

## Gender, still a power issue for use of public space by visitors and tourists?

Test Case Brussels  
(part of a comparative study)  
for Flemish Center for Tourism Policies

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## Gendered Space

“We conceive spaces and places as social and physical constructions, shaped by the complex gendered, cultural and power relations that govern people and their actions”  
(Wilson & Little, 2008: 168) (Valentine, 1989, Ruddick, 1996, Bondi, 1998, Peleman, 2002)

↑  
“the long association of city space with the erotic has meant that the presence of women in public spaces could be interpreted only as a symptom of pathology; there was no possibility for the “female flaneur,” only the prostitute. The limiting of women’s access to public space and the public realm was the outcome of a de facto spatial segregation ... “  
(Ruddick, 1996: 135-136 in: Vanneste, Genderstudies, 2001 & 2003)

↓ (patriarchaal) systeem ↓  
“Association of male violence with certain environmental contexts”  
↓ ↓  
Behaviour(al) rules ↔ (system of ) Fear

## ⇒ Unsafe space Geography of Women’s Fear

### In a familiar context

- Physical adaptations in space (e.g. parks)

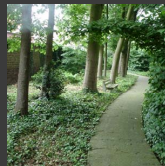
“... (recent gains of feminist/ activists in) developing initiatives to create safer cities for women”

- Mental Map ⇒ time-space paths

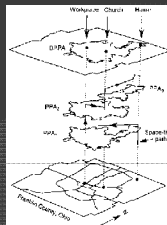
coping mechanisms, strategies = negotiate time-space paths  
⇒ “more confidence” + “how/where to seek help”

- “disproportionately fearful”: 77% feeling vs 14% effective

(Ruddick, 1996, Hajonides et. al, 1987, Kwan, 1999 in: Vanneste, Genderstudies, 2001 & 2003)



Safety  
(male) gaze



## Beyond the familiar context (usual environment)

- Objective: real uncertainties
  - Structure of public space?
  - Way of practising social control in public space?
  - What is considered ‘adapted’ behaviour by women?
  - Behaviour of men (harassment, violence)?
  - ↔ coping mechanisms ↘ feeling of unsafety ↗
- Subjective: perception = “construction of the mind”
  - Historical stigma & story telling
  - Conviction: “Travelling is more difficult for (single) women
  - POTENTIAL threat

⇒ “self- moderation”  
= avoiding certain spots,  
= “stay where one is meant to be”

Still valid?

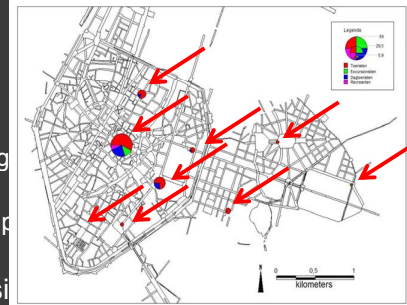
## Case Brussels (Vandepoel & D. Vanneste, 2011)

### Aim

- Use of space for tourism and leisure

### Methodology

- Observation → choice of spots along 3 touristic routes (9)
- face-to-face survey
  - random selection of people passing
  - 10 days, 20/8/10 - 4/1/11,
  - no sundays or Mondays, 10 am- 4 p
  - 3 languages
- Statistic and cartographic analysis



Figuur 22: Verdeling van de respondenten (n=112) over de negen bevestigingspunten. (Vandepoel, 2011: eigen verwerking)

## Topics of the survey

- Characteristics of the respondents
- Knowledge of the towns and use of its space
  - (Name 3 locations)
  - Drawing points and paths:
    - 1) walked (green),
    - 2) intention to walk (red)
- Experience during the walk trajectory
- Aspect of safety
- Gender aspect

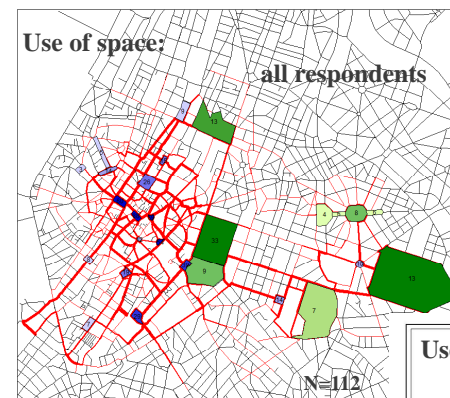
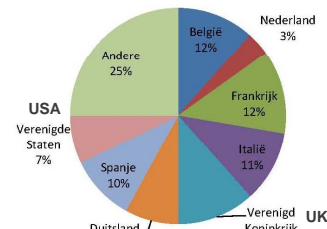


## Repons / non-respons

- Non respons: 63
  - 42: not a tourism/leisure profile
  - 21: other language than D-F-E
- Respons: 122 (59 Grote Markt & 53 elsewhere)
  - 60 women; 52 men

