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12. The classification of spatial planning in Europe: added value and challenges

Vincent Nadin, Giancarlo Cotella and Peter Schmitt

INTRODUCTION

Large-scale international comparative spatial planning studies are valuable in enhancing our understanding of spatial planning. On the one hand, comparative analyses may offer alternative perspectives on the nature of spatial planning systems to the direct benefit of planning professionals and researchers by exposing them to understandings, approaches and methods with which they are unacquainted (Hantrais, 2009). On the other hand, they may play a crucial role in informing and positioning the development of supra-national planning measures such as, for instance, the strategies and policies put in place by the European Union (EU), the United Nations and other international organisations (Adams et al., 2011; Caprotti et al., 2017; Williams, 1984).

However, conducting such studies has significant methodological challenges, including the generalisation and communication of findings (Nadin and Stead, 2013). Cross-national studies often attempt to classify the spatial planning systems under investigation to facilitate their comparison and the development of meaningful policy messages on their functioning or, less often, their performance (Janin Rivolin, 2012). However, the analysis and systematisation of the knowledge collected in relation to such inherently complex and articulated institutional objects is not an easy task.

International comparative spatial planning studies generate lots of in-depth detailed data on spatial planning systems, but this gives a rather fragmented comparison from which it is difficult to draw out general themes and to distinguish one system from another. Therefore, comparative studies use a limited number of variables to organise systems, reducing complexity and fragmentation to communicate meaningful comparisons in some form of classification. The choice of variables involves compromise. It will be informed by a theoretical position, the question under investigation and the availability of data.

This concluding chapter explores how selected characteristics of spatial planning systems across Europe can be used to provide broad classifications, drawing on several attempts from the 1980s and based on evidence presented in this book. After this introduction, the following section introduces the notion of classification, distinguishing between the taxonomic and typological approaches. It is followed by four examples from studies from the 1980s to the 2000s. The chapter then shifts to the results of the analysis in this book, presenting further classifications that illustrate and compare characters and dynamics of spatial planning systems. We conclude this chapter by discussing the added value of this work for understanding and comparing continuity and change, convergence and divergence, and the development of future classifications of spatial planning in Europe.

CLASSIFICATIONS: TAXONOMIES AND TYPOLOGIES

Classifications help to reduce complexity by generalising and organising entities into groups or classes. Groups are made up of entities (in this case, spatial planning systems) that share characteristics. There should be a clear difference between groups so that the classification distinguishes between them. Classification is a routine part of any data analysis but is often taken for granted. Much depends on the choice of the variables and data for making them. If the classification is to assist in understanding, the choice should be led by theoretically informed questions and the data should properly represent the variable(s). For example, we could compare spatial planning systems according to the number of planning instruments employed, but that would not yield meaningful findings. Unfortunately, the fundamental characteristics that shape the operation of spatial planning, such as the level of discretion given to decision-makers or their effectiveness in shaping spatial development, are much more difficult to measure.

Classification can be done in many ways. There are two main approaches to classification that it is useful to be aware of for the discussion that follows: taxonomies and typologies. A brief introduction is given here. See Bailey (2011) for a full account.

The most common form of classification is a taxonomy. Categories are created based on characteristics that can be readily identified or empirically measured, such as the form of government: federal, regionalised or unitary. Each entity can be put into one class or category. Categories should be exhaustive, that is, we should be able to put every entity into a class; and mutually exclusive, that is, the entity can only be placed in one category. All entities within a category will then share the common attribute that defines the category. Each category will be distinctive from the others. Most taxonomies have multi-dimensional categories which combine variables that can be organised

in a two-dimensional cell diagram with variables on the x and y axes. For example, we could classify systems according to both the level of government where planning action is concentrated – national, sub-national or local – and the extent of public engagement in decision-making: high, moderate or low. However, spatial planning systems involve complex multi-dimensional arrangements, therefore choosing the most appropriate variables is difficult because they will not represent the full complexity of the system. The selection of variables is effectively a hypothesis about what is fundamentally important in explaining the nature of planning. Cross-national comparisons of planning have tended to concentrate on the form of the legal and administrative systems, as explained below and in Chapter 2.

A typology, on the other hand, is a conceptual classification that proposes fictional ideal types against which reality can be compared. Ideal types are fictional in the sense that they are not reality, but they are nevertheless created from empirical observation of what is important in explaining things in the real world. They ‘are formed from characteristics and elements of given phenomena but are not meant to correspond to all of the characteristics of any one particular case’ (Nadin and Stead, 2013, p. 1552). However, they deliberately accentuate specific characteristics, they are one-sided and exaggerated (Bailey, 2005). Ideal types are the pure state or reference points against which we can compare ‘empirical cases as variations or deviations from this pure state’ (Grønning, 2017, p. 2). Typical examples of ideal types are ‘socialism’ or ‘free market capitalism’. Neither ideal type exists in its pure form, yet they are valuable methodological tools for understanding actual political-economic systems. Note that the ‘ideal’ in ‘ideal type’ does not refer to a desired state, but rather that the type is built around a central idea.

Ideal types are not generally derived from one or two variables, but are intended to represent the complex multi-dimensional reality of systems. Real entities – spatial planning systems in our case – are not pigeonholed into a specific class, rather they are compared against the ideal types. Typologies of ideal types are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Each instance of a system is likely to exhibit more than one ideal type, but will also be explained with reference to one or more others. The *1997 EU Compendium of Planning Systems and Policies* (also introduced below and in Chapter 2) used ideal types to explain the dominant traditions of planning in Western Europe.

CLASSIFYING PLANNING SYSTEMS OVER THREE DECADES

In this section we explore the typologies and taxonomies that emerged from four large-scale studies between 1989 and 2006 as a precursor to proposing

further classifications arising from the evidence presented in this book. For an overview of all major European comparative studies, see Chapter 2.

Taxonomies Based on Law and Government Structure

We take a chronological approach starting in the late 1980s. The first study concerns a United Kingdom government-commissioned comparison of five North-Western European spatial planning systems: Denmark, England, France, the Netherlands and West Germany (Davies et al., 1989).¹ The study concentrated on spatial planning regulation and proposed a simple taxonomy of two types of systems: the Anglo-Saxon system of common law applying in England, and the continental systems of civil law applying in the other countries. Similar conclusions were proposed in Newman and Thornley's (1996) taxonomy of European spatial planning based on the work of Zweigert and Kötz (1998 [1987]) on legal and administrative families. Newman and Thornley's taxonomy is shown in Figure 12.1 (see also Marcou, 1993).

The notion of legal families has its critics, not least in Central and Eastern Europe. Former communist countries are lumped together in the 'socialist model family', ignoring historical ties with legal systems in Western Europe (Dąbrowski and Piskorek, 2018; Kule and Røsnes, 2010; Maier, 2012), although later editions of Zweigert and Kötz (1998 [1987]) dispensed with this family. Nevertheless, both Davies et al. and Newman and Thornley conclude that the most important factor distinguishing spatial planning systems in Europe is the divergence of common and civil law systems or, in Newman and Thornley's words, 'the clearest conclusion that can be drawn is the distinctiveness of the British family compared to the rest of Europe ... The legal and administrative framework and legal system is different and produces a particular kind of planning system' (Newman and Thornley, 1996, p. 71). The Nordic legal family is also thought to be distinctive, in that it incorporates elements of Napoleonic and British families with specific Nordic elements.

