



REGIONAL PLANNING IN FRANCE AND GERMANY: TOWARDS CONVERGENCE?

Karsten Zimmermann , Patricia Feiertag 

Technische Universität Dortmund, Faculty of Spatial Planning, European Planning Cultures
August-Schmidt-Str. 4-6, 44227 Dortmund: Germany
karsten.zimmermann@tu-dortmund.de • patricia.feiertag@tu-dortmund.de

Abstract. The comparison of planning systems is a well-established field of study in the planning sciences. However, the typologies in use seem to be outdated as planning systems in Europe change continuously, showing disruption as well as path-dependent trajectories. The eventual demise of regional planning has been one of the focal points in this debate. In this paper, we compare two planning systems following the idea of variation-finding comparison. We seek to find the differences within a group of similar systems (i.e. western European social-democratic welfare states). The two countries chosen for this contribution are Germany and France and our empirical focus is on regional planning in city-regions. The two countries usually are considered to be very different in terms of politics and governmental structure as well as with regard to the planning system. Recent reforms in France demonstrate that regional planning goes into the direction of a more consolidated system, eventually showing more convergence with the German system than expected. Our results demonstrate that differences continue to exist but that there is also considerable sub-national variation in both countries so that there is more convergence on the level of city-regions than on the national level. In addition, we put into question the widely assumed demise of regional planning.

Keywords: comparative method, France, Germany, metropolitan region, regional planning.

Comparing Regional Planning

There has been a surge of contributions on the rise and demise of regional planning in the scholarly debate (Smas & Schmitt, 2021; Harrison et al., 2021; Purkarthofer et al., 2021). Quite often, a neoliberal doctrine is assumed to drive the reform of planning systems (Waterhout et al., 2013; Galland, 2012), in combination with a failure of the modern rational planning model (Harrison et al., 2021). In fact, the relevance and scope of regional planning was at the heart of reforms in England, Denmark and the Netherlands and in these countries, regional planning has been weakened or abolished. The idea of a cascading system of planning levels with regional planning being an important intermediate layer has eventually lost momentum (Galland, 2012; van Straaten et al., 2014). Closer scrutiny reveals this to be a far too simple description of current changes of planning systems (Smas & Schmitt, 2021; Nadin et al., 2021). Scholars see a new momentum or at least persisting relevance for regional planning, in particular with regard to strategic planning or sustainable urbanisation in city-regions (Smas & Schmitt, 2021; Eichhorn et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence of the effects of institutional changes on the performance of regional planning is rare (Schmidt et al., 2018; Eichhorn et al., 2023). In any case, the question of the factual relevance of worldwide trends and policy convergence (such as the demise of regional planning) needs careful interpretation in each national context. We want to contribute to this discussion and use France and Germany as two exemplary cases. We made this choice because France and Germany are not among the usual suspects that are referred to as exemplary case for the change of regional planning in many journal contributions. This choice is also justified by the approach of variation-finding comparison (see below).

We give a particular emphasis on the instruments for the coordination and control of settlement development in city-regions as we believe that this is a core task of regional planning that is, however, implemented in different ways. We do this for two reasons: a) existing approaches in comparative planning studies seem to be too complex and thus have limited explanatory power (Janin Rivolin, 2012; Salamin, 2023); b) we argue that regional planning in city-regions is not under threat – at least in Germany and France although there is much room for betterment.

This argument is developed over three sections. The next section will introduce a framework for comparing regional planning. Then we will briefly introduce the two planning systems. We refer to the distribution of competences and power in the multi-level system of planning and the direction of change within the last 20 years. This time span has been chosen because a reform of the French planning system happened in the early 2000s (*Loi relative à la solidarité et au renouvellement urbain*).

For each planning system, we then analyse two case studies: Nantes and Lyon in France, Stuttgart and the Ruhr region in Germany. These are city-regions facing similar challenges of growth control and land use change, albeit showing different levels of prosperity. This – limited – subnational variation is important as France is now a decentralized and regionalized state and Germany always has been a federal state. Hence, a comparison of the national level would be misleading and this is why we apply a multi-level matched comparison as suggested by Sellers (2019).

We compare the two planning systems employing the principle of variation-finding comparison (Tilly, 1983). Variation-finding comparison seeks to identify the differences within a group of similar systems (in our case: Western European social-democratic welfare states). Hence, comparability is high as many parameters and factors are equal and of equal relevance for the performance of regional planning. In fact, we can say that the two systems share many characteristics:

- Both countries cover an extensive geographical area and are industrialised, fully developed post-war welfare states, now facing serious challenges with regard to structural transformation of post-industrial cities and regions, shrinking cities, and fast growth in some urban areas.
- Both countries used to follow a nationwide politics of balancing socio-economic disparities (between urban and rural areas, between old industrial and modern service-oriented regional economies), although with different approaches and success rates.
- Both countries use a fully-fledged portfolio of regional development policies, spatial planning instruments and infrastructure policies as well as urban regeneration strategies in order to reach a more balanced settlement structure.
- Both planning systems are organised as multi-level systems, although the hierarchies are different (a fused system with the counterflow principle in Germany; juxtaposed system of regions, *départements* and intermunicipal associations with sometimes unclear hierarchies in France).

However, Germany and France are usually considered to be different in terms of political culture and governmental structure: Germany is a federal state while France is a decentralised and unitary state, still displaying some elements of centralism in its political culture. Also, with regard

to the planning system, conventional wisdom says that the two systems differ to a large degree. France is considered to be the prototype of the regional development model while Germany represents the integrated-comprehensive model (CEC, 1997). However, recent studies are less clear with regard to the usefulness of these typologies (Berisha et al., 2021; Nadin & Fernández-Maldonado, 2023). We argue that this may be the result of policy changes that have taken place in particular in France over the last two decades and misinterpretations of the German system (as shown by Dembski & O'Brien, 2023).

The empirical bases of this article are expert interviews and participant observations as well as document analysis. We interviewed planning practitioners from different levels (regions, local government, inter-municipal bodies) and politicians. Documents included plans, planning policy documents and secondary sources. This empirical study was part of a research project on metropolitan governance and spatial planning in Germany, France and Italy (the latter not considered in this article) (Zimmermann & Feiertag, 2022). In addition, the work has benefited from a Franco-German expert group supported by the German Academy for Territorial Development ARL (Gustedt et al., 2022).

