentralized unitary State” and a new importance to internationalisation since the 1970ies, parallel raised a regionalisation which raised the impact of regions and (big) cities and led to a re-shaping of the nation-state.

S. Sassen defined several “global cities” with its linkages to other cities and its role in an international system.

In this view Brussels is a major player in Europe, and was it already before WW1:

- 1907: embedding of 42/109 international organisations (39%)
- 1910: 1st world congress of International Organisations

This international orientation clashes with domestic discussions about “historical injustices” between the two conflicts sides of the linguistic question in Belgium. These quarrels are mainly about language use in public space and in official institutions, especially education and led to concepts like BEL2 or BEL3.
1. CONTEXT

The successive linguistic disputes have made the successive Belgian governments very unstable. The three major parties (Liberal -right wing-, Catholic -center- and, Socialist -left wing-) all split in two according to their French- or Dutch-speaking electorate. A language border was determined by the first Gilson Act of November 8, 1962. The boundaries of certain provinces, arrondissements and municipalities were modified (among others, Mouscron became a part of Hainaut and Voeren became a part of Limburg) and “language facilities” for linguistic minorities were introduced in 25 municipalities. On August 2, 1963, the second Gilson Act entered into force, fixing the division of Belgium into four language areas: a Dutch, a French and a German language area, with Brussels as a bilingual area.

1.1. KEY CONCEPTS

1.1.1. PLURALISM

When Pluralism of organisations is regarded as the dynamic of urban politics then society consists of small incompletely overlapping special interest groups, diffused power bases and a multitude of techniques for exercising influence. The political system has to be relatively permeable, so that it is open to active, organized groups.

The study of community power started in the 1950ies with the study of social groups and a focus on decision-making processes. Hunter, regarded as the father of the urban elite theory, identified in his 1953 analysis of Atlanta, Georgia a small policy-making elite, dominated by the city business. Dahl differentiated this theory in his 1961 analysis of New Haven: Nobody rules in absolute sense, but there are particular (unelected) elites. Oligarchy has been transferred to a stratified pluralism. He is seen as the leading pluralist thinker.

Pluralism led in Brussels to a fragmentation of the political-institutional arena: Several spheres have influence on certain topics while the question of responsibility is not that clear. The impact on the decision making process is in first place a slowdown of the whole process due to a higher discussion rate.

1.1.2. ELITE THEORY

When, after Hunters theory, entrepreneurs lead the city, then there must be some kind of a hierarchical conception of society. By focussing on “urban development” entrepreneurs were seen as the “critical force in shaping urban systems” (“rentiers”) – therefore they are privileged in influencing public policy. This “growth machine” is essential for city development – therefore the elected rulers have to restrict their power and

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influence in “development politics” and capture investors and firms in a high enough number to compete against other cities, so that everyone can benefit:

- Direct business partners: developers, construction firms, architects,…
- Indirect beneficiaries: local media, utility companies,…
- Auxiliary members with particular benefits: universities, cultural institutions, small retailers,…

In this aspect Brussels has a high number of a bureaucratic elite: Diplomats, Lobbyists, EU-bureaucrats. These elite immigrants bring prestige and (social) capital to the city.

1.1.3. REGIME THEORY

The traditional focus in the (urban) Regime Theory lies on the “commercial republic”, the connection between economy and elected polity – newer focus lie on the special coalition-building between these layers. The premise here is, that besides the elite theory urban decision makers are not only determined by the economic sector but have a relative autonomy.

Such a coalition of private and public leaders is a non-hierarchical collaboration and forms a “regime” (a long term relationship with focus on agenda-setting and resource-mobilisation. Considering Michel Foucault three “faces of power” (formell, informell, normativ) emerge from this collaboration.

1.2. DEFINING BRUSSELS

1.2.1. EXPANDING BRUSSELS – THE “OLIEVLEK”

Although the origins of the city of Brussels lay in the 6th century, the first city privileges from the 13th (which then were abolished under French government), the territorial expansion began with the foundation of the Belgian state 1830: Embedded in the central policy of the state, elites populated the city and led to an expansion of 150% in the following 100 years in 10 shifts and acclamations. This led of course to tensions with the neighbouring villages. (Brussels “Olievlek”) The last three villages joined the Brussels Capital Region in 1947.

To avoid problems in the progress of territorial annexations 1874 the first conference of mayors took place to found the Region Brussels (in those days with 8 other municipalities). Regular informal meetings and language surveys followed. Between 1932 (Law of language use) and 1958 a nearly clear cut was drawn through the city, but the language border remained a broad zone while bilingual zones were limited. This led to a growing instability and conflicts with the political constructs Flandern and Wallonia.

1962 was the year of the fixation of the language border between the two regions – exceptions were 27 “facilities” and the officially bilingual capital.
1.2.2. THE METROPOLITAN AREA

The functional area of influence of Brussels is much broader as the 19 municipalities forming the official region:

- 52 municipalities in direct relation, 135 in the 2nd ring
- 1/2 of the 700 000 Jobs in Brussels were done by people not living in the official region
  - Growing mobility & housing problem
- Average income 20% less than in the state
  - Young average inhabitants
  - High amount of service work
  - International migration only in small parts higher educated

The rising amount of international and local migration led to significant higher costs, especially for mobility. Therefore compensation payments have to be done by the state (6th state reform) – 420 Mio € every year, and rising.

