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Homelessness in Brussels – Limits of Multi-Level Governance in the Application of the Principle of Spatial Justice[1]

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ABSTRACT

The transformations of the Belgian state entailing multiple transfers of competences from the central state to federated entities has had fundamental territorial consequences on the management of 'the social question'. The article proposes to study anti-poverty policies (APP) for homeless people in the Brussels-capital region based on successive transformations in the relationship between public actors and the voluntary sector.

This analysis focuses on the way spatial and territorial transformations have rearticulated the management of poverty as well as 'games' of cooperation or eviction among actors dealing with extreme urban poverty, in which they accept the local poor and reject poor people from elsewhere. By combining insights from sociology and urban planning, the aim is to better understand both issues of multi-level governance in metropolitan areas and how to (try to) counter forms of spatial injustice.

Keywords: homelessness, spatial justice, multilevel governance, urbanism, social policy

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Since 1970, six consecutive reforms of the Belgian state[6] have transferred powers from the federal level to the federated entities (see box). These reforms have given the regions a high degree of autonomy in both local development and social policies, particularly with regard to providing support services and primary care. At the same time, however, these regional competences[7] are embedded in a complex arrangement with those exercised by the municipalities or the federal state.

We hypothesize that an analysis of the public interventions carried out in this context and focused on the most vulnerable populations (i.e. the "homeless") shows, on the one hand, an acceptance of the growing phenomena of precarious urban populations and, on the other hand, the inability of current responses to achieve an objective of spatial justice. Moreover, analysing policies for homeless people cannot be separated from observing more generally how transformations of the Belgian welfare state have led to fragmentation in the country's management of the social question.

This fragmentation has made room for the development of a 'game' or stratagem in which actors either cooperate or carry out evictions; as such, it serves as one of the instruments for the neo-liberalisation of public policies in Belgium by effectively establishing competition between local entities. This process of fragmentation in carrying out public interventions can be read through the prism of the notion of governmentality theorized by Michel Foucault (2004). This concept refers to the evolution of tactics in governing populations, in particular by reducing state power and redefining what falls under the responsibility of public as opposed to private actors. The objective of the system of governmentality is to guarantee, among other things, the security of populations while leaving a maximum of latitude to private initiative, whether individual or collective (Foucault, 2004; Berns, 2009).

In Belgium, this reversal of the hierarchy between public and private (Supiot, 2015) is reflected in the implementation of a complex multi-level system of governance which activates the principle of subsidiarity towards both local authorities (municipalities and Public Centres of Social Welfare [PCSW]) and the private sector (mainly non-profit organizations). These mechanisms of power transfer are regulated by various forms of contractualization between the public and private sectors, as described in particular by Isin (1998). They have led to dynamics of competition between local actors as a result of privatising a component of public services or rationalising them, with the rise of the management concept (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The multiscalar fragmentation of power and the new arrangements that result from it have profoundly modified the

6. In 1970, 1980, 1988-89, 1993, 2001 and recently in 2015.
7. Or "community based", in the case of so-called "personalizable" competences, i.e. competences directly linked to people (culture, health, education) and organized by the "Communities" on the basis of linguistic affiliation (French or Dutch-speaking).

organization of territorial governance and paved the way for a neo-liberal urban project based on a procedural conception of justice.

The question of the right scale of government to meet the requirements of spatial justice can be seen in the tension between a micro local approach, centred on uses and recognizing people as "beneficiaries" (particularly in spatial registration), and a metropolitan scale that requires a certain equality in the distribution of resources (Gervais-Lambony and Dufaux, 2009; Desjardins, 2009). Managing the location and availability of resources for homeless people, such as night shelters or social restaurants, is thus an integral tool of urban poverty management (De Vertueil, May and von Mahs, 2009).

In this article, we propose to study the operation of anti-poverty policies (APP) in the Brussels region on the basis of successive transformations in relations between public actors and the voluntary sector. These transformations must themselves be viewed in the broader context of state reforms and their fundamental territorial consequences on the management of the social question. To do so, our approach mobilizes contributions from sociology and urban planning, reflecting the research fields of each of the authors as part of a joint, interdisciplinary investigation of homelessness in Brussels from 2017[8]. Given this framework, the article develops a socio-historical approach to legal texts and the games of public and associative actors in order to discern their territorial effects on the management of extreme precariousness.

The first part of the article recontextualizes the impact of institutional reforms on the management of homelessness, specifically the in-depth reform of principles of public action and the curbing of state power by redistributing roles between public and private actors. The second part presents the major developments in homelessness policies in their historical context in order to shed light on the institutional complexity of Belgium and Brussels. In the third part, we analyse the outcome of these forms of restructuring and how they are reflected in the Ordinance[9] on Emergency Aid and the Integration of Homeless People adopted 25 May 2018 by the Common Community Commission of the Brussels Capital Region. These policy developments illustrate the evolution of contractualized relations between public and private actors and their effects on, among other things, the way services for the homeless are localized. Through an examination of these two highlights, the fourth part of the article explores the spatial and territorial transformations underway in the management of the highly

8. This collaboration encompassed two research programmes in particular: BRUMARG-Brussels through its margins: Homelessness between urban transformations and urban practices (Innoviris-Attract programme, funded by the Brussels Capital Region, 2017-2020) and MEASINB-Measuring Invisibility in Brussels, Innoviris-Anticipate, funded by the Brussels Capital Region, 2018-2020).