Comparing Regional Planning in France and Germany

Many planning systems are organised as multi-level systems, the essential levels being strategic plans made by the state or sub-national levels (such as the German *Länder*), local land use planning, and an intermediate level where state goals for territorial development meet local development ambitions. We refer to this intermediary level as regional planning, being a mix of place-shaping activities and regulatory interventions in patterns of land use (Fürst, 2010; van Straaten et al., 2014, p. 568). This produces a range of potential conflicts: between regional planning authorities and municipalities, between business interests and sustainable urban development, and between infrastructure planning and protection of the landscape, to name just a few. The regional scale is often seen as appropriate to address urban growth and suburban sprawl as strict land use regulation at the local level without regional coordination tends to produce spill-over effects in adjacent municipalities (Schmidt et al., 2018, p. 639). This does not necessarily mean that there is a clear-cut hierarchy between regional planning and local land use planning. As mentioned in the introduction, the regional level of planning was reformed in some European states. We build on this debate to develop our comparative framework and focus on four essential categories: 1) direction of change, 2) instruments for settlement planning, 3) planning style and 4) spatial delimitation of the planning region (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative Framework

| Category | Description |
|---|--|
| Direction of change | Institutional change in the national planning system, changing policy goals |
| Instruments for settlement planning | Control of settlement planning in regional plans, positive or negative planning, quantified goals, text or map spatially defined |
| Planning style | Proactive or reactive, implementation-oriented or regulatory, coordinative |
| Spatial delimitation of the planning region | Boundaries of statutory planning regions, networks, other spatial definitions of the region |

Source: adapted from Zimmermann and Feiertag (2022).

Direction of change covers the changing policy goals, which are often part of institutional changes that happened over the last decades in both planning systems. This may imply a stronger recognition of sustainability goals in planning laws or decentralization. We refer to this category in a separate section for each country.

As our interest is on the coordination of settlement planning the focus of the empirical analysis was on regional plans and methods to control settlement development. The portfolio of planning instruments for settlement planning gets broader and ranges from caps for residential development to clear designations where growth is allowed to the system of central places and green belts (Schmidt et al., 2018, p. 6).

The category of planning style describes what the purpose of planning in a given context is and how regional planning is seen by actors. We make a dichotomic distinction between proactive and reactive planning styles. Proactive planning means that the planning agency is involved in plan implementation and engaged in regional development (beyond land use control). Building up collaborative relationships with the private sector and the municipalities is one of the features.

Last but not least, space is a necessary category for comparison in our study. Adapting the perimeter of statutory planning regions is a permanent issue, in particular in growing city-regions. However, space goes beyond jurisdictional territory as space is also constituted by networked relations of cities, resulting in the softening of boundaries.

An empirical investigation of regional planning along these categories allows us to answer the question whether regional planning (in city-regions) is getting stronger or has lost relevance.

Germany: sticking to the plan-led approach?

The German planning system follows the principles of federalism with local land use planning, regional planning and state planning being the three essential levels where plans are made. At least in theory, all spatial planning activities do follow the ideal of comprehensive and integrated territorial development. In practice, this means that the coordination of functions (social, environmental, agricultural or economic) in a given territory is a core activity of planners (Fürst, 2010; Blotevogel et al., 2014; Schmidt et al., 2018). The main rationale of spatial planning is the balancing between different aims that have been formulated in a qualitative way; to set an absolute aim for one of those does not blend well with this logic (Henger et al., 2010, p. 307).

Implementation of spatial planning is the competence of the states, there is no national spatial plan (Fürst, 2010, p. 47). Federal government has nevertheless legislative competences and the federal planning law defines the goals and principles of spatial planning. These goals are sustainable territorial development and territorial cohesion. The 16 states have their own planning laws with leeway for derogation (Siedentop et al., 2016, p.73).¹ Goals and principles as defined in the federal law give room for interpretation and balancing of interests.

The German planning system has been characterized as a plan-led system or plan-conforming system (Janin Rivolin, 2008), which nevertheless gives room for informal initiatives (Dembski & O'Brien, 2023). State plans define priorities for territorial development, major infrastructure corridors and a functional hierarchy of settlements (central places), nature conservation areas and further land uses such as surface mining. A state plan consists of a map with a scale of 1: 500,000 or larger, which is legally binding for public authorities and an explanatory text. Instead of controlling the development of settlement areas directly, the state plans define general aims and planning

¹ In Bavaria, the state planning law substitutes the national one since 2006.

principles (Einig, 2012). The classification of central places has relevance for the permitted urban extension as well as for the location of large retail centres and leisure facilities (Schmidt et al., 2018).

The regulation of land use on the different scales is organised as a process of reciprocal influence of federal, state and municipal levels based on what is called the counterflow principle (*Gegenstromprinzip*; Schmidt et al., 2018, p. 640). Within this system of reciprocal influence, regional planning is an important functional element. Regional planning has a long tradition in Germany, but is at the same time the most variable layer within the planning system (Schmidt et al., 2018, p. 639). The country is covered by 111 planning regions (excluding the three city-states), ranging from 525 to 8,291 km² (Schmidt et al., 2018, p. 646). The German planning system has different organisational forms for regional planning (municipal associations or government office of the regions; in smaller states even ministries take over this task, Fürst, 2010). Regional planning is a state function but representatives of the municipal councils or – in some city-regions – directly elected assemblies form the ‘regional planning assembly’ (the decision-making body for the plan). Statutory regional plans are legally binding (they are local law) and this applies both for the cartographic specifications in the plan and aims specified in the text (Siedentop et al., 2016, p.74). A regional plan consists of a text where principles and goals for territorial development are defined and a planning map. This map has a binding character and usually defines nature conservation zones, green corridors, agricultural land, settlement areas (including commercial uses), infrastructure corridors (transport and energy) as well as surface mining. Flood protection and climate-relevant matters increasingly find recognition, and concerns about the location for windmills or large retail centres outside the centre of core cities are addressed.

Note that German municipalities have a high degree of autonomy in terms of spatial planning and urban development. The decision on whether a municipality will designate new settlement areas in their local land use plan is up to the municipal councils. The capacity of regional planning to restrict the growth of settlement areas is limited due to its mission to provide an adequate amount of constructible land for housing and economic activities, and due to the resistance of municipalities who interpret restrictive stipulations as interventions in their planning autonomy (Einig, 2012, p. 53).

The German planning system is often considered being stable. In fact radical institutional changes or drastic shifts of directions of planning policies as they tend to happen in some European states are unknown. Nevertheless, change happened in the form of drift, to use a notion of Streeck and Thelen (2005): stability on the surface but erosion underneath. Amendments of planning laws since the late 1990s gave a stronger emphasis to sustainable development on the one hand and a more pro-active role in regional development by using new governance tools (such as contracts). Comprehensive evaluations of the state of the German planning system do not exist but there are indications that state planning and regional planning have creepingly lost relevance (Furkert & Skowronski, 2018; Klee, 2022). A clear sign for this is the loss of staff members and the reduction of the content of plans (for Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg: Klee, 2022). In addition, in some states a shift of tasks from state planning to regional planning happened (Blotevogel et al., 2014, p. 27).

Stuttgart: integrated regional governance and pro-active planning

The Region Stuttgart association, founded in 1994, is the organisational anchor in a network of a variety of actors, with regional planning being the very heart of the arrangement. The Verband Region Stuttgart (VRS) association is, in formal terms, a county-like regional jurisdiction with reduced competencies (the counties still exist). The governance structure is a two-tier system (a municipal level and the city-regional level) with divided as well as shared competencies.

