

# National-Level Planning in Democratic Countries

*An International Comparison of City  
and Regional Policy-Making*

Edited by  
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ONE

# NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING IN DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Rachelle Alterman

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National-level planning in democratic countries has been almost all but ignored by researchers in urban and regional planning since the reconstruction years following the Second World War. Having become identified in many people's eyes with communist regimes and coercive government practices, national-level planning fell into some disrepute. Yet, this book will show that planning is carried out on the national level to some degree in each and every one of the ten countries studied, even though the goals, degree of comprehensiveness, subjects, institutions, format, powers and effectiveness differ widely from country to country. There are even modest trends whereby, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, national-level planning is growing in importance in democratic, advanced-economy countries. These trends point to the need to revisit planning theory.

## *Why study national-level planning?*

Little attention has been given to the study of national-level planning in Western countries for many decades. The attention of planning theorists in recent years, as expressed in the majority of topics for empirical research and the themes of normative debate, has tended to focus on decision-making modes relevant more to the local and individual levels than to the national one. The three compendiums of planning theory published in the 1990s (Campbell and Fainstein, 1996; Mandelbaum et al., 1996; Stein, 1995) do not include even a single chapter devoted to the types of issues, institutions and modes of decision-making typical of national-level planning.

This book was born of necessity. It is not the result of a library search for lacunae in knowledge, but of a real-life need for knowledge about how different countries handle their land-use (or 'spatial') planning issues at the national level. The need was Israel's—a country that ostensibly already has a high degree of national-level planning, but where a group of planners and academics involved in the ambitious 'Israel 2020' planning team<sup>1</sup> was seeking to know more about alternative modes of national-level planning. I began to search the literature for ideas. Is national-level

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planning still relevant in the era of deregulation, privatisation, globalisation of markets and communication, political federations, and deep changes in governance styles and social trends (Hall, 1993)? What is the range of ways in which national planning is prepared, adopted and implemented in democratic advanced-economy countries? What are the emerging issues and trends in modes of national-level planning? Cross-national learning, we assumed, would be an effective way of getting some answers to these questions. This book shares what we found with planners and decision-makers in other countries for whom many of these questions are no less relevant.

Since very little published analysis of national-level planning in democratic countries was found, we opted for the ‘home made’ approach. We invited leading researchers from ten democratic, advanced-economy countries to do the research for us. We purposely resisted what might have been considered a natural tendency to look only for countries widely reputed *a priori* to have ‘good’ or ‘exemplary’ national-level planning (such as the Netherlands or Japan). On the contrary, we were looking for as broad a sample of advanced-economy countries as possible, located in different parts of the world, with different types of constitutional structures, different population and area sizes, and different types of needs and constraints. From among the 18 OECD member countries with the highest Human Development Index scores (see Table 1) I selected nine: the United States, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Germany and—the only Far East country in that group—Japan. Together with Israel, these ten countries represent a good proportion of the world’s advanced economies. Such a broad range of countries should represent the gamut of degrees, modes, and approaches to national-level planning. For each of the countries selected, we invited a leading scholar in urban and regional planning policy or planning law to write a critical account of national-level planning in his or her country. The group was convened in a joint seminar for mutual presentations and discussions.

Each one of the researchers related that this was the first time he or she had been asked to think in particular about what occurs in planning at the national level. Indeed, none of us could recall any national or international academic or professional conference where the focus of analysis and debate was on the desirability of national-level spatial planning. The absence of a body of systematic knowledge on national-level planning could also be discerned from the fact that few of our authors cited any literature on national planning. The analysis was new and challenging for us all.

In this chapter, I shall first define ‘national-level planning’ and then present some background geographic and demographic data on the sample countries. As a starter for the task of comparison, I begin with an attempt to classify and rank the group of countries by the degree to which national-level planning has been institutionalised in each. This classification is correlated with population density. I then identify the major trends in national-level planning, as they emerge from a comparative reading of the ten chapters. These trends pertain to the variety of

reasons for the inception, perseverance or demise of national-level planning, to its political-ideological contexts, to the emerging modes and styles whereby it is carried out, and to the tools and problems of implementation. I conclude by pointing out some of the challenges that the findings hold for planning theory.

### *Defining ‘national-level planning’*

I prefer the term ‘national-level planning’ to ‘national planning’ not so much because the latter may for some be tainted by the history of coercive planning, but because in this book we are not looking necessarily for *the* national, comprehensive planning enterprise. Rather, we would like to focus on any spatial planning carried out at the national level. We are also not dealing with what are known in Euro-English as ‘national planning *systems*’, ‘spatial planning systems’, or ‘statutory planning systems’.<sup>2</sup> These terms refer to the legal and institutional bases for enabling urban and regional planning and regulation in a particular country (also known as ‘town and country planning’ in the UK, and ‘land-use planning’ in the USA). The vast majority of countries in the world do have some such ‘system’, and certainly all advanced-economy countries do. While the laws and regulations are usually enacted for the country as a whole, and in that sense are ‘national’, the major part of the legislators’ attention is usually focused on enabling land-use planning and development regulation at the local and regional levels, down to the approval of a particular development. The fact that there is a national planning *system* established by parliamentary legislation does not necessarily mean that there is also planning or policy-making that is carried out at the national level.

Planning ‘systems’ have drawn considerable attention not only from legislators and planners, but also from researchers. There is extensive literature that analyses and evaluates how these systems operate and what they achieve. There is an even larger literature on particular aspects of spatial planning systems such as local planning, development permits, land-value implications of regulation, procedures for public participation, negotiation with developers, tools for farmland or historic preservation, financial aspects, etc.<sup>3</sup> The 1990s have seen the most rigorous and comprehensive, though not the first,<sup>4</sup> effort made to date to analyse planning systems in European countries. But *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*, commissioned by the European Union (European Commission, 1997),<sup>5</sup> can devote only a few pages to the policies and instruments vested at the national levels.

The focus of this book is quite different. In my guidelines to the authors, I asked them figuratively to cut off the layer vested at national level and carried out by any government or quasi-government body at that level. The meaning of ‘national-level planning’ in this book is thus both narrower and broader than ‘spatial planning systems’. It is narrower because it focuses only on those planning functions carried out at the national level. Planning carried out at the regional and local levels is not our focus, and is mentioned only for the purpose of explaining the division of labour

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between the national and the other levels, or as the context for implementation of national-level plans or policies. Our meaning is wider because we cover not only statutory 'land-use' planning in the traditional, regulatory sense, but also planning and policy-making carried out by national-level agencies outside the statutory 'system'. Thus, the authors were also requested to analyse *sectoral planning and policy-making*, such as transportation, environment, housing, economic development, parks, agriculture—whatever are spatial policy areas determined at the national level.

A set of common guidelines was given to each of the invited authors. The guidelines requested that they describe and analyse the goals, subjects, functions, instruments, and modes of implementation of national-level planning. The authors were also challenged to evaluate critically the successes and failures of national-level planning as they see them. We purposely avoided a rigid check-list format, preferring that each chapter draw a complete picture as viewed by the author, based on our general guidelines. Given the pioneering nature of this enterprise and the lack of an *a priori* shared definition of what comes under the umbrella of national-level planning, there inevitably remain some differences in the interpretations given by the various authors to the span of topics to be covered, especially regarding sectoral planning.<sup>6</sup>

In this chapter I will try to weave together a picture of national-level planning in democratic, advanced-economy countries as it emerges from the reports of the ten countries included in our sample. My purpose is to draw out both the shared and the differing elements, and to identify any common trends that may have emerged. But first, a few comparative indicators to highlight the wide range of geographic, demographic and economic contexts that characterise our sample.

#### *Comparative background variables*

Some argue that there is no justification for studying national-level planning because countries differ a great deal in size. A small country, they argue, can be regarded as equivalent in planning terms to a single region in a large country. This argument is unacceptable since nations are legal-institutional entities that, like people, come in various sizes, but have similar limbs. Indeed, there are important similarities among many countries, regardless of their size, in the basic hierarchy of planning functions on the sub-urban, urban, and often also the regional levels. In this book we ask to what extent there are also similarities and differences in the allocation of planning functions to national-level institutions.

Table 1 provides some background data to characterise our sample countries. Since we are dealing only with advanced-economy countries, the differences in Gross National Product per capita are relatively small compared with most countries of the world. However, if one compares the ten countries among themselves, there are considerable differences in affluence: Israel is the least affluent,<sup>7</sup> while the USA is the most affluent.

Table 1 Selected physical, demographic and economic indicators in the sample countries, 2000

Country	Population	Births per woman	Annual immigration as percentage of total population**	Population annual growth rate (%)	GNP per capita (US\$) adjusted for parity (1999 estimates)	Human Development Index (rank in the world 1999)***	Surface area (sq. km)	Population density (residents per sq. km)
USA	265,179,000	2.06	0.35%	0.91 %	33,900	3	9,629,091	28
France	59,329,700	1.75	-	0.38 %	23,300	12	547,030	108
UK	59,511,700	1.74	0.42%	0.25 %	21,800	10	244,820	243
Germany	82,797,400	1.38	1.34%	0.29 %	22,700	14	357,021	232
Netherlands	15,892,200	1.64	0.77%	0.57 %	23,100	8	41,532	383
Denmark	5,336,400	1.73	-	0.31 %	23,800	15	43,094	124
Sweden	8,873,100	1.53	0.02%	0.02 %	20,700	6	449,964	20
Ireland	3,797,300	1.91	-	1.16 %	20,300	18	70,283	54
Japan	126,550,000	1.41	-	0.18 %	23,400	9	377,835	335
Israel	6,100,000*	2.60	1.00%	1.67 %	18,300	23	20,770	294

Sources

US Government—*World Factbook 2000* (estimates for mid-2000, unless stated otherwise).

\* *Israel Statistical Yearbook 2000*

\*\* *The Europa World Yearbook 1997*, Europa Publications Limited, London

\*\*\* *U.N.D.P. Human Development Report, 2000*.

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Population sizes differ immensely. The largest populations are found in the USA and Japan. The smaller populations are in Ireland, Denmark, Israel, Sweden, and the Netherlands, in ascending order, with population sizes between 1.5 and eight per cent of the USA's. The medium-size populations are found in France, the UK, and Germany. Surface areas also differ greatly, with Israel the smallest—about two per cent of the area of the USA. Other small countries are the Netherlands, Denmark, and Ireland, and the rest are medium-sized. Population densities also vary a great deal among the countries: Sweden, the USA and Ireland have lower densities; the Netherlands, Japan and Israel are at the high end (Israel, with the highest population growth rate, can be expected to surpass the other countries in the sample). Less variation exists in demographic attributes. Most advanced-economy countries have an almost-zero natural growth rate. Israel is an exception, with a relatively high growth rate. Germany and Israel are the only countries with significant immigrant-intake (Israel's current rate of one per cent is much lower than the four per cent rate in 1990–92 during the mass influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union).

