CROSSING BORDERS WITH PLANNERS AND DEVELOPERS: THE LIMITS OF LESSON-DRAWING

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Abstract

As a result of new legislation and regulations, changing governance structures and other trends such as globalisation spatial planning and development practices change. Although many countries face the same trends, these are often translated on a tailor-made basis into planning practice. Can we learn from each other? In this paper we compare cross-national lesson-drawing and international comparative research in literature. On the basis of research on the Dutch and the English planning and development practices in area development we explore the possibilities and barriers to cross-national lesson-drawing in planning policies and practices.

1. Introduction

Spatial planning practitioners across countries face many challenges: an increasing complexity as result of new legislation and regulations, changing governance structures etc. Also the manner in which government authorities give direction to it is also undergoing change. In the last ten years much has been written about the concept of urban governance. Government authorities – in particular at the local level – are no longer capable of giving direction to spatial planning in the same manner as before (Kearns & Paddison, 2000). In addition, the faster pace with which changes are taking place in society plays a part. Speedier adjustments in spatial planning are also required. Long-term visions with a fixed final view of the spatial planning of an area, which moreover require long drawn-out procedures, no longer seem to be appropriate. The current complexities of many spatial interventions demand more from legislation, instruments, and planning practice

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than was previously the case. All these trends are often translated on a tailor-made basis into planning practice by the different countries.

Because planners in various countries face (in general terms) the same problems, the question is often raised whether planners in different countries can learn from each other. In recent years a large number of cross-national comparisons of planning frameworks, planning policies and planning practices have been published (a.o. Nadin & Stead, 2008; Sanyal, 2005; Masser & Williams, 1986). There is also a wide body of literature of cross-national policy transfer in general.[1] In literature different names are being used: cross-national learning, lesson-drawing and policy transfer. Often they more or less cover the same concept. These studies all state that there are many barriers, mainly in a cultural, legal and political sense. Although each country has its own planning and development frameworks with its own characteristics, there is some evidence for a common planning ideology among planners in different countries (Kaufman & Escuin, 2000) and similarities in the language and objectives in planning documents (Abram & Cowell, 2004). These studies indicate that although there are cultural differences there are also striking similarities between planning communities of planners in different countries.

Lesson-drawing and comparative studies on policies have much in common; both focus on differences between policies which national, regional or local governments adopt in response to a common problem. The primary concern of comparative studies is to explain why countries differ in their policies; the policies imply that the differences are persisting (Rose, 2005: 6). Lesson-drawing does not necessarily involve different countries. Lessons can also be drawn from different policies and practices in other parts of a country, for instance between different local governments. But there is also a lot of research and policy which stimulates cross-national lesson-drawing in the field of planning. Examples are case studies in European programmes as Interreg and ESPON, but also lesson-drawing schemes by national governments. On the basis of a specific problem or objective a number of best practices is selected which are analysed in a more or less structured way. An assumption might be that these and other cross-national lesson-drawing initiatives will reduce differences between countries at the end. Lesson-drawing thus might contribute to the convergence of planning frameworks, planning policies and planning practices.

In this paper we explore the possibilities and barriers to cross-national lesson-drawing in planning policies and planning practices. We focus on the Dutch and the English planning and development practices and in particular on area

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[1] See for a review Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) and a practical guide by Rose (2005).

development. Area development is the alignment of different land uses leading to an overall solution for a specific area. Area development should not be confused with mixed use development or multiple land use which is a planning product, whereas area development focuses on the planning process of combining different land uses in a specific area and their functional relations in the wider spatial context.

Although there is a wide literature on comparison of planning frameworks, planning policies and planning practices, there is little literature on possibilities and limitations of cross-national research in planning. The paper is structured as follows. In section 2 we give a short review of the main literature on international comparative research and cross-national lesson-drawing. In this section we relate general literature about lesson-drawing and international comparative research to literature in planning on this subject. In section 3 we focus on the reasons and difficulties of cross-national lesson-drawing and conclude that a comparative research between recipient and donor country on institutional, social, economic and cultural differences is a key factor for the success of lesson-drawing. In section 4 we compare the planning and development practices in area development in England and the Netherlands. This section is based on Dutch research by Hobma et al. (2008) which aimed at lesson-drawing from English planning practice in area development. In our concluding section 5 we present a conceptual framework to explore and assess the possibilities for lesson-drawing in a cross-national context.