The reform reorganized regional planning in this region. A former intermunicipal planning authority (*Nachbarschaftsverband*) being in charge of an intermunicipal land use plan has been abolished in order to give way for a new regional planning authority with a broader portfolio of functions. Tasks for which it has full responsibility are regional planning, landscape planning and regional transport planning. Waste management, tourism, marketing and management of public transport are shared with municipalities and counties. The bundling of planning competencies for transport and regional planning is of great advantage as the planners can develop new settlements along the railway lines. In addition, the VRS is allowed to take full or shared responsibility for the management of the trade fair, congresses, culture and big sports events. The planning association is also the majority shareholder of a regional development agency.

Today, the territory of the VRS encompasses five counties with 179 municipalities and the county-free city of Stuttgart (Fig. 1). It comprises 3,654 km² with 2.6 million inhabitants. The core city outpaces the surrounding medium-sized cities in terms of inhabitants (634,830 inhabitants, second largest city is Esslingen with 94,941 inhabitants). However, most of the municipalities in the Stuttgart region are rather small. The reform in 1994 did not change the boundaries of the planning region. The perimeter of this planning region has remained stable from 1974 to today.

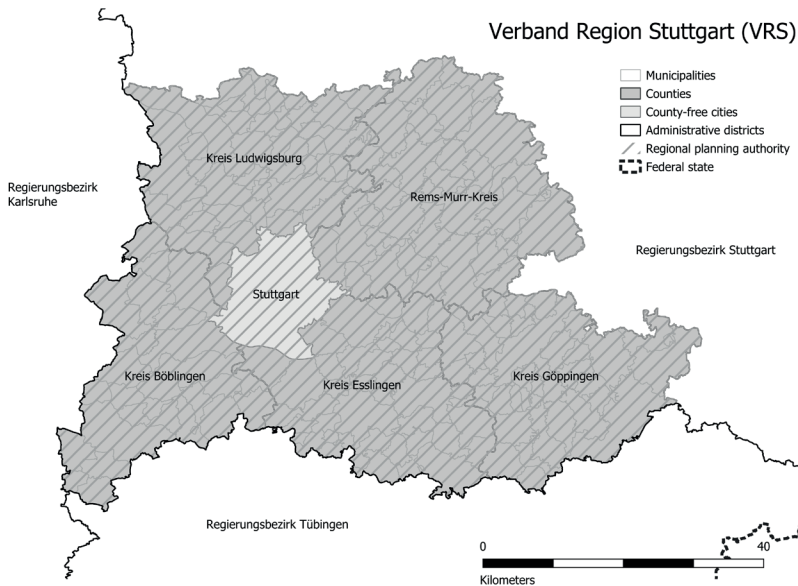


Figure 1. Regional Planning Region Stuttgart
Source: own elaboration.

The direct election gives a strong legitimacy to the regional assembly. As a result, the elected members of the assembly are inclined to support the goals of the planning authority also against the will of the municipalities in the region. This helps to solve difficult issues.

With regard to regional planning, the VRS is known for its proactive and rather strict planning regime. The current regional plan dates from 2009 and seeks to implement what is considered to be the state of the art in German regional planning: reduction of land take, decentralised concentration of settlements, a preference for development of new houses in built-up areas and settlement development along the major public transport axes. However, as the region is growing in terms of inhabitants, exceptions are possible in order to give enough room for the municipalities

to cope with growth. In fact, in recent times the VRS has given incentives for new settlements in the zones defined in the regional plan as the region suffers from a shortage of affordable housing but more and more municipalities do not want to grow any further.

With regard to new settlements, the regional plan defines the densities (*Bruttowohndichte*) based on the premises of the state development plan – *Landesentwicklungsplan* (Baden-Württemberg, 2002). Strict regulation of the density of new settlement is considered to be the best way to reduce land take. The regional plan defines different density values for municipalities depending on their centrality. These values range from 90 inhabitants/ha in central places of the highest rank in steps of ten to 50 inhabitants/ha for municipalities of the lowest rank. In addition, the regional plan defines priority zones for housing where new settlements should preferably be built. The definition as a priority zone in the map of the regional plan and in the table of the plan means that all other usages except settlement are excluded. Density is calculated as a desired state based on the preparatory land use plan of the municipality (average value). This gives each municipality considerable room to manoeuvre, as a new settlement does not have to meet exactly the density value. However, the high property prices in the Stuttgart region are the main reason for increased densities. The regional planning authority has discretionary powers to precisely define settlements zones and infrastructure in the regional plan if regional relevance is given.

Different from many other regional planning authorities, the VRS has options to proactively support the implementation and the goals of the plan. The association uses co-financing programmes with monetary incentives for municipalities for the implementation of goals in the realms of mobility, landscape planning and settlement development. One of these co-financing programmes (*Aktionsprogramm Landschaftspark*) gives municipalities an incentive to develop new settlements with high densities in the built-up area of cities by co-financing the design of attractive green spaces as part of those projects.

To conclude, regional planning in Stuttgart is a mix of regulatory control and proactive planning of settlements. Enforcement of plans is possible and common practice. The institutional changes of the 1990s strengthened regional planning.

The Ruhr region

The Ruhr region is a large agglomeration with high spatial interdependencies, as the cities along the two rivers Ruhr and Emscher form one continuously built-up space. Five of them have more than 250,000 inhabitants. The Regionalverband Ruhr (RVR) is the regional planning authority and is composed of 11 county-free cities and four counties with in total 53 municipalities. The planning region covers an area of 4,439 km² with 5.1 million inhabitants. Over the last decades changes happened in the institutional realm as well as with regard to the perimeter of the planning region. Statutory regional planning was taken away from an intermunicipal association in 1974. As a result, strategic regional planning in the city-region Ruhr became fragmented if not blurred. The planning region was divided between three administrative sub-units of the state (*Regierungsbezirke*) with a broad range of responsibilities, among others regional planning. In 2009, the regional planning authority (RVR) regained the competence for the statutory regional plan. The regional development agency is under political and financial control of the RVR, but operates fairly independently in its daily business. Additional tasks are waste management, tourism and, as a shared competence, mobility master planning. Another change happened in 2015. The state government of NRW decided to strengthen the legitimacy of the RVR by introducing the direct election of the regional assembly. In addition, a new law allowed for sharing of more competences between the RVR and the counties and cities.

Preparatory works for the new regional plan started in 2012 with an inclusive and broad discussion of pressing problems and visionary ideas for the region. The process turned out to be complex and lengthy as the Ruhr region was part of three different planning regions until 2009, each ranging far beyond the Ruhr region (Fig. 2). To complicate things further, six cities of the region decided in 2002 to make use of a new instrument in German spatial planning: the regional land use plan. This new type of plan is a binding and obligatory up-scaled preparatory land use plan usually carried out on the local level. In the case of the Ruhr region, the existing regional land use plan of the six cities became part of the new regional plan.