9. The legal texts adopted by the United College of the Brussels-Capital Region, i.e. the government in charge of the powers of the Common Community Commissions, are called "ordinances".

precarious urban situations in the Brussels-Capital Region. It aims to show that services to help the most disadvantaged are unequally distributed and how some municipalities in the Region implement strategies of eviction or even non-reception. In conclusion, we highlight the way in which the fragmentation of competences and delegation of services to help the most disadvantaged to the not-for-profit sector is the result of neo-liberal management that takes the form of competition between local levels, the unequal distribution of services and, consequently, a partial or even segregated care of the homeless.

Between state reforms and complex multi-level re-organisation

While extreme precariousness and homelessness are major issues in any urban area, the institutional reality in Brussels makes them a highly complex issue.

For four decades now, the Belgian institutional system has been engaged in a process of decentralising territorial solidarity mechanisms based on the principle of subsidiarity. Initially initiated to meet Flemish requirements for respecting cultural identity and Walloon demands for control over its own economic destiny, it has gradually come to affect a large segment of public policies.

The logic of "federalising" the Belgian state has long remained ambiguous in relation to the Brussels area because of its status as national capital, its location within Flemish territory and the composition of its population, both French-speaking and Dutch-speaking. Nevertheless, as an examination of the first reform of the state shows, the specific urban and even metropolitan nature of Brussels was recognized through the act of constituting the Greater Brussels Area, an administrative entity responsible for coordinating certain policies (spatial planning, waste, health, transport) across the 19 municipalities of the current Region.

At the same time, the specificity of Brussels was also quickly embodied in a social movement that took charge of the specifically urban problems abandoned by the bureaucratic and largely functionalist forms of the welfare state. This mobilization generated a significant number of associative actors who have sought to intervene outside the established framework of the pillars (Genard, 2002; Moriau, 2017). A first wave of "real NPOs", in Goldman's words (2015), appeared in this period, recognized by a state that has allowed these organisations to handle the problems that the state itself has renounced addressing.

As far as social policies are concerned, this logic of fragmentation of public authorities has given rise to a rather heterogeneous arrangement. The centralisation specific to the organisation of a nation-state gives way to multi-level governance (Hooghe and

Marks, 2001). This governance takes the form of a mix of communal, regional and federal powers combined with a powerful associative sector at the grassroots level that is granted a large degree of autonomy in pursuing its objectives (see table below).

Level		Competences	Areas of action	Operators	Organisations representing sectors/themes related to homelessness
Federal		Supervision of the PCSWs	Social Welfare	Federal service of social integration	United Front of Homeless People (Front Commun SDF); 3 federation of PCSW per Region
		Anti-poverty Policies (APP)	APP Financing of winter measures	Anti-poverty service	Anti-poverty networks – NPO (RWLP, ForumBxL, Verenigingen waar armen het woord nemen)
		Health	Health	Public Health Service	
		Asylum and Migration	Reception	Fedasil	
Regional		Housing	Housing		Networks of NPO housing actors (RWBDH-BBROW)
			Reception	Financement Hub Humanitaire Et Porte d'Ulysse	Citizens Platform (+ humanitarian NGOs)
Communities	COCOF French Community Commission	Assistance for persons	Social Welfare		Federation of NPO homeless services (AMA)
	COCOM Common Community Commission	Assistance for persons (including homeless)	Social Welfare		Federation of NPO homeless services (BICO/AMA) La Strada
	VGC/VG Flemish Community Commission	Assistance for persons ; local social policy	Social Welfare		Consortium of Flemish NPO social welfare services (CAW/SAW)
Municipalities		PCSW	Social Welfare	PCSW	

Distribution of competences in the field of social assistance in the territory of the Brussels Region according to levels of power.

The transition from a centred and socially-oriented political system (De Decker, 2004) to an "acentrated" system involving a proliferation of actors and levels of power has retriggered a series of challenges specific to the relationship between public action, territory and inequality. The division of the country into regional political entities with unequal resources and, in Brussels, the structuring of the territory into a set of municipalities, are once again based on "the central question of the scale of government for any attempt to define just public action on space" (Dufaux and Philifert, 2013, p. 2, translation by the authors). While the proliferation of local actors theoretically allows policies to be implemented closer to local settings and therefore makes them more effective, it also gives authorities greater opportunities to avoid and defect with regard to particular problems and can accentuate inequalities within a relatively small space.

This raises the question of the equality of public action targeting vulnerable populations throughout the region. Is the communal level the appropriate level for addressing the issue of homelessness? Is the public actor's move to delegate part of its powers of intervention to NPO actors able to guarantee fair treatment of situations

of precariousness? Is multi-level governance a realistic challenge when it comes to tackling extreme poverty, a phenomenon which requires a minimum of territorial solidarity in its management (Fraser, Marlier and Nicaise, 2010)?

From the confinement of vagrants to the management of homelessness

The establishment of social policy

In order to understand this Belgian-Brussels institutional complexity involving local, regional, federal and other international trends, it is important to situate the major developments in public policy with regard to homelessness in their historical context.

The first state reform (1970) mentioned above took place in a context of economic crisis, and such crisis had a certain influence on the perception of poverty by public actors. The explosion of mass unemployment profoundly changed the situation. Considered to be just another victim of the crisis among others, the poor were for a certain period less stigmatized (Pichon *et al.*, 2008). It was in this context that the law of 7 August 1974 created the Public Centres for Social Assistance (since 2001, known as Public Centres for Social Welfare: PCSW) and established the right to a minimum means of subsistence (Deschamps, 1998). It is important to add that, beyond the granting this minimum subsistence, the PCSWs are tasked with developing all kinds of services: guidance, reintegration, nursing homes, care facilities, housing, withdrawal centres, etc. (Pichon *et al.*, 2008, p. 35-36). They can also coordinate local services.