The primary consequence in planning practice of the different legal systems is, in principle, that in civil law systems, development rights are allocated through binding regulation plans that usually become the law. In common law systems there is no legally binding regulation plan, and development rights are allocated through decisions on a case-by-case basis informed by policy. These differences are important for adaptability in decision-making, as explained in Chapter 7. Other small-scale studies arrive at similar conclusions about the difference in principle. In a comparative study of spatial planning in England and the Netherlands, Thomas et al. (1983) identified sharp differences in their legal systems. However, they also conclude that the formal differences in law were less significant in practice, a conclusion subsequently confirmed by others (Buitelaar, 2010; Balz, 2018; Janssen-Jansen and Woltjer, 2010).



Source: Based on Newman and Thornley (1996, p. 29).

Figure 12.1 Taxonomy of European spatial planning on legal families

Rather, as Newman and Thornley (1996) suggest, the locus of power in government is becoming ‘more important in determining variation in planning systems’ (p. 246), in the face of decentralisation and reforms to introduce more discretion in some continental spatial planning systems. This view is shared by Nadin and Stead (2013, p. 1549), who argue that although such taxonomies provide unambiguous categories of spatial planning systems, ‘it is questionable whether an approach to comparison based on criteria relating to the nature of the constitution and law (fundamental though they are) provides

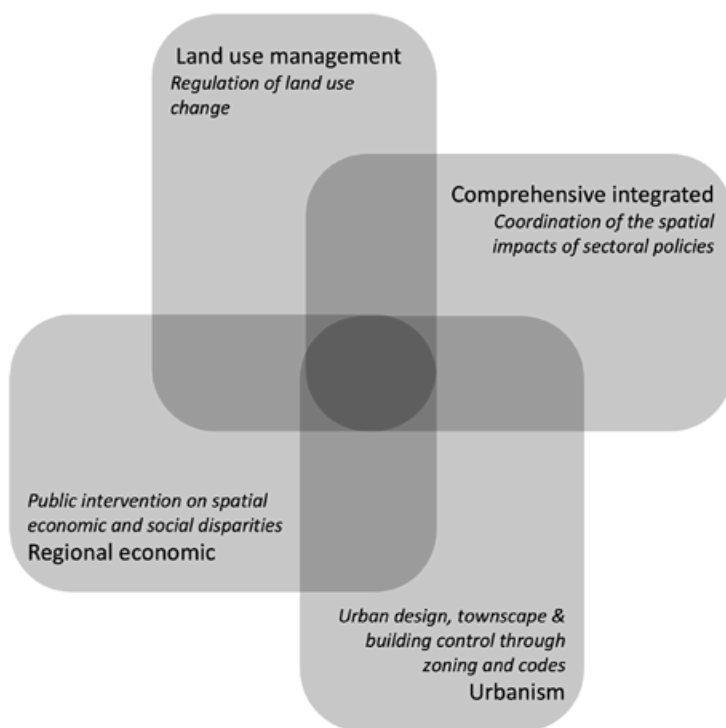
a sufficiently robust classification in terms of the actual operation of planning systems’.

The EU Compendium Typology

In the early 1990s, ministers responsible for spatial planning in the then 12 EU member states took an interest in learning more about European spatial planning systems on the advice of national experts, notably from the Netherlands. At that time, the then EU Committee on Spatial Development began its work on the European Spatial Development Perspective (CSD, 1999; Faludi and Waterhout, 2002). Subsequently, the General Directorate for Regional Policy of the European Commission commissioned the *EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies* (CEC, 1997). The 1990s were days of optimism and the heydays of European spatial planning (Faludi, 2010).

The Compendium (CEC, 1997) comprises 16 country volumes (the then 15 member states and Norway) following a common template, together with a Comparative Review. It compares spatial planning systems according to seven variables: the legal family; the scope of the system; the extent of national and regional planning; the relative competences of central and local government; the roles of public and private sectors; the maturity of the system or how well it is established in government and public life; and the apparent distance between expressed goals and outcomes. These variables were used to formulate a fourfold typology of spatial planning systems, illustrated in Figure 12.2. The diagram shows four ideal types, described in the Compendium as ‘traditions’ and later as ‘models’ (Dühr et al., 2010; Nadin and Stead, 2013): comprehensive integrated, land use management, regional economic and urbanism. The models or ideal types do not exist in their pure state, but can be used as a reference point for understanding the nature of a real system. All spatial planning systems will manifest aspects of more than one model, although it is likely that one will dominate.

Unfortunately, the Compendium itself does not explain the traditions as ideal types, nor the way that they were produced. As noted above, typologies are not drawn from the analysis of empirical material but, as the originator of the ideal type method explained, are hypothetical concepts that are deliberately one-sided, emphasising chosen characteristics (Weber, 1997 [1949]). The types draw on theoretical knowledge of how spatial planning is conceived, alongside seeing what distinguishes systems in the comparative study. The typology approach is more durable than taxonomies: actual planning systems may change, but this does not require new categories into which they can be pigeonholed; rather they can still be explained and compared with reference to the ideal types, that is, the extent to which they are more like one than another type.



Source: Nadin and Stead (2008) based on the *EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies* (CEC, 1997). See also Dühr et al. (2010, p. 181).

Figure 12.2 EU Compendium's four ideal types or traditions of spatial planning in Western Europe

The EU Compendium has been used in many subsequent studies, some large (e.g. Silva and Acheampong, 2015), but mostly of a smaller scale in terms of the sample of national spatial planning systems under consideration (e.g., Böhme, 2003; Kule and Røsnæs, 2010; Othengrafen, 2010; Živanović et al., 2023). However, one large-scale comparative study on the *Governance of Territorial and Urban Policies* (Farinós Dasi, 2006), had the objectives (in part) to provide 'a modest update' on the analysis on which the Compendium was based; to extend it to 29 European countries (that is, including all new EU member states, Norway and Switzerland); and to consider styles of planning at national, sub-national and local levels of government. The study, known as the ESPON (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion) Project 2.3.2, draws directly upon the models identified in the Compendium, but renames them as 'styles' because the word 'tradition' was

not thought appropriate to refer to the changed arrangements in the transition countries from Central and Eastern Europe (Farinós Dasí, 2006).

One part of the analysis is concerned with governance and administrative arrangements, including the allocation of competences for spatial planning, the extent of decentralisation and devolution, and arrangements for inter-municipal cooperation. These variables are cross-tabulated against a taxonomy of state structures (IGEAT and partners, 2006). In total, the ESPON Project 2.3.2 created a taxonomy that included 120 different categories, with a strong leaning towards explaining spatial planning in respect of its formal government administration structures.