We did not pre-judge countries on the basis of their constitutional structure. Whether federal or unitary, nations could, in theory, elect to have or not have national-level planning in some degree and form. We made sure to include within our sample two federal countries—the USA and Germany—and have indeed found that they differ immensely from each other on the point of national planning. Other legal-institutional variables, such as the number and sizes of local authorities, degree of local government power, or central government structure, have also been raised as reasons why national-level planning should not be studied comparatively. The countries in our sample differ widely on many such variables, but these are not necessarily related to national-level planning, as we shall see shortly.

### *Degrees and formats of national-level planning*

National-level planning comes in many shapes and forms. This emerges vividly from reading the ten country chapters. There are, at the same time, also some shared formats. I shall not attempt a systematic comparison of all the similarities and differences. The information provided by each of the country chapters is too rich for that. Most of this chapter is therefore devoted not to a mechanistic comparison, but to an attempt to point out selected aspects, issues or trends that, in my judgement, are of special interest. I shall begin with an attempt to summarise a few key aspects of the formats and powers of *comprehensive* spatial planning (excluding sectoral planning). Based on this comparison, I will offer a rough classification of the sample of countries by 'degree of institutionalisation' of national-level spatial planning.

### THE FORMATS OF NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING

There is no consensus among the countries on the format for national-level planning, neither comprehensive, nor sectoral. The ten countries vary not only in the ‘software’ of goals and values to be furthered (to be discussed in a later section), but also in most aspects of ‘hardware’—institutions, instruments and procedures.

National-level spatial planning can be classified into two schematic types: comprehensive and sectoral. Comprehensive planning (called ‘facet planning’ by Mastop in the Dutch chapter) seeks to take as integrated and multi-sectoral a view as is feasible, both geographically and subject-wise, and seeks to guide the use of land for all types of needs in a coordinated fashion. By this I do not mean, of course, a fully comprehensive view of all aspects of national policy as called for by the now defunct *rational-comprehensive model* in planning. That model is rightly regarded as impossible in most real-life formats of public policy-making and administration. I mean a planning or policy-making perspective that uses the integrative potential of a spatial, land-use view, to develop policies that go beyond the areas of responsibility of any particular sectoral government ministry. Full comprehensiveness is, of course, hard to achieve, so most ‘comprehensive planning’ would be less comprehensive than the ‘ideal type’.

At the other extreme, sectoral planning deals with a single sector such as transportation, housing, agriculture, parks or health. Usually, sectoral planning is carried out by a specific agency in charge of regulating or initiating projects in that particular area. Since public planning is never done in a vacuum, sectoral planning obviously also needs to coordinate with other sectors, to some degree (Alexander, 1998). Much day-to-day planning at any level, and certainly at the national level, should be classified somewhere in between comprehensive and sectoral planning. The relationship between comprehensive and sectoral planning at the national level will engage us several times more in this chapter.

Table 2 focuses on *comprehensive* national-level spatial planning. It summarises the answers to five of the questions that the authors were requested to answer:

- Is there a formal national-level plan or set of policies, and if not, are there any informal substitutes?
- Which national-level institutions are responsible for such planning or policy-making?
- What are the procedures for preparing such policies and for their approval?
- What is the legal status of such policies?
- What are the modes and means of implementation?

In addition, the authors were asked to answer the following questions about *sectoral* planning:

- In what subject areas is sectoral planning carried out at the national level and who are the agencies in charge?

Table 2 *The formats of national-level (comprehensive) spatial planning in ten democratic countries*

<i>Country</i>	<i>Is there a national spatial plan or some substitute?</i>	<i>Institutions in charge</i>	<i>Procedures for plan/policies preparation</i>	<i>Legal status of the plan/policies</i>	<i>Modes of implementation and coordination</i>
USA	No national plan or comprehensive spatial policy. Partial substitutes—federal policies (laws) in selected sectoral or multi-sectoral areas.	The Congress and Senate. The Federal Government's specific Offices, as legislated in each policy case.	Almost every federal action regarding land-use policy requires special authorising legislation. Usually accompanied by wide-scale public and professional debate.	No legal authority for national spatial planning. In a few areas, the constitution permits direct federal control. In most others, the Fed relies on special sectoral or multi-sectoral legislation.	Planning powers reside in local governments. Most states have weak authority. The Fed relies on incentives to states and locals to stimulate local or regional multi-sectoral planning.
Ireland	No national plan or comprehensive policy; no regional plans. EU-stimulated 'National Development Plan' but this is just project proposals. Intention to prepare national plan/guidelines.	The Department of Environment and Local Government. Planning National Appeals Board (which is required to update itself regarding multi-departmental policies).	The National Development Plan was prepared by the Department of the Environment according to EU funding conditions only (Community Support Framework).	No national-level plans under Irish planning law. The 'National Development Plan' has only contractual status (regarding the EU).	The 'Plan' obtains EU funding. EU monitors the projects. Implementation through public and public-private partnerships. Minister has oversight authority over local plans—rarely used.
Sweden	No national plan. 'Vision 2009' is a research document with little impact. Occasional national planning directives to implement projects of national import.	The Ministry of the Environment. The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning. The County Administrative Boards.	Vision 2009 prepared by a professional, not a political body. Extensive public consultations, compiled for review by Interior.	The Planning and Building Act makes no mention of a national plan. Some legislated criteria allow intervention in local plans. Central government has administrative authority to make policies.	Regarding Vision 2009—no clear modes stated. National criteria and projects of national interest maintained through oversight powers over local planning by the county boards.

UK	<p>No national plan. Highly effective substitute—set of (30) Planning Policy Guidelines (formerly called Circulars) without maps; Regional Planning Guidelines (with maps).</p>	<p>The Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (a 1997 integration of DOE and DOT).</p>	<p>Until recent years, national guidelines were prepared with consultation only within government. Since the 1990s, greater public exposure; hearings and public report expected.</p>	<p>No legislated basis for the PPGs! Local plans must relate to 'relevant considerations'. Parliament's Select Committees becoming involved in oversight.</p>	<p>The Secretary of State has extensive oversight and intervention powers through objections in hearings, the inspectors, call-in power; hears appeals.</p>
The Federal Republic of Germany	<p>Federal Spatial Planning Report (advisory). Guidelines for Regional Planning—deal with inter-regional equality, development priorities, environment, transportation, European status.</p>	<p>The <i>Bund</i>. Ministry of Spatial Planning, Building and Urban Development. Spatial Planning Advisory Council advises the Minister. Conference of <i>Bund</i> and <i>Länder</i> planning Ministers; research Agency for Construction and Spatial Planning.</p>	<p>The Federal Report is prepared by Ministry of Spatial Planning at regular intervals. Presented to <i>Bund</i>. Incorporates all decisions of the Advisory Council and the Conference of Ministers, who prepare Guidelines.</p>	<p>The <i>Bund</i> legislates framework for supra-local spatial planning. The Federal Spatial Planning Act mandates preparation of Federal Report—advisory only. Mandates coordination with the <i>Länder</i>. Implementation is exclusively in hands of the <i>Länder</i>—legal separation of powers.</p>	<p>Extensive and effective vertical and horizontal forums for coordination and mutual compliance. Consultation with the Conference and the Advisory Council. Coordination of <i>Länder</i> targets with the Federal Report and Guidelines and local and regulatory plans. Monitored by Agency.</p>
Denmark	<p>A National Planning Report presents goals and policies, coordinates with EU policies. The planning law divides the country into three land uses. National directives used to implement specific projects or policies.</p>	<p>Minister of Energy and the Environment; the National Planning Department. The Parliament has a specific planning role.</p>	<p>The Report is prepared and submitted to Parliament after each national election; by the National Planning Department in cooperation with other agencies. Broad public debate through hearings.</p>	<p>The Report is mandatory to prepare but is not legally binding—'persuasive'. Directives are binding. Revision of regional plans based on Report.</p>	<p>Plans at lower level must not contradict higher levels ('framework control'). Minister has authority to order counties and municipalities to ensure national policies; can veto or call in a plan. Usually negotiated, not imposed.</p>

Table 2 *Continued*

Country	<i>Is there a national spatial plan or some substitute?</i>	<i>Institutions in charge</i>	<i>Procedures for plan/policies preparation</i>	<i>Legal status of the plan/policies</i>	<i>Modes of implementation and coordination</i>
France	In 1995 Act— <i>Schéma national d'aménagement et de développement du territoire</i> (draft, 1997). New Bill will likely recast as 'strategic choices' plan. New powers to issue <i>directive territoriale d'aménagement</i> .	Ministère de l'aménagement du territoire; Conseil national (CNADT); CIAT—Comité interministeriel—DATAR Délégation à l'aménagement.	Prepared by the Ministry. Approval by the Conseil. Adopted by Parliament. Reappraisal every five years. Consultations with all government levels. Sectoral schemes and state-region plan conventions approved by CIAT.	Mandatory to prepare National Scheme and sectoral policies—compliance by government bodies only, now more flexible. Directives are binding on all lower government bodies. Conventions binding in contract law.	Through financial planning and budgeting. Since 1998, recast as 'collective service schemes'. Scheme to guide long-term sectoral policies, regional schemes, and the 'State-region plan conventions'.
Japan	Since 1945, five National Development Plans (spatial-economic—latest in 1998). Plus short-term economic plans (13). Separately—a national land-use plan that broadly designates five land uses.	Under PM are several planning agencies, including National Land Agency with six Bureaux, headed by a Minister of State. Advisory expert Land Development Council.	Development Plans prepared by Agency, debated in the Council to reflect popular opinion. Approved by Cabinet. Process of ongoing inter-agency and interest-group consultation.	Comprehensive Land Development Act (economic-spatial plans) not 'binding'—consensus. Land-use national plan authorised by National Land Use Act. Indicative, not binding (like economic plans). Separate legislation for local and regional planning.	Economic planning and budgeting are key tools to implement and coordinate among policy areas. Also personnel-sharing method of coordination. Local and regional urban planning is separate, not well integrated.

The Netherlands	<p>Four national spatial strategic 'Notes', last one updated 1993 as 'Fourth Note Extra'. Fifth Note preparation begun 1998. Full national coverage by provincial strategic plans. First National Plan for the Environment Plus initiated, 1993.</p>	<p>Cabinet Council of Physical Planning and Environment Spatial Planning Advisory Council; Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and Environment (VROM). National Spatial Planning Committee; National Spatial Planning Agency.</p>	<p>Minister prepares through Agency. Professional consultation with Spatial Planning Committee; interest group input through Advisory Council. Approval by Cabinet Council. May be debated in Parliament. Extensive public exposure and debate.</p>	<p>1965 Act on Spatial Planning authorises but does not mandate national planning; plans are non-binding, indicative. 1993 Act on Environmental Management mandates integrated national (and provincial) environmental plans. 1993 Act on infrastructure projection.</p>	<p>Higher government levels can intervene in local decisions (rare). Extensive coordination mechanisms among sectoral planning (e.g. National Spatial Planning Committee for compulsory interagency coordination). Key National Projects can override local.</p>
Israel	<p>National comprehensive land-use middle-range plan ('#31' 1993); new long-range plan under preparation ('#35'). Extra-governmental multi-sectoral indicative plan ('Israel 2020'). About 25 statutory sectoral land-use plans.</p>	<p>The Minister of the Interior and the Planning Administration. The National Planning and Building Board (mostly inter-ministerial). Six District Planning and Building Commissions. The National Lands Administration.</p>	<p>Comprehensive plans initiated by Ministry or Board. Mandatory consultation only with District Commissions; informal public hearings a growing trend. Approval by Board and Cabinet. Sectoral plans—same (but different initiators).</p>	<p>National spatial plans authorised by 1965 Planning and Building Law. Not (effectively) mandatory to prepare or update, but once prepared strictly binding on all public and private interests. Same status to sectoral statutory plans.</p>	<p>Strict consistency required of district, local, and detail plans and permits. Minister has wide call-in powers. National and district planning bodies based on central-government representation for inter-ministerial coordination. National plans can impose specific projects.</p>

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- What are the interrelationships between comprehensive and spatial planning?
- How effective has the implementation process been, and how desirable the outcomes of both comprehensive and sectoral planning (in broad-brush terms)?