To stop the “Olivlek” from occupying another municipalities at its border a federation of municipalities was created in 1971 to form 1993 the “Vlaamse Rand” (19 municipalities).

- Passive resistance: celebrating the rurality
- Active policy: investments in culture, infrastructure, independence
- Cooperation with the Center (model Berlin-Brandenburg)

Examples of other cities show different models of the cooperation with the “hinterland”:

- Lille: international city in the bigger “Lille Metropole Communauté Urbaine with 85 municipalities
  - Urban planning, transport and infrastructure are the responsibility of the region
  - A conjunction of the actions between the city and the metropolis creates a new dynamic
- Berlin: federated entity, completely enclosed within one other (Brandenburg)
  - Unification failed 1995 but joint regional planning
- Vienna: city-state, hemmed by Lower Austria → institutions till 1986 in Vienna

1.2.3. THE ISSUE OF TRIPLE SEGREGATION

1. spatial
2. socio-cultural: philosophical, linguistic,…
3. socio-economic

This led to significant differences of housing quality and 118 districts: neighbourhoods with relatively homogeneous backgrounds
1.3. POLITICAL CLEAVAGES & CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1.3.1. POLITICAL CLEAVAGES

After Rokkan and Lipset the National/Political Revolution and the Industrial Revolution created fracture lines in the population of a state (church/state, city/regions, work/money) which then have influence on the political landscape and so institutionalized structural conflicts inherent to the society. For Belgium a fourth main fracture line, the linguistic question, arose in the same period.

One cause of this segregation is the “Pillarisation”: Every social group has influence on every state institution and service. Therefore we have cooperating elites, separated by ideology, language or religion. But in daily life most of the time only one pillar is used to get everything: So you stay mainly in your social group. But this effects difficult expectations for votes.

1.3.2. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Political conflicts intensified after WWII with collective action and mass mobilisation of the cultural-linguistic nationalism of Flanders and the socio-economic nationalism of Wallonia:

- Royal Question (1940-51)
- School War (1950-8): 893 000 manifestants
- Language issue: boycott 1960 of the language census & double “march on Brussels” 1961/2

Although the instability is limited to certain periods the average stability of post war governments in Belgium is under 1.5 years. The causes of a governmental split up are only in a limited level the impact of the public opinion, but to a higher degree communautarian issues and policy conflicts. To avoid stand stills several measures were introduced in Belgian federal politics:

- “Alarmbelprocedure”: none of the interest groups can rule on their own
- “Wafeleijzerpolitiek”: Every financial aid for one region has to go along with one for the other
- Proporzdemokratie → compromise of power sharing elites
- Mutual (minority) veto

In order to defuse conflicts through separating the political arenas from 1970 on 3 communities and 3 regions (overlapping territories) with separate decision-finding processes were developed. Brussels has so on the one side the possibility of regional self regulation, on the other it is part of the policy of the communities. Additional between 1968 and 78 the ideological united nationwide political parties split up along the regional cleavage and supported so the ethnic division and built therefore the basis for the federation.

1.3.3. A NEW TERRITORIAL IDENTITY?

A change in the cleavage structure went along with a better understanding of the other civil society/cultural...
actors from the 1980ies onwards. This led to a rising identification of the population of Brussels as inhabitants of their city more than of the state or the regions. On the one hand this shows the trust of the city population in their government – more than for example in the state government – on the other hand it is obviously, that the identification of the regions with Brussels is higher as the other way round. This rising capital region identity set the basis for a border between the city and the other regions and the development of an independent and self-confident cultural group (BRU3).

1.4. DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITIONS

In 1846 only Gent and Brussels had more than 100 000 inhabitants – the demographic boom of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century made Brussels to the one big city in the country. In 1920 around 60\% of the inhabitants had a migration background – this then had also influence on the creation of the capital region. Three sources can be traced:

- Rural depopulation
- Economic attractiveness: elites, modernisation, high amount of service work needed
- Growing internationalisation and therefore international migration

The picture, that the skilled workers and the intelligence came from abroad and Wallonia while the agricultural low-qualified labours came from Flanders will change dramatically in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. But although the chain migration led to spatial segregation there were no linguistic or ethnic ghettos. Transport facilities got a high economical importance, which is why Brussels got the sole centre of Belgian railway with a high developed intra-Brussels mobility-network.

Periods of economic growth (around 1900 and in the post-war restorations) were important pull factors in the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The necessity of labour force combined with low wages led to a considerable number of immigrants from more and more different countries (esp. the Mediterranean). This for example 16\% of foreigners in 1970 were (as everywhere) seen as problem in every case of economic crisis. Peaks of these developments were the anti-immigrant campaigns of Jean-Marie Le Pen in the 1980ies and Roger Nols, governor of Schaarbeek, riding on a camel.