A second part of the analysis draws upon national experts, who were asked to describe their perception of the style of spatial planning which prevails in their country of expertise, based on the typology presented in the EU Compendium (Farinós Dasí, 2006, Annex B: 251). Nadin and Stead explain how the study used:

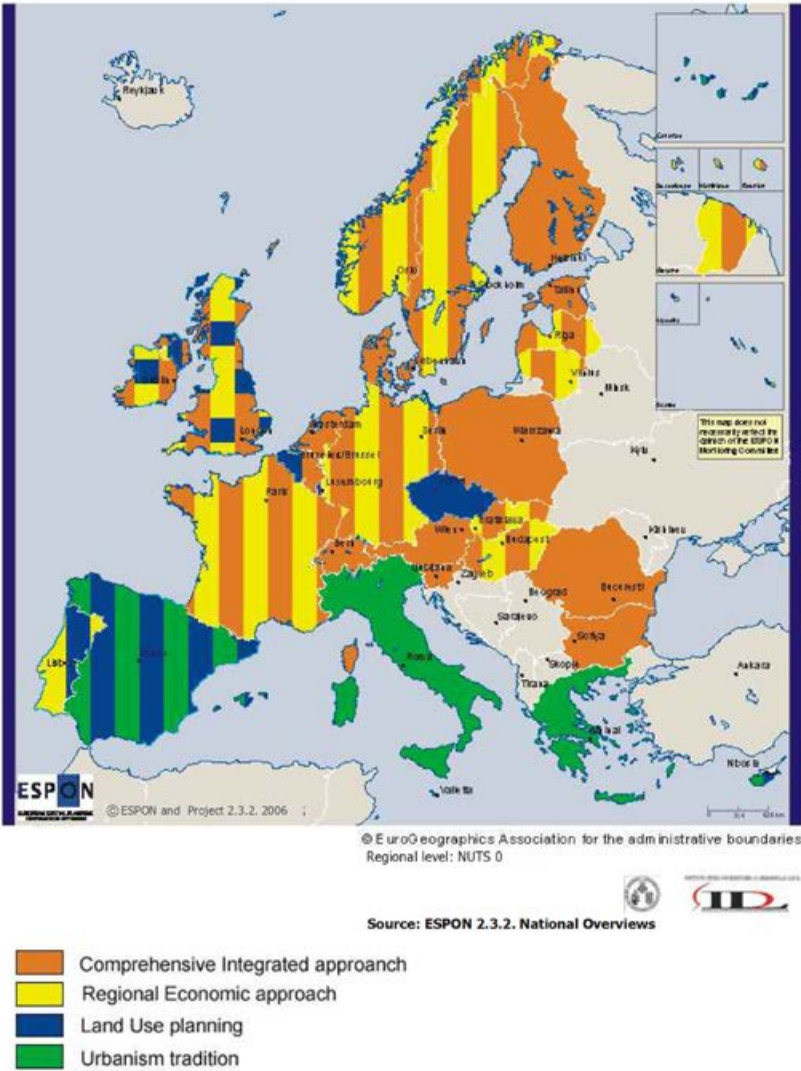
the Compendium's four ideal types, although in a rather distorted way. First, the analysis unwittingly treated the Compendium's ideal types as if they are classes or categories; second, the four Compendium ideal types ... were given a completely different meaning. Consequently, each country was allocated to a 'category' of spatial planning and then a description was presented of how countries are moving from one category to another. (Nadin and Stead, 2013: 1556)

Nevertheless, if read with care, the report does reveal general directions of reform, whilst recognising that variation and complexity are the norm (see Figure 12.3).

The four examples here are the primary classifications of spatial planning in Europe. They have been widely cited and employed in other studies. They illustrate the way that a taxonomy or typology can provide a general understanding of variation between systems in elementary and more complex ways. The next section provides examples of classifying systems using the ESPON COMPASS (Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe) data.

THE ESPON COMPASS EXPERIENCE: MAKING SENSE OF FRAGMENTATION

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the objective of the ESPON COMPASS project was to provide an authoritative comparative report on the changes that have characterised territorial governance and spatial planning systems in Europe from 2000 to 2016, with particular attention to the possible impact of the EU. Twenty years after the compilation of the EU Compendium (CEC, 1997), the research aimed at giving added value by updating knowledge of spatial plan-



Source: Farinós Dasi (2006, Annex F, p. 49), © ESPON.

Figure 12.3 Spatial planning styles: a new physiology for Europe

ning systems and territorial governance, widening the analysis to more countries, and addressing the relationship with EU sectoral policies in a place-based approach. In doing so, ESPON COMPASS provides a starting point for under-

standing the capacity of spatial planning systems and territorial governance, to enhance the implementation of EU policies, particularly by encouraging cross-fertilisation among sectoral policies (see Chapter 8 and Chapter 9).

The research shows that ‘spatial planning is ubiquitous in Europe’, with ‘[a]ll countries [that] control the right to develop or change the use of land or property using a hierarchy of instruments involving multiple levels of government’ (Nadin et al., 2018, p. viii). However, as the chapters in this book explain, the detailed arrangements are exceedingly varied across European countries and regions, thus depicting multifarious fragmented arrangements that defy simple comparisons. Whilst the level of detail offered in the findings presents an opportunity for more nuanced comparison across more variables, it also presents a challenge for synthesis in general classifications. The overall picture is that of spatial planning systems evolving in many ways to face their weaknesses and to address emerging challenges. Overall, there is little evidence of ‘deregulation’ in the formal structure of spatial planning systems, but rather of innovation in the form of instruments and procedures (see Chapter 5). Diversity has been amplified by the considerable shifts in the allocation of competences among levels of government, which have followed varying directions: either downwards through from national to sub-national and local levels, or upwards leading to increasing powers at the national level (see Chapter 4). Moreover, spatial planning systems vary a lot in relation to their scope and how they relate to sectoral policy matters (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Chapters 1 and 2 explained the need to compare not only the institutional characteristics and functioning of spatial planning systems, but also how they are changing through time. Following the direction taken by several studies produced in the 2010s (Adams et al., 2011; Janin Rivolin, 2012; Reimer et al., 2014; Dąbrowski and Lingua, 2018), the ESPON COMPASS project highlights the importance of understanding planning institutions as dynamic. This means organising comparison and classification in terms of their evolution and the drivers of institutional change. We are especially interested in the influence of EU law, funding programmes and spatial planning discourse (see Chapter 8). Whilst ESPON COMPASS findings do not lead to a single comprehensive classification, several contributions have generalised about planning systems drawing on selected findings from the study. We summarise them here, having in mind the two main themes that were introduced in Chapter 1:

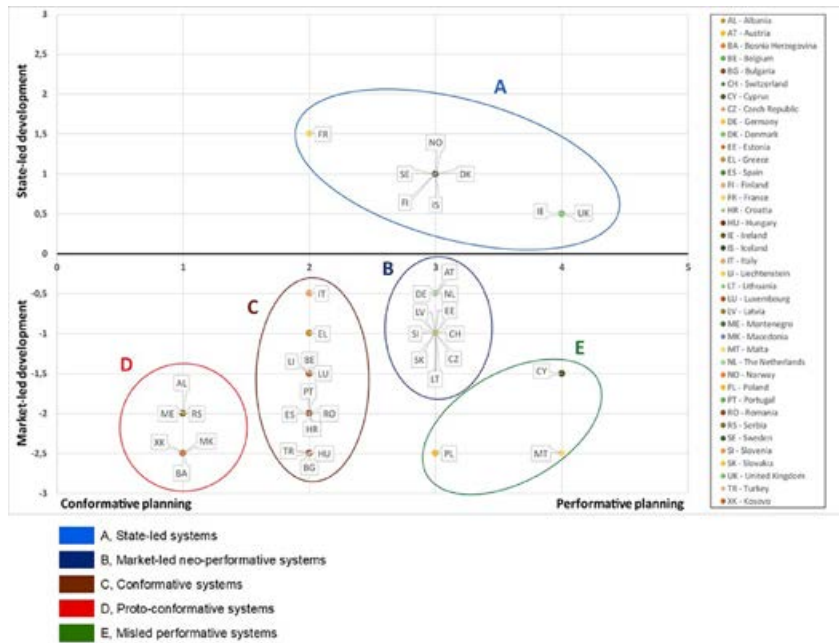
- changes in scope and purpose which represent a shift from a narrow understanding of spatial planning as the regulation of physical land use changes to a broader notion of a spatial planning approach; and
- the role of the EU in shaping change in spatial planning systems, both directly in law and policy, and indirectly through a shared discourse and mutual learning among member states.

Capacity to Influence Spatial Development

The first of four classifications drawing on ESPON COMPASS findings, produced by Berisha et al. (2021), clusters the planning systems of 39 European countries in relation to the public planning authority's capacity to control or influence spatial development. The classification is concerned with the regulation aspect of planning, that is, urban planning or land use planning. The analysis, summarised in Figure 12.4, draws on information and expert opinion gathered in the ESPON COMPASS research regarding the institutional technologies operating in each country that are used to allocate land use and development rights, shown on the x axis (Janin Rivolin, 2008, 2017; Muñoz Gielen and Tasan-Kok, 2010); and the relative prevalence of state and market in spatial development, shown on the y axis. The form of institutional technologies refers to the 'decision moment' in the planning process when decisions become binding, which is explained above and in Chapter 7. Systems are described as conformative when binding imperative regulation plans are adopted early in the plan process and often become law; or performative when indicative non-binding plans provide guidance for decisions that are made on a case-by-case basis as development proposals come forward (Janin Rivolin, 2017). This is the distinction highlighted by Davies et al. (1989) and Newman and Thornley (1996).

Each country is plotted according to whether it is more conformative or more performative, and more market-led or state-led. From the distribution of national systems, five groups of spatial planning systems are identified. Ordered by their decreasing capacity for public control of spatial development the groups are:² (A) state-led systems; (B) market-led neo-performative systems; (C) conformative systems; (D) proto-conformative systems; and (E) misunderstood performative systems.

In summary, the classification is used to argue that the 'state-led' and 'market-led neo-performative' systems of planning (groups A and B) provide the public authority with a higher ability to steer spatial development vis-à-vis market forces, and to extract public value from market-led transformations. A notable exception is the French system, which although based on the traditional conformative model, is also characterised by the uncommon influence of central government on *aménagement du territoire*. In contrast, the conformative and proto-conformative systems (groups C and D) that characterise South-Eastern and Mediterranean European countries, where the public authority allocates spatial development rights through a more rigid legally binding general zoning, seem to show a lower public control capacity. Additional procedures are needed in conformative systems to enhance the system flexibility or adaptability (such as recurring plans revisions). However, the classification also seems to argue that a high level of flexibility – as in the



Source: Berisha et al. (2021).

Figure 12.4 Classification of European spatial planning systems with respect to the capacity for public control of spatial development

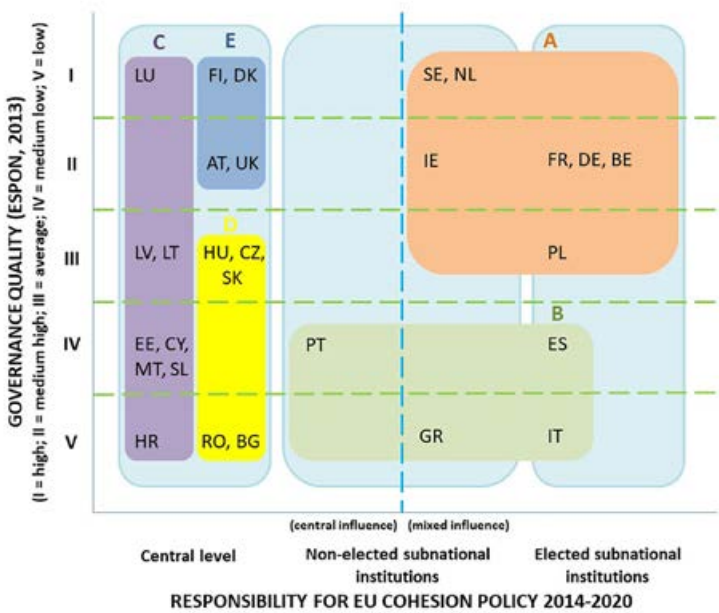
case of the misunderstood performative systems (group E) of Cyprus, Malta and Poland, where the planning authority allocates spatial development rights in a performative way when proposals come forward, but under different socio-economic conditions – may lend itself to increased influence of private interests and have less ability to steer spatial development.

Integration with Cohesion Policy and Quality of Governance

The second example classification drawing on ESPON COMPASS is the work by Cotella et al. (2021), which clusters the national spatial planning systems according to the level of integration that each system allows between domestic spatial planning and the programming of EU cohesion policy (see also Cotella and Dąbrowski, 2021). Cohesion policy is the main investment tool of the EU. It refers to four programmes that amount to about a third of the EU budget, and which fund hundreds of thousands of projects across Europe. It is intended to

deliver on the EU’s overall goal (as stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty) to strive for social, economic and territorial cohesion, and thus has a strong spatial dimension.³

This classification is more concerned with the spatial planning approach emphasising the role of planning in coordinating or cross-fertilising the territorial impact of sectoral policies, which is close to the definition of territorial governance provided in Chapter 1. The analysis produces a classification of multi-level regional development governance systems, illustrated in Figure 12.5. It is derived from two key variables: the operational models that each country adopted to manage EU cohesion policy in the programming period 2014–2020, which is divided into three types as shown on the x axis; and a fivefold categorisation of the quality of governance shown on the y axis, as used in the ESPON TANGO (Territorial Approaches for New Governance) project and based on the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators Database⁴ (Schmitt et al., 2013). The countries were plotted and clustered into five categories according to their potential for the integration of EU and domestic regional development actions.



Source: Cotella et al. (2021).