2. Research on international comparisons and lesson-drawing

There is a growing body of literature within political science and international studies on lesson-drawing or policy transfer (based on diffusion studies), both within and outside planning domain. Most studies are single-issue case studies or diffusion studies. "Diffusion studies examine the way in which policies spread across time and space and typically attempt to describe and account for the temporal order in which countries adopt similar policies" (Wolman, 1992: 28). According to Wolman and Page (2002: 479) most studies "focus almost entirely on the receivers of information and the use they make of it, rather than on the senders and providers". There is hardly research on how the information during lesson-drawing or policy transfer is processed, framed and assessed (Wolman & Page, 2002). Both Rose (2005) and Wolman and Page (2002) are exceptions to this. Rose presents a practical guide for all the stages in international lesson-drawing, whereas

Wolman and Page[2] performed empirical research. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000: 6) state that "there are a number of obvious reasons for the growth in transfer. As the globalization literature demonstrates, no nation in the industrialized or industrializing world can insulate its economy from global pressures." By subjecting countries to similar pressures and expanding the amount of information available to policymakers, have meant that policymakers increasingly look to other political systems for knowledge and ideas about institutions, programs and policies and about how they work in other jurisdictions (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000: 6-7). Rose argues that policy transfer or lesson-drawing is common:

> *"Every country has problems, and each thinks that its problems are unique (...). However, problems that are unique to one country (…) are abnormal (…) confronted with a common problem, policy makers in cities, regional governments and nations can learn from how their counterparts elsewhere responded"* (Rose, 1991, in: Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996: 343).

Most of this literature is very much focused on the public sector, whereas much of the planning practices relates to processes in which both public and private actors participate. It seems as though international lesson-drawing by the private sector is not subject of academic research publications. In the following we discuss the existing types of research which mainly focus on the public sector view. Later in this paper we will come back to the perceived gap in research in private sector viewed lesson-drawing.

Various authors distinguish various ways or levels of intensities of transfer. Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008) distinguish between three basic levels of increasing intensity in the transfer of planning instruments and practices when comparing practices across countries: (1) inspiration, (2) learning, and (3) transplantation. Inspiration is about collecting and valuating data and information on innovative experiences and practices. Learning implies adaptation of the information collected and valuated in the inspiration phase, including retrieving underlying ideas, obstacles and changes. A practice might be of interest to one country but – as systems are quite different – how can it be implemented without its weaknesses? Working together with planners from different countries and 'exchanging' knowledge is essential to this learning level. With transplantation one looks to the specific conditions under which transfer of policy, instrument etc. to another planning context is possible. In our paper learning is thus only one of the intensities in lesson-drawing.

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[2] As research of the latter authors focuses on policy transfer between governments within the same country, their work is slightly less relevant for our research.

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Rose (2005) only discusses 'learning'. Essential in his approach is that it is not about the details, but about the essence of a 'programme' as a consequence of which this knowledge can be used elsewhere (Rose, 2005: 22-24). Rose defines a programme as "a specific measure that sets out the way in which public employees are authorised to spend money in pursuit of stated objectives" (Rose, 2005: 16). He states that learning can also imply that you learn what *not* to do. It is not only about best, but also about worst practices. In his guide book Rose (2005) distinguishes seven ways of 'drawing lessons' which can be seen as a more specified categorisation of the three levels of transfer of Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008). Rose's categorisation ranges from photocopying, coping, adaptation, hybrid, synthesis, disciplined inspiration to selective imitation and overlaps with the categorisation by Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008): inspiration, learning and transplantation. One can conclude that both the categories of Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008) and Rose (2005) are about the intensity of this type of transfer. Stone (2004, in Ward, 2007: 371) on the other hand categorises policy transfer more to what is transferred. His 'ideational' transfer concerns 'softer' policy aspects such as ideas, paradigms, interpretations and problem definitions. Stone also distinguishes institutional transfer witch lies more within the governmental process and includes 'harder' instruments, legislation, techniques and policies. Finally, he distinguishes network transfers which occur under the auspices of international bodies, multi-lateral agencies or specific cross-border network initiatives.

A wide range of academic literature exists on cross-national comparison of planning frameworks and planning practices and on trans-national and trans-regional initiatives and their impact on planning in European countries (Newman & Thornley, 1996; Sanyal, 2005; De Jong & Edelenbos, 2007). Hendriks (2007) brings forward that comparative researchers all report that comparisons not only give insight in the foreign situation, but also in their own situation (both country and time). These comparisons are usually drawn with a specific aim. Other planning systems or planning practices are being studied for example with a view on improving one's own planning system or planning practice. However, international comparative research and cross-national lesson-drawing are not the same. In general one can argue that comparative research has a stronger scientific meaning than lesson-drawing because it aims at the understanding of major differences and similarities of planning systems, whereas while lesson-drawing has a more practical nature. In general lesson-drawing focuses on a specific issue.