In the mid-1950ies the suburbanisation process started, but in the mid of the 1960ies the total population growth stopped with its lowest level 1995. The new growth is due to the new international immigration, natural growth only exists in the poorer regions which led to the statistic fact that 28\% of all children were born in households without own income.

Brussels as a typical immigration city now has less than 50\% born here, 33\% are non-Belgians and acts as national gateway, holding 1/3 of the total Belgian migration. A high positive migration balance for young adults and on the contrary a negative balance for those over 30 years has impacts on the age structure: Brussels
changed itself from the “oldest” region in 1991 to the “youngest” till 2006.

Not only the chain migration but also the educational situation led to regional differences with high change rates in the centre and in the south (Etterbeek, Ixelles). The new attractiveness for young people led to housing problems and the erosion of the incomes but also to short time migration with estimated 90-100 000 inhabitants who are not registered: sans-papiers as well as students and short time workers.

This has consequences for the political structure and representation: In 1988 there was none of the community assembly seats in the BCR taken by a foreigner, this rose to 138 (around 20%) in 2006 and the first mayor in 2012.

On the regional level the representation is more difficult because it is strongly connected to the parties in the other two regions. The “gegarandeerde vertegenwoordiging” guarantees a certain amount of Dutch and French speaking in the Brussels parliament. Although bilingual lists have with 1/3 of the votes the majority this system does not represent the actual situation and is not interesting for many inhabitants of Brussels who feel themselves not connected to one of the language groups or regions but feel themselves as “Brusselaars”.
2. THE CASE BRU

2.1. LANGUAGE AS TOOL OF POWER

2.1.1. THE LANGUAGE OF POWER / “VERFRANSING” OF BELGIUM

After several shifts of rulers in the early modern history Belgium declared itself multilingual (French as official language + two regional “dialects”) at the foundation of the state in 1830 with 50% of the population speaking Dutch and 42% French, but the influence of the French elite from the economically more influential Wallonia and the former French reign led to French monolingualism in education and culture and soon also in administration, which intensified this **Frenchification** process during the 19\(^{th}\) century.

The status problem of Dutch in the 19\(^{th}\) century created a social gap expressed in language use which led any struggles for the use of Dutch in the justice or administrative system fail. The influence of the Dutch speaking was very low at the end of the 19\(^{th}\) and the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century.

Until the First World War the positions were clear: While Wallonians were successful in creating a **monolingual Wallonia and a bilingual Flanders** the Flamingants worked for a complete bilingual state or at least two monolingual regions. The “Dutchification” of the University of Ghent was seen central against the French dominance in regard of the “Frenchification machinery” as which education was seen.

2.1.2. THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

In 1883 Dutch was allowed in secondary school, in 1895 the first Dutch course was held at the ULB. This is part of a slow “Flemigrantisation” movement, influenced mainly by catholic church, towards a legislative equal language status in the second half of the 19\(^{th}\) century: In 1878 the official communication in Brussels became bilingual in 1898 both languages were equal in the justice system which meant the creation of two official languages.

After WW1 the new political landscape made coalitions between Wallonian Socialists and Flanders Conservatists necessary. A **rising Nationalism of Flanders** could be brought to the first row of politics and influenced the language discussion towards a **Dutchification** of Flanders in the 1930ies: University of Ghent, administration, justice and education. This led to the first generation of monolingual Flanders. Additional the Flemish movement became national interest when the Flemish economy overtook those of Wallonia after WW2.

2.1.3. CENSUS ISSUES

Brussels was in the mid of the 18\(^{th}\) century generally Dutch-speaking with a French elite. After the creation of the Belgian state a slow Frenchification led to a high bilingual population (50%) and a growing French speaking group. While immigrants from Wallonia remained monolingual, immigrants from the Dutch-speaking
community were educated bilingual. The high emmigration of the countryside together with the Frenchification and the problem of the Olievlek led to the conclusion in Flanders, that they are “loosing” Brussels.

The first surveys to language use in Belgium were made in the 1840ies concluding with a 2/3 majority for the Dutch. In the next hundred years the amount of only Dutch speaking in Brussels will shrink to less than 1/10 in 1947. While the only French speaking parts stayed nearly the same the bilingual population rose during the 19th century to nearly 50%. But these surveys hat several mythological problems:

- No level of proficiency asked
- No variation of language use in function or context asked
- “socially desirable” answers for most used language (esp. after WWII: collaboration issue)

After Wold War 2 a big French minority in 8 Flemish municipalities around Brussels forced the authorities to define administrative shifts: From an amount between 30 and 49% official documents must be bilingual, from an amount from 50-80% the linguistic shift preserves the facilities of the former majority and installs new ones, and with over 80% the former majority facilities can be totally cancelled – which happened in several cases. Here the political discussion used and uses the pictures of the “Olievlek” and the “Carcan”.