Figure 12.5 Classification of multi-level regional development governance systems in the EU

According to the classification, countries in group A present the highest potential for exploiting synergies, as they feature subnational levels that play a crucial role in relation to both spatial planning and EU cohesion policy programming (for example, France, Poland and Germany). They are also characterised by ‘mature’ spatial planning systems in a relatively good-quality governance context, where regional spatial planning can enrich EU cohesion policy regional operational programmes with a spatial dimension. Group B contains countries where, despite the strongly regionalised programming of the EU cohesion policy, the potential for synergy is limited by the relatively lower level of governance quality. This is the case of Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, where the spatial governance and planning approach is less influential and often characterised by vertical and horizontal coordination gaps between levels and sectors. Regional authorities are not always able to coordinate domestic spatial development priorities and tools with EU cohesion policy programming, and end up subordinating the former to the latter for pragmatic reasons.

Group C includes countries where cohesion policy is managed centrally, due to their rather small size. The successful promotion of regional development here mostly depends on two issues: (1) vertical coordination, allowing for an accurate representation of local development into centrally developed spatial development strategies and programmes; and (2) horizontal coordination between central bodies responsible for the definition of national development strategies and those assigned to the EU cohesion policy programming and management. In this light, countries characterised by more mature, integrated spatial governance and planning systems and higher levels of governance quality, for example Luxembourg, appear better positioned. A group of larger countries from Central and Eastern Europe also opted for central management (Group D). These countries are traditionally centralised and characterised by a dominance of the capital region over the rest of the territory. Development trajectories are defined centrally through the programming of the EU resources that account for the lion’s share of public investment. Here, the promotion of balanced regional development depends on the actual will of central government to prioritise territorial cohesion over economic growth.

Integration of Spatial Planning with Sectoral Policy

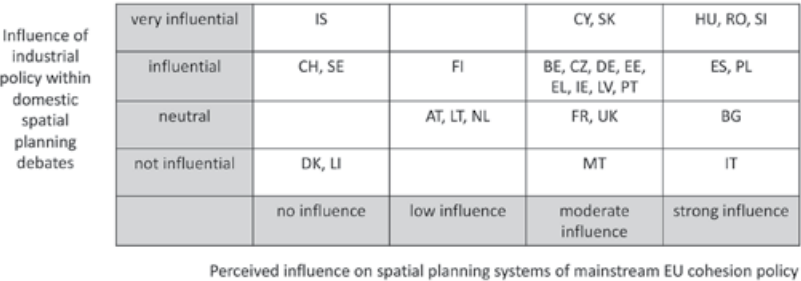
The third and fourth classifications in this section draw on data presented in Chapters 6 and 8 of this book, which are taken from the country responses to the ESPON COMPASS questionnaires. The two classifications consider the potential of spatial planning to guide investment in, first, industrial policy, and second, information and communications technology (ICT) and digitalisation. The two exemplify the influence of these sectoral policies within domestic

spatial planning debates in relation to the general influence of EU cohesion policy on spatial planning.

As noted above, cohesion policy is the main investment policy of the EU which pursues the EU's overall goal of social, economic and territorial cohesion. As such, cohesion policy has a strong spatial dimension. For the 2014–2020 programme, the spatial dimension was strengthened by the introduction of new implementation tools, such as community-led local development (CLLD) and integrated territorial investment (ITI). They introduce a multitude of different spatial framings, including regions of various kinds, transnational spaces and urban areas (Purkarthofer and Schmitt 2021, p. 31). Hence, one could argue that cohesion policy is supposed to be absorbed by the national spatial planning systems. In addition, 'given that spatial planning often operates through strategies but frequently lacks financial means to work towards the objectives stipulated in these strategies, EU Cohesion Policy can be seen as a potential "partner" to join forces with' (Purkarthofer and Schmitt, 2021, p. 42). However, cohesion policy has been criticised for many years for being rather spatially blind (Cotella and Dąbrowski, 2021; Doucet et al., 2014; Nosek, 2017). The ESPON COMPASS project concluded that '[s]patial planning instruments and their policies are too often detached from cohesion policy and other (EU) sectoral policies. Mainstream spatial planning systems are not steering cohesion policy investments but come into play mostly in the regulation stage' (Nadin et al., 2018, p. 76).

Our analysis shows two connected classifications concerning the perceived influence on spatial planning systems of two interrelated EU policy streams that are critical to the 'smarter Europe' and 'greener Europe' objectives of cohesion policy: industrial policy and ICT and digitalisation policy. Both are related to the priorities of ongoing modernisation and digitalisation of industrial production, and the strengthening of innovative capacity, specifically in view of the European Green Deal (CEC, 2019). They have clear territorial implications as they relate directly to regional labour markets, place competitiveness and local economic resilience.

The first classification examines the perceived influence of industrial policy on spatial planning domestically, in relation to the general influence of cohesion policy on spatial planning (see Figure 12.6). The classification takes two variables from the ESPON COMPASS data: the perceived influence of cohesion policy on spatial planning on the x axis, and the influence of industrial policy within spatial planning in the country concerned on the y axis. The question is particularly interesting for those countries in which EU cohesion policy has an important role in cofinancing public expenditure. One can argue that countries where industrial policy has a comparatively strong role within domestic spatial planning debates may be better able to incorporate spatially underpinned rationales regarding those measures within EU cohesion policy.



Note: Norway and Luxembourg have been excluded, because for both countries the influence of industrial policy within spatial planning debates was assessed as not relevant.

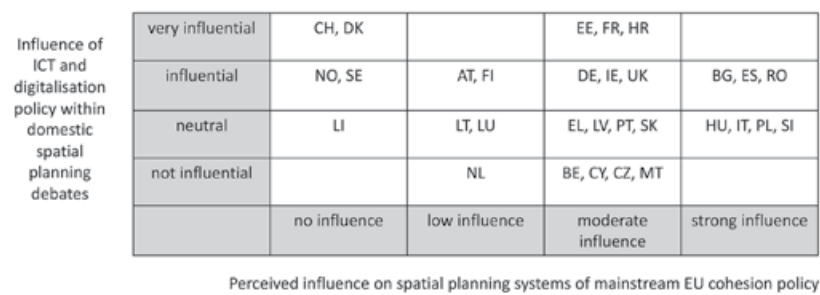
Figure 12.6 Influence of industrial policy and EU cohesion policy on spatial planning

The resulting classification suggests that half of the 30 analysed countries show a considerable influence of both EU cohesion policy and industrial policy on spatial planning, which means that they are placed in the four cells in the right-hand upper area of Figure 12.6. In other words, in these countries, at least potentially, there are good preconditions to better connect those projects funded under the umbrella of EU cohesion policy that relate to (or at least overlap with) domestic industrial policy, which then influence domestic spatial planning debates. In particular, in Hungary, Romania and Slovenia, placed in the right-hand upper cell, these preconditions seem to be very promising. There is little clustering of the remaining countries, which are spread evenly across cells which show that spatial planning is considerably influenced by one of the two policy fields (that is, either cohesion policy or industrial policy) but weakly by the other, or that it is weakly influenced by both policies.