Only little literature exists on the methodological approach to international comparative research. However, there have been wide-ranging theoretical discussions with respect to the comparison of welfare states, legal systems and

research fields as urban governance (Spaans, 2002; DiGaetano & Strom, 2003). DiGaetano and Strom (2003) examine structural approaches to comparative analysis in urban governance and distinguish three major schools of thought in the study of comparative politics: rational actor, cultural, and structural. The authors propose to develop an integrated framework for comparing urban governance cross-nationally. Literature about a typology for welfare states is dominated by Esping-Anderson (1990; 1996). He constructed different regimes in which countries fit. On the basis of Esping-Anderson's original welfare state regimes typology the Netherlands fits into the social-democratic welfare state model and England into the liberal welfare state model. The third model is the conservative corporatist model, in which countries as France and Germany fit. Many authors after him constructed variations on these models. Throughout these discussions there is the debate about the distinction between the convergence and the divergence perspective. Those who adhere to the convergence thesis assume that under the influence of similar political, economic, demographic, and technological developments, the national welfare arrangements will become increasingly similar. The divergence perspective, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that the national welfare states will show very distinct reactions to similar internal societal trends and external international developments (Engbersen et al., 1994). Nadin and Stead (2008: 43-44) argue that national planning systems are to a larger extend, embedded into social models such as the typology by Esping-Anderson and state that: "The planning system is in part an expression of some fundamental values in a society in relation, for example, to the legitimate scope and aspirations of government, the use of land, and the rights of citizens".

Most cross-national comparisons can be typified (in their aims) as inspiration and learning and can spur fresh thinking. Transplanting planning instruments and approaches is often beyond the inspiration and learning categories (Hendriks, 2007). Research by De Jong (1999, 2004) and De Jong et al. (2002) shows the many difficulties that rise with the transfer of planning instruments from one planning system to another. Often there are institutional obstacles which cause that in a certain country a successful practice cannot be transferred to another country without any problem. Legislation, culture or economic structure may for example differ in such a way, that a literal take-over is not easily possible. But also if the aim is more on inspiration and learning than transplantation, it is important to be able to position the cases in the planning and development framework of the country concerned. The large variety in administrative culture and structure and political and legal systems make the transplantation of a successful policy or instrument from one country to another even more complex. In international

comparative research it is therefore common to arrange countries in groups. Transplantation within a group of comparable countries is generally easier. Examples of groups of countries are the Anglo-Saxon, Nordic, Napoleonic, other Continental and former Communist systems (Janssen-Jansen et al., 2008). In determining if and how successful elements from one planning practice can be translated into the planning practice of another country, one has to strongly consider the differences but also the similarities between both countries. Because England and the Netherlands do not belong to the same group, it is necessary to map out the differences between the English (as an example of the Anglo-Saxon) and Dutch (as an example of the Continental) planning systems and development planning practice.

In international comparative housing research three different schools have been identified by Kemeny and Lowe (1998), which could also apply to spatial planning. Each is associated with a different level of generalisation. When a number of countries are juxtaposed but generalising conclusions are not made, this is termed juxtapositional analysis. At the other extreme are studies that point at underlying similarities and name differences between countries as 'variations', 'historical contingencies' or sometimes 'exceptions'. Commonly these approaches have assumed that all modern societies are developing in a particular direction, for example towards a more developed welfare state, an unregulated market, or higher levels of capital exploitation. Such universalistic and global approaches in the comparative literature have been termed convergence perspectives. In between these two extremes there are studies which apply what might be termed theories of the middle range (Merton, 1957) that propose typologies of systems derived from cultural, ideological, political dominance or other theories as the basis for understanding differences between groups of societies. Such approaches in the comparative housing literature are termed divergence perspectives. Such a middle range theory would use a universalistic method within groups of systems that are described as part of the same family. Here a problem arises; when it is accepted that cultural differences exist and are of importance for a comparison on planning issues, it is hard to generalise between countries (Janssen-Jansen et al., 2008).

In general we conclude that, compared to the abundant amount of planning literature on international comparative research, there is only a small amount of research on policy transfer and hardly any research on the transfer of planning practices. This last conclusion corresponds with our earlier conclusion that research on cross-national lesson-drawing and policy transfer is focussed on public actors and not so much on private actors. This is a gap in academic knowledge as in

policy and implementation of planning the role of private actors is increasing, which is illustrated by the change from government to governance.