This difficult situation between the language groups and the regions led to the fact that a considerable number (around 10%) of the representatives of the French language group live officially in Flanders – on the other hand the Flemish claim that their total amount of representatives to the Dutch decision finding institutions is significantly lower than those of the French. This complex situation after WWII led to the installation of two main principles of language use in 1962, when the language zones were fixed:

- **Personalism**: language use as an individual right
- **Territorialism**: language rights depending on (the ideal monolingual) territory

This led to a quick bilingualism in the Brussels Department Supervisors and the upper management to nearly 50% in 1979 while for example the billboards stayed to 2/3 monolingual French which remained a “tacit pressure” of the Francophone majority till today while the socio-psychological pressure remained low (no territorial segregation, no material exclusion, no labour restrictions, ...). This aspect was strengthened by the rising amount of foreigners from the 1970ies tending to learn French instead of Dutch – here the international reputation or importance is obvious. Also is the influence of Dutch in the health system very little compared to a Dutchification of other infrastructure (education, sociocultural sphere).

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Due to the fact that official language surveys are forbidden since the creation of the bilingual basis 1962 another less scientific methods arose to see tendencies (telephone subscriptions etc.). The knowledge that the monolingual ideal is something of the past can be seen in statistics to language requirements in Job Ads, but surveys to the actual language knowledge show interesting details:

- Around 95% of all Brussels inhabitants speak French on a high level
- With around 1/3 speaking English this is the second most spoken language in Brussels
- The knowledge of Dutch is shrinking from 1/3 in 2007 to ¼ in 2013
- Arabic (18%) and Spanish (9%) are rising
- monolingualism is a total minority compared to several forms of bi- or multilingualism
2.2. URBAN GOVERNANCE

The institutions of Belgium and Brussels are built on the linguistic frontier established in 1963 (with discussion about the question of whether this frontier can still change), on a territorial agreement concerning language use (excluding the language frontier and surrounding Brussels), and on the systematic separation of the two large language communities. Not like other federations Belgium installed this system to hold together different nationalities developed in one country.

In Brussels, the institutions of the Region, the Flemish Community Commission (VGC), the French Community Commission (COCOF) and the Common Community Commission (GGC/COCON) arise from the double Belgian federation. The different visions that both language groups have about the position of Brussels in the Belgian institutions also translates in the asymmetry between the French Community Commission and the Flemish Community Commission, such that the French Community Commission is an independent legislative institution while the Flemish Community Commission is part of the Flemish Community.

High differences of the 19 communities in terms of demographics, language use, economic and cultural power make it difficult to find a uniting policy for the region. Another big problem is the strict language border in political thinking: There is no grey bilingual zone between the poles. Due to the fact that everyone is considered as part of one of the two groups, chambers get big (89 seats in the regional parliament), expensive and inefficient. As a result of the high international migration 1/3 of the inhabitants have no legitimate representatives because as non Belgian citizens they are not allowed to vote.

2.2.1. “KONKORDANZ”

Fears (especially of the Flemish) of underrepresentation of one or the other group at a certain point led to a unquestioned consociation democracy which freezes the existing patterns of group identities and led to irrational laws like the “Wafeleizerpolitiek”. Big democratic changes, concluded in most other western European countries, like democratic renewal, executive reforms or Europeanization couldn’t yet be decided.

The rising of the Flemish movement from a cultural to a nationalistic one after WWII, strengthened by the economic growth (first time stronger than Wallonia in the 1960ies), was a big pressure on the francophone government. The split of the parties precedes the transformation of the Belgian state from a unitary into a federal one. Due to the intense language cleavages at first language Laws were introduced 1962 and finally several state reforms from 1970 till 1993 created a special form of regional autonomy:

- indirect election of the “Assemblee” and the “Raad” till 1995
- responsibilities and competences are highly devided between the layers
- GGC/COCOM as inter-language organisation is the primus inter pares
- “alarmbelprocedur”: ¾ of every language group have veto right
- 1993: creation of the federal state
All three budgets of the Regions together are around the half of those of the central government (ca. 15/30%). No tax autonomy shows the fiscal dependence on money from the upper level while Language Communities have a big policy making power but no fix budget at all. **Vertical and horizontal cooperation** between all levels is the basis for political work – for example the Deliberation Committee, the unregularly meeting of the leaders of the regions, the communities and the prime minister.

The special case Brussels brought another difficulties: It was the last of the regions to get its legislative status in 1989 (later than the other regions) due to fears of the Flemish to get overwhelmed by the francophone majority – first as the secured representation of the Dutch speaking in Brussels was guaranteed, the third region could be installed. Additional the “ordonances” of the Brussels legislative are subordinated to the “decrees” of the other regional assemblies.

Before 1989 the executive committee consisted one minister and two Secretaries of State – the average duration of these governments were 541 days. Therefore a second Minister was added to complete the separation but led to more stable coalitions. The total system is a little more complex:
From the 89 representatives in the Raad 72 are from the French language group and 17 from the Dutch. Every language group has its “Gemeenschapscommissie” and “vergadering” (COCOF and VGC) – together they form the “Gemeenschappelijke Gemeenschapscommissie” and “Verenigde Vergadering”. And every of them sends 3 (French) or 2 (Dutch) representatives (their “colleges”) to the “Verenigd college” – “voorzitter” and speaker of the Raad is one of the French. This is the executive power, known as “Hoofstedelijke Regering”: 5 Ministers (including an informal Dutch deputy to the French “voorzitter”) and 3 Secretaries of state.