Variety of company ↔  
6 single ♀ (5%); 11 single ♂ (10')

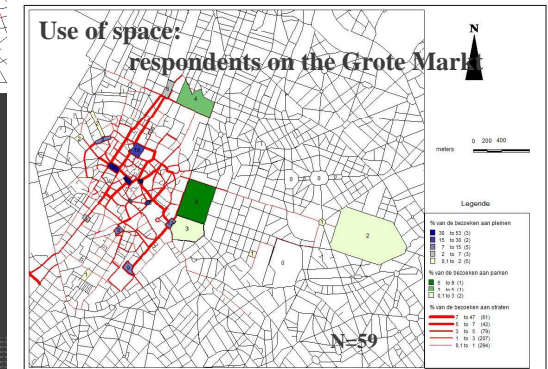
Variety of nationalities ↔  
dominance of European nat.; 12% Belgian



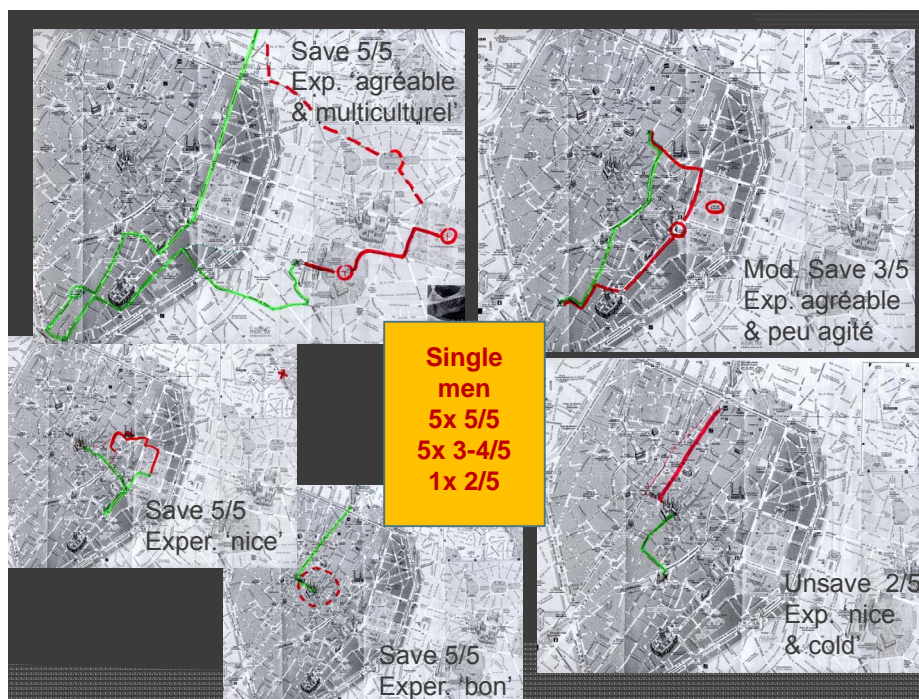
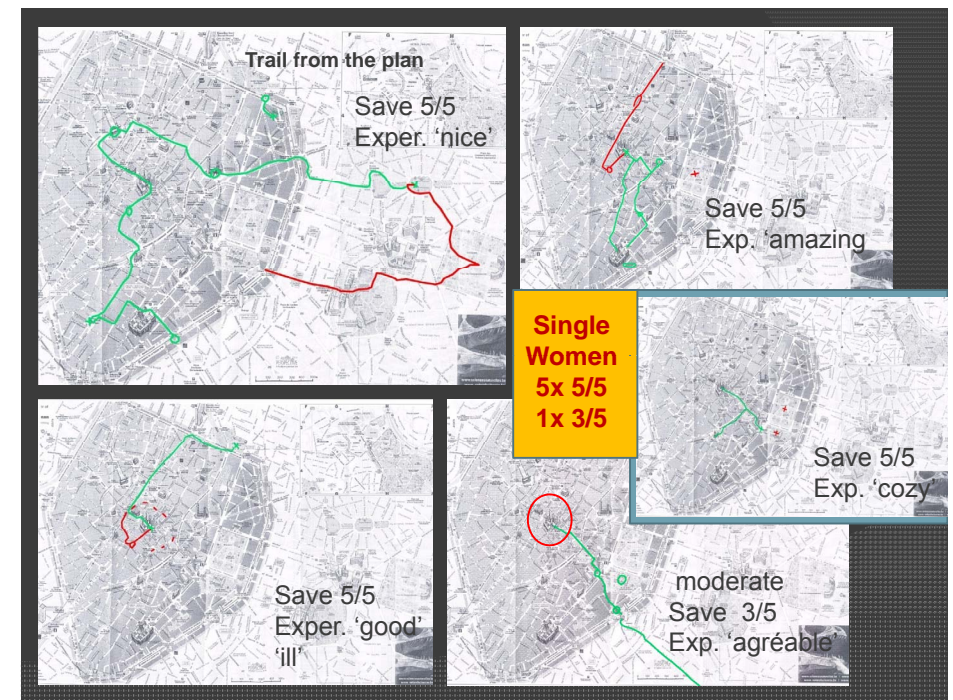
total number of visits  
within a street segment/  
park/square, divided by  
number of respondents  
= 112