One can argue that lesson-drawing is more relevant for governments than private actors in area development, because they operate within frameworks created by them. To alter or change these frameworks they have look beyond the 'borders' of these frameworks. However, lesson-drawing in an international context is also important to private actors as they operate within the same framework. They can influence the way in which such a framework operates by lesson-drawing from practices in other countries. Often this lesson-drawing is aimed at solving problems which these private actors encounter in their day-to-day operation and which are often linked with the implementation of planning policies by public actors.

3. Why crossing borders to learn?

Although there is a bulk of literature on cross-national lesson-drawing, there is hardly any attention to the question why this phenomenon exists. Is it because the grass across the border is always greener, or because it is thought that the solution of planning problems can be found in another country? Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) state that it is increasingly likely that governments look for solutions abroad, as different forms of communication make this easier than in the past. Others point at the growing globalisation in general. In some studies it is stated that it is to gain inspiration and to learn from each other, while others state that other contexts – that is other countries – can generate new ideas and practices that can be used as examples to solve one's problems. In general one can assume there must be an immediate cause to look abroad, as it requires action. According to Rose (2005) this is the case when policymakers do not have past experience with the solution of a specific problem. Such an immediate cause may be a policy revision (for instance the announcement that a new policy document will be written) or problems in the planning and development practice. In the former case the search for new ideas will be more open minded, while otherwise the search will be more focused on certain planning subjects or measures.

We assume that it is generally easier to draw lessons from different cases in the same country than from cases in different countries because institutional, social, economic and cultural differences will be less within the same country as between different countries. A survey among British urban regeneration partnerships by Wolman and Page (2002) indicates that information about regeneration activities in other local authorities of the United Kingdom had a more substantial effect on decision-making than information about these activities in foreign countries (see

table 1). Nonetheless some information is transferred and has at least some effect. This confirms our assumption that it is more difficult to learn from abroad than from 'inside'. The reason for a country to look abroad is to find a solution for a problem in a donor country. Cross-national lesson-drawing is thus usually inclined by obstacles and barriers in the country that looks abroad (recipient country) (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). That means that this problem should also be recognised in the countries from which one tries to learn. According to Rose (2005: 18) "lesson-drawing is possible only if policymakers in different governments face a common problem".

Table 1   The effect (in terms of percentage) of information about regeneration activities in other UK local authorities and foreign countries on decisions on regeneration within recipient authority

	Information from UK local authorities	Information from foreign countries
Big effect	2.4	1.4
A significant effect	10.8	1.0
Some effect	69.4	21.0
Very little effect	16.3	41.6
No effect	1.0	35.0
Total percentage	99.9*	100.0
Absolute number	288	286

 *Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Wolman & Page (2002: 495-496) adjusted by authors.

An important assumption is that lesson-drawing in this context is voluntary, while policy transfer can be either voluntary or coercive.[3] This is a difference between policy transfer and cross-national lesson-drawing. Lesson-drawing is voluntary and requires an active stance from the recipient actor, while policy transfer can be coercive or conditional. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000: 13) use a policy transfer continuum which ranges from lesson-drawing to coercive transfer. They argue that the distinction between voluntary and coercive transfer oversimplify the process and place voluntary transfer in the middle of the continuum. In their interpretation this voluntary transfer is "driven by perceived necessity", which can refer to

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[3] Coercive policy transfer takes place when for instance policies from supra-national institutions such as the European Community or the United Nations are imposed on countries (Dolowitz & March, 1996) or the transfer is a result of treaty obligations (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). An example is the way Dutch law deals with EU-directives about the environment (Zonneveld et al., 2008).

problems in a recipient country. This line of argument suggests that lesson-drawing is not necessarily grounded in a problem. Conceptually this is a sound argument, but in reality active lesson-drawing is often based on real problems.[4]

Another assumption behind Rose's (2005) statement is that problems in various countries are similar.[5] This may be the case at a very abstract level, but not necessarily so at the more practical level where planning policies are implemented. Problems may be ingrained in very particular parts of the planning and development framework and refer to deeper institutional and cultural differences. The manifestation of the problem may be the same, but the solutions may be restricted to the donor country. Also there is the issue how a problem is perceived. An issue may be a problem in one country, but not perceived as such in another. Does that mean that lesson-drawing is impossible? We do not think so because the awareness of differences in the perception of problems can have a lesson-drawing effect. It can help to a better understanding of one's own problem in relative terms, but also that lessons can be negative al well as positive (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). The lesson-drawing effect can be that policy transfer should *not* take place.