Both “Gemeenschapscommissies” have their own “Raad” and Parliament, together they form the Senat. Every representative can have different posts. A member of the French language group in Brussels can sit in up to six different offices – and a hand full does so (some of them are local majors) – with different tasks from governmental leading to opposition fighting.

The whole system is based on negotiations, cooperation and consensus: The rising of the Vlaams Belang in the early 21st century led to an adaption of the system so that one party could not block the whole process. Also the balance of power is very fragile and important – especially regarding the Dutch minority. Although the system is slow, it has a stabilizing effect. Biggest disadvantages are the missing transparence and democratic control as well as the asymmetry of the city framed in the conflict between language communities, which are reinforced by this system.

Another critics are the undermination of the state by the own institutional logic of sub-national entities – with a weak upper level no one will defend common interests. The current structure also minimizes the influence of the BCR let alone the German minority (both of them have no own community) in order to strengthen the main language groups. In such a federal state no nationality group will arise and challenges and divisions concerning minorities will continue.

On the other hand surveys show that the influence of the two main groups in terms of identification is losing while the self-determination as “Belgian” is gaining influence. One of the main stabilizing effects of the federalism is the lower debates on language and regional affairs and the therefore higher concentration on actual policy making.

2.2.2. BRUSSELS PARLIAMENT

The Brussels Parliament has a special Role – in Brussels and in Belgium. First the location of the building tells us much about the self-defined role: Other as the European and Federal Parliament and the buildings of the French- and Dutch-speaking groups it is not situated in the same Quarter between Wetstraat and Royal Palace but right in the centre of the city, close to the Grande Mart and so to the Municipality.

The Building was adopted 1993 as the former Region of Brabant seized to exist in terms of the re-structuring of Belgium. On the left and the right side of the old building newer of the French and the Dutch community of Brussels are attached. This symbolizes also the situation in the Brussels Parliament as different from the regional interest groups. But (as always in Belgium) it is a bit more complicated than that:
The German speaking minority elects their very own and unique Parliament.

The Dutch-speaking of Flanders elect their Parliament (the biggest in the country by representatives in the Parliament and in the federal Senat)

The Dutch- and the French-speaking of Brussels elect the “Brussel Hoofdstedelijk Parlement”/“Parlement de la Region de Bruxelles-Capitale” with fixed amounts for French-speaking Politicians (72) and Dutch-speaking representatives (17)

The French-speaking of Wallonia AND of Brussels (!) elect together the “Parlement Walon”

The last thing expresses the desire of the French community to connect Brussels (which is entirely enclosed in Flanders) to their territory and therefore to play a bigger role in the federal politics in which they only have 18 out of 50 representatives.

The Brussels Regional parliament is split into Dutch- and French-speaking language groups and each language group can propose supplementary legislation (secondary legislation) with a view to implementing Flemish or French Community policies in the Region (when acting accordingly these language groups constitute ‘language commissions’ known respectively as the Flemish Community and the French Community Commission). Where Community policies are not clearly distinguishable on a linguistic basis (for instance, some subsidised retirement homes may seek to accommodate Dutch- and French-speaking people), the consent of the Dutch and French language groups in the Brussels Regional parliament and executive is required (hence, the Flemish and the French Community Commissions constitute a Joint Community Commission). In this sense, the members of the Brussels Regional parliament put on two hats: legislators in Regional policies of the Brussels Capital Region and administrators in Community policies within the same region

The federal Parliament of Brussels consists of 72 representatives of the Wallonian Parliament (Commission communautaire française, COCOF) and 17 of the (Dutch) Parliament of Brussels (Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, VGC). As we can see: The directly elected Parliament and the Community Commission are de facto the same – same politicians, same parties, same composition, different tasks.

As early as 1980, a decision was made to merge the Flemish Community and Region into one ‘Community’ governed by a single parliament and executive. Conversely a French-speaking Community parliament and executive still exist alongside a Walloon Regional parliament and executive. This reflects the much larger demographic weight of the Brussels based French-speakers in the total pool of French-speaking Belgians (approximately 18 per cent) and the distinct socio-economic and political preferences of the French-speakers who live in Brussels and Wallonia.

While the Communities (and the Common Community Commission) only have power in connection with their language use – so also in educational issues or healthcare – the competences of the regions go beyond infrastructural issues – every region has for example their own foreign policy and trade politics. 89 representatives is very much in comparison with the other two regions – but the complex structure between the two interest groups makes a detailed share of power necessary.
At a public Q&A at the parliament Jef Van Danne, president of the Brussels sp.a, Brigitte Grouwels (CD&V), Stefan Cornelis (Open VLD) and Johan Van den Driessche (N-VA) encouraged a debate about the parliament and the decision finding process. It became obvious that on most issues the main target is the same over all fractions with only small differences between the party interests – consensus seems to be the main way of work. The only emotional discussion which showed significant differences in ideology was about the necessary of this huge amount of representatives (over 1200 in Brussels, together with the municipalities).