The second sectoral policy-related classification is on the perceived influence of ICT and digitalisation policy on spatial planning domestically, in relation to the general influence of cohesion policy on spatial planning. The modernisation of ICT infrastructure is a key EU policy objective, with €14 billion invested in the Digital Single Market over the 2014–2020 investment period. It has a strong spatial dimension because of variation in digital network quality across the EU, especially between central urban areas and sparsely populated areas. This is a key concern when striving for territorial cohesion because it hampers place competitiveness (Pellegrin and Colnot, 2023).

Two variables are again compared: influence of cohesion policy on spatial planning, and influence on ICT policy on spatial planning within the country, as shown in Figure 12.7. In comparison with industrial policy, there are fewer countries placed in the four cells in the right-hand upper area. There is more

variation than for industrial policy, with an even distribution of countries across the cells. Unlike the other classifications in this chapter, it is not possible to cluster the countries into groups. The variation is in part explained by the rather low share of EU cohesion policy in relation to domestic public expenditure (see CEC, 2022) for countries with high economic performance, such as Denmark and Sweden. Also, the position of non-EU member countries is because they only participate in some specific cohesion programmes, such as Interreg, by mobilising their own domestic financial resources.



Note: Iceland has been excluded, because the influence of ICT and digitalisation policy within spatial planning debates was assessed as not relevant.

Figure 12.7 *Influence of ICT and digitalisation policy and EU cohesion policy on spatial planning*

Overall, the findings show that there are few countries where both EU cohesion policy and ICT and digitalisation policy are influential in spatial planning, and none that could be placed in the right-hand upper cell. To put it differently, we see in several countries where there is room for strengthening the role of spatial planning by advocating a more responsive position towards the enormous spatial implications of ICT and digitalisation policy. This is especially important for EU regions that will receive substantial cohesion policy co-financing for digital investments. The analysis also emphasises the very different experiences of countries in the relation between spatial planning and sectoral policies, even ones that are critical to the general objectives of the EU. This relationship is not conducive to synthesis by clustering countries into groups.

Change in Integration, Adaptiveness and Engagement

The fourth approach to classification using the ESPON COMPASS data examines the degree and direction of change in spatial planning systems over time, in terms of their level of sectoral integration, adaptiveness and citizen engagement. It draws on evidence reported in Chapter 7. The overall question here is to what extent governments are reforming planning to engage with the spatial planning approach and broaden the scope of planning. Two key features of the spatial planning approach, as explained in Chapter 1, are the emphasis on coordinating the spatial impacts of sectoral policies, and adaptiveness in the system that allows for responses to changing conditions. Thus, we consider together data on country experts' perceptions on levels of integration and adaptiveness. We also examine change in the degree of citizen engagement in planning. Where there is active citizen engagement, we would also expect to see less rigid and more adaptive systems that have flexibility to adjust policy in response to citizens' and stakeholders' inputs.

Figure 12.8 shows the overall trajectory of planning systems by combining findings for change in two main facets of the spatial planning approach: levels of integration and adaptiveness.⁵ The top part of the figure combines the two variables: the country experts' reports on integration on a scale from neglected to integrated shown on the x axis, and reports on adaptiveness on a scale from none to strong on the y axis. The categories for each variable are explained in Chapter 7. The response for each country is shown as a line indicating change from the year 2000 to the year 2016.

The figure shows that there was much reform of planning systems over the period. Although there is considerable variation, there is undoubtedly a general trend that combines greater integration and adaptiveness in most countries, although sometimes from a low starting point and with moderate change. Overall, the findings suggest that there was a steady evolution from urban or land use planning only, with siloed and rigid approaches, towards the spatial planning approach with a few exceptions where there is no change or less attention to integration or adaptiveness. These include, for example, Denmark which shows less integration over the period, and Italy which is reported to have less integration and adaptiveness.

The outliers are apparent in the second part of Figure 12.8, where the countries are clustered according to whether they are decreasing or increasing in terms of integration and adaptiveness. The exercise produces three groups of countries. Most countries are in a group that is increasing on both counts, although including all those increasing at both the top and bottom end of the scales. Two other groups include countries that are increasing in one or the other variable. Six countries are reported to have experienced increasing attention to integration, but decreasing adaptiveness. Four countries experienced

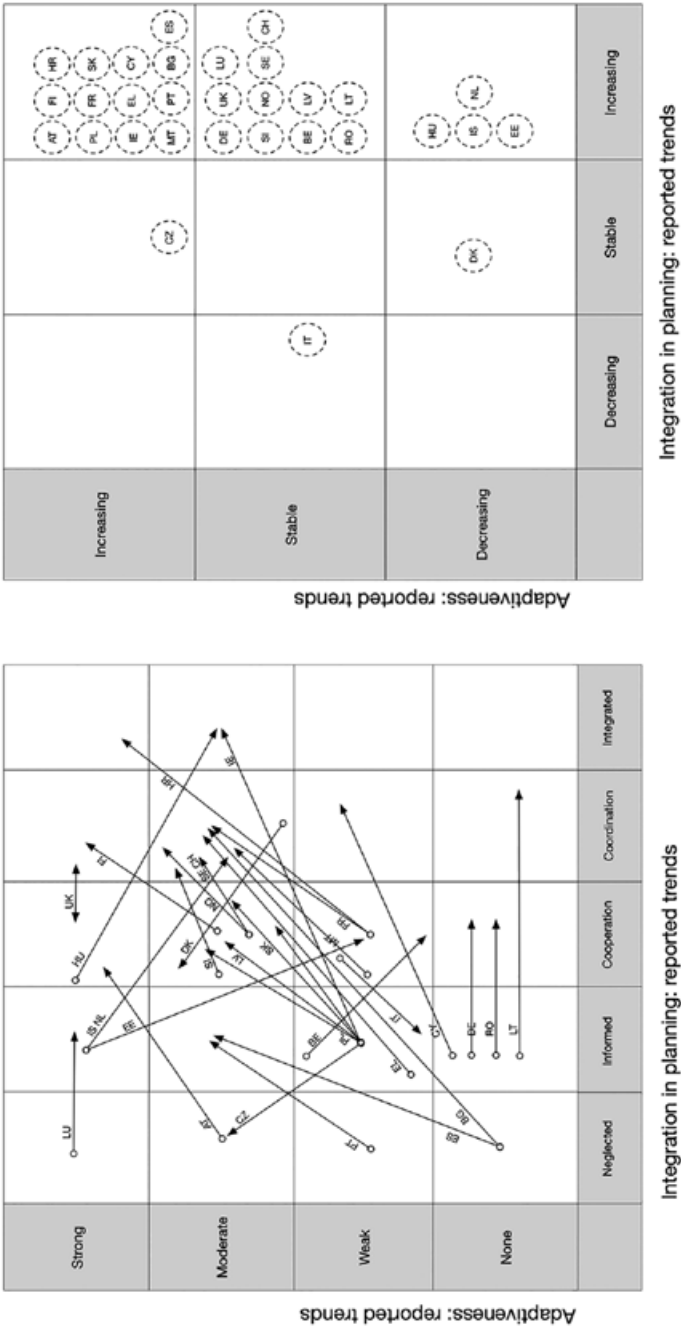


Figure 12.8 Integration and adaptation reported trends 2000–2016, and classification of countries according to direction of change

increasing adaptiveness and decreasing integration. There does not seem to be a general explanation for the position of countries in groups, because each group includes countries with different planning traditions and socio-economic conditions. The conclusion from this classification is that there is an overriding tendency for countries to reform planning to enable more integration with sectoral policy and more adaptiveness, an indication of movement towards a spatial planning approach.