Perception and understanding are important aspects of lesson-drawing. In a review of seventeen case studies of cross-national policy transfer by Mossberger and Wolman (cited in Wolman & Page, 2002: 481) it was tentatively concluded:

> *"(…) that most policy transfer involved a relatively narrow search (usually one country), that in most cases borrowing countries appeared to have reasonably accurate and detailed knowledge about the operations of the programme in the other country but insufficient understanding of the way the program interacted with other elements op the political system in that country (…)".*

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000: 14) refer to the same problem when they state that:

> *"(…) actors are influenced by their perceptions of a decision-making situation rather than the "real" situation. As such, transfer may be based upon an inaccurate assessment of the "real" situation (…)".*

That is why they make a distinction between lesson-drawing within the confines of 'bounded rationality' and 'perfect rationality'. Most studies on policy transfer assume perfect rationality, but Dolowitz and Marsh and research by Mossberger and Wolman suggest that in most cases policy transfer is actually a process that takes place in a bounded rational way. This concerns the process of policy transfer, but we assume that the same is true for the way donor countries are selected. Perfect rationality prescribes a selection process to choose one or more donor

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[4] In theory one can make a distinction between conscious and unconscious learning.
[5] We should mention that Rose discusses both inter en intra-national policy learning.

countries, but in reality this choice is made in a bounded rational way. That is with the perception of the institutional, social, economic and cultural differences in mind. From the literature we know it seems that this is an underestimated factor in research on policy transfer and cross-national lesson-drawing. Important questions in this respect are: from which countries can we learn most and under which conditions will the lesson-drawing process be successful?

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000: 17) suggest that at least three factors have a significant effect on failure of policy transfer:

- Uninformed transfer: the borrowing country may have insufficient information about the policy/institution and how it operates in the donor country.
- Incomplete transfer: crucial elements of what made the policy or institutional structure a success in the donor country, may not be transferred.
- Inappropriate transfer: insufficient attention was paid to the differences between the economic, social, political and ideological contexts in the recipient and donor country.

These factors imply that for successful policy transfer and cross-national lesson-drawing it is necessary to make a cross-national comparison on the conditions and context of the policies that should be transferred to increase the learning effect.

4   Two countries: their problems, similarities and differences

In our empirical research (Hobma et al., 2008) the aim was to find ways in which private actors in area development could speed up the development process in the Netherlands. This research was commissioned by the Dutch property developer Bouwfonds which had the impression that in England the private sector was more in control in the development process than in the Netherlands. The decision to commission the research was made because the developer perceived a problem (slow development process), but also had a perception of where the solution could be found. This last perception was rather based on general knowledge of typologies such as the one by Esping-Anderson, than on a perfect rational choice for a donor country. Also, there is a normative element in the choice for England as a donor country, as a the liberal welfare state England is to believed to be more favourable to the private sector than the social-democratic welfare states of the Netherlands.

To compile information on the English planning and development practice we co-operated with English scholars from the University of the West of England in Bristol. They have both academic knowledge and experience with contract research in the English planning and development practice. Important was also that the interviews for the three cases studies were done by native speakers to get the

most on confidential aspects of the cases. Our English colleagues compiled a general paper on the English planning and development practice and a report about three case studies. By collecting information this way the risk was avoided that information senders shape the information to support their own objectives and that the reputation of their own programmes, activities and policies was enhanced (Wolman & Page, 2002: 497). As a way of speaking, our English counterparts formed a filter for this risk. We, as Dutch researchers, compared the English and Dutch planning and development practices and the contexts within which the cases were performed.

After comparison the conclusion is that the English and Dutch planning and development practices differ from each other in a number of ways. According to Nadin and Stead (2008) they belong to different groups of planning systems. The English system belongs to the land-use regulation model, while the Dutch system can be categorised into the comprehensive integral approach. However, both systems are currently in reform and tend to converge at least at which problems they try to tackle. Similar reasons generated the need for reform of the planning system in the two countries. Procedures and planning instruments had to become objective, efficient, and transparent (Spaans, 2005).

When looking at the relevant differences between both countries in planning and development processes of area development, we distinguish the following themes (Hobma et al., 2008):

Different competences of local and central authorities and special purpose organisations
England does not have a written Constitution in which the various government levels have been provided their own competences. It is central government which determines these competences, but also the existence itself of the lower administrative levels. In a period in which the Conservatives are in power, the role which local government may play can differ considerably from a period in which Labour is in power. Other than by law, central government may also grant competences for a specific project to either a lower government or a special purpose organisation. An example is the Urban Development Corporation. Because of these differences in competences, but also because of major regional differences in market conditions, there are bigger local and regional differences in the planning and development process than in the Netherlands.