### 2.3. URBAN POLITICS

Often a maybe unfamiliar coalition in regional politics bases on an example in a local government: The 19 communities of Brussels tended to fragmentize, with more electable lists and majors of more different parties also the coalition work got more and more important. The reasons why there are still 19 local governments in the city are based on the “sources of power” (Eraly, 2002):

- Local embedding: The identification of the public with politicians is lower the higher the position is
- Media presence
- Representation of an important social group
- Support by political party organs and the top

Due to the relevance of individuals and networks politicians prefer to have a local executive mandate as basis for higher ambitions which leads to a condensation and intermingling of local and regional political elites.

BRU-19 became an actor in a shared-rule model with the 2001 state reform which embedded extra financial inputs if a Dutch alderman or CPAS-president is appointed.

The shape of the administrative organisation of the city and the region was and is discussed frequently, from

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the goal of merging the municipalities in the 1960ies and 70ies over the intra-municipal deconcentration in districts in the 80ies, which should help getting closer to the citizen, to the multi-level-government approach since the 90ies; the arguments were always the same:

- **The fragmentation integrates minorities better**, helps the citizens participate and reflects the high number of inhabitants
- **The consolidation is better in terms of efficiency**, impact and political coherency. It also always was a Flemish demand in terms of the rising influence in a shared-rule model.

The fact that no major and alderman wants to lose power and/or its mandate makes discussions complex. In terms of “municipalism” and “communautarian self rule” the 19 communitites are in charge of infrastructural demands and not a higher political layer. But a “federated entity” or “united city” would also have effects on the balance of power in Belgium and the independence of Flanders and Wallonia.

But with the state reforms a lot of competences of the municipalities were transformed to the regional level which led to the fact that the regional government of Brussels de facto is the urban governance, guiding the politics of its municipalities. The creative cognitive work is on regional level, providing the municipalities with proposals and rewarding the implementation with additional payments (policy of the carrot and the stick). These measures also try to implement some sort of equality and solidarity, providing the poorer communities with more funds than the richer. This is the result of big differences of the communities in terms of wealth, size and demographics.

As sort of compensation of the fragmentation of the political-institutional architecture in Brussels constantly more than 2/3 of the mayors and aldermans have also a mandate in the Brussels Capital Parliament. Additional to the accumulation of mandates, indirect access to decision making areas is provided by organisations like the Concercence of Mayors basing on informal contacts and agenda setting to reach a quasi-diplomatic decision making and a subtle and gentle leadership.

### 2.4. URBAN EDUCATION

Education in Belgium is regulated and for the larger part financed by one of the three communities: Flemish, French and German-speaking. All three communities have a unified school system with small differences from one community to another. The federal government plays a very small role: it decides directly the age for mandatory schooling and indirectly the financing of the communities.

- **Schools owned by the communities** (GO! Onderwijs van de Vlaamse gemeenschap; réseau de la Communauté française)
- **Subsidized public schools** (officieel gesubsidieerd onderwijs; réseau officiel subventionné), organized by provinces and municipalities
- **Subsidized free schools** (vrij gesubsidieerd onderwijs; réseau libre

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subventionné), mainly organized by an organization affiliated to the Catholic church.

Considering the secondary School as decisive factor in “national mobilisation” the pillarisation and the impact of the communautarization state in the school system can be seen as a structural problem-zone of the traditional politico-philosophic and politico-linguistic conflicts in Belgium. Although there is no sub-nationality, children are educated in quasi-national systems. Bilingual schools are rare so the region in which you live decides the language of education.

This is even more complicated in Brussels: Here you have the choice of going to a Dutch or a French speaking class. But there are still mainly two monolingual systems besides each other and not one bilingual. The higher impact of communities on the French educational system leads to a high number of French schools in Brussels, compensated by community schools of the Flemish community.

2.4.1. HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The monopoly of French education in the 19th century was often seen as “Verfransingsmaschine” (Frenchification Machinery), but beginning in the 1870ies Dutch sometimes got a subordinate position in special “classes” or “sections” in the French schools. For basic and secondary education this monopoly falls in the 1880ies, for higher education in 1930.

Charles Buls, mayor in Brussels from 1881 till 1899, established experiment basic schools with a Dutch education in the first two years – but so Dutch became only the function of transition to French as “main” language of instruction. Also the free choice 1911 didn’t bring the revolution.

Due to the fact that education became compulsory not earlier than in 1914 (in comparison: Prussia 1717, Austria 1774) while child labour was also not only tolerated but welcome in the highly industrialized country the number of uneducated people – especially on the countryside – was high. With a more complex industry and a rising state administration more educated people were needed which led to a change right before WW1. In Brussels in that year 6 Dutch education units in the whole education stood against 405 French units.

Besides a rising number of Dutch Kindergartens the problem of (higher) education in French remained till 1932 as a new law decided the education in the language of the head of family. New problems with bilingual children arose.

Besides the “school war” between catholic and public education, the period from 1945 to 71 was characterised by collective action with massive demonstrations for monolingual Dutch education, which was not provided in the monolingual French or bilingual schools. Since 1954 the number of municipalities in Brussels providing those hasn’t really changed, but the discussions of the late 50ies and early 60ies led to the establishing of the so-called “blind-system” with two monolingual systems to which the pupils were divided by evaluation (self determination and verifying) of their mother tongue and spoken language at home. So every child was born in

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one cultural/ethnic community (with language as the one and only marker) and the division of the state enforced by this policy of “imposed identity”.