The table shows that there is no consensus on any of these questions: on whether there should be a document called a national ‘plan’ or ‘policy’ and what its format should be; on the identity of the ministry (or other bodies) charged with national-level policy-making; on the procedure for developing and approving such policies—who should prepare them and how they are to be approved; on the legal status of such policies; or on the types of implementation expected and the modes of carrying them out. Similarities frequently turn out to mask significant differences. For example, in the column titled ‘institutions in charge’, one can see that the ministry responsible often has the word ‘environment’ in its title, yet the actual span of responsibilities and the degree of coordination among component parts often differ significantly from country to country.

### **DEGREE OF INSTITUTIONALISATION OF NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING**

Although some degree of national-level planning does exist in every one of the countries represented, the differences in degree are large. Figure 1 represents an attempt to classify the set of countries by degree of ‘institutionalisation’ of *comprehensive* national-level planning. The classification is relative, and is not deduced from a theoretical model. It is based on a comparative reading of the ten countries’ reports and on consultation with the authors. My assessment is admittedly relative and judgemental, weighing together several of the variables and criteria summarised in Table 2, and adding the criterion of effectiveness not included in the table. The concept of ‘institutionalisation’ thus brings together several criteria related to comprehensive planning:

- Has there been an attempt at national-level spatial planning as expressed in a set of formal plans or policies? (These might be called ‘plans’, ‘policy plans’, or ‘guidance statements’—the name does not necessarily correlate with the degree of importance or impact).<sup>8</sup>
- How comprehensive is the view taken by that set of plans or policies?
- To what degree are the procedures for making and approving such policies or plans well established in law, administrative procedure, or political action?
- How effective are the legal, administrative or financial powers available for the implementation of these policies?

I have called those countries with a low degree of institutionalisation of national-level planning, somewhat humorously, the ‘have-nots’. This category includes the USA (not quite used to being classified among the ‘have-nots’) alongside Ireland

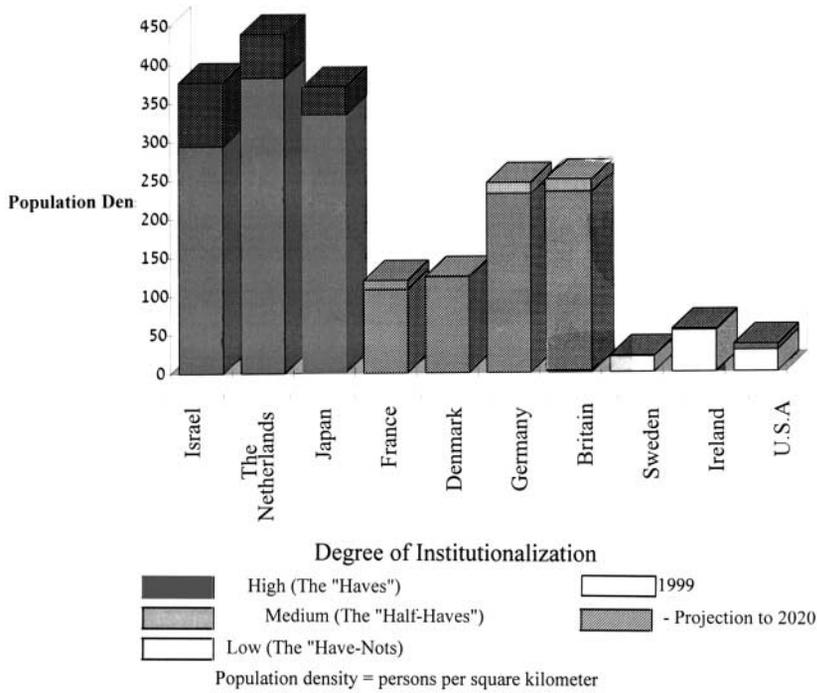


Figure 1. Degree of institutionalisation of national planning in ten countries by population density

and possibly Sweden (our two Swedish authors were at odds as to whether Sweden should today be classified in this category or the middle one). In these countries, comprehensive spatial planning exists at the local-government level, is relatively weak at the regional level, and is absent from the national level, except through sectoral planning. (The latter may be weakly or strongly institutionalised—that is not shown in the figure.)

At the other extreme are the countries with a relatively high degree of institutionalisation of planning—the ‘haves’. This category includes the Netherlands, Israel and Japan. In these countries, comprehensive spatial planning at the national level is a distinct and visible task of specific government bodies, with a basis in law or administrative practice and with established procedures for approval and implementation. Yet implementation is by no means necessarily of the ‘command and control’ type. These three countries differ a great deal in the modes and formats of planning and implementation, as well as in degrees of effectiveness over time.

The middle level of the ‘half-haves’ includes France, as well as Denmark, Germany and Britain, more or less in that order. France could perhaps have been included with the ‘haves’ based on its ambitious 1995 legislation that sought to re-establish strong national-level spatial-economic planning. But in 1999, reflecting the change brought about by the 1997 national elections, that legislation was amended. I

have thus classified France as falling within the medium-degree category. One can guess that most members of the European Union could be classified in this category.<sup>9</sup> The order of the chapters in this book has been arranged according to the order of the countries in Figure 1.

As may already be apparent, the classification by degree of institutionalisation is not technical nor simple. For example, it is not enough that a country has a document called a ‘national plan’ or ‘national vision’ in order to qualify for the higher category. For instance, Sweden, which we classified among the ‘have-nots’, does have such a national document, but our Swedish authors, Cars and Hårsman, do not attribute much weight to it.<sup>10</sup> A similar picture emerges from Ireland. A converse example comes from the UK, which has no ‘national plan’ or ‘national vision’, but which I classified in a higher category than Sweden and Ireland because its alternative mechanism—the Planning Policy Guidance—is much more effective in conveying and implementing central government’s spatial policy than the Swedish or Irish tools. A third example relates to legal status. In Denmark, the preparation of the national report is mandatory in law, while in the Netherlands it is not. Yet the Netherlands, whose national-level planning is highly institutionalised in administrative practice and is very effective, is classified among the ‘haves’, whereas Denmark is classified among the ‘half-haves’.

#### **CAN THE DEGREE OF NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING BE CORRELATED WITH OTHER VARIABLES?**

The classification in Figure 1 probably brings to readers’ minds many hypotheses to try to ‘explain’ the differences, using, for example, some of the variables in Table 1. But as the rest of this comparative chapter and this book will show, the number of variables along which countries can be compared is almost endless. The state of knowledge regarding comparative planning in general, and national planning in particular, is so rudimentary that one should not take too seriously any attempt to test ostensibly hypotheses linking some such variable with degree of planning as a ‘dependent variable’.

Having given this ‘waiver’, I did undertake one such exercise. Population density is a variable that can be hypothesised as possibly indicating an objective ‘need’ for spatial planning on the national level. In countries with lower densities, decision-makers and the electorate may not understand comprehensive national-level planning as an urgent requisite for the management of land resources. Indeed, the author of the US chapter, Kayden, offers this as one explanation of why national-level spatial planning has never taken root in his country. So, in Figure 1 I placed the classification of degrees of institutionalisation against the current and projected population densities.

A correlation does seem to emerge (one should not go so far with this analysis as to undertake statistical tests). The three countries with a high degree of institutionalisation of national planning—Israel, the Netherlands and Japan—also have the highest population densities, expected to reach 350–450 persons per square kilometre by 2020.<sup>11</sup> The countries with medium population densities ranging

from approximately 100 to the mid-200s—France, Denmark, Germany and Britain—are classified as ‘half-haves’. Whereas the three countries with the lowest population density levels ranging from approximately 50 down to 20—the USA, Ireland, and possibly Sweden—are classified with the ‘have-nots’.

However, even this seeming correlation is less than convincing. Under the current state of knowledge we can by no means predict the emergence of national-level planning based on high population densities. Thus, although Sweden has the lowest density among the ten countries, until the early 1990s, while the ‘Swedish model’ of state intervention ruled high, Sweden had a much higher degree of national planning than it does today. And although France has the third lowest population density, it too was in the past considered a model of strong national-level planning, both in traditional land-use planning and control, and in the special type of spatial-economic planning which is France’s *fortesse*. France attempted a revised ‘come-back’ to this model through its 1995 legislation, thus possibly requalifying for classification among the ‘haves’.

The conclusion is that the decision to develop spatial planning on the national level is not predetermined by some specific set of variables that indicate a ‘need’ for planning. The decision to adopt national-level planning is a question of choice by decision-makers and voters. In other words, Davidoff and Reiner’s (1962) classic point about the Choice Theory of Planning holds for national-level planning too.

### ***Differing reasons for the introduction of national-level planning and its goals***

The ten reports show that countries do indeed differ widely in the reasons that may have prompted decision-makers to introduce national-level planning or to phase it out at a particular time.

#### **A TOOL FOR NATION-BUILDING**

The three countries classified above as the ‘haves’ historically shared the view that national-level planning is an essential tool for nation-building. The Netherlands, with a long history of planning and regarded by many as the world’s flagship of national spatial planning, has had a historic ‘head start’. Mastop attributes this to its existential need for concerted public management of water in the lowlands and the need for a national effort for land reclamation. In recent decades, although these essential infrastructure and environmental policies have been routinised and these needs more or less assured, national-level spatial planning has not been phased out. Rather, it has shifted its focus to the challenges of meeting the internationalisation of the economy, of competing better within the European Union, of conserving the environment, and of meeting housing needs.

Japan and Israel, so distant geographically, socially and historically, are the closest in terms of the major role assigned to national-level planning as a tool for nation-building. One can guess that decision-makers among Europe’s newly formed

nations or its ethnic quasi-autonomous units may today also be considering the possibility of using strong national spatial planning as a tool for nation-building.<sup>12</sup> Japan and Israel also share the story of national-level planning, in danger of decline, being resurrected to serve new national goals. As Taminura and Edgington report, Japan used strong national planning in the post-Second World War years as a tool for repairing massive destruction and, even more, as a means for creating the astounding transformation of a traditional Asian society with a weak economy into a Western-style economy. Additional goals were added through the years to address Japan's scarce land resources and environmental sensitivity. It would be interesting to follow the story of Japan during its current economic recession. Will national planning be called upon to serve as a major tool for economic resuscitation?