This new public service quickly become an important tool in the arsenal of measures to combat poverty. Governed by a national law, it had to serve as the guarantor of equal treatment throughout the territory and symbolizes the authority of public power alongside the disparity of the range of programs organized by the voluntary sector (NPO).

The major upheavals of the 1990s

These years were marked both by the recognition of the Brussels Region as a political entity in its own right and by profound upheavals that went on to influence the structuring of the homeless assistance sector to this day.

During this period, a wide range of mobilizations took place to protest the fact that a large portion of people without a fixed address were excluded from the PCSW. For this movement, the aim was to demand access to social assistance, including for people

who were homeless. These claims around the "street minimex[10]" were combined with demands calling for the application of the "Onkelinx Act" (Pichon *et al.*, 2008; Peeters, 2018). This law dated 12 January 1993 setting up an "emergency programme for a more cohesive society" included several important measures with regard to the homeless; specifically, it introduced the legal obligation to provide assistance to homeless people and set a framework for the territorial competence of the PCSWs (Rea *et al.*, 2001). It also abolished the former law of 1891 on vagrancy and begging by giving municipalities the power to implement a homeless policy.

In Brussels, the PCSWs were facing difficulties in setting up adequate structures at their level of action to meet the needs of rough sleepers and finding it impossible to develop a common vision across the 19 PCSWs in the Region. As a result, six of them, supported by representatives of secular circles (socialist and liberal), created an additional structure: the Samusocial. This was meant to provide a solution to the gap in the care of individuals between the street and other support services (De Backer, 2008). Services with "low threshold" access, to serve a population particularly excluded from the traditional range of assistance and care options, was intended to remedy this lack. More critically, we also agree with Francq (2004) that this move was a political communication response to the growing problem of homeless street deaths.

This new structure is only the most visible example of the diversification of services that was evident at the time, diversification including supported housing, the creation of a night shelter in 1988 (Pierre d'Angle), Samusocial in 1999, street work (Diogenes in 1995), day services, showers, hygiene services, social restaurants, Global Social Welfare Centres (NPO), innovations in the sector of assistance to citizens, assistance to people with addiction problems and assistance to people in general. The services were multiplying, developing and specializing. It should also be noted that most of these new services were located in the former central working class districts of Brussels, i.e. close to homeless people. This phase of service creation went hand in hand with a growing professionalization of employees in the sector (De Backer, 2008, p. 35).

At the same time, the homeless sector was witnessing a massive increase in the opening of emergency shelters. This parallel evolution framed a key debate in Brussels: the conflict between immediate (or emergency) demand and longer-term integration, a clash that actually reflects the conflict between generalist and targeted policy (Van Regenmortel *et al.*, 2006; Gardella, 2014). The first territorial effects were already

10. The minimex refers to the minimum subsistence income provided for in Belgian social protection, at the time (it is currently the Social Integration Income – SII). When we speak of street minimex, we refer to people without an official address who receive a minimex (complete or partial) while being unaddressed. PCSWs (and other organizations) can provide a reference address for homeless people. This allows them access to social protection and a place to pick up their mail.

emerging as emergency centres were located in the poor districts of the city centre, while reception centres, often organized by associations from a Christian background, were set up in buildings belonging to religious communities and spread throughout the city.

In 2000 these divergent positions, between associative services and their representatives within the sector itself, the different PCSWs and different political orientations, resulted in a particularly tumultuous period of open conflict. It should be noted that one source of conflict was the move to establish Samusocial without conducting any real consultation beforehand in a sector that since 1993 had organized a "Consultation Committee" bringing together associative and political actors (Francq, 2004). In response, the United College of the Brussels-Capital Region commissioned Prof. Rea to conduct an evaluative study in 2000 (Rea *et al.*, 2010). This order stemmed from an acknowledgement that there was a recurrent conflict situation and the desire to formulate a regional urban policy.

Between levels of power and competence – towards a co-managed sector?

On the basis of findings regarding the diversification of actors at the local level, the creation of tools to overcome the PCSWs' difficulties in offering solutions to homeless people as provided for by the 1993 "Onkelinx" law and, above all, the serious difficulty in achieving coordination between the PCSWs and associative services, the study conducted by the Rea team outlined a series of proposals for the future organizational and political management of the fight against extreme precariousness. These later served as a basis for a general policy note on assistance to the homeless (Collège réuni, 2002; COCOM, 2002) which suggested the creation of an integrated network enabling institutional rapprochement between all actors, regardless of what supervisory actor they answer to.

Following the Flemish government's refusal to endorse this note (Alter Echos, 2004) and after lengthy negotiations, a new note was approved by all public actors in May 2007.

The note specifies that it is up to the PCSWs to be the general actor in social assistance in multiple areas, including the homeless. The general aim of the note is to regulate incoming and outgoing flows and to organize the range of services, precisely defining the role that services must play by integrating the notion of diversified accommodation. However, the most important point of the note is the one revisiting the idea of creating a public tool that would carry out several missions: information, orientation, the regulation of places, telephone permanence, and outreach teams. What was commonly referred to as the "reference centre" as proposed in the study by

Rea *et al.* (2002) appears here in a different organizational form. Following various refusals, roadblocks or impended forward progress, this "reference centre" tool has been divided into two parts: the support centre for the Brussels homeless sector (La Strada) and the public provision of emergency social assistance. The notion of a "reference centre" has been problematic mainly because of its potential capacity to requisition places and following the fact that field services questioned what role they could play there. This debate ignited with the release of the study by Rea *et al.* (2002) and is still ongoing in 2019. It shows that the question of recognising one central authority, even at a purely "operational" level, remains the crux of the problem.