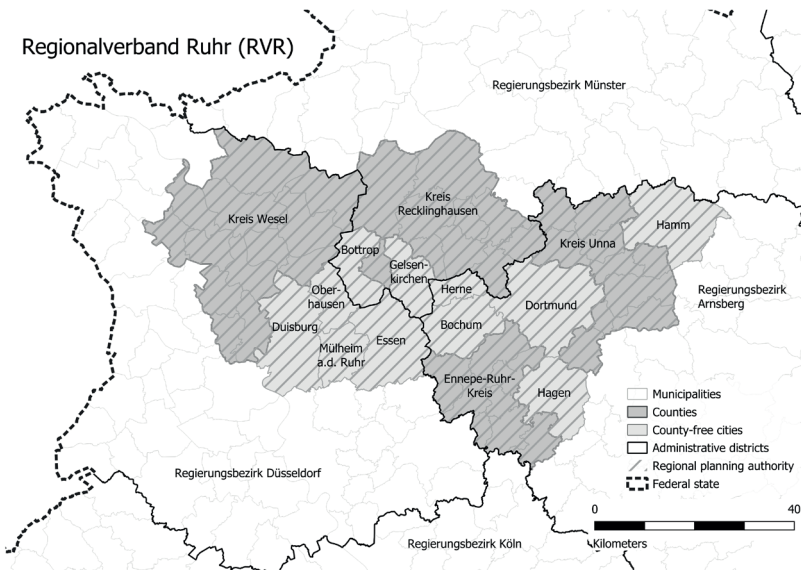


Figure 2. Planning region Ruhr
Source: own elaboration.

During the public consultation process, the planning association received 5,000 comments from public and private actors who felt affected by the plan and demanded changes or clarifications. Some of the municipalities were not satisfied with the future provision of land for settlement and commercial development in their jurisdiction. The high number of comments caused a delay in the process so that the final decision on the plan was made in late 2023. The step from a fragmented planning region towards a more coherent framework took more effort than expected.

The regional plan does not operate with density values but defines focus areas for settlements and regional cooperation areas (for commercial zones) (RVR, 2023). The distribution of potential for growth was calculated on the basis of a commonly accepted formula that was discussed before plan preparation (RVR, 2018, p. 44). The state plan (LEP) also indicates rules how to calculate and monitor the demand for new settlement areas with the aim to restrict land take (NRW, 2017, aim 6.1.1.). Still, during the consultation process many municipalities were in opposition, as they wanted more growth potential. As the region is stagnating in terms of economic development and population growth, not all municipalities may grow at the same time. Green corridors as well as fresh air corridors are strictly protected, leaving a limited number of potential development areas in the core cities. Local politicians and planners ask for more flexibility and less detailed prescriptions in the map.

Financial instruments for plan implementation do not exist. However, the planners often take informal initiatives in various thematic areas: mobility, environment and climate change, economic development, and housing. The planning association has only limited competencies to be active in these areas but uses collaborative planning tools, networks and external funding to prepare implementation in cooperation with partners. Hence, the planning style is pro-active but resonance is sometimes cumbersome. The reorganization of spatial planning in the Ruhr did follow a similar direction as in Stuttgart but the impact is less visible (cf. Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison Stuttgart / Ruhr according to criteria of Table 1

| Category | Stuttgart | Ruhr |
|---|--|--|
| Direction of change | Institutional consolidation and direct election (1994) Pro-Development (public-private development agency) | Institutional consolidation (2009) Direct election (2015) Transformation of a post-industrial region |
| Instruments for settlement planning | Zoning, both positive and negative (restrictions) site control, density values, priority areas for settlement, aims and principles | Zoning, both positive and negative (restrictions) site control, aims and principles |
| Planning style | Regulatory control and pro-active (financial incentives and cooperative) | Regulatory control and pro-active (informal concepts) |
| Spatial delimitation of the planning region | Stable since 1970s | Perimeter of planning region adapted institutionally in 2009 (status quo ante 1974) Boundaries of intermunicipal association stable (RVR) |

Regional Planning in France: towards consolidation?

The French equivalent for the German term *Raumordnung* is *Aménagement du territoire*, a state activity for the supra-local ordering of territorial development. However, *Raumordnung* and *Aménagement du territoire* have little in common: the French approach is considered to be the archetype for the ‘regional economic’ type of spatial planning (CEC, 1997) and is said not to be plan-led. Zoning regulation is done at the local planning level and is called *Urbanisme*. The idea of *aménagement du territoire* is closely tied to the central power of the French state, with the balancing of socio-economic disparities being an essential goal (Geppert, 2014, p. 110). The planning system has massively changed, with several steps of decentralisation taken since 1982 and several new planning laws since 2002. The major results were the emergence of regions and intermunicipal groupings as important intermediate levels of territorial policy-making, territorial reforms redefining the distribution of competences, an upscaling of local planning instruments to the intermunicipal scale, as well as a stronger concern about environmental issues (Geppert, 2014; Ducos, 2015; Demazière, 2018; Hertzog, 2018). We see signs of the ‘integrated-comprehensive’ approach with comprehensive spatial plans on the regional and intermunicipal levels becoming more relevant (SRADETT and SCoT, see details below) and the whole system increasingly taking the form of an integrated multi-level governance arrangement (Desjardins & Geppert, 2019, p. 126). This is to the betterment of a system that was considered to be fragmented, small-scaled and centralized.

Two bodies carry out regional planning in France: the regions and intermunicipal groupings. Regions were created in the 1980s as a weak sub-national level distributing regional funds. Step by step, they took on a coordinative role with a range of strategic plans for infrastructure and economic development. In 2016, some of the regions were amalgamated, decreasing their number from 22 to 13 (without overseas territories) (Desjardins & Geppert, 2019).

On a smaller territorial scale, intermunicipal groupings (EPCI) have been developed as an alternative to municipal amalgamation since the 1960s. Though they are not fully-fledged territorial authorities, they can nowadays be regarded as an influential level of territorial administration because they cover the entire country since 2017, levy taxes and assume a large proportion of municipal responsibilities, especially in city-regions. Both levels use regional plans that differ in form and character.

The regional plans: SRADET and SCoT

The SRADET (*Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires*) is a legally binding strategic plan that the regions² are required to elaborate, the first generation until 2019. Some of the regions already had a voluntary strategic document before (SRADT – *Schéma régional d'aménagement et de développement du territoire*) but it had very limited content regarding spatial planning and no relevance for lower-level planning documents. The SRADET is meant to be integrative, substitutes a range of sectoral plans and is binding for the lower levels of planning. Mobilising a joint spatial vision for the region is a key function according to Béhar et al. (2021, p. 208–211). Although the SRADET has a long-term perspective, the law states it must be updated within three years after each regional election. It consists of one or several indicative maps in 1:150,000 scale and binding guidelines. The precision of the cartographic representation caused by the choice of the scale does not fit well with its strategic, indicative character and the enlargement of regions (Vanier, 2018, p. 51).