In England the Secretary of State of the Department for Communities and Local Government has a lot of freedom to intervene in local planning processes.

This happens on the basis of his call-in power in major projects. He therefore may intervene in projects at the regional or local level.

In the Netherlands the division of responsibilities and competences over the lower authorities has been settled in the Written Constitution. Dutch municipalities operate under a system of negatively delimited government, i.e. they have the freedom to undertake any activity not specifically prohibited by law. The Dutch local governance is less fragmented than in the UK with fewer quango's and greater autonomy for local authorities. This autonomy is defined in the Dutch Constitution. In the Netherlands the minister has little freedom to intervene in local planning processes.

Differences in division between public and private in the development process
In England government authorities are (mostly) not allowed to act as a private actor. For example, authorities may not pursue an active land policy. Local planning authorities are therefore not allowed to acquire land proactively as in the Netherlands, and develop it into a building location. Authorities may only buy land for the realisation of public works such as roads. Only in specific cases special purpose organisations may obtain this competence. Furthermore public authorities are not allowed to join public private co-operations just like that, as market risks might possibly become part of the public domain. This is only possible with explicit approval of central government. Public private cooperation in the form of a legal body in which (financial) risks are shared is thus very unusual in England, whereas in the Netherlands this phenomenon is quite common.

Many actors and partnerships in England, few in the Netherlands
English area development is characterised by a large number of ad-hoc institutions and actors involved (see also Catney et al., 2008). These ad-hoc institutions are often special purpose organisations and partnerships. Partnerships are often launched to gear the different interests and trust to one another. Compared to Dutch area development practice – in which there are complaints about the fact that developers have to deal with many government counters – the English situation is even more fragmented. Another mentioned reason for the establishment of partnerships is the fact that projects become too complex for one actor.

Plan instrument and participation of citizens
Both countries differ in the type of planning instruments. A major difference is that the Netherlands disposes of a legally-binding plan (*bestemmingsplan*: land-use or zoning plan), while there is not such a plan in England. The Dutch land-use plan is

decided upon by the elected local councils, after hearings with the public. After approval of the land-use plan all building initiatives are tested against it. If the proposed building initiative fits within the land-use plan a building approval has to be issued. Instead England disposes of the planning permission and the building regulations approval, which are both granted on a discretionary way after the Local Planning Authority has considered local and regional plans and other material considerations.

Negotiation between local government and private parties
Because the English planning system does not contain a legally-binding planning instrument, there is space for negotiations between developer and Local Planning Authority about the submission of a planning permission. These pre-application discussions are confidential and held behind closed doors. Part of these negotiations is about the conditions for issuing the permission. This largely manifests itself in the S106 agreement (or so-called planning obligations) which is linked to the planning permission. As there is no binding planning instrument, Local Planning Authorities are allowed to act more extensively in a discretional way than Dutch local authorities. In the Netherlands the planning and development process is dominated partly by formal procedures, partly by negotiations between developer and government authorities. Whereas the duration of the process in the Netherlands is determined to a large extent by the duration of the formal procedures, this is determined by the duration of the negotiations in England. Negotiations in England tend to be more institutionalised than in the Netherlands were local authorities first of all try to recover public investments for area development by their land development.

Apart from the negotiations which precede the grant of the planning permission, English developers are engaged in the development process in an earlier stage then in the Netherland. Especially in areas with enough market potential, they do not wait for the public sector to approach the private sector for development. On the contrary, developers submit unsolicited proposals to test whether and under which conditions planning permission would be possible. As there is a huge stagnation in the building sector and – parallel to that – a large demand for housing (notably in the South of England), a market potential is easily on the fore. Central government focuses on redevelopment of brownfield land. The private sector (landowners and developers) has to be seduced with public money (through for example English Partnerships) to invest in certain disadvantaged areas.

Development-led versus plan-led

Originally the Dutch planning system was characterised as plan-led, and the English as development-led. Plan-led means that government plans are leading in the realisation of spatial planning. In England the development sector takes the initiative by submitting development plans to the public sector. These plans are then tested against the current spatial planning policy. Because of changes in both countries the two planning systems are moving towards each other. The Netherlands faces an increasing use of project decisions, in England there is more focus on integration of policy sectors at the local and regional levels. However, even if there is more government-focus in some areas (plan-led), this does not imply a truly integral approach yet.