While *La Strada* was created in 2008 as a support centre for the Brussels sector, the creation of a public social emergency service has not progressed because of an impasse among the 19 Brussels PCSWs, the Samusocial's desire to position itself as both an independent associative service and an entity directly dependent on the PCSW of Brussels City, and the relative mistrust of the associative services in relation to a coordination body perceived as too politicized (Wagener, 2011 and 2012).

The 25 May 2018 ordinance on emergency assistance and integration of homeless people

The Belgian institutional landscape as described in the first part of this article offers a series of backdoors that the various actors employ, whatever their territorial scale of competence, in order to avoid having to make decisions enjoying a broad consensus but which may quite quickly come up against a local NIMBY-type roadblock (De Verteuil, 2011). The drafting of the Ordinance of 25 May 2018 was an attempt to regulate this complex coordination among the actors in order to achieve the appropriate scales of intervention, both institutional and spatial. It thus aims to extinguish the conflicts mentioned above[11]. It pursues an objective of spatial justice by distributing the provision of services for homeless people among operators in superimposed or separate territories.

With the arrival of a new Brussels government in 2014, the negotiation of an ordinance resumed in wake of the political notes from 2002 and 2007. After a first short consultation regarding the government agreement (Wagener, 2015; Mormont, 2017),

11. The following section is based on an analysis of the political documents produced on this issue, informed by comments published in various media outlets, parliamentary discussions and meeting of representatives of the Brussels Government ministers' offices (Minister-President; Minister of Mobility and Public Works in charge of personal assistance policy within COCOM; Minister of Housing and in charge of social welfare policy within COCOF and social welfare and poverty alleviation within COCOM; Minister in charge of health policy within COCOF) as part of the BRUMARG research funded by INNOVIRIS. It is supplemented by the opinions expressed by representatives of the sector during parliamentary hearings.

a policy note was approved in November 2015. In terms of the points not resolved in previous work, i.e. the issue of coordinating the sector, this note divides the issue in two: on the one hand, the coordination of emergency services (Samusocial) and, on the other hand, the coordination of integration (a social integration office [BIS] which is to be created). In addition, it expresses the desire to organize the question of the PCSWs' jurisdiction via a Joint Regional Management Contract using the BIS. In each situation, this contract will have to designate the competent PCSW and call for solidarity, from a territorial point of view, among the various PCSWs in the Region (and elsewhere in Belgium).

The articulation between incoming and outgoing flows is addressed through the sole function of emergency reception. What about prevention work, then? The incoming flows are still described, but they are limited to the question of the person's status in the territory (does the service user come from another region of Belgium or abroad?) by referring to the competences of the PCSW and the federal state. This can be understood as an invitation to the federal government to strengthen winter measures. In relation to the speech by the Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration at the time, however, it could also mean encouraging the expulsion of undocumented migrants. On the other hand, outflows call for several concrete measures regarding access to housing (the capture of unoccupied housing, Housing First, quotas regarding social housing and/or social housing agencies, and so on).

In short, the conflict between different approaches has therefore been "resolved" by creating a two-headed coordination, on the one hand the Samusocial, on the other the BIS aimed at integration. This arrangement will have to coordinate the actions of several dozen associations in the sector as well as the 19 PCSWs.

For the actors concerned, the objectives of the ordinance are essentially to reconcile emergency interventions and a policy of social inclusion, to establish longitudinal monitoring by mobilising appropriate services for homeless people, and to stabilize the structures that deal with homelessness by recognising them through the ordinance (Jamoulle and Teitelbaum, 2017-2018). To achieve these three objectives, the Ordinance must employ the three tools described below.

The policymakers drafting this text therefore saw coordination as central, in an attempt to resolve, in the Brussels-Capital Region, the recurring conflicts characterising complex multi-level governance within a system that has become indecipherable. The answer to this Belgian institutional complexity is a restructuring that clarifies the role of each of the actors, whether public or private, regardless of their scale of intervention. The institutional architecture put in place is related to type II governance as identified by the Hooghe and Marks typology (2001). It is reflected in several institutional levels

simultaneously involved in managing homelessness: at the micro level, the PCSWs; at the meso level, the coordination of actors to be installed at the level of the Brussels-Capital Region; and at the macro level, the federal government responsible for asylum seeker policy. In practice, this will mean that a regional institution is in a position to tell the municipalities who should be welcomed by its PCSW on the basis of federal laws. This operation is contrary to the principle of subsidiarity that governs relations between levels of competence in Belgium.

It is in this unstable context that the Ordinance on Emergency Assistance and Integration was approved by the COCOM United Assembly on 25 May 2018. This ordinance broadly adopts the same categories as in the latest version of the policy note. However, a major change is taking place regarding the position of New Samusocial. The mission of the latter is now to dispatch new people who make emergency requests. After the person undergoes an initial interview and residence, a new public law non-profit organization will take over: Bruss'help (Collège réuni, 2018). Bruss'help's competences include the missions of the BIS (orientation, electronic filing for all services and connection with the PCSWs and the Brussels Health Network, designating the competent PCSW) and a dispatching function with a single call centre number. Its competences will also encompass those of La Strada (support for coordination, organization of consultation, support to the sector thanks to different tools, an information and awareness point, an observatory, the participation of homeless people, etc.). It should be noted that the term coordination is not limited to emergency but extends to all forms of social work with homeless people (e.g. shelters, day centres, home guidance, Housing First, street work and outreach, etc.).