The SCoT (*Schéma de cohérence territoriale*) introduced in 2000 is the main instrument of regional settlement planning in France and in intermunicipal responsibility. It was meant to integrate land use planning, housing as well as transport planning and to reintroduce a strategic dimension in urban planning (Verhage et al., 2007, p. 83). The instrument was reformed in 2010 by the Grenelle laws, substantially strengthening its environmental aspects (Ducos, 2015, p. 588; Moscarelli, 2016, p. 411). Not all municipalities in rural areas are covered by a SCoT yet, but their number is increasing and the planning areas become larger due to legal incentives. The decision about the elaboration and the planning region, i.e. who to collaborate with, is taken at the local level. There is no legal obligation to produce a SCoT, but only minor urban extensions are possible without. The responsible body can either be a planning association with the legal form of *syndicat mixte* or an intermunicipal grouping³.

The SCoT is supposed to define the strategic guidelines for spatial development within a 20-year period without pre-empting the local land use planning, which is reflected in the level of precision. The SCoT consists of an analytical part describing the area, a comprehensive project for its future development called *projet d'aménagement et de développement durable* (PADD), and a legally binding part composed of the guidelines and objectives for land use (Verhage et al., 2007, p. 85). The PADD is essential for the new planning approach and shows that the SCoT has a more active, prospective character instead of being purely regulative, passive planning. The SCoT operates

² Île-de-France, Corsica and overseas excluded.

³ In case of the *métropoles* Montpellier (Moscarelli, 2016, p. 414), Rouen, Nice and Orléans, the planning region is identical with the intermunicipal grouping.

with quantitative mechanisms, fixing binding values concerning reduction of land consumption, development within urban areas, and the density and concentration of development along public transport hubs, whereas maps are indicative and illustrate the aims in a schematic way. The SCoT is binding for the local zoning plans (PLU) as well as intermunicipal plans for housing (PLH) and transport (PDU).

Intermunicipal local zoning plans (PLUi) have recently been pushed by the legislator and will be more common in the future. By the end of 2017, 324 PLUi were under preparation and 22 already adopted (Fédération des SCoT, 2018, p. 4). This development leads to an intended hierarchy of three planning documents: the SRADET at the scale of the region, the SCoT covering several EPCI, and a PLUi for each EPCI (Table 3), at least in the case of the city-regions such as Lyon and Nantes presented in the following section.

Table 3. Regional Planning Instruments in France

| Plan | Function | Scale | Actor in Charge |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| SRADET | Coordinating sectoral policies | 1:150.000 | 13 regions |
| SCoT (and Inter-SCoT) | Regional planning | 1:100.000 | EPCI or planning associations formed by several EPCI In 2024, 78 SCoT were in preparation, 213 were approved, 153 were in the process of revision |
| PLU / PLUi | Land use planning, Zoning | 1:10:000 | Municipalities or EPCI (several hundred plans) |

* For SCoT mapping portal see:

<https://scotenaction.fedescot.org/visualiser/explorer#layers=3d456eaf82e25715db7f9d451e6585ad>

Source: own elaboration.

The case of Nantes-Saint Nazaire: fragmented or consolidated planning?

The case of Nantes demonstrates well the changing role of different territorial authorities in the implementation of regional planning in France (Zimmermann & Feiertag, 2022). During the golden age of planning in the 1960s-1970s, the state orchestrated regional spatial development by combining strategic plans with structural investments in transportation, higher education and health (Mahé & Bois, 2012, p. 21). The 1980s and 1990s in Nantes were marked by a void in regional planning. It was revived in the 2000s as an intermunicipal task with a SCoT, first developed between 2003 and 2007, followed by a revision between 2013 and 2016, leading to the approval of the current *SCoT 2016-2030*. Nantes-Saint Nazaire was seen as one of the areas of national interest due to its harbour and was the subject of a state-led regional plan (DTA) approved in 2006.

The area of state-led as well as intermunicipal regional plans extends to the Atlantic coast with the harbour city Saint Nazaire (69,800 inhabitants) and the river Loire as a connecting element but is weakly institutionalised. After a phase of informal intermunicipal dialogue (Mahé & Bois, 2012, p. 21), the planning association Syndicat Mixte du SCoT Nantes-Saint Nazaire was founded in 2003 by five EPCI (Fig. 3). It expanded slightly in 2010 to 61 municipalities, covering an area of 1,895 km². Its largest member is the municipal grouping Nantes Métropole, consisting of 24 municipalities with 0.6 million inhabitants (296,000 in the city of Nantes) and an area of 534 km². The president of Nantes Métropole is also mayor of the city of Nantes, president of the planning association, as well as president of the public developer SAMOA responsible for the key project Île de Nantes (Diedrich & Dahl, 2016). The Syndicat Mixte du SCoT Nantes-Saint Nazaire became

the Pôle Metropolitan Nantes-Saint Nazaire in 2012 and has now stronger implementation capacities. This can be interpreted as a further step towards institutionalising the city-regional scale (Ouvrard, 2016, p. 91). However, it continues to be a very light structure with about four employees and is mainly appreciated as a forum for regular exchange, whereas the five municipal groupings remain the main actors concerning plan development (see Ouvrard, 2016, p. 96), and implementation of the goals of the SCoT.

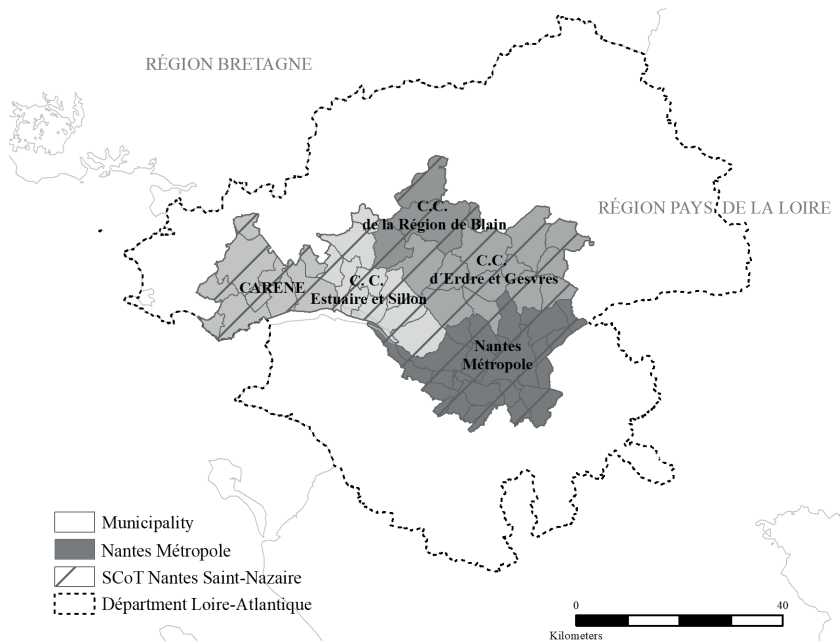


Figure 3. Planning Region SCoT Nantes-Saint Nazaire
Source: own elaboration.