Israel's story includes many parallels to both the Netherlands and Japan. The need for long-term planning to assure the life-sustaining water supply in the dry Middle East is reminiscent of the Netherlands' effort at managing the dangers of excess water. The social goal of nation-building after war and the challenge of creating an advanced economy from a developing country are reminiscent of Japan's goals. In contrast to the Netherlands and Japan, however, Israel is the only country within our sample and with few counterparts among advanced-economy countries worldwide where national-level planning is also assigned a distinct military-security (or perceived security) role. My account of Israeli national spatial planning, however, shows that by the latter 1970s, once the essential nation-building tasks were more or less fulfilled, national-level planning began a steep decline, which would probably have led to its eventual weakening from within. A major national crisis brought about by mass immigration—regarded as a nation-building goal in Israel—helped to 'save' national planning. It 'opened the eyes' of politicians and government officials to the need to redirect the old nation-building goals towards the environment and infrastructure, as is more typical of other Western countries.

#### **REDUCING INTER-REGIONAL DISPARITIES WITHIN THE COUNTRY**

The desire to reduce inter-regional inequalities within the country is a shared goal that has helped trigger national-level planning (independently of EU policies to be discussed later) in several of our sample countries both within Europe and outside it. In France this was the distinctive goal in the 1960s and 1970s, the heyday of national planning. As Marcou aptly explains, 'planning' in the sense of *aménagement du territoire* carries a very special meaning in France, referring not to traditional land-use planning but to the spatial aspects of socio-economic development. This same goal was also largely behind the enactment of the 1995 spatial planning act, but the focus there was on ensuring equal access to public services and utilities in all parts of the country. In Denmark and Sweden, reducing regional inequalities was a strong goal in the past, but is no longer so, since it has been more or less achieved. Alleviating regional disparities has also been an important, though not overriding, goal in Germany after unification. It has also been an important goal in Japan, where regional inequalities are still quite large. In Israel, the parallel policy is called

‘population distribution’ with the intent that economic incentives in the peripheries would not only help to equalise socio-economic levels but would also help to attract more population so as to contribute towards nation-building.

#### **THE EU’S SPATIAL POLICIES AS A TRIGGER FOR NATIONAL-LEVEL PLANNING**

During the 1990s, the European Union adopted the alleviation of inter-regional disparities as a key goal, as is clear from its spatial planning documents *Europe 2000* and *Europe 2000+* (European Commission, 1994) and the Spatial Development Perspectives approved in 1999. It has also been the focus of some of the EU’s major implementation tools such as the structure funds and the community support policy (Faludi, 1997; Giannakourou, 1996; Kunzmann, 1995; Prodi, 1993; Shaw et al., 1996; and Marcou here). EU policies stipulate that eligibility for various types of incentives, such as the structure funds, is conditional upon proof that an adequate level of planning on a broader-than-project scale has accompanied the set of priorities submitted by each member country.

All seven reports from the European countries in this book (and one could have added reports from some other European countries)<sup>13</sup> mention how recent EU spatial planning policies and funds have either served as a trigger for the introduction of some degree of national-level planning or have reinforced the utility of existing practices. As Mastop (1998) puts it, ‘for western Europe, the development of the new politico-institutional super-structure of the EU triggers important changes. Europe is building its own “nation” and as Europe is becoming a “Europe of regions”, the various regions are building their “nations” too.’ But the responses to the EU policies have differed among member countries, sometimes to an extreme degree. The story of Ireland is striking in this respect in a ‘sweet and sour’ way. Bannon and Russell’s analysis shows how the promise of EU funding and its linkage with specific requirements for proof that some planning has been done beyond the project-by-project level became the trigger—indeed, the *only* real trigger—for initiating national-level planning in Ireland in the 1990s. However, in Ireland, such planning is not yet much more than a routine for obtaining funding. However, the authors note that in the future, national planning may become entrenched in its own right. Cars and Hårsman also mention the influence of EU policies as a trigger for a ‘vision’ statement for Sweden, but are very sceptical about the document’s utility. Ireland and Sweden also happen to be classified as belonging to the low-level category of degrees of national-level planning.

Other European authors, including Grant for the UK, Enemark and Jorgensen for Denmark, Marcou for France, and Schmidt-Eichstaedt for Germany, are less sceptical about the impact of EU policies on planning in their countries. We learn, for example, how European policies have added extra flare to France’s national policies about regional disparity alleviation and how Denmark was able to leave that goal entirely to the EU level and to make room in its national planning policy for a new focus on environmental and infrastructure goals. They also assess their country’s existing national-level planning modes and procedures in terms of their

adequacy for meeting EU requirements, and come to positive conclusions. Note that in my scale of degree of institutionalisation of national planning, the UK, Denmark, France and Germany are classified in the mid-level. Mastop for the Netherlands, which holds the highest degree of institutionalisation of national planning within the EU, does not even raise the question of planning adequacy. Marcou adds that competition among nations and regions at the European level today also includes the quality of the *planning function* itself and that French decision-makers are aware of this. We further learn from Faludi (1997) that the German decision-making structure for coordinating national-level planning with the *Länder* (see Schmidt-Eichstaedt's chapter) has become a model for the EU's coordinative Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers in charge of planning in their respective countries.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND NIMBY-MITIGATION GOALS**

In several countries, the rising public support for environmental values and the search for environmentally friendly infrastructure policies have replaced the goals of the previous decades and, one can surmise, have thus helped to maintain national-level planning. As Enemark and Jorgensen tell us, environmental goals and the improvement of international transportation links are today the key motivations for national-level planning in Denmark. Infrastructure planning and the prevention of NIMBYs ('not in my back yard') are key goals of national-level planning in Sweden, but unlike Denmark, in Sweden these areas represent exceptions to the general trend to reduce national-level planning and intervention. Environmental considerations, and especially a growing concern about the need to overcome resistance from local constituents to essential national projects, are today major goals and *raison d'être* for national planning in the countries with the higher population densities—the Netherlands, Japan, Israel and the UK.

The USA is an example of a country where environmental considerations have played a double role. It is a probable reason why comprehensive national planning has not taken root, but at the same time it has been the stimulus for most of the (modest) examples of (sectoral) national-level planning that do exist. On the one hand, Kayden notes that the country's generous land and environmental expanses have been perceived as allowing 'room for mistakes', making the need for national planning less urgent. On the other hand, a quick glance at the US paper shows that many, if not most, of the sectoral areas where national-level planning and intervention did take root are environmental areas or, more recently, environment-plus-infrastructure areas. Kayden also notes that in Hawaii, Vermont and Oregon, the pioneering states where state-level planning first took root, the goal of protecting agricultural land—another environmental goal—was a prime motivation. Some of the other states that joined later (state-level planning exists, as yet, only in a small minority of states) were motivated by additional environmental goals such as reducing pollution, managing congestion and making more efficient use of infrastructure.

### ACCOMMODATING GROWTH PRESSURES AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

For some countries, management of a high level of growth pressures has been a major goal for national-level planning. Growth accommodation has been a prime goal in Israel both in its initial years and during the ‘resurrection’ of national-level planning in the 1990s. It has also figured high in Japan, not so much as a result of demographic growth, but as a result of steep economic growth. In the Netherlands, although the demographic rate of growth is not high and is similar to other European countries, national-level planning has continuously seen growth accommodation as a prime goal. This seeming contradiction is solved if one notes that the Netherlands’ long-standing ideological commitment to ‘a home for every household’ has exposed planning decision-makers to the commitment of meeting the growing demand for housing due to decreasing household sizes.

In Germany, Schmidt-Eichstaedt tells us, although demographic growth has been low, there has been a growing need to upgrade the infrastructure, housing and public services in the former East German *Länder*. In Ireland, Bannon and Russell hypothesise that the current relatively high rate of growth in household formation might in the future lead to a higher degree of national-level planning than currently. In the USA, those Federal programmes oriented to the management of sprawl and transportation congestion are a reflection of the need for accommodating growth—although in the USA there are great differences from region to region and therefore the programmes are also different. Indeed, I would add that, in the USA, ‘growth management’—a term widely used as an American euphemism for planning—is the umbrella goal for much of state and local-level planning.

By contrast, the absence of growth does not seem to be related to the phasing out of national-level planning, reconfirming the applicability of the Choice Theory to national-level planning. The authors of the French, UK and Danish reports tell us that their countries have in recent years had a very low level of demographic growth and an almost stagnant development rate, and that there is an excess supply of most types of built-up space. Yet in none of these countries has national-level planning been phased out; on the contrary, it shows signs of strengthening.

### CRISES OR THEIR ABSENCE

Finally, the emergence—or non-emergence—of national-level planning in some countries is related to crises. While such a linkage must have existed in the post-war years in many countries, most authors did not cite the existence of a crisis as an important stimulus for planning in recent decades. The story of the mass immigration crisis in Israel in the 1990s is an exception, and is indeed the most distinctive story of the linkage between crises and planning to be found anywhere among advanced-economy countries since the Second World War (Alterman, forthcoming). A possible runner-up is the story of German unification, but from Schmidt-Eichstaedt’s chapter we do not learn of any major impact that this change has had on the degree and modes of national-level planning. Kayden hypothesises a link between the perceptions of the existence of a crisis to explain why, on three occasions, the USA came closer to adopting some form—albeit very mild—of

national-level planning. The absence of a real crisis situation, surmises Kayden, may have contributed to the fact that land-use planning at the national level has not been reintroduced.

### *Trends in national-level planning*

Despite the great differences among the ten countries in the formats and goals for national-level planning, there are also some trends that are shared by several of our sample countries and that can probably be generalised to some other countries not represented here. I have identified 16 trends that seem to me to reflect directions that should engage debate and further study. These will be classified into five groups:

- Trends related to national political and administrative contexts;
- Trends in national comprehensive planning;
- Trends in national sectoral planning;
- Emerging styles of planning and implementation; and
- Shared problems and dilemmas.

#### **TRENDS RELATED TO NATIONAL POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXTS**

The state of planning at any level has always been linked to the state of government, and changes in ideological views regarding government intervention and styles of governing have always influenced planning. This linkage is even sharper where national-level planning is concerned. Two important trends emerge from the country reports that herald the promise of a new relationship between attitudes to government intervention and to national-level planning.

##### *The release of national planning from the shackles of political ideology*

The ideological link between attitudes to government intervention and to national planning may be almost dead. This is one of the more important—and surprising—findings of this comparative study. Only in one country within our sample—Sweden—do we still today find a linkage between changing ideologies about government intervention and degree of national planning. Sweden's is a story of the rise and subsequent demise of national-level planning. In the post-war years, rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and a concern for the over-exploitation of natural resources led to the introduction of considerable central government planning and intervention in many spheres of life. The ideologically espoused and world-renowned 'Swedish model' of government intervention came into being. Improvement of social and housing conditions and equalisation throughout the country were the leading goals. However, as Cars and Hårsman tell us, by the 1990s, excessive government spending and intervention in the market had led to a steep economic decline. So, an overdose of national planning—not necessarily in spatial policy—can

be ‘credited’ with the recent reluctance of Swedish leaders to adopt a degree of national-level spatial planning commensurate with most other European countries in our sample, such as neighbouring Denmark.