The critical issue that has been discussed since 2001 remains the distribution of homeless people within care facilities. The ordinance specifies that associations are required to implement the decisions of the BIS, and that this central actor must respect their way of working (Collège réuni, 2018). Associations may lodge a non-suspensive appeal against a decision with Bruss'help and/or the ministers in charge. If the Minister does not respond within ten days, the appeal is annulled and Bruss'help's decision is confirmed.

The ordinance thus concludes a 20-year debate aimed at resolving territorial conflicts of jurisdiction over homelessness by imposing an intensely hierarchical structure on the sector. It is therefore based on two pillars: one, the New Samusocial, which is in charge of emergency services and two, Bruss'Help, which is in charge of longitudinal monitoring, inclusion and observation. It is therefore the vertical approach that has been favoured in order to escape the complexity of multi-level governance and to calm endemic territorial conflicts between public and private actors. This mechanism should

make it possible to reduce coordination costs by dealing with conflicts upstream, but in so doing the Brussels-Capital Region is also re-territorialising social policies through forced-march integration.

Once this reconfiguration has reached cruising speed, an evaluation of it will reveal whether this change in type of governance has met the legislators' desire to respect the diversity of working methods and the autonomy of the various front-line intervention structures. The sector's very powerful fears on this subject, combined with the difficulty of coordination among front-line public structures, mainly communal, remain two obstacles to this return to organising cooperation among actors through hierarchical silos.

Consequences of the Ordinance on the Territorialization of Homelessness Services

The multi-level governance built in Belgium to respond to different territorial characteristics (culture, economic dynamics, etc.) has established regional or community borders that are different from changes in the use of spaces. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the case of Brussels, whose functional area extends beyond the limits of the Brussels-Capital Region. The perimeter of this functional area, or metropolitan area, fluctuates according to the indicators used, but it more or less corresponds to the former province of Brabant. The sixth state reform, which continues Belgium's federalization process, also included a new cooperation territory, the Brussels Metropolitan Community. This territorial unit takes on the boundaries of former Brabant. However, the current political landscape has not yet given substance to this system. Nevertheless, there are economic and demographic rebalances between the Brussels-Capital Region and Walloon Brabant (Leclercq, Quadu and Malherbe, 2016).

With regard to policy for homeless people, a cooperation agreement between the Belgian federated entities and the federal state aims to respond to the invitation issued by the European Council 20 and 21 June 2013 to adopt comprehensive strategies guaranteeing fundamental rights, including the right to decent housing, as set out in Article 23 of the Belgian Constitution (Service public fédéral, 2014). This agreement recognizes the need to "pursue, coordinate and harmonize their (federated entities and the Belgian State) policies to prevent and combat homelessness" at all levels of competence. One of the ways to achieve this objective is to establish "the greatest clarity as to the existing offer of available services and instruments, as well as maximum

visibility of this offer". It is necessary to "find concrete common solutions" when competences overlap.

In this context, the Walloon Region, which includes Walloon Brabant, contributes to the fight against homelessness through intermunicipal "social relays (*Relais Sociaux*)". The implementation of "collective projects relating to local specificities", including night shelters, are part of this programme. However, it must be noted that the Walloon side of the Brussels metropolitan area, i.e. Walloon Brabant, does not provide any night shelters for homeless people (De Vogelaere, 2018). Admittedly, there is not an equal level of resources available for people in extreme precariousness throughout the Brussels metropolitan area, but this lack of resources in a large part of this area strongly constrains use for the most vulnerable people living in this territory.

If we focus on the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region, we see that the aid schemes do not cover the entire territory of the Region in an equivalent manner. We have noted that one of the priorities of the Ordinance is to reduce friction between institutional actors (PCSWs) and associations, and among associations themselves, through better coordination of programs in order to ensure both a better readability of the range of services and a more balanced distribution of the efforts to be undertaken by the parties. Historically, spatial segregation in Brussels has been the result of a triple phenomenon: suburbanization between the city and the periphery since the 1960s and still continuing today, a housing market that socially homogenizes the districts of the Brussels-Capital Region, and the development of certain districts along negative social, environmental and economic spirals (Mistiaen, Meert, Kesteloot, 1995).