5   Conclusion: a framework for cross-national lesson-drawing

After studying and comparing the English and Dutch planning and development practices both at the institutional and the practical level, we identified six themes on which the Dutch can learn from the English. These themes were selected to learn about the roles of and relation between developer and (local) government in order to improve the area development process. They boil down to the following recommendations (Hobma et al., 2008):

1. Introduce enabling partnerships in the Netherlands to smoothen the relation between public and private actors.
2. Introduce planning performance agreements in which public and private actors in an area development project agree on the level of 'services' they provide to each other. This may imply that developers pay for civil servants who at the end have to deal with their building permit.
3. Consider the assistance by Dutch developers of public authorities in their decision-making process by providing knowledge, research and assistance during consultations of the public.
4. Let Dutch developers make more use of unsolicited proposals to take the initiative in area development.
5. Let Dutch developers take a more strategic and long range perspective to area development.
6. Consider the introduction of a roof tax to recover costs.

      For the aim of this paper these recommendations are not interesting in itself. More interesting is to place these recommendations in the context of lesson-drawing. One of the striking experiences during our research was that Dutch perceive the differences between the Dutch and English planning and development

practice smaller than they actually are. Many institutional and cultural differences are overlooked, while they are important for cross-national lesson-drawing. The world behind apparently simple processes, instruments, procedures and politics is often complex and directed by more fundamental political and administrative concerns[6]. This requires a deep understanding of the language and culture of the countries being studied. This seems particularly true for the two countries researched which have spatial planning systems belonging to two different models, but are also part of two different social systems.

As Nadin and Stead (2008) demonstrate there is a strong correspondence in the application of social and spatial planning models in particular countries. We argue that possibilities and barriers to cross-national lesson-drawing in the field of spatial planning are not to be found in the differences of the planning systems, but in the differences of the underlying social models: "The form and operation of planning systems are embedded in their historical context, the socio-economic, political and cultural patterns that have given rise to particular forms of government and law" (Nadin & Stead, 2008: 35). Several of the differences between the Dutch and English planning and development practices – as we have identified in the previous section – are lying outside the spatial planning model, but in the wider social model of both countries. Most important are the differences in government structure (competences and resources) and the assignment of tasks between the public and private sector. We see that the English planning and development process is deeply rooted in the liberal model. Government is only involved in the spatial planning framework and the developers are in charge of the development. In the Netherlands government is also involved in the planning framework, but heavily involved in land development too. Private land developers[7] are well-known in England, but almost absent in the Netherlands. Another important difference is the government structure. In the Netherlands this structure is less fragmented and more stable over time and local governments have more resources (particular in the field of planning and development) at their disposal. This means that there is less need for partnerships than in England. At the same time we assume there is also more trust between private and public actors.

In the context of these deeply rooted differences we assess the six recommendations according to the three levels of transfer intensity introduced by Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008): inspiration, learning and transplantation. The first recommendation relates to the introduction of partnerships in the Netherlands.

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[6] Also our six recommendations should be interpreted as such simple processes, instruments, procedures or polices.
[7] A land developer adds value to land by arranging the planning permission and then sells the land with planning permission to another developer which will actually build on the land.

Learning and especially inspiration are more probable to happen than transplantation. Because of the clear (compared to the English) governmental structure and the lack of strategic initiatives by Dutch developers, an adaptation of the concept of partnerships, another type of partnership is needed to add value to the Dutch situation. Therefore transplantation is less obvious. Introduction of recommendations (2) and (3) will probably need a sort of cultural adaptation of the Dutch public domain, as it not (yet) accustomed to this type of blending of public and private tasks. For this reason the focus will be on inspiration of the Dutch planning and development community. Recommendations (4) and (5) aim at private actors, who are hardly subject of publications about policy transfer and lesson-drawing. However, as we look at the planning practice of area development lesson-drawing may involve changes in the way private developers operate. In current Dutch area development practice developers are less likely to be proactive and to use a strategic perspective than in the English practice. These recommendations therefore ask for a change in behaviour. It is likely that Dutch planning practice will change in this direction as a result of the global trend towards a more liberal societal model. It will probably also ask a considerable change in behaviour among local governments which are used to take the lead in strategic thinking about area development and act proactively to support this. Learning is therefore the most likely transfer intensity for these recommendations. Finally recommendation (6): this is a technical recommendation which can be introduced in Dutch legislation on land development. In that sense transplantation is possible, although the English roof tax is institutionally less elaborate than current cost recovery schemes in the Netherlands.