The finding of the ‘death of ideology’ emerges from the reports of all the countries except Sweden. In chapter after chapter, we learn that the former debates between the party-ideological views on left and right, once so vehemently pro or con planning, are no longer relevant to the attitudes towards national-level planning. Some of the authors make this point overtly, but probably without guessing that this is a shared picture; others make it indirectly, by keeping silent about any significant changes in the status of national planning as a result of a swing of power from left to right, or from right to left. There are even two countries—France and the UK—in which a reverse direction of linkage could be observed in the 1990s.

The UK is a country where controversies about town and country planning powers have, during the post-war years, occupied a central place in the well-documented debates between left and right. As Grant aptly puts it:

[A] powerful consideration in both national and local politics has been ideology. British politics in relation to land policy was, between 1945 and 1985, bedevilled by a simplistic dichotomy between socialism and conservatism . . . That is not true of the Labour Government elected in May 1997 . . .

Grant and others (see also Thornley, 1991) point out that Margaret Thatcher’s highly conservative government, while ostensibly seeking to weaken planning and government intervention, in effect led to greater centralisation of planning powers and greater involvement of the national government in local and county planning. Grant notes that, during the Tories’ last years in office, Parliament began to be involved in specific national planning policies. Furthermore, public support for planning (recast as ‘sustainable development’) actually increased. The Labour Government that took over in 1997 did not find it necessary to make too many changes in the powers of national-level planning. So, national-level planning has become oblivious even to a rather dramatic party swing!

The French story is an even stronger case in point. The 1995 Guidance Act on Spatial Planning and Development (*aménagement du territoire*), which called for extensive and ambitious national spatial-economic planning, was in fact enacted by a right-leaning government. And ironically, in 1997, the incoming left-wing government was the one to recall the Act for review and made it more moderate in national-level powers.

From Kayden’s account one learns that even in the USA the relationship between political ideology and planning is at times obscure, or paradoxical. The only attempt to enact a law introducing land-use planning powers at the federal level was defeated in the 1970s, and such intervention is regarded by both parties as anathema and has not been proposed again. During the post-war years, the Democrats usually supported rather more (sectoral) policy-making at the federal level than did the

Republicans. But in recent years even these differences have been fading. Paradoxically, in a country where the ideology supporting private enterprise and property has always been held at the centre, in recent decades one can also find policies—proposed and implemented by all administrations—that permit extreme intervention in the right to develop land, without paying compensation, for purposes such as wildlife protection, wetlands preservation, or open coastline access. Such freedom to intervene is, I may add, at times more excessive than in some other countries in our sample, although they may have a much higher degree of institutionalisation of national-level planning.<sup>14</sup> The recent legislative proposals in some states to establish the right to compensation for some of the above-mentioned controls take no account of whether the Democrats or the Republicans are ruling in Washington.

In Ireland, there seems to be another ideological paradox. The minimalist degree of comprehensive national-level spatial planning is attributed by Bannon and Russell to the very strong ideological commitment in Ireland to the freedom to use private property. At the same time, we learn that Ireland is a highly centralised country, with a large dose of sectoral national-level planning and intervention in various areas.

The authors of the two remaining countries in the ‘half-haves’ category, Germany and Denmark, make little mention of political debates over planning. But the most telling test should be regarding the countries in the ‘haves’ category—the Netherlands, Japan and Israel. Even in these countries, the desirable degree of national planning is no longer a prominent issue of party debate. But this fact is apparently not mutually known. Assuming (as I too had done before undertaking this analysis) that party-political debate about national planning still occupies a major position in other countries, Tanimura and Edgington present Japan as an exception, noting that its extensive degree of national planning has been supported by all governments, and has never become a party-political issue. We now know that Japan is no exception.

So, in all the countries in this book except Sweden, national-level planning has in recent years become almost immune to the vicissitudes of party-political changes.

*Trends of decentralisation and the general weakening of governments*

Two tendencies emerge that appear to contradict each other: on the one hand, governments are being weakened; on the other, national-level planning is probably gaining strength. The first trend is dealt with here, the other in the next section.

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, most advanced-economy democracies experienced a weakening of governmental powers in general and central government powers in particular. This occurred through decentralisation, privatisation, deregulation, fiscal problems, and the legitimisation crisis in governments.<sup>15</sup> Among these trends, decentralisation deserves a special focus because it appears at first sight to be at odds with national-level planning.

Most of the authors report that the 1980s and the early 1990s have seen devolutionary trends in which some central government powers have been moved to the regional or local levels or to special agencies. The most striking case-in-point is France—a country that, until the early 1980s, was one of the most highly centralised

in the West. Since then, France has taken a swing to the other extreme by devolving many central government powers, including land-use planning, to the local level. Considering the fact that France has thousands of tiny local authorities, such devolution was an extreme measure indeed.

In Denmark and Ireland, local governments have always had considerable powers. In Sweden, legislative changes that devolved some land-use planning powers occurred in 1987, ahead of the more general collapse of the Swedish Model in the early 1990s. Thereafter, devolution occurred in many spheres. In the Netherlands, although decentralisation trends in the 1990s have been soft and gradual, they continue to occupy a central position in debates about the proper role of national planning, as emerges vividly from Mastop's account. Even in federal Germany, where the constitution clearly stipulates the division of authority among levels of government, decentralisation trends have been occurring, sometimes in institutionally ingenious ways, as recounted by Schmidt-Eichstaedt. And in the USA—a highly decentralised country where one can hardly think of any further steps towards decentralisation—Kayden reports about a recent trend to decentralise some federal powers in sectoral planning to the state level, or to a partnership of the state and private bodies. This has gained momentum especially in the environmental area.

The UK and Israel were the exceptions to this trend—but may have now joined it through some devolutionary steps taken during the last years of the 1990s. Grant reports that the Labour Government has re-established the Greater London Council and in 1999 devolved extensive powers, including planning, to Scotland and Wales. And I report about the first ever change in the planning law in Israel which devolves to the local planning authorities a modicum of independent power to approve some types of amendment plans where these make only minor changes in land use. However, on the *de facto* rather than *de jure* level, significant decentralisation trends have been occurring in Israel as well since the early 1980s.

And finally, in Japan the situation has been rather paradoxical. Tanimura and Edgington tell us of the extensive powers of central government in economic planning and certain topics of land-use planning that are salient to central government. But I would like to add from my own observations of Japanese planning practice that, alongside these powers, Japanese local authorities are not as highly encumbered by central government in their local land-use planning and development control decisions as it seems on paper, and their independence is probably on the rise.<sup>16</sup> This has led to a rather low quality of the built environment in many Japanese towns and cities outside the major urban centres.

Perceived excesses of decentralisation have, in some countries, led to recentralisation of selected powers. Thus in France, as Marcou reports, excessive decentralisation of land-use planning powers to thousands of small local authorities has caused problems in coordinating spatial planning at the regional level and in implementing essential national or regional projects. A few corrective measures were taken in the 1990s, without changing the basic decentralised structure. A similar trend occurred in Sweden, as reported by Cars and Hårsman. Central government powers were strengthened where necessary to override local opposition to a project

deemed essential. In the Netherlands, as Mastop reports, in 1994 a so-called 'NIMBY Act' was legislated for a similar purpose. In the UK, where central government and the national assemblies already have considerable powers to call in local plans for the Minister's approval, Grant reports that there may be an emerging tendency for Parliament to intervene as well through a 'public bill'. It has done so in special cases where controversial national projects were involved (such as the Channel Tunnel and King's Cross station).

#### TRENDS IN COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Comprehensive planning is the more ambitious form of national planning. I have noted that the ten countries may be classified into three levels by the degree of institutionalisation of such planning. Has comprehensive planning been on the increase or decrease in recent years? Comprehensive planning at the national level would benefit if a comprehensive view were also adopted at the regional level or at the supra-national level. Among our sample countries, three trends can be observed concerning the linkage between the national, regional and supra-national levels of comprehensive planning.

##### *The strengthening of comprehensive national-level planning*

Despite the global trends weakening governments, in several of the sample countries, national-level planning shows signs of strengthening. Except for the Swedish case, one cannot point out a correlation between the trends towards decentralisation noted above, and a weakening of national-level planning. Only in Sweden did these trends bring about a marked decline in national planning in sectors such as housing and economic development and a reluctance to adopt comprehensive spatial planning. In all the other countries in our sample, national-level planning or particular aspects of it have become more highly institutionalised, sometimes concomitantly with decentralisation and deregulation.

This is true even for the three countries with the highest degree of institutionalisation of national planning. In Japan, where economic-industrial planning did show signs of weakening in the 1990s, the same cannot be said of land-use planning. The current economic crisis and the worsening environmental problems may even lead to its further strengthening. In the Netherlands, despite public debates about the proper role of national spatial planning and the steps taken towards decentralisation and deregulation, national planning is likely to grow in strength. This can be credited to the 1993 legislation that mandates a national *environmental plan*.<sup>17</sup>

In France, the renewed importance of national-level spatial planning is striking. In 1995, the ambitious national planning act returned to some of the legacy of the 1970s, when French national-level planning was at its height; but, as Marcou stresses, the emphasis was no longer on pure economic planning, but rather on spatial socio-economic planning. And although the implementation of this act was partial and was subsequently changed, it will probably prove to have had some effect on rejuvenating national-level planning.

National-level planning in the UK also shows signs of becoming stronger. Since 1988, the former government circulars have become public documents (Planning Policy Guidance, or PPGs). They now increasingly resemble national planning policies and are not too distant from what in other countries are regarded as components of a national spatial policies plan. Since 1992, local authorities in the UK have been required to adhere to local plans (except if there are 'material considerations' that justify otherwise); and because such plans come under the guidance of the PPGs, central government and the two national assemblies now have potentially stronger implementation tools than in the past.

In Israel, the 1990s saw the impressive re-emergence of national-level planning to a degree of comprehensiveness it had not enjoyed since the 1950s, and with a higher degree of public exposure than ever before (previously public exposure was very low in cross-national comparative terms). In Ireland, national-level planning had its modest advent in the 1990s and a new attempt to issue national planning directives showed promising momentum in 2000. Finally, in Denmark, and even in federal Germany where the constitution bars the federal government from carrying out direct land-use planning, one can point out some signs, albeit more subtle than the other examples, that national planning is growing stronger.

*The increasing importance of regions and the regional level*

A regional view has always been one of the hallmarks of a comprehensive spatial-planning approach. All the European reports note the increasing importance that national governments attribute to regional planning, regional institutions and regional alignments (compared with the past focus on the local level). This growing prominence finds expression in both the contents and procedures of national-level planning policies. In Germany, France and Denmark, the goal of furthering regional perspectives finds formal expression in the constitution or in national planning legislation. The attention on regions probably reflects three trends: growing environmental awareness and therefore greater attention to the environmental distinctiveness of different regions; social changes that encourage greater attention to ethnic diversity and regional pride; and, of course, the EU policies targeted at the regional level. The EU has adopted a set of policies that emphasise regional planning within member countries in order to reach greater equalisation of socio-economic levels in the EU as a whole. The EU regional planning policies offer lucrative funding for that purpose. The impact of EU policies on strengthening regional planning is already apparent in France, Germany, Ireland and Denmark, and in the future may also become apparent in Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK.