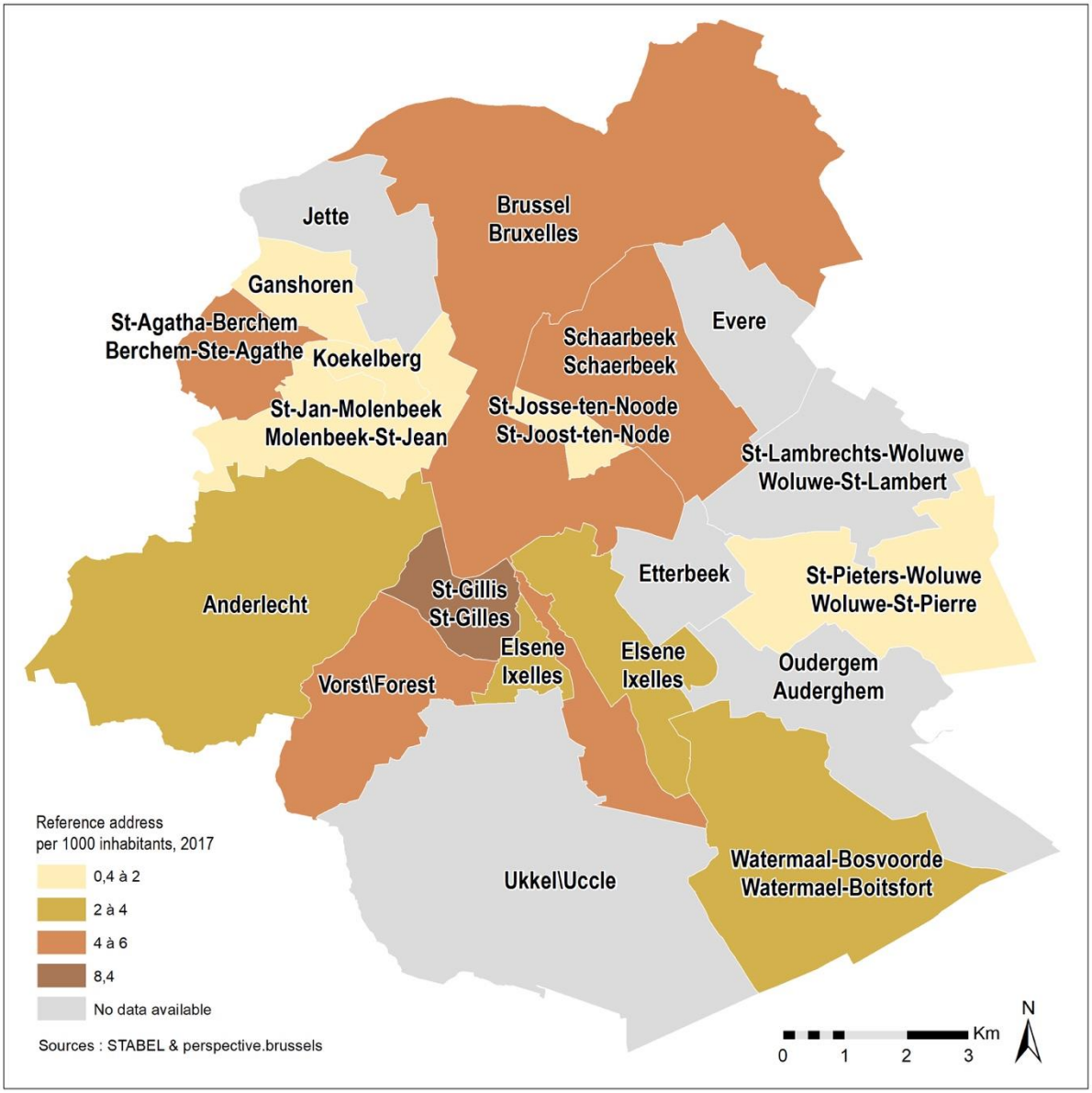
The tensions among the PCSWs and between the public and private sectors that the Ordinance of 14 June 2018 seeks to regulate in the reception of homeless populations is illustrated by the unequal distribution of support services in the region. A survey from the Brussels Social site makes it possible to count the number of structures offering services to the homeless per municipality. These services include all kinds of facilities offering day and night reception, meals, care, and so on. There are 130 private and public structures offering support to people living in extreme poverty. In addition, of the 19 PSWCs in the Brussels-Capital Region, 11 have agreed via the Housing Representative of the Brussels-Capital Region to provide their data on reference addresses[12]. This involves 2,727 people who were appointed an address by a Brussels PCSW on 1 August 2017. It should be noted that, according to the actors in the sector,

12 A reference address is an address that allows certain people who do not live in Belgium or have no residence there to nevertheless maintain a contact address in a Belgian municipality. The reference address is a purely "administrative" address (http://www.ocmw-info-cpas.be/fiche_FV_fr/ladresse_de_reference#m2). This address gives homeless people in particular the right to social assistance which is linked to having a registered address in the Belgian National Register.

some PCSWs are reluctant to give reference addresses to homeless people. Mobilizing this data as an indicator is therefore biased. However, despite its lack of thoroughness, such data can be used to represent an order of magnitude of the repair of very high precariousness in the Brussels region.

In addition, the results of the double counting of homeless people on 7 November 2016 and 6 March 2017 highlight important developments in the spatial distribution of homelessness in the Brussels-Capital Region. Indeed, of a very rapidly growing homeless population that increased by 170% between 2008 and 2016, from 262 to 707 individuals counted in 2016, the number of individuals seeking refuge inside centres decreased by 14% between 2008 and 2016. On the other hand, the spread of homelessness is increasing considerably, with 41 people being counted as sleeping rough in 2008 compared to 310 in 2016, an increase of more than 656%. It was especially between 2014 and 2016 that the phenomenon exploded from 109 individuals to 310 (Mondelaers *et al.*, 2017).

Finally, and in order to better identify the services most mobilized by the homeless, La Strada report notes that 26.7% of the 191 homeless respondents to the November 2016 survey use social restaurants and 18.3% use emergency accommodation offered by Samusocial and the Pierre d'Angle night shelter (Mondelaers *et al.*, 2017). We will therefore target these two services in terms of their spatialization to identify the services made available to the homeless by Brussels municipalities at the initiative of public or associative sectors.