With the establishing of language areas and the bilingual BCR in 1962 (and the implementation in law 1970/1) free choice of schools got implemented in Brussels 1971, but altogether the communities became more influence in the education system which led on the one hand to an expansion of Dutch language schools in Brussels by the community and on the other furthermore to a competitive system in the BCR with up to 1/3 of the pupils from outside the BCR and altogether a rising home-school-mobility (no neighbourhood-classes any more). This intensified residential and social segregation – so “ghetto schools” do not establish due to the parents giving their children to the very first neighbourhood school but due to a higher diversion of the schools as result of the free choice.

In the 70ies these measures of the Dutch community didn’t work yet and the number of pupils (esp. in basic educational levels compared to kindergartens) decreased tremendously (suburbanisation and demographic change) – but migration as a result of the new language borders is also a main reason of the decreasing amount of Dutch pupils and schools. This development intensified with the state reforms of 1981 and 1988/9 and the transition of higher education to the community level. In recent years structural problems about the too little amount of schools arose.

2.4.2. DUTCH IN BRUSSELS

In order to establish a better education in the conflict between French and Dutch schools in Brussels bilingual schools were established from the Flemish community as well as French and other language bases schools. Dutch so became a minority in the minority: 2013 only 9% of the schools of the Dutch community in Brussels were monolingual Dutch, but 18% of the pupils (around the amount of Dutch-speakers in the BCR) visited a school financed by the VGC.

While the French community installed immerse education (the education of pupils partly or totally in the other language) in 1998 the discussion about social reality and providing education for foreigners in the Flemish community arose. After an enhanced language policy at school and offering multiple courses entirely in another language the immerse education was implemented in 2013. Based on immersion, the Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) with English as main educational language was established in pilot projects by the Flemish Community.

While most schools outside of Belgium use the Assimilation model with the main education in one and only foreign language classes in another language, Belgium (like Montreal) uses a hierarchical bilingual model with different languages used in education based on the region. Exception is Brussels with a non-hierarchical bilingual model, the autochthonous educational systems by linguistic groups and the free choice. But this is not active pluralism as for example shown in the educational system of Luxembourg.

The present situation in Brussels is altogether one of concurrence with a lot of responsible organisations and

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little coordination. While the number of pupils is rising in the northwest of the city, in the southeast the amount is shrinking. To ensure the education in your first language 55% of the places in Dutch schools are reserved for Flemish in Brussels. But the mobility especially of pupils in the “Croissant pauvre” (area around the city centre from the north to the southwest) is very low, so often the closest school to the living place wins the competition.

The social (and triple) segregation in the Brussels education system is shown in the French system: Besides a lot of elite schools with a very low number of pupils with migration background most of the schools have a high number of “migrant” pupils. With over 20% the drop-out-rate is in Brussels the highest of all regions in Belgium, showing inner segregation correlated to the richness and the amount of French-speaking people in the 19 communities. Therefore the happiness with the school is higher in Flanders while the hope for change in Brussels.

2.4.3. PRESENCE AND OUTLOOK

At institutional level, education in Brussels does not exist. The Region, a bilingual institution, has very little competence in this area, as the terms for the federalisation of Belgium result in the coexistence of an education system structured separately by the French and Flemish Communities. The historical legacy of struggles and balance between socio-political pillars is translated by the presence of networks within each community system. In Brussels, education is therefore managed by a multitude of structures (the organising authorities) which often function in an autonomous manner and consult each other at different levels (network and Community). The 19 municipalities, which act as separate official subsidised organising authorities, often in both linguistic frameworks, obviously do not simplify matters. The same is true regarding the many international schools.

This complex organisation of education must cope with the realities of a (small) world city whose population has grown and become younger and more international, and where the wealth of some coexists with the unemployment and poverty of others. Demographic growth has led to large-scale needs. There will be 42,000 additional students to accommodate between 2010 and 2020, 29,500 of whom will be at preschool and primary level.

Other aspects also deserve to be discussed and even organised in a Brussels framework, in addition to the Community level: the fight against academic failure and early school leaving, the nature and allocation of means related to positive discrimination measures, extracurricular activities, management of multilingualism, additional training for (future) teachers in Brussels, and even inter-school coordination, solidarity and responsibility.
3. EMBEDDING BRU

3.1. VLAAMSE RAND

19 Municipalities (6 of them with language facilities who guarantee the French language use) in the surrounding of the capital form the “Brusselse/Vlaamse Rand”, in which the “Verfransing” is a highly sensible political and social topic. Although the language use is formally free there is often no alternative, because the territorial principle lies over the personal principle. “Taalbarometer”-investigations (language use in the closest family, first and emotional language) in the last decade show especial problems in the “Vlaamse Rand” around Brussels:

- Rising amount of double language education
- ½ of the Dutch speakers do so from birth on, 2/3 of the francophones
- Higher mobility (“new mobilities”) has effects on language policy (e.g. Arabic Nr. 2 spoken language)
  - Decrease of French-speakers at home from ½ to 1/3 → lower incentives for foreigners
  - Rise of foreign language use to 1/3, especially English → higher diversity
- Lower influence of the labour market: multiple language use often key, but lower influence of Du & Fr
- Rising unusual language use: conversations with both languages used, combinations, frequent switching → although 90% speak French, the development leads to multilingualism and combinations
In the Vlaamse Rand Dutch is the most used language at home, but altogether French alone is leading in front of the combination Dutch & English and Dutch alone – this is mostly due to the working environment and therefore also the internationalisation not only of Brussels itself but also the surrounding area. Basic principle: The more informal a conversation is, the more Dutch is used, for example in shops and restaurants.