The SCoT defines quantitative objectives for the EPCIs but not for individual municipalities. The objectives concern land consumption (reduction of land take outside urbanised areas by 50% compared to the reference period 1999-2012 as well as number of hectares of agricultural land to be preserved), housing (annual housing production, proportion of total housing stock per municipal grouping, proportion of social housing) and minimum densities for urban extension depending on centrality (in general 20 units per ha; structuring centres 25 units per ha; Saint Nazaire and Nantes inside ring road 40 units per ha). Maps are used to illustrate the objectives for future development concerning the economy, environment, centrality of settlements and mobility. Those cartographic representations use a schematic language with a low degree of precision. The rule setting part is illustrated by four annexed volumes consisting of maps with different degrees of precision, ranging from schematic overview maps concerning the four topics of business locations, logistics, agriculture and landscape, to rough localisation of green infrastructure and commercial sites as well as detailed maps concerning nature preservation with parcel-sharp representation. However, settlement extensions for housing are not depicted in any of those maps. They are only defined by quantitative aims, whereas the location is left to local land use plans (PLU). The SCoT uses the definition of centrality as a means to regulate

growth by designating five 'structuring centres' (*pôles structurants*) that should accommodate services, employment and housing alongside the cores of Nantes and Saint Nazaire.

The Region Pays de la Loire, being the upper tier planning region for Nantes was rather reluctant to take up the new instrument SRADDET set by the national government, seeing it as a compulsory technocratic exercise of little value. This changed fundamentally when the French Government decided to drop the regional airport project Notre-Dame-des-Landes in January 2018 due to environmental concerns and citizen protests (Griggs et al., 2018, p. 8, 13). As a consequence, the SRADDET gained political relevance as a tool to redefine the long-term development strategy of the region based on prospective analysis and a territorial dialogue. The airport project had been at the heart of the regional development strategy as a unifying project with a considerable impact on residential and commercial development.

Due to the new legal hierarchy of plans, the potential impact of the SRADDET on the already existing SCoT has raised concerns at the local level. *Agences d'urbanisme*, *Syndicats de SCoT* as well as EPCI have been seeking to make the region aware of potential unwanted impacts at an early stage of the process, articulating the clear expectation to be sensitive to local achievements in terms of concertation and political consensus reached in the SCoT processes. According to regional actors, the first SRADDET in the Region Pays de la Loire will be handled carefully to avoid legal insecurity.

The forerunner: Lyon Métropole

The city-region of Lyon is regarded as forerunner because of the early creation of a strong intermunicipal grouping with competences in spatial planning (Parnet, 2016, p. 242). This grouping has, unlike most other parts of France, a long-standing tradition of intermunicipal land use planning. This has led to a limited perimeter. Today, the Métropole de Lyon is constituted of 59 municipalities, covering an area of 533 km² with about 1.4 million inhabitants (thereof 0.5 million live in the city of Lyon). The first strategic spatial plan for this joint territory was the SDAU 1978, followed by the *Schéma directeur 1992* and the SCoT 2010, modified in 2017. The first PLUi was adopted as early as 2005. The SCoT perimeter has an area of 756 km² and is only slightly larger than the PLUi as it comprises two small municipal groupings (Fig. 4).

The creation of a larger SCoT perimeter was already proposed in 2001, but was immediately rejected by the municipal groupings around Lyon and prevented by the creation of planning associations covering homogenous peri-urban territories (Boino, 2007, p. 50). Instead, an InterSCoT dialogue started in 2002, i.e. in parallel to the development of the SCoT. As a result, each SCoT starts with a common chapter containing the main principles of the development for the entire metropolitan region as well as a schematic map with development corridors and main green spaces. The InterSCoT dialogue first covered nine SCoT territories and was later enlarged to 13 SCoT territories (Verhage et al., 2007, p. 87; Bariol-Mathais, 2015, p. 48) covering 914 municipalities with an area of 10 400 km² and 3.1 million inhabitants. Today, a strong motivation is to articulate shared points of view, e.g. concerning railway connections or the SRADDET and to have a forum to agree on joint positions towards investors, e.g. when it comes to large-scale commercial developments.

The *SCoT de l'agglomération lyonnaise 2030* is a planning document with a proactive character, defining the key choices for future development in its project PADD. Quantitative objectives and priority areas control settlement development. However, contrary to some of the surrounding SCoTs, the *SCoT de l'agglomération lyonnaise* does not use quantitative caps for housing; given the small perimeter and being located in the centre of a much larger agglomeration with high pressure on the housing market, the reasoning is rather to encourage housing production in the core

of the agglomeration, while demanding densification and development within urbanised areas. The quantitative objectives in the regulative part of the SCoT are mainly related to housing (annual housing production, proportion of construction to be realised within urbanised areas, proportion of social housing) as well as density (only guiding values, for extension: 30-35 units per ha in central parts and 15-20 for the rest of the territory; renewal: 60-70 units per ha in central parts and 30-35 for the rest of the territory). Sprawl shall be prevented by defining priority areas for urban development (around railway stations, urban corridors, urban centres) in a schematic way. Only some particularly sensitive green corridors are delimited parcel-sharp in maps. The *SCoT de l'agglomération lyonnaise* copes with its small perimeter by mapping the vision for future development on two scales, that of a larger reference territory of the *aire métropolitaine* including Saint Etienne, and a more detailed perspective on the SCoT territory itself, including a comprehensive map called *territorial coherence*.

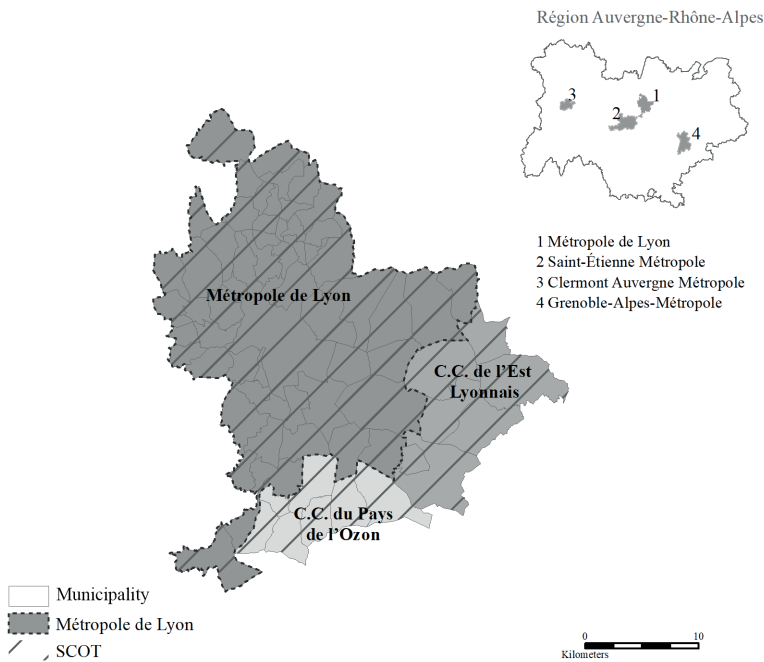


Figure 4. Planning Region SCoT de l'agglomération lyonnaise
Source: own elaboration.