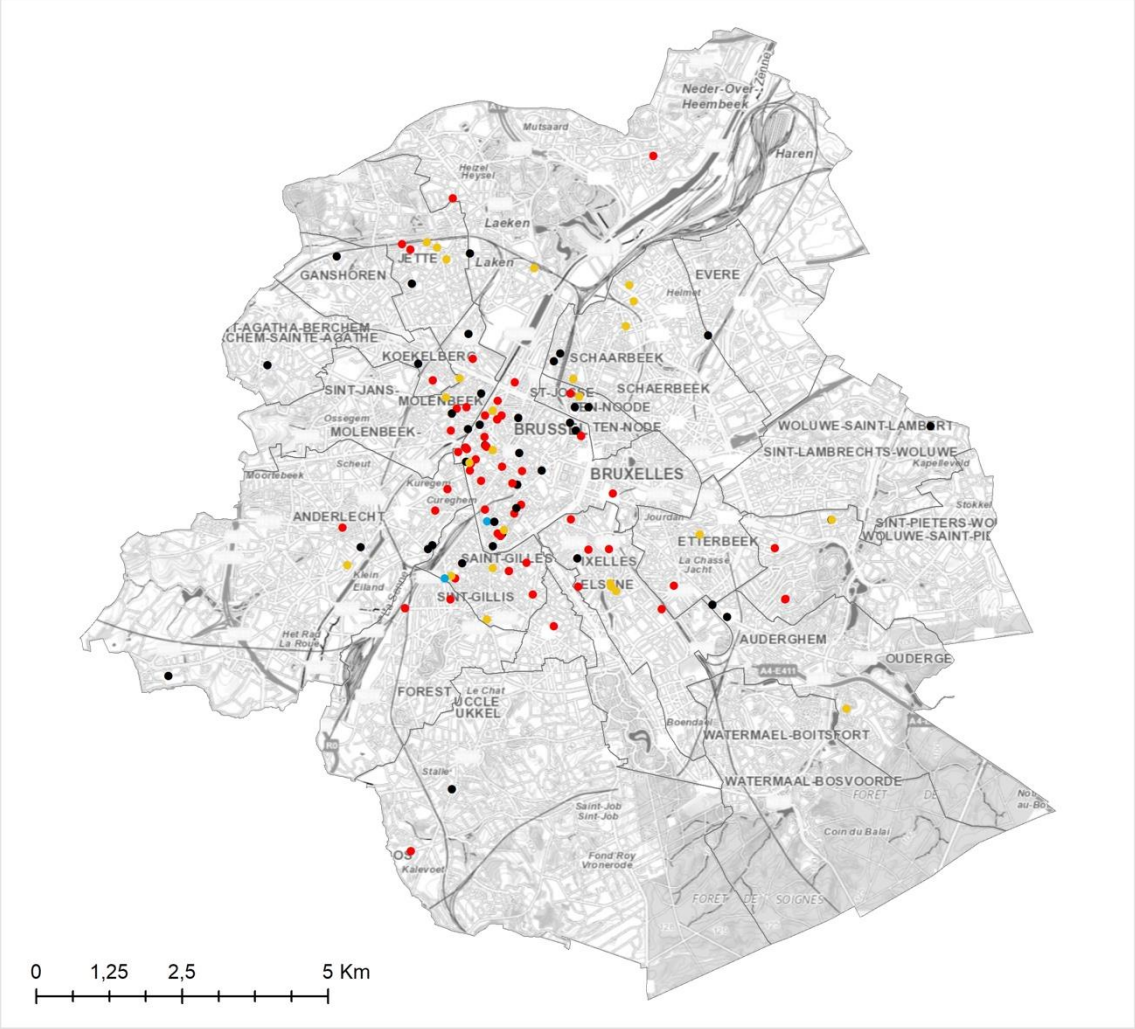


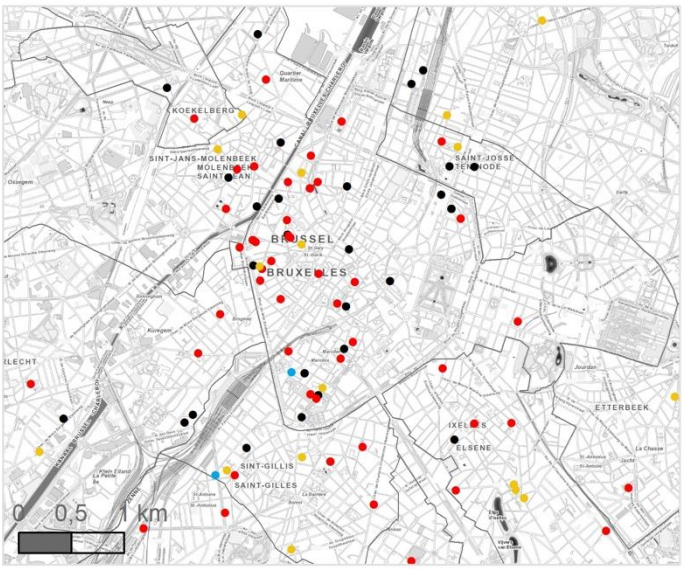
Map of the number of reference addresses per 1000 inhabitants per municipality in the Brussels-Capital Region (sources: Statbel and Perspective.brussels)

It is very risky to compare the services offered by the different structures. Some, such as Samusocial, are able to accommodate a large number of people in precarious situations, while others are small organizations that prefer to respond to and follow up on a smaller number of individuals. Nevertheless, it appears from the available figures that the PCSW of the municipality of Brussels, which is the most highly populated and extensive in the Brussels-Capital Region with a population of 179 277 inhabitants as of 1 January 2017, registered 907 individuals under reference address on 1 August 2017 while the PCSW of the municipality of Koekelberg, with 21 774 inhabitants, has

registered 9 individuals under this status. In other words, the city of Brussels has 5.14 people under reference address per 1 000 inhabitants, while Koekelberg has only recorded 0.42 individuals per 1 000 inhabitants. The PCSW of Saint-Gilles accepted the most individuals, with a rate of 8.41 per 1 000 inhabitants.