While native Dutch speakers use more languages in different situations, native French speakers mostly concentrate on this language in daily life. This unavoidably leads to tensions in a Flemish society and an aggressive reaction of the Dutch speakers: A battle in the public area tries to show the presence of monolingualism by providing pressure on French shop names or price lists. A new trend therefore is the total avoiding of written language at all instead of bilingual texts.

In Quebec in comparison, in the external public sphere only French is used while in the internal public space both languages are allowed. The ideal is the integration by forced language use, but in the Vlaamse Rand no official laws about language use in public were installed, but a complex language policy system to bridge over from Dutch to other language use and accepting multipluralism:

- Obligation: shops, organized playgrounds, housing
- Language stimulation: language courses, sports, clubs
- Integration support: exceeded dualism, use of English

While in the city region of Brussels the city is more identity building than the language communities and for migrants the divided system therefore is no problem, in the Vlaamse Rand the identification with the region and the language is much higher – this is true for the Flemish and the Dutch speaking, the French and other language speakers identify themselves much more with the city, in which they’re mostly working, than with the region they’re actual living in.

This trend intensifies with the decreasing influence of Dutch in the former completely Flemish villages. The spreading of the “functional” Brussels (“Olievlek”) led questions about new borders arise, but new circumstances would again produce border questions and new minorities – that’s why a stronger co-working of the city with its surrounding is enforced. For example weekly free papers like BDW (Brussel Deze Week) or Radio Stations (FM Brussel) try to connect the Flemish surrounding with the cultural life of the capital.
3.2. TECHNICIANS – DRIVERS OF THE CITY MACHINERY?

The development towards the modern State started mainly in the 19th century with the condition of mapping sources and taxation systems and the long-term-developments of nationalisation and administration. Key factor was the loyalty monopoly with a trans-territorial affiliation to religion, ethnicity and dynasty. On the one hand, administration systems could be imported to Europe (good administration in China), on the other it could be transferred to and experimented in the colonies, which led to the first professional civil service in British India 1854 and later in the US after the civil war.

Science, discoveries and especially warfare were the main incentives for a global “mapping” of the known territories, which then could be used as tool of nationalisation. This went along with a professionalization (training, exams, promotion) of the workers in the administration but also with a higher complexity of the modern state and city. Different civil services were established in the 19th century, from water supply to railway infrastructure.

In the case of Belgium as decentralized unitary state the autonomy of the regions and cities was very high which allowed an individual development, but forced the municipalities also to offer all those services (municipalism). This led to the establishing of highly educated technicians in a bureaucratic elite in the last quarter of the 19th century. The (in-) dependence of these non-elected decision-makers had always to be controlled and measured without restricting their function to passive agents.

An important element was the internal exchange: Parallel to conferences in politics (e.g. Brussels Conference of Mayors) also conferences of technicians were developed for a better coordination and knowledge-exchange and efficiency-orientated coalition-building. Additional the long periods of office without official restrictions (as for politicians in office) enforces the position and influence of the technicians because of rising knowledge and experience – but with their continuous work in the background they normally stay in the background when developing (action) plans for politicians.

The “centralisation paradox” shows the implementation of the regional technicians in the governmental plans: While decrees come from the elected governmental layer, local municipalities have to execute it. In this position of partly autonomy and partly dependence, the so-called “satellites” developed a big mix of hierarchical relations, networks and market controls. The outsourcing of work to only partly privatised sub-companies of the city (like transport services or energy supply) led to a spreading of power and influence (pluralism, urban elite theory), but also to more flexible actions and a vision-free practice-orientated work – while always implementing the central governmental policy.

One example of the violation of the hierarchical layer was the “Lokettenkwestie/Affaire des Guichets” in Schaarbeek 1971-6: Roger Nols, mayor of the municipality became famous by denying to install bilingual counters. In 1976 the national governmental commissioner acted and implemented the national rule in the
quasi-informal (daily) practise area. Since then a fix percentage of 70/30 was established in Brussels.

In this example the big and rising power of the language communities in Brussels is obvious: Too little coordination and inter-layer-agreements, which led to permanent infrastructural provisionals, and too little identification of the inhabitants of Brussels with the commissions of the other regions are current problems which are expressed by the technicians of the city as crucial actors. But the main frustration in these days heads towards the structures and not yet with the decision makers itself, but more synergies and first empirical studies on the connection of elected and non-elected drivers of the city development are needed.