*A stronger supra-national perspective*

Alongside the inwards regional perspective, there is also a trend in various parts of the world towards spatial planning at the supra-national level. This trend is most notable within the European Union, which publishes its own spatial policies plans for the entire area—*Europe 2000+* (European Commission, 1994) and *European Spatial Development Perspectives* (European Commission, 1999). Supra-national

planning also occurs among neighbouring countries, such as the Benelux strategic plan mentioned in Mastop's report. This trend has increasingly engaged European researchers in planning and related areas. There are dedicated research funds and specialised research institutes and journals<sup>18</sup> that are helping to create a knowledge base.

This trend reflects not only EU goals and procedures, but also deep worldwide changes—globalisation of markets, information, education and culture. Where international regional agreements enable cross-border planning, such as between the USA, Canada and Mexico, one can expect increasing supra-national planning in sectoral areas. The peace process in the Middle East has also brought about attempts at cross-border planning between Israel and its neighbours, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt.

### TRENDS IN SECTORAL PLANNING

Sectoral planning and comprehensive planning are often in tension with each other, competing for the attention of the public, politicians, government officials and professionals. This tension is especially strong at the national level because there, comprehensiveness is difficult to achieve. Three trends can be gleaned from the country reports and these offer some fresh perspectives on the relationship between comprehensive and sectoral planning.

#### *The subjects for sectoral planning—some shared, others differing*

One of the hypotheses with which this book began was that the topics assigned to sectoral planning at the national level would differ from country to country. There may also be a difference in whether urban and regional planners recognise that sectoral planning areas constitute part of the patchwork whereby spatial policies are made.<sup>19</sup> Some of the areas subject to sectoral planning at the national level are shared by many of the countries in this book and have usually existed for many decades. These one could call the more 'traditional' areas—highways and railways, parks and forests, national heritage sites, sensitive resources, bodies of water or coastlines. To these one could add the newer environmental areas such as air quality and toxic waste disposal. Other traditional areas, albeit somewhat less consensual, include housing, urban renewal and agriculture.

There are also significant differences among the countries in the areas covered by national-level sectoral planning. Some of these differences may reflect an objective need; others are probably a question of choice reflecting values and goals. In smaller and more densely populated countries, there may be a tendency to vest, at the national level, more sectoral NIMBY and LULU<sup>20</sup> policies than in larger countries, where they would be left to the local or regional levels. In Israel, for example, inter-town roads, railways, power plants, airports, toxic waste sites, mining and excavation sites, gas pipes, telecommunication lines, and even cemeteries and non-toxic waste disposal sites, are all handled at the national level by means of statutory sectoral plans. However, there is no consensus even among the more densely populated countries. In the UK, some of the areas that in Israel are subject

to national sectoral plans, such as airports, are regarded as appropriate for the local and regional levels. Whenever the Minister deems it necessary, he or she can promote national interests through the activation of the plan call-in powers.<sup>21</sup>

Other differences probably reflect the importance assigned to particular policy areas. In some countries, additional, non-traditional areas are subject to national-level planning, such as higher education, science and health services. New environmental planning areas, such as wildlife preservation, have also been added. In some other countries these have not (yet?) benefited from national sectoral planning. In Japan and France, where there is a tradition of strong economic development planning, sectoral planning for industrial development has been prominent. In Israel, on the other hand, there is a separate national statutory plan for tourism, but not one for industry (the latter is handled through a national policy of differential financial incentives).

*Some strengthening of sectoral planning*

The existence of sectoral planning is a confirmation of the ‘disjointed incrementalism’ theory of public policy and planning (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963). That theory recognises the *realpolitik* dynamics of public bodies and stakeholders who wish to control their own interests. The advantage of disjointed incrementalism and of sectoral planning is a smoother planning process and, because of the closer correlation between the planning and implementation bodies, a hoped-for smoother implementation process. The price is, of course, poor coordination with other sectors and, at times, unexpected implementation problems (Christensen, 1999). I suspect that there are some trade-offs between comprehensive and sectoral planning.

In parallel with the trend noted above regarding the growing prominence of comprehensive national-level spatial planning in some countries, one can also (hesitantly) point out a trend in several countries whereby national-level sectoral planning in particular areas may also be growing in strength—with or without a concomitant enhancement of comprehensive planning. The expansion of sectoral planning at the national level may be an expression of a wider recognition of the need for more national planning, which finds expression in sectoral planning rather than in the more administratively and politically difficult comprehensive spatial planning. This trend is sometimes triggered by a political commitment to a particular policy area, by the availability of outside funding in particular areas, such as through the EU, or by international political or trade agreements. For example, in the USA, sectoral areas promoted in the 1990s included several policy areas related to environmental and transportation issues that have high political visibility and electoral support.

Not all countries share this trend. In a series of policy areas in the UK, the national government has in fact reduced its involvement. Grant reports that agriculture is the only sectoral ministry left with national-level planning powers (and these, too, have been relaxed).<sup>22</sup> Other areas previously vested at the national level—water, roads and rail—have either been privatised or assigned to a special agency.

*New paradigms for broadening and coordinating sectoral planning*

There are signs of a new tendency to soften the raw edge of disjointed action. New paradigms may be emerging that seek to build into sectoral planning better mechanisms of integration with other sectors than is possible through regular interministerial coordination. The five paradigms enumerated below represent mid-way compromises between fully comprehensive spatial planning, and planning that relies entirely on disparate sectors.

The first such model calls for sectoral planning that weaves together two or three selected areas into a single programme, without yet taking on the comprehensive spatial-planning view. Under this model, sectoral planning takes a ‘look over the shoulder’, so to speak, towards adjacent sectoral areas.

An interesting example comes from the UK. Grant tells us of a 1998 programme that seeks to encourage the integration of transportation with land-use planning—two areas that have suffered from poor coordination between them. But the clearest examples of this tendency come from the USA. Kayden analyses a long list of federal environmental policies that have been expanded to include what he aptly calls ‘a slice of land-use planning’ (coastal zones, wetlands, wildlife, transportation, air quality). A US federal programme—ISTEA<sup>23</sup>—encodes the multi-sectoral view into its emblem. This programme is tailored to encourage an integrated view of land-use, transportation and air-quality considerations, and this integrative view has already won itself the acronym LUTRAQ. As Kayden puts it:

ISTEA introduced cutting-edge change at the national level. Since transportation investment decisions obviously have a major impact on land use and environmental quality, this legally imposed relationship between plans and institutions represented an important break with past planning practices.

ISTEA sets up a special institutional implementation tool—the Metropolitan Planning Organisations (MPOs)—which are major innovations in the US tradition of local government. They are responsible for preparing long-range transportation plans in conjunction with the states, which are required to prepare their own long-range plans for areas outside the jurisdiction of the MPOs.

Israel provides a second paradigm for interrelationships between sectoral and comprehensive planning. From 1965 until the early 1990s, national statutory planning took the form of sectoral planning only, rather than of comprehensive land-use planning. Ironically, sectoral plans were actually based on the legal basis intended for a comprehensive national plan.<sup>24</sup> Under this legal umbrella, some 25 national sectoral plans have been prepared to date. The legislators’ intention that a comprehensive view be taken was met only indirectly—through the composition of the body in charge of approving statutory plans, which includes representatives of all relevant government ministries. But despite this institutional structure, the accumulation of sectoral plans, often uncoordinated and even contradictory, never became a substitute for an integrated view. Only in 1991 was the first initiative

taken to prepare a comprehensive statutory plan. This dramatic ‘comprehensive turn’ may also be credited with spinning off more sectoral plans in new subject areas and enhancing their quality. Thanks to the new comprehensive plans, the sectoral plans are now cast within broader coordinative mechanisms than before. A similar dynamic is described by Mastop for the Netherlands, where the national plan titled ‘Fourth Report+’ is credited with stimulating considerable sectoral planning in areas such as infrastructure, environment, agriculture and economic development.

A third type of interrelationship between comprehensive and sectoral planning comes from Japan, as described by Tanimura and Edgington. In Japan, economic planning is the strongest among our sample countries, and it is institutionally distinct from national land-use planning. The comprehensive economic plan is used as an effective coordinating mechanism for most other sectors, including the spatial planning sectors. The tool is the requirement that a five-year plan be prepared by all sectors under the guidance of the economic plan. Another ingenious Japanese coordinative mechanism is based on the personnel element: the national economic planning agency seconds officials from several other agencies, who work as part of that agency on a rotational basis, thus bringing in their ‘mother agency’s’ perspective and improving the mutual coordination of decisions.

A fourth paradigm of the relationship between sectoral and comprehensive planning comes from the Netherlands. Indeed, Mastop’s account of national-level planning there can be seen as the story of the perennial search for the right balance between comprehensive (called ‘facet’) and sectoral planning. He vividly describes the various concepts and experiments that have been attempted, decade after decade. The Achilles’ heel of sectoral planning in the Netherlands is the notoriously poor coordination among land-use, environmental and water-management plans (and this despite institutional location of the first two topics in a single ministry). Mastop reports on recent provincial-level experimental programmes for integrating these three sectors into a single planning document. If these are successful, government has promised that the national plan currently in preparation—the Fifth Note—will integrate a ‘note’ about environmental planning too. Thus we see a new paradigm emerging, whereby expanded sectoral planning is subsequently integrated into a comprehensive planning view.

And finally, an even more fascinating paradigm may be emerging from the Netherlands, with a twist. Mastop (1998) and Priemus (1998) tell us of the alignment for the preparation of the new 2030 plan. Behold: the four major sectoral ministries, each of which has traditionally prepared its own sectoral plan, are on the verge of espousing a new role. The four ministries are Economic Affairs; Transport and Public Works; Water Management and Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries; and Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment. The latter is the ministry legally and traditionally in charge of land-use planning, and in all previous national plans it has taken the lead but coordinated poorly with the others. This time, each of the other three ministries has prepared a policy document which, in effect, is a comprehensive alternative conception to the national plan! One can

therefore anticipate that the debates about the 2030 plan will be based on new grounds and with new dynamics. Instead of a debate between a lead agency in charge of comprehensive planning and sectoral agencies that in fact act as lobbies for their interests, the debate will now be between alternative comprehensive conceptions, from different loci. Thus, the notoriety of poor coordination among sectoral plans may have led the sectoral agencies to realise that the best way to effect comprehensive planning is by preparing it themselves!

#### **EMERGING STYLES OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

For many, national planning carries the image of a command-and-control approach to planning and implementation. This image may reflect the fact that national-level planning often takes a longer view than local planning, deals with subjects that might be anathema to local communities, and is carried out by central government. National planning might be viewed as more distant from the consumers of planning than is local planning. Surprisingly, the picture that emerges from the ten chapters is a far cry from this image. The styles whereby planning and implementation are carried out at the national level turn out to be not too dissimilar from the styles of local and regional planning and public policy-making that have been evolving in democratic countries in recent decades.