The region Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes is the product of the merger of two regions in 2016. For this new regional territory, a coherent vision was needed. The development process of the SRADDET started one year after the amalgamation with a territorial dialogue in each *département* and thematic consultations. The document named 'Ambition Territoires 2030' was adopted in December 2019. It contains objectives that have to be taken into account as well as 42 general rules with a binding character concerning territorial development, transport, climate, air and energy, biodiversity and waste management. Limitation of land consumption, densification and reservation of agricultural land are targeted, but without fixing any quantitative aims. The indicative map

contains among others ecological corridors and biodiversity reservoirs. Measures to support implementation are mentioned for each rule, thus making the document action-oriented (Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison Lyon and Nantes according to criteria of Table 1

| Category | Lyon | Nantes |
|---|--|--|
| Direction of change | Institutional consolidation, limiting fragmentation, scale flexibility and administrative efficiency Pro-Development | Institutional consolidation, limiting fragmentation, administrative efficiency Pro-Development |
| Instruments for settlement planning | Quantitative objectives, priority areas, negative planning (nature preservation), indicative density values | Quantitative objectives, density values, negative planning (nature preservation), centres |
| Planning style | Regulatory and pro-active | Regulatory and pro-active |
| Spatial delimitation of the planning region | Several spaces overlaid, weak institutionalization at level of functional region; SCoT stable with minor extension | Stable (SCoT, <i>région</i>) |

The shift of regional planning in Germany and France

Direction of change in the last 20 years

The comparison of the two planning systems demonstrates that France has experienced more and far-reaching changes than Germany since the *Loi relative à la solidarité et au renouvellement urbain* (SRU) came into effect in 2000. We observe decentralisation and regionalisation in combination with more indirect state control. However, central government still has considerable influence. The principle of a non-existent hierarchy of lower levels is weakened in the field of planning with an emerging modest hierarchy of plans, but upper levels are careful to respect the autonomy of lower levels, as the practice of SRADDET and SCoT in Lyon and Nantes shows.

Planning documents on the regional level have developed greatly in terms of content (more environmental issues), binding power (from strategic guidelines to prescriptive elements and a hierarchy of plans), follow up (mandatory evaluation) and territory (now covering a large part of France; perimeters becoming bigger). The French state seeks to reduce fragmentation and implement a more consolidated form of territorial regulation. Local land use planning is upscaled to the intermunicipal level due to the small size of municipalities. The main drivers for this are austerity but also sustainability goals (Zimmermann & Feiertag, 2022).

Germany, in contrast, displays stability in terms of perimeters and institutional power of regional planning authorities. The rearrangement of regional planning in the Ruhr region stands out. Experiments such as regional land use plans remain rare exceptions. In the German cases, regional planning relies heavily on prescriptions of the state development plans and laws. This demonstrates the integrated multi-level character of the German system. Germany reveals an internal diversity due to the state competency for regional planning and the weak role of the federal level. In terms of changes, there is no nationwide strategy of institutional changes but there are incremental adaptations in the practice of regional planning. Environmental issues are becoming relevant (biodiversity, climate resilience) but coordination of land use is still the main purpose.

Planning instruments for the control of settlement development

In France, the relevance of maps is much lower compared to the statutory regional plan in Germany. In the SCoT, maps define the development axis and development nodes but not the precise zoning of land use. Open spaces and environmental protection zones are exceptions. The SRADDET only contains indicative maps. In Germany, the map is part of the binding plan and is fairly precise with a scale of 1:50.000 and a map base displaying even the outline of buildings. The control of settlement development is to a large extent done by site control, both positive (areas for settlement) and negative (restrictions).

Regional planners in both countries use density values to regulate settlement development. However, the density values are handled differently (even in Germany). In Stuttgart as well as in the French cases, density values are related to the centrality of places. In both states, priority is given to transit-oriented development. Stuttgart defines priority areas for settlement development based on a clear method with direct implications for the plan (map and text). In the Ruhr area this is done in a more indirect way. Goals for settlement development are defined in a more general way without density values or quotas. Still, the plan is based on precise calculations of growth for each municipality and these calculated growth potentials are transformed into zones for settlement extensions.

Planning style: proactive or not?

We see the biggest difference between the planning systems in the proactive planning style which is prevalent in France. The *projet*, which is a compulsory element of regional planning, and the ubiquitous availability of funding for plan implementation is unknown in Germany. The French regions are traditionally more oriented towards distribution of funds than regulative planning instruments. However, as the case of Stuttgart shows, a proactive style can evolve as well when existing opportunities are used and combined in a creative way. The region of Stuttgart is an exemplary case where the regional governance arrangement brings together a broad bundle of functions and this makes a pro-active and coordinative planning style possible. In other regions such as the Ruhr, pro-active measures are bound to informal and dialogic instruments.

Dimension of space

The emerging pattern of regional planning in France has three elements: the SRADDET as a strategic document with low relevance for regional land use planning; the SCoT as a genuine regional plan, and intermunicipal land use planning (PLUi), carried out by intermunicipal groupings such as the *Métropole*. In terms of perimeters, the French approach displays much more flexibility, in particular on the level of the SCoT. While this still raises the impression of an excessively high degree of institutional variability and fragmentation, the case of Nantes-St. Nazaire demonstrates that this can be handled. The city-region Nantes Métropole is the area where several (regional) jurisdictions overlap. We may call this a successful mix of fragmentation and integration.

In Germany, the perimeters of planning regions change only rarely and when this happens, major problems may occur (as the Ruhr region shows). Planning regions in Germany are on average larger than territories covered by a SCoT. Intermunicipal land use planning, which is becoming more common in France, is an exception in Germany (cf. Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of Germany and France

| Category | Germany | France |
|---|---|---|
| Direction of change | Limited change of policy goals towards sustainability goals No clear dynamic of institutional change | Institutional consolidation (plan hierarchy) Decentralization |
| Instruments for settlement planning | Control of settlement planning in regional plans, positive and negative planning (map), aims and principles | Development axis and development nodes, density values, quantified goals, maps mainly indicative, negative planning for nature protection |
| Planning style | Proactive and reactive, regulatory, coordinative | Proactive and implementation-oriented regulatory (though limited) |
| Spatial delimitation of the planning region | Stable boundaries of statutory planning regions | Overlap and flexible boundaries |

Rise or demise of regional planning?

The four case studies and the description of the two national planning policies show that there is no clear sign for the demise of regional planning in Germany and France. Rather, the reforms on national level in France and regional level in the two German city-regions on first sight seem to support and strengthen regional planning.

However, due to the institutional design of each arrangement the success depends very much on local and regional politics in both countries. The idea of territorial regulation and proactive regional development planning in France is still in stark contrast to the German idea of integrated spatial planning. Still, we can say that France is en route towards a more consolidated system that now shows clear patterns for plan-led steering of settlement development. We see limited convergence between Germany and France in this respect. However, variation within German federalism is high and to a certain extent we see more similarities between Stuttgart and Lyon or Nantes than between Stuttgart and the Ruhr region. Therefore, future comparisons of planning systems should take multi-level comparisons (Sellers, 2019) into account and avoid easy categorizations.

Funding

This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft under grant number ZI 1164/8-1.