As far as the supply of services is concerned and notwithstanding the reservations mentioned above, it is the central municipality of Brussels that has the most structures to help the homeless, with one organization for every 3,260 inhabitants. On the other hand, there are two municipalities which do not have any such organization in their territory, namely Watermael-Boitsfort and Evere. These two municipalities are located in the south and east of the Brussels-Capital Region. Examining in particular the two types of services most used by homeless people in the Brussels region (social restaurants and night shelters), it can be seen that, although the municipal territory of Brussels has the most services offering meals to the homeless (6), there are nevertheless 151 people under reference address per service. On the other hand, the territory of the municipality of Schaerbeek is more effective in meeting the needs of its most precarious residents in that there are 40 people under reference address per facility offering meals. As far as emergency accommodation structures are concerned, the four centres we identified are located in the centre of the Brussels-Capital Region, although Samusocial also has infrastructure in the municipality of Woluwe Saint-Lambert.





Legend

Services

- Accommodation, no meals
- Accommodation + meals
- No accommodation, meals
- No accommodation, no meals

Communes

Date: 02/10/2019

SOURCES :

IGN-2019

social.brussels-2019

Perspective.brussels-2019

Maps showing the distribution of accommodation and meal services for the homeless population (source: social.brussels, 2019).

This brief inventory highlights the polarization of services providing assistance to the most deprived in the centre of the Brussels-Capital Region. As such, it illustrates just how important the spatial policy of public and private actors is in developing better care and support for the homeless.

Eviction or non-reception strategies also become clear given that a part of the Brussels metropolitan area or intra-regional municipalities do not offer any resources for the homeless population within their territories. Socio-spatial inequalities can be seen in the eviction strategies adopted by social institutions, a lack of service provision and/or the non-dissemination of information about the reference address system. This tactic of evicting homeless populations by not offering any services or resources for them, in order to exclude them from the territories concerned, is a classic phenomenon and one which had been identified previously in the United States (Snow and Mulcahy, 2001). Such strategies also appear in urban development projects in the sense that public spaces may offer such resources or not (Malherbe and Rosa, 2018). The therefore ordinance attempts to respond to this difficulty by centralizing information through the creation of Bruss'Help. However, existing structures offering certain services should not be weakened by the guardianship mechanisms established by the ordinance.

Young (1999) also notes that, although it is important to act at the regional level to avoid forms of withdrawal from responsibility and segregation policies organized on a local basis, the better territorial distribution of resources is not enough to stop dynamics of marginalization and exclusion. As other authors have pointed out (Harvey, 1992; Watson and Cuervo, 2017), the fight against spatial injustices also requires actions that foster the involvement of the people to whom such policies are addressed in the decision-making process. Although the resource distribution system must be the first target of any changes to be made, institutional mechanisms of domination – such as the very move to organize the sector on the basis of urgency and "shelters" – must also be rethought by favouring a strong and voluntary support policy through which inequalities in treatment at the individual level can be reduced.

Conclusion

As this genealogy of the consequences of the various reforms of the Belgian state on the management of homelessness shows, the result of developments over time has been extreme complexity. Such complexity is the result of a twofold trend: on the one

hand, a logic of regionalization/communitarization that fragments competences into different sectors of a multi-level governance and, on the other hand, the move to take the roles the state once performed in its social vocation and delegate them to the associative sector. In the end, this segmentation has produced points of view that are increasingly difficult to reconcile among stakeholders and intervention cultures that focus either on urgency, as in the public authorities acting through structures such as Samusocial, or on prevention, as in a significant part of the community acting through various projects. In addition to the 19 PCSWs of the municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region, four authorities at the regional level are called upon to develop a common vision (Regional Government, COCOF, COCOM, VGC/VG) with powers that are still exercised by the federal government (supervisory powers over the PCSWs and immigration policy in particular).

The other consequence of this complexity is that some public actors may not encourage the implementation of services on their territories. The municipal level is therefore discriminatory in that it allows actors to defend their local interests by avoiding either appointing reference addresses to homeless people or setting up support services for the most vulnerable populations. These tactics specific to neo-liberal urban management are mobilized by the different levels of power. They aim to evict the most vulnerable populations from certain neighbourhoods by not allowing services that would ensure a minimum security of existence for such populations to be located there. By installing de facto spatial segregation, such tactics illustrate the procedural mechanisms of territorialization through access to services as theorized by John Rawls (Rawls, 1972).

In addition, the decision to extend the Brussels functional area to encompass the entire metropolitan area fosters the spread of precariousness on this scale. What has been observed in the Brussels-Capital Region with regard to the growth of homelessness must still be examined systematically throughout the metropolitan area, but in any case the lack of services may be seen as an incentive for users to refocus on the heart of the metropolitan area.

The 25 May 2018 ordinance, in its attempt to clarify responsibilities and coordinate divergent interests, is a first step in systematising the provision of services for homeless people. It also aims to guarantee equitable treatment, both socially and spatially, of the extremely precarious. In this sense, the approach aimed at regulating the overall territorialization of homelessness reveals the significant limits of the complex division of competences through multi-level governance in which the interweaving of mechanisms allows some to move away from managing extreme precariousness and

to adopt subtle strategies for rejecting these populations from their respective territories.

This re-territorialization of policies in Belgian Regions and Communities also raises the question of managing divergent policies on extremely sensitive issues affecting a highly mobile population by coordinating such policies at a higher level. This population is looking for specialized services within a metropolitan area composed of three Regions and two Communities that also apply differentiated policies which are more or less welcoming to them. The interplay of spatial scales remains a constant in the management of precariousness in the sense of accepting the local poor and rejecting the poor from elsewhere; indeed, it is this interplay that makes it so important to mitigate the effects of institutional borders between the Regions making up the metropolitan area and the municipalities within the Brussels Capital Region. Guaranteeing access to survival services in all territories, whatever their scale, depends on this coordinated and accessible welfare.

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