#### *The use of incentives to improve local and regional planning and comply with national policies*

Increasingly, national governments are using incentives rather than command-and-control styles to encourage comprehensive planning at the local and regional levels, and thereby encourage compliance with national policies. This is carried out through a type of quasi-voluntary 'deal'. If the local level undertakes a comprehensive planning process, which also implements national policies, it will be granted more financial resources, or more legal powers. An example of this is the 1983 French planning law which authorised central government to devolve full land-use and building-control powers to the local authorities, provided that a local plan had been prepared and approved. Conditioning the transfer of funds upon the improvement of planning has been the prime technique adopted by the federal government in the USA since the 1950s and, more recently, by the German federal government.

In the USA, a whole pageant of policy areas have been implemented in this manner. As Kayden reports, some have been more prominent in the past, such as housing, urban renewal and neighbourhood regeneration, while others are the current stars, such as integrated transportation modes and various areas of environmental quality. Through this approach, a national government can gain three things. It can improve local and regional planning (in the EU case, as we saw above, it is also used to improve national-level planning); it can gain control over the timing of planning; and it can further the implementation of national-level planning goals by assuring that these goals are absorbed into local or regional plans.

*From 'blueprint'-style plans to flexible policy documents*

Theorists and legal scholars concerned with local land-use planning have been engaged in the decades-long debate about the advantages and disadvantages of flexible broad-brush policy plans versus 'blueprint'-style plans (Alterman, 1981; Alterman and Hill, 1978; Faludi, 1970; 1987; Haar, 1956). Where *local* plans are concerned, the law and practice in this regard does vary significantly.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in some of the chapters in this book, the authors complain that overly rigid local plans have become a national problem that inhibits or slows down implementation of national policy. But at the national level, the debate has clearly been decided in favour of flexible policy plans.

In all but one of the countries where there is a document equivalent to a national plan of some form ('plan', 'report', 'note', 'guidelines', '*schéma*' ), that document is described as a flexible set of policies or guidelines (see Table 2). Such is the case for the Netherlands, Japan, France, Denmark, Germany, the UK and Sweden. In France, the 1995 law which anticipated a relatively rigid type of plan was amended so as to turn the *schéma national* into a document that presents a set of *choices*.

Most of the planning documents make use of maps to convey the spatial aspects of policies, but maps are no longer the *sine qua non* for national spatial planning. In the UK, maps have purposely been avoided in the PPGs. Written policies are the major form of communication in national planning documents in most countries.

The only exception to this trend is Israel, where the tradition of blueprint-style plans that specify rules and regulations has survived longer than in the other countries in our sample. However, even in Israel, a change of course may have begun. The 'Israel 2020' plan, completed in 1997, was the first policies plan, but it was not a statutory plan, nor even a government-initiated one. So the real test regarding the emerging style of plans will only occur when the final version of the comprehensive National Outline Plan 35 is submitted for approval. Will the planners be able to withstand the pressures from both government bureaux and environmental groups to be more and more specific? I have my doubts.

*From a binding to an advisory status in implementation*

The offshoot of the flexible policy style of plans is that in the implementation arena most of the documents play an advisory, guiding function rather than a legally binding one, as can be seen in Table 2. This book shows that the legal status regarding plan *preparation* has largely been disengaged from the legal status regarding plan *implementation*. Although many of the national planning documents among the countries in our sample are mandatory to prepare (Germany, Denmark, France, Japan), that does not mean that they are binding on development-control decisions (or, in American planning parlance, full 'consistency' is not required). Lower-echelon government units may be expected, by legal or administrative requirements, to relate to national plans (the British term to 'take regard' is appropriate here). Central government may use various methods of oversight, incentives or sanctions to encourage lower-echelon agencies to adhere to national planning policy, but it cannot bind private and non-governmental bodies to it. In

other words, the command-and-control style of plans at the national level is not the prevalent implementation mode—except for Israel, where national statutory plans are strictly binding on all parties (but are not mandatory for government to prepare).

The correlation between the plan's legal status and its degree of effectiveness is not very strong. For example, in the UK, the 'National Policy Guidelines' are not mandatory to prepare; indeed, they have no direct grounding in any legislation, yet national government has rendered them rather binding on local authorities through administrative practice. In the Netherlands too, it is not mandatory to prepare national Notes, yet these policy statements have to date been rather effective—not through a command-and-control process, but an advisory, guiding one.

There is an exception to this trend. Several of our authors report a 'backlash' where projects of salient national interest are concerned and where there is a fear that local government or private interests might block or delay an important project. In those cases, central government issues a very specific plan or directive that requires full and detailed compliance. Such a trend is reported from Sweden and France (greater use of national directives), the UK (where a 'private bill' technique is of late being used), and the Netherlands (where a 1994 amendment to the planning act is nicknamed the 'NIMBY Law'). In Israel, many of the statutory national plans are in fact project-specific NIMBY-bypass plans.

*More public participation alongside a growing NIMBY problem*

The fact that the national planning reported in this book is carried out in democratic countries would lead one to expect that public authorities would allow opportunities for public participation. The question is, on which rung of Arnstein's (1969) famous 'ladder of public participation' do they stand? Do the authorities just ensure provision of information to allow objection by injured parties, or do they expand participation towards a more proactive process?

The distinctive finding from most of the countries is that public participation modes in the 1990s have in general gone 'up the ladder', regardless of where they were stationed before. Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK are countries that have had a relatively high level of participation for many decades, relative to many other countries (the UK's temporary regression in the 1980s notwithstanding). The authors of these chapters point out that there has been a distinctive expansion in participation modes in the 1990s. The resort to conflict resolution in a conscious manner (as distinct from just an outcome of regular planning administration) is an emerging theme in some of the chapters, such as the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.<sup>26</sup> While the Irish and American authors do not refer to such a trend, that is probably because in these countries extensive public participation is already taken for granted.

The trend of expanding participation holds even for countries where government administrative culture has traditionally been less open. Thus, in France, where the prefects still have significant authority and can implement national planning directives (DTAs<sup>27</sup>), they have been resorting to public participation more broadly than required by law. A similar picture emerges from Israel, where the National

Planning and Building Board has been increasingly willing to hear stakeholders even though the law exempts the National Board from that requirement. In Japan, ‘participation’ is traditionally practised in different ways than in the other countries—it focuses on collaboration with specific interest groups, rather than on expanding access to the public at large.

The enhancement of public participation does not always hold. A reverse tendency has also been emerging as part of the NIMBY-bypass trend noted above. This, however, applies only to selected cases where the national government perceives that a particular policy or project is an essential one, sees time is pressing, and fears that local government and private interests will halt the project. We learn from the Dutch, Swedish and French reports that, during the 1990s, central government has enacted new laws or adopted procedures that are specifically designed to override local opposition by consciously limiting the opportunities for public participation and litigation in the courts. In Israel too, the early 1990s saw a temporary reduction in participation rights when government saw an impending crisis as justifying such procedures and enacted a temporary law, which has since been terminated (Alterman, 2000). In none of the cases, however, have public participation rights been totally curtailed.

*From a command-and-control planning process to a negotiated, collaborative one*

One of the most consistent themes emerging from the reports is that, at the national level, the command-and-control mode of plan-making is in demise, whereas the negotiated and contractual mode is on the rise. From most of the reports we learn that central governments are shifting their implementation energies from the more traditional ‘instruments’ of implementation that had engaged analysts for decades (Alterman, 1982) to negotiated contracts. These are carried out on a wide span of issues and with a growing range of government bureaux, other agencies and private bodies.

We learn of many types and layers of negotiated agreements. They are being used to create joint policy between *hierarchical* agencies, such as central government, regions and local authorities (here the French state-region plan conventions and the German federal state and local conferences are notable examples). They are also used between horizontal agencies, such as among sectoral agencies at the central government level (here Japanese practice is a case in point) and among local authorities (the French and more recent UK practices provide examples). Negotiations are also being used to develop and coordinate policies among *hierarchical and horizontal* agencies at once—what Mastop calls ‘diagonal’ negotiations (here Dutch and Danish practices are distinctive). And finally, negotiated contracts are employed between government agencies, a variety of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private corporate bodies. This mode—the change from *government* to *governance*—is taking root in several European countries in our sample, and has also been adopted in the 1990s by experimental US federal environmental programmes. It is also a veteran Japanese practice.

Indeed, in some of the chapters—especially Germany, France and Denmark—

the focus on negotiation is so prominent that the accounts no longer resemble the traditional accounts of planning ‘systems’ where hierarchical structures and rules of compliance used to occupy centre stage. The implications of this trend are captured by Grant in his report on the UK:

[T]he language of partnership is having a powerful effect on current public policy management.... Partnership is at one level a sign of weak government, and an indication of the dependency of national and local governments upon others to secure public policy objectives. But it is also a potent tool for consensus building in generating those objectives and delivering the policies necessary to achieve them.

The finding about the growing prominence of negotiated, collaborative planning modes at the national level is among the most important in this book. This finding would not have been a surprise had it applied to the local and regional levels. After all, the shift to negotiated modes accords perfectly with currently prominent theories of urban and regional planning, such as Healey’s ‘collaborative planning’, Innes’ ‘communicative planning’ or Forester’s ‘deliberative planning’ (Healey, 1997; Innes, 1995; 1996; 1998; Forester, 1999). These theories, however, focus in their examples mostly on the neighbourhood and local levels—the ‘shaping of places’, as Healey calls the collaborative process. Our findings show that national-level planning, despite its greater distance from consumers and often its longer time range, is adopting modes that are not dissimilar to local planning.

#### **SHARED PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION**

The emerging trends regarding national-level planning may end up painting a picture that is too positive. Despite the signs that such planning may be gaining strength in democratic countries, and despite the adoption of more open, participatory, flexible and implementation-oriented modes, national planning is not immune to problems. Each chapter outlines the specific difficulties encountered in that country. I have found that some types of problems are shared by several countries. Here are three of them.

##### *Continuing problems of inter-agency coordination*

Because of its geographic and organisational span, national-level planning, whether sectoral or comprehensive, must deal with many agencies and must find ways of coordinating among them. After all, government structure is always *disjointed*, to borrow Braybrooke and Lindblom’s (1963) term once again. Even in this summary chapter we saw evidence of the great efforts that planners and decision-makers are making to structure into the planning and implementation process improved methods of coordination. In some chapters—most distinctively the Netherlands and Germany—the search for effective ways of coordination is almost the *leitmotif*. Yet only one author—Schmidt-Eichstaedt for Germany—expresses satisfaction with the

degree of inter-agency coordination achieved. Enemark and Jorgensen for Denmark also voice few complaints.