The final classification presented here clusters spatial planning systems in relation to change in the degree of citizen engagement in planning, combined with change in the degree of adaptiveness. Public engagement and adaptiveness of planning are interrelated. Citizen engagement in decision-making is less likely, and would be ineffective in a form of planning that does not have the flexibility to adapt in the light of consultation, participation and objection. Therefore, we would expect a measure of correspondence in change in the two variables. The source of data for each variable and the explanation of the categories is explained in Chapter 7. The data are taken directly from the country responses to the ESPON COMPASS questionnaires. The findings are shown in Figure 12.9.

There is a clear trend towards systems that engage citizens more, and at the same time are becoming more adaptive. Some countries start from a low base with minimal or even no opportunities for citizen engagement; nevertheless the general direction is clear, and for most countries trends in increasing engagement are matched by a trend towards greater adaptiveness. There are a few exceptions. These become clear in the second part of Figure 12.9, where the countries are clustered according to whether they are decreasing, stable or increasing in citizen engagement and adaptiveness.

The categories are only concerned with change in direction, not the starting or ending points, so the groups comprise, for example, countries that have reformed citizen engagement only up to a weak level, as well as those that have moved from partial to full engagement. The question here is about the general trajectory of reform. The figure illustrates very well the significance of increasing citizen engagement in many systems, which in most cases, but not all, is matched by increases or stability in the degree of adaptiveness. It should be noted, however, that for some countries stability means that the absence of adaptiveness remains, as in the cases of Latvia and Romania; or that a high level of adaptiveness is maintained, as in the case of the United Kingdom.

These last two exercises in classifying and visualising change in planning systems indicate just how important it is to consider the dynamics in the operation of spatial planning, with very few countries maintaining the same position over time, and distinct common tendencies across Europe. The clustering points to further questions that would benefit from more investigation, especially regarding the outliers.

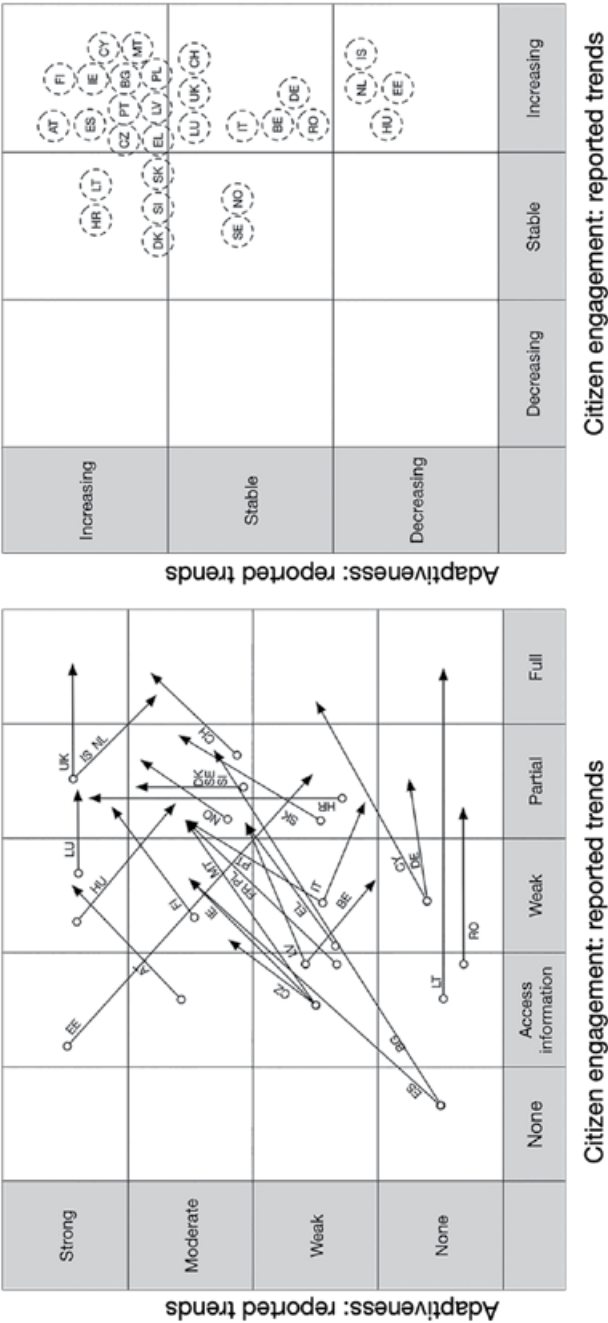


Figure 12.9 Change in planning systems: citizen engagement and adaptation, 2000–2016, and classification of countries according to direction of change

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have shown how earlier attempts to classify spatial planning systems have provided helpful general comparative insights on the nature of planning systems. The twofold distinction between the more rigid and the more discretionary decision-making in spatial planning that arises from the legal family explains fundamental differences, and it is an essential input into any discussion of reforming planning, and especially in transposing solutions from one country to another. So too are the Compendium's ideal types and their development in policy styles. They have assisted in explaining systems by positioning them in relation to other countries for academics, practitioners and students for many years, and continue to do so.

However, these classifications are very general. As such, they make a limited contribution to comparing systems on specific issues; such as, for instance, in the capacity of public bodies to influence spatial development, their influence over other sectoral policies, and the spatial relevance of selected policy sectors. Moreover, although each study does give attention to how systems are changing, their classifications concentrate on the static snapshot. And they concentrate on the formal structures for planning rather than actual practice. These limitations were raised in Chapter 2 and encouraged the ESPON COMPASS project to be more specific and less general, to address the dynamics of systems, and to consider actual practice alongside formal structures.

The analyses presented in this book have sought to address these limitations, but they are only partly successful. The empirical investigation of many variables describing the characteristics of spatial planning systems has generated much data. They are valuable in their own right, but generalising from them through classification and identifying unambiguous patterns is very difficult. Much of the data simply reveal the staggering variety of arrangements in place for spatial planning in European countries. Building on this, it may be that we should conclude that the early classifications, with their small number of types, give a limited and flawed picture because we cannot unequivocally detect common patterns among groups of countries that are normally associated with the one or other type or model of spatial planning. Schmitt and Smas (2023), for instance, question whether reform of planning systems has consolidated the EU Compendium's 'comprehensive-integrated' model of planning. They found that the integration of sectoral policy fields is selective and limited. The model may be in a state of dissolution and no longer useful as an analytical construct.