+ Heizel (15x, of which 13x Atomium)

## synthesis







## Results from the statistical analysis

Would the trajectory look different if your party would be different? (no=0; yes=1)

- alone (for those in group)
- not alone (for those alone)
- someone of the opposite sex (for 2 m/f)

No difference between ♂ and ♀

No difference between alone/party

! hypothetical: stated ≠ revealed

Table of Geslacht by TrajectBeinvloed				
		TrajectBeinvloed		Total
		0	1	
Geslacht				
vrouw	0	Frequency	37	23
		Percent	33.04	20.54
		Row Pct	61.67	38.33
		Col Pct	50.00	60.53
man	1	Frequency	37	15
		Percent	33.04	13.89
		Row Pct	71.15	28.85
		Col Pct	50.00	39.47
Total		Frequency	74	38
		Percent	66.07	33.93
			100.00	

Statistics for Table of Geslacht by TrajectBeinvloed				
Statistic	DF	Value	Prob	
Chi-Square	1	1.1185	0.2902	
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	1.1250	0.2889	
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	0.7353	0.3912	
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	1.1085	0.2924	
Phi Coefficient		-0.0999		
Contingency Coefficient		0.0994		
Cramer's V		-0.0999		



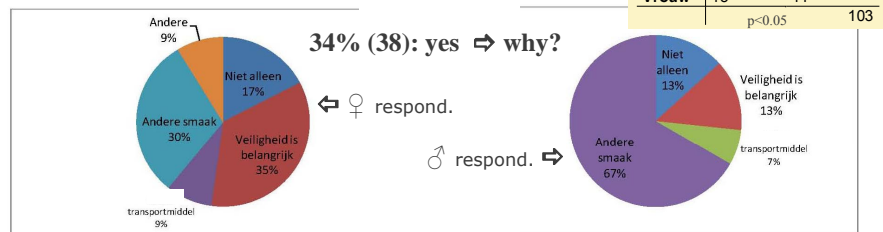
## Impact in the trajectory (I)

Is your trajectory influenced by (your) gender in combination with the party?

66% (74): no ⇒ why not? 41% "Brussel is veilig" (daytime)

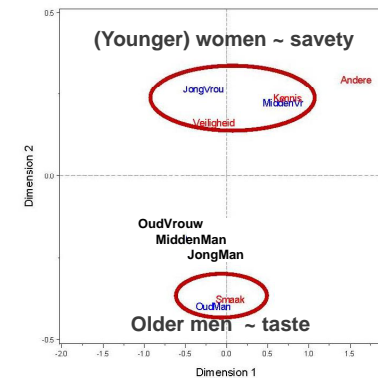
	Traject beïnvloed	Traject niet beïnvloed	Totaal
Man (niet alleen/alleen)	15 (11/4)	37 (30/7)	52 (41/11)
Vrouw (niet alleen/alleen)	23 (20/3)	37 (34/3)	60 (54/6)
Totaal	38	74	112

No stat. Significant difference

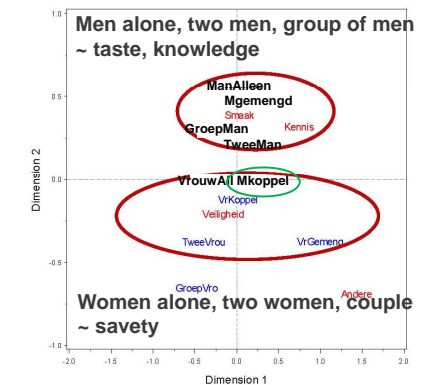


	Smaak/interesse	Veiligheid
Man	23	26
Vrouw	13	41
	p < 0.05 103	

## Impact on the trajectory (II)



Gender



Party

## Conclusion

- Very little difference according to gender
  - Statistically: few stat. significant differences
  - Cartographically: little differences
    - ⇒ end of impact of gender?
- Importance of safety in general (men!)
- Reflections
  - Few single women
  - European nationalities ⇒ strategies
  - !Brussels = international city without dominant culture
  - Limitation to the touristic core (no migrants neighbourhoods)
- More qualitative research needed (e.g. interviews in hotels) + survey during nighttime