All other authors persist in reports about the continuous search for better mechanisms of coordination because existing ones are not satisfactory. For example, in the Netherlands a new format of coordination is tried out every few years, testifying to the decision-makers' perpetual dissatisfaction with past performance. Inter-agency coordination of national-level planning may indeed be a 'wicked problem' (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

*Lengthy procedures and growing litigiousness*

Many of the authors in this book voice the same twin complaints. On the one hand, planning procedures at the local and regional levels are increasingly perceived as taking too long, and national authorities are increasingly being called in to help. Grant calls this the 'procrastination culture'. On the other hand, the tendency of stakeholders to resort to legal procedures against planning authorities is steeply on the rise. These two trends are, of course, linked in a paradoxical way. When procedures take a long time, various stakeholders—those interested in promoting development and those interested in halting it—have greater reason or opportunity to go to court. But resorting to litigation is a sure recipe for delaying procedures further—often taking the control of timing totally out of the hands of the planning authorities.

The longer timescales involved and greater likelihood of litigiousness probably reflect several shared trends: the increase in environmental awareness, the availability and wide dispersion of information about spatial planning and its impacts, the generally higher education levels of the public, and greater affluence that allows both public and private parties to the disputes to invest in further actions and in litigation.

Complaints about lengthy procedures and frequent litigation are expressed in the German, Dutch, British, Swedish and Israeli chapters. Kayden mentions that in various states of the USA, legislation has increased landowners' compensation rights, thus, I would add, in effect lowering the litigation threshold. He does not, however, complain about lengthy procedures and delays since these are probably less problematic in the USA, where planning procedures usually have fewer 'clearance points' than in the various European, Israeli or Japanese systems. Recent legislation in the Netherlands has given citizens the right to demand compensation for a growing range of public decisions. In Israel, the litigation threshold has been lowered in several ways: through the establishment of new, highly accessible quasi-judicial and judicial planning bodies, a lowered threshold of compensation, and greater access to information about planning procedures. In Japan, the problem is not litigiousness (that is not typical of Japanese society) but the reverse—bypassing legal procedures through rampant bribery, as noted by Tanimura and Edgington.

Some of the authors report new attempts to reduce either litigiousness or procrastination, or both. We learn that in Germany new legislation stipulates that appeals about certain types of planning initiatives in the new *Länder* can no longer

stall the approval of such plans. In Sweden, 'projects of national impact' have special speedy procedures. In the Netherlands, national 'key projects' such as airports also have special speedy procedures, whereby appeals and litigation are in principle restricted to the initial stage of the approval process. During the second, detailed stage, no more appeals from local government or private parties can be heard. In France, special directives can be used to streamline procedures. In the UK, the Minister has powers to speed up procedures where necessary, but in some prominently problematic cases in the late 1990s, Parliament has had to intervene. Finally, in Israel a paradoxical process has been occurring. On the one hand government has initiated amendments to the planning law that were intended to reduce quasi-judicial and judicial litigation. But on the other hand, the Knesset (parliament) dissipated these goals and achieved the converse: access to quasi-judicial and judicial litigation has actually been increased. No type of national-level planning, no matter how urgent it may be, is today immune to full scrutiny by the courts.

These problems are not innocuous. They are the symptom, not the malady. The maladies arise from built-in contradictions in the trends noted above. Flexible plans do not enable specificity and predictability. Stakeholders want to know what will happen on a particular site. Approval of flexible policy only delays conflict, it does not make it go away. Public participation, open information, flexible plans and negotiated contracts are indeed the desirable ways of conducting planning in democratic countries and are the paths along which planning theorists have been leading planning students and practitioners. But national-level planning deals with complex administrative and interest group structures, and with the middle or long term. In this context, no prescribed ways apparently hold the recipe of enduring consensus.

### *Conclusions*

Despite the 13 positive trends concerning national-level planning noted above, and the evidence that such planning is on the rise in democratic countries, the reports in this book by no means indicate a full consensus about its desirability. National planning must justify itself even in those countries that already have a high or a medium level of it. The authors of the chapters on the Netherlands, the UK and Israel anticipate that the debate about the desirability of the existing level of national planning will intensify in the coming years. And at the other end of the scale, the authors of the chapters on Ireland, the USA and Sweden report continuing resistance and doubt about the utility of national-level planning.

For some, national planning still carries the image of a command-and-control approach to planning and implementation. This image may reflect the intrinsic characteristics of national-level planning in terms of time-span and distance from the consumers. Furthermore, national planning sometimes deals with subjects that might be anathema to local communities. However, despite the shared problems, the emerging trends of national-level planning do indicate that 'something is going right'.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the practice of national-level planning is becoming increasingly attuned to changes in governance style, in society and in the economy. Such planning, as this book shows, is becoming adaptable as a useful tool for shaping government policy in democratic countries. The styles whereby planning and implementation are carried out at the national level turn out to be not too dissimilar to the styles of local and regional planning and public policy-making that have been evolving in democratic countries in recent decades. Although national-level planning has been virtually ignored by planning theorists and by empirical researchers, those theorists who have argued for the 'communicative turn' in planning and for planning as collaboration should be very pleased. The general trends in planning that they predicted seem to be occurring even on the national level!

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the picture of national-level planning that emerges from this book is very different from what it was in earlier decades. The twentieth century that saw the rise of some of the most coercive misuse of national planning by non-democratic regimes, and witnessed their demise, has sidestepped successfully the danger that any and all national planning would be viewed negatively. Surprisingly, in most countries represented in this book, national planning (or its absence) seems to have become immune to the churning of political-ideological debates. If this trend perseveres, we may be seeing growing debate in democratic countries about the pros and cons of enhancing national planning, but these debates will no longer cut across the traditional party-ideological lines of left and right. They will no longer focus on whether planning *per se* is desirable, but rather on the values and goals that are to be pursued and on the degree of effectiveness of alternative modes and formats of planning. National planning would then be largely seen as an instrumental rather than an ideological issue. Such planning will increasingly be viewed as a useful tool for democratic, advanced-economy countries that are seeking to improve their standing in a world of increasing economic and demographic competition, and are eager to answer voters' demands for better global and local environmental management.

The ten accounts of national-level planning provided in this book will, we hope, provide a varied set of models from which to learn and a rich information base on which to conduct future debate.

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## NOTES

1 The 'Israel 2020' project was initiated and headed from 1990 to 1997 by Adam Mazor, Israel's leading architect-planner practitioner and professor at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. More is said about this initiative in the chapter on Israel and in the Preface. This book is the outcome of the exceptional link of practice and academic knowledge production that was enabled by Mazor's leadership.

2 In Britain an equivalent term is 'town and country planning system', while in American English there is no fully equivalent term, though a close approximation would be 'land-use planning' or 'urban and regional planning' (without the word 'system' attached).

3 Even if we restrict ourselves to the English language, the literature on each of these topics is too extensive to be cited here. A few of these topics have also benefited from cross-national comparative analysis, such as plan-making styles in European countries (Healey, 1994), building permits (Schmidt-Eichstaedt, 1995), agricultural land preservation tools (Alterman, 1997), and the division of labour between planning authorities and developers in financing public services (Alterman, 1988).

4 Previous compendiums include Alterman (1990) and Schmidt-Eichstaedt (1995).

5 The authors are Vincent Nadin, Peter Hawkes, Sheila Cooper, David Shaw and Tim

Westlake. In 1997 the EU published the summary volume under the name of the Commission, and in 2000 it published most of the 15 country reports.

6 One of the chapters—that on Ireland—does not cover sectoral planning. The others do, but the span and depths vary somewhat.

7 In view of the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East, the gap between Israel and the other countries in this book is expected to increase.

8 The *EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies* (1997), which classifies all EU countries in terms of the planning instruments used, identifies two types of instruments of national-level comprehensive planning, which it calls either a ‘national perspective or plan’, or a ‘general policy guidance’. These two categories are probably not fully parallel to the difference between our ‘haves’ and ‘half-haves’ categories (see text below) because we are looking not just for the existence of the instrument, but also for its legal powers and degree of effectiveness.

9 Most European countries not included in this book appear in one or other of the categories of national-level instruments mentioned in the *EU Compendium* (see above note). In the ‘national perspectives or plans’ category are included Austria (with both instruments), Finland and Greece. In the category of ‘general policy guidance’ are included Italy and Luxembourg. As noted in the previous note, these two categories are probably not fully parallel to the difference between our ‘haves’ and ‘half-haves’ categories. Two countries—Spain and Portugal—are classified as having only sectoral policies at the national level, and only one country, Belgium, is classified as having no national-level planning instruments.

10 Indeed, in the first two versions of their chapter, the Swedish authors hardly mentioned the national Vision document, until I as editor requested a specific discussion of it.

11 While Israel’s population density is currently not much different from the UK’s and considerably lower than the Netherlands or Japan, Israel does have a large uninhabitable region, a desert, which the Netherlands and the UK do not (Japan has high mountains). Israel is expected to surpass all the other countries in density, not only effectively (discounting the desert), but also nominally, due to its higher demographic growth rate.

12 Scotland and Flanders are two such examples. See the detailed proposal made by Lloyd (1999) for instituting a distinctive layer of national spatial comprehensive planning in Scotland on the eve of the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, and see the description of the Flanders plan by Albrechts (1998) and by Mastop (1998).

13 See, for example, *Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz* (1996).

14 This point does not emerge from the reports in this book, but is part of ongoing research by this author on compensation rights.

15 The concept of the ‘legitimation crisis’ was introduced by Habermas (1975) as part of the ‘critical theory’ school. He has had great impact not only through the theorising of social scientists and planners (such as through the writings of Forester [1980; 1989]), but has also impacted on governance styles, such as through the concept of ‘reinventing government’.

16 I am basing these observations on my two-month study visit to Japan in January and February of 1994.

17 Some might argue that in the Netherlands the new planning process associated with the 2030 plan now in progress shows some signs of a weakening of support for national-level planning. But given the high level of institutionalisation and effectiveness of Dutch planning, I would hazard a guess that these are not signs of a weakening, but of institutional

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realignment and changes in formats and styles of planning, a conclusion hinted at by Mastop (cf. Mastop, 1998; Priemus, 1998).

18 Such as *European Planning Studies*.

19 Kayden notes that in the USA planners generally do not regard sectoral planning as part of land-use planning. I should hope that this view is not shared by planners in some of the other countries discussed here.

20 Locally unwanted land uses.

21 At the time of publication, the High Court declared the involvement of ministers in planning decisions to be incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. An appeal is pending against that decision. See note 5 in Malcolm Grant's chapter.

22 See Alterman (1997).

23 ISTEAs stands for Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1992 (see Kayden's chapter).

24 The Israel 1965 Planning and Building Law talks of the preparation of a 'national outline plan', whereby the legislators probably meant a comprehensive plan. However, the law also allows for the preparation of 'partial outline plans' if necessary.

25 Although in many of our sample countries the law and practice regarding local plans have been changed to call for strategic policy plans, this has probably not yet reached consensus status. In other parts of the world, blueprint-style local plans are still the majority rule (see Schmidt-Eichstaedt, 1995; European Commission, 1997). My own comparative research in several countries also supports this statement.

26 The literature on conflict-resolution methods as applied to public decision-making has its origin in the USA, but is gaining presence in Europe and elsewhere, as is indirectly visible from some of the chapters in this book. The literature on conflict resolution or Alternative Dispute Resolution is today very extensive. Two key items are Susskind et al. (1999) and Susskind and Cruikshank (1987).

27 *Directive territoriale d'aménagement*.