The heterogeneity of the specifics of systems, perhaps even fragmentation, is further underlined in the chapters in this book. Chapter 3 sets out the diverse ways in which spatial planning is defined in the law, and the many terms that

are used to do so. Domestic law is the starting point for establishing the great variety of instruments, procedures and substantive goals for planning. It is critical because it assigns powers, duties and lines of accountability. There are common themes: the need to systematically regulate development; to establish procedures for deciding among competing interests; and to express objectives, policies and regulations. Nevertheless, no two definitions are alike. Some explain spatial planning primarily as a set of procedures, whereas others say much more about what planning is intended to achieve. Some countries specify the components of spatial planning in detail, others provide only a framework within which the specifics can change quickly.

Zonneveld and Stead discuss in Chapter 4 the distribution of powers and responsibilities across different policy levels for spatial planning. While some administrative arrangements are the product of substantial recent government reforms, others have existed for a long time. The inertia in planning systems also varies widely. In some places, institutions and ways of working are sticky and resistant to change. In some countries it is very difficult to change administrative boundaries; while in others the delineation of territorial jurisdictions is easier to adjust by central governments. They conclude that there are four patterns of change – decentralisation, regionalisation, centralised decentralisation and centralisation – each having crucial implications for the practice of spatial planning and its outcomes.

In Chapter 5, Smas and Schmitt shift the focus of analysis to planning instruments. A profusion of instruments is devoted to a multitude of uses, to mediate competition over the use of land, to allocate rights of development, to regulate land use change and to promote preferred spatial form, and more. The results show there is a change in most countries towards incorporating strategic spatial planning ideals in statutory spatial planning instruments. Another general trend is the increasing use of functional or soft geographies at the regional level that do not correspond to traditional administrative jurisdictions. Aside from these, their analysis shows that the variety is multiplied as planning instruments increasingly serve as multi-purpose tools, expected to simultaneously be strategic, provide policy frameworks and regulate spatial development. This complexity undermines any attempt to find clear patterns or clusters of countries following a similar structure or path.

Chapter 6 discusses the relation between spatial planning and 14 sectoral policy fields, and again finds great diversity between countries, policy levels and sectoral policy fields across Europe. There are some common trends: spatial planning is playing an increasing role in relation to a few sectoral policy fields, notably transport, environment and energy. Nevertheless, the overall picture is of an extremely fragmented landscape of relations where it is difficult to find patterns among groups of countries in even the relatively firm relations between spatial planning, environment and transport policies.

Integration features again in Chapter 7, which explains that whilst policy coordination through spatial planning has been a long-standing priority in a few countries, most are only feeling their way. The majority of countries are strengthening relations with sectoral policy, but from different starting points and in different ways. The same can be said for introducing more adaptability into planning decision-making and opportunities for citizen engagement. Thus, most countries are on a similar pathway, although generalisation beyond this is difficult because the specific arrangements are determined by the local conditions, past and present.

Chapters 8 and 9 shift the focus on the influence of the EU on spatial planning systems in Europe, and on how these have tried to generate synergies with the implementation of the EU Cohesion policy. In comparing trends in relation to many systems across Europe, Cotella and Janin Rivolin (Chapter 8) argue that while the spatial planning systems of all European countries have been progressively embedded within a supra-national territorial governance process, the opportunities and constraints offered by this have been interpreted selectively by domestic actors. On the one hand, the transposition of EU sectoral legislation in the fields of the environment, energy and competition has influenced spatial planning systems in most national contexts. On the other hand, however, the receptiveness of countries to different EU policies appears rather mixed. It also seems related to the magnitude of the actual financial support delivered by each policy to each country, as well as to the fit of the various institutional frameworks with EU policies and programmes' prerequisites and delivery mechanisms. Komornicki et al. further enrich this picture in Chapter 9, highlighting how the complexity surrounding the relations between European cohesion policy and spatial planning may hamper their coordination. The case studies presented show that whereas the EU policy priorities certainly influence local and regional objectives, this process is hard to assess unequivocally, as in some cases the quest for synergy and cross-fertilisation is abandoned due to more pragmatic reasons related to maximising the spending of the received resources.

Chapter 10 sheds light on comparing the evolution of spatial planning systems in a group of countries that is normally absent from any of such international studies: the Western Balkans. Cotella et al. reveal that the Western Balkan countries have made progress in innovating their spatial planning systems in recent years. However, one of the major challenges resides in the high uncertainty and dynamics in their socio-economic and institutional development since the dissolution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Against the background of the findings presented in the various chapters, we also need to stress that the analyses presented in this book concentrate on institutional conditions, the general character of planning instruments, and expert perceptions of the general characteristics of practice. Although the introduc-

tion to the book (Chapter 1) pointed to the importance of planning cultures and the social construction of planning, the empirical evidence presented comprises the readily observable characteristics of spatial planning institutions. To further unpack, compare and understand the scope and practices of spatial planning, we would certainly need to complement this rather structuralist approach by exploring spatial planning as culturalised practices, as suggested by Othengrafen and Reimer (2013). Such an approach would investigate the extent to which spatial planning unfolds agency through the rather invisible dimensions of planning practices, revealing underlying convictions and norms, actor-network relations, taken-for-granted beliefs, and prevailing traditions that guide planning decisions. However, such studies would be enormously challenging. Culturalised practices of spatial planning will differ between but also within countries, even between regions and other localities (Purkarthofer et al., 2021). A systematic investigation of culturalised practices of spatial planning in a comparative European perspective would require very significant resources.

In conclusion, in this book we sought to contribute to a long tradition of understanding spatial planning in Europe from a comparative perspective, and thus encourage further exchange of ideas and practices. Our intention was to address some of the shortcomings of earlier cross-national comparative planning studies by taking care to recognise the problems of conceptual equivalence and the rootedness of spatial planning in place; by giving attention to the dynamics of spatial planning systems as elements change over time; and by considering actual practices as well as the formal institutions of spatial planning. There is a lot of empirical detail here that describes, and to an extent explains, the great variety in domestic arrangements for spatial planning, and indeed in understandings of spatial planning. However, the complex varied combinations of elements in each system makes generalisation difficult. The book and the research that underpins it reveal substantial reforms in the way that governments seek to manage the European territory, but along many different trajectories. We offer the text as a helpful source for those who wish to benchmark their own practices, and in the hope that inspires learning and fresh thinking about spatial planning. No one properly understands their own nation's planning system without comparing it with others.

NOTES

1. Although the study was commissioned by the UK government, it only concerns England. The other nations of the United Kingdom have similar systems.
2. Drawing on another EU study, ESPON SUPER (Sustainable Urbanization and Land-Use Practices in European Regions) (Evers et al., 2020). This concluded that, apart from possible exceptions due to the unpredictability of social and political phenomena, the land consumption trend in the same 39 countries over

- the period 2000–2018 confirms the mentioned classification (Berisha et al., 2023).
3. Cohesion policy includes the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which invests in the social and economic development of all EU regions and cities; the Cohesion Fund (CF) which invests in the environment and transport of the less prosperous EU countries; the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) which supports jobs and a fair and socially inclusive society; and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) which supports the regions most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality. Further information on EU cohesion policy is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en.
 4. Available at <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/worldwide-governance-indicators>.
 5. Note that the findings are taken directly from the responses of country experts.

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