From this short assessment it becomes clear that lesson-drawing is not easy when it concerns transfer between two different spatial planning systems which are rooted in different social models. In this context a transfer with the aim of inspiration is more likely to happen and to be successful than a transfer with the aim of transplantation. Transplantation seems most likely between countries that belong to the same spatial planning system and social model. However, this is relative. Lesson-drawing in the form of transplantation seems more feasible within one country, than between countries because the context in which the transfer is to take place is likely to be the same. Research by Wolman and Page (2002) presented in table 1, indicates similar wise. Learning may occur in both situations: within a system or model and between countries in different systems or models. However, the likelihood for success is larger in the former than in the latter because of significant differences in social models.

We conclude that the chance of lesson-drawing to occur successfully is less likely when the transfer is between countries within different social models and more likely to occur successfully between countries in the same social model. Institutional and cultural differences between countries act as a kind of system border which is difficult to cross. In this latter case only the simplest form of transfer, namely inspiration, is likely to occur, while more 'robust' forms of transfer are far less likely to occur. In situations where no system borders have to be crossed, transfer is more likely to take the form of learning or even transplantation (see figure 1).

Figure 1 Conceptual framework for likelihood of transfer between countries in the same and different planning systems
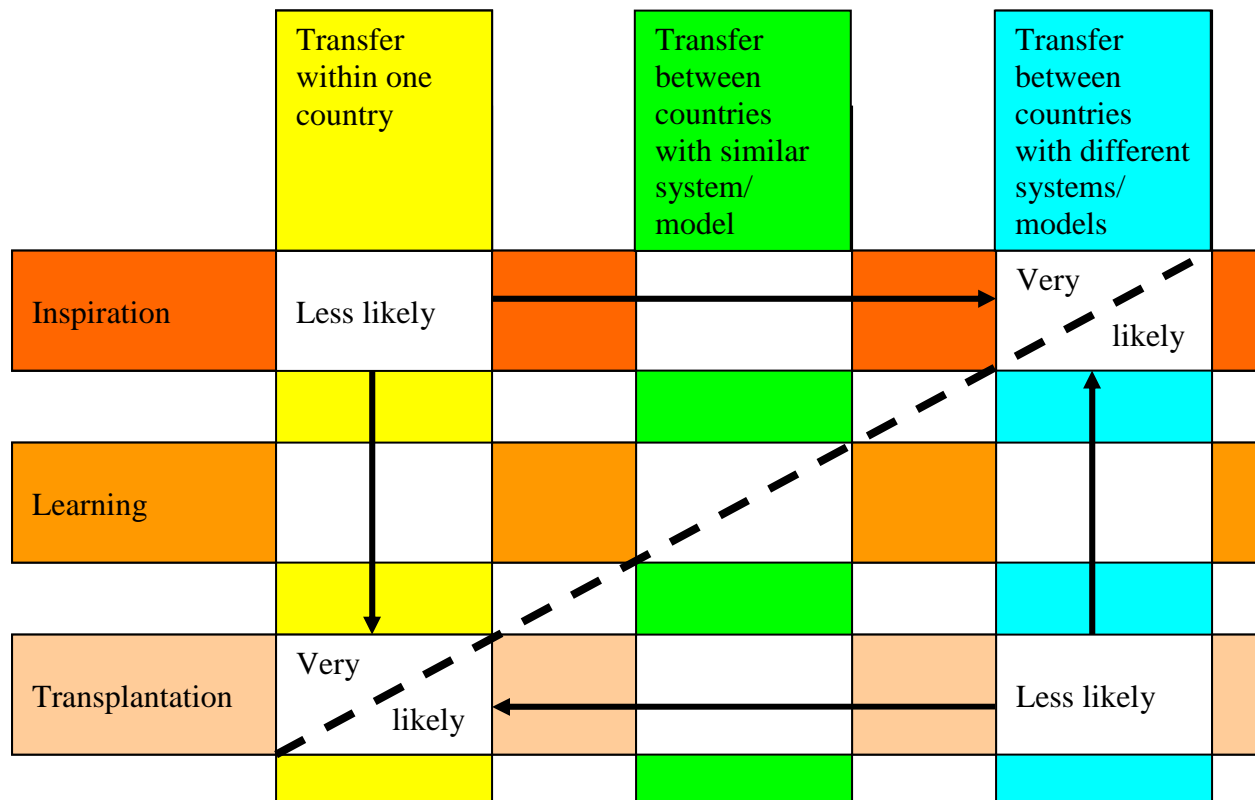
This conclusion also has implications for the discussion about convergence of spatial planning systems. Assuming that through globalisation and increasing international knowledge transfer in general planning systems tend to converge, it is likely that the *pace* of convergence is relatively faster between countries within the same planning system or social model. This is mainly due to the fact that lesson-

drawing in the more robust forms of learning and transplantation is more likely to occur in situations where no system boundaries have to be crossed.

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