References

- Baden-Württemberg (2002). *Landesentwicklungsplan*. Stuttgart.
- Bariol-Mathais, B. (Ed.). (2015). *L'expérience métropolitaine lyonnaise*. Collection Alternatives. Paris: FNAU, Gallimard.
- Béhar, D., Czertok, S., & Desjardins, X. (2021). *Au fil du débat. Faire région, faire France: Quand la région planifie*. Boulogne-Billancourt: Berger-Levrault.
- Berisha, E.; Cotella, G.; Janin Rivolin, U. & Solly, A. (2021). Spatial governance and planning systems in the public control of spatial development: a European typology, *European Planning Studies*, 29(1), 181–200

- Blotevogel, H.-H., Danielzyk, R., & Münter, A. (2014). Spatial Planning in Germany: Institutional Inertia and New Challenges. In M., Reimer, P., Getimis & H.H., Blotevogel (Eds.). *Spatial Planning Systems and Practices in Europe. A Comparative Perspective on Continuity and Changes* (pp. 83–107). London: Routledge.
- Boino, P. (2007). Lyon: le territoire comme facteur de métropolisation. In A., Motte (Ed.). *Collection Villes. Les agglomérations françaises face aux défis métropolitains* (pp. 42–61). Paris: Economica, Anthropos.
- Demazière, C. (2018). Strategic Spatial Planning in a Situation of Fragmented Local Government: The Case of France. *disP – The Planning Review*, 54(2), 58–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2018.1487645>
- Dembksi, S., & O'Brien, P. (2023). The quest for certainty: Introducing zoning into a discretionary system in England and the European experience. *Raumforschung und Raumordnung. Spatial Research and Planning*, 81(6), pp. 579–590. <https://doi.org/10.14512/rur.1695>
- Desjardins, X., & Geppert, A. (2019). Governance Rescaling and Regional Planning in France: Is Big Really Beautiful? In V., Lingua & V., Balz (Eds.). *Shaping Regional Futures: Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling* (pp. 121–132). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23573-4_9
- Diedrich, L., & Dahl, C. (2016). Ile de Nantes 2000–2010: A method for the meantime? *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 11(2), 72–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2016.1188576>
- Ducos, J.-P. (2015). L'efficacité environnementale des documents d'urbanisme : les Schémas de Cohérence Territoriale: Echelle nationale et locale: le cas du Maine-et-Loire. PhD thesis. Angers: Université d'Angers. Retrieved from <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01475750>
- Eichhorn, S.; Diller, C.; Pehlke, D. (2023). The Development of the Regulatory Intensity of German Regional Plans from 1985 to 2017. An Empirical Contribution to the Discussion on the Loss of Importance of Spatial Planning. *Raumforschung und Raumordnung*, 81(3), 207–24. <https://rur.oekom.de/index.php/rur/article/view/941>
- Einig, K. (2012). Regulierung des Siedlungsflächenwachstums als Herausforderung des Raumordnungsrechts. *DisP – the Planning Review*, 41(160), 48–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2005.10556906>
- Fédération des SCoT (2018). *SCoT et PLUi. Panorama au 1er janvier 2018*. Paris.
- Furkert, M., & Skowronski, S. (2018): Eine Disziplin im Wandel. Entwicklung, aktueller Stellenwert und Handlungsoptionen der Raumordnung. *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung* 3. Retrieved from https://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/veroeffentlichungen/izr/2018/3/downloads/disziplin-im-wandel.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1
- Fürst, D. (2010). *Raumplanung: Herausforderungen des deutschen Institutionensystems*. Detmold: Rohn.
- Galland, D. (2012). Is Regional Planning Dead or Just Coping? The Transformation of a State Sociospatial Project into Growth-Oriented Strategies. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 30(3), 536–552. <https://doi.org/10.1068/c11150>
- Geppert, A. (2014). France, drifting away from the 'regional economic' approach. In M., Reimer, P., Getimis & H.H., Blotevogel, 2014 (Eds.). *Spatial Planning Systems and Practices in Europe. A Comparative Perspective on Continuity and Changes* (pp. 109–126). Routledge: London.
- Griggs, S., Howarth, D., & Feandeiro, A. (2018). The logics and limits of "collaborative governance" in Nantes: Myth, ideology, and the politics of new urban regimes. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 9(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2018.1516508>
- Gustedt, E., Grabski-Kieron, U., Demazière, C., Paris, D. (Eds.). (2022). Cities and Metropolises in France and Germany. Hanover: ARL. Retrieved from <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0156-11198>
- Harrison, J., Galland, D., & Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2021). Regional planning is dead: long live planning regional futures. *Regional Studies*, 55(1), 6–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1750580>
- Henger, R., Schröter-Schlaack, C., Ulrich, P., & Distelkamp, M. (2010). Flächeninanspruchnahme 2020 und das 30-ha-Ziel: Regionale Verteilungsschlüssel und Anpassungserfordernisse. *Raumforschung und Raumordnung. Spatial Research and Planning*, 68(4), 297–309. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13147-010-0038-2>

- Hertzog, R. (2018). Inter-municipal Cooperation in France: A Continuous Reform, New Trends. In F., Teles & P., Swianiewicz (Eds.). *Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Europe: Institutions and Governance* (pp. 133–155). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Janin Rivolin, U. (2008). Conforming and performing planning systems in Europe: an unbearable cohabitation. *Planning Practice & Research*, 23(2), 167–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697450802327081>
- Janin Rivolin, U. (2012). Planning Systems as Institutional Technologies: a Proposed Conceptualization and the Implications for Comparison. *Planning Practice & Research*, 27(1), 63–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2012.661181>
- Klee, A. (2022). Zum Bedeutungsverlust der Landesplanung. In M., Miosga, S., Dudek & A., Klee (Eds.). *Neue Perspektiven für eine zukunftsfähige Raumordnung in Bayern* (pp. 59–75). Hannover: ARL. <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0156-4394046>
- Mahé, S., & Bois, S. (2012). Naissance d'un grand territoire. In A., Masbouni (Ed.). *Collection projet urbain. Estuaire Nantes - Saint-Nazaire. Écométropole, mode d'emploi* (pp. 18–25). Paris: Éditions du Moniteur.
- Moscarelli, F. (2016). La place de la biodiversité dans les documents de planification urbaine en France. *urbe. Revista Brasileira de Gestão Urbana*, 8(3), 407–424. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2175-3369.008.003.A009>
- Nadin, V., & Fernández-Maldonado, A. M. (2023). Spatial planning systems in Europe: multiple trajectories. *Planning Practice & Research*, 38(5), 625–638. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2023.2258568>
- Nadin, V., Stead, D., Dąbrowski, M., & Fernandez-Maldonado, A. M. (2021). Integrated, adaptive and participatory spatial planning: trends across Europe. *Regional Studies*, 55(5), 791–803. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1817363>
- NRW (2017). *Landesentwicklungsplan Nordrhein-Westfalen (LEP NRW)*. Düsseldorf.
- Ouvrard, P. (2016). Le nouvel esprit de l'urbanisme, entre scènes et coulisses: *Une ethnographie de la fabrique du territoire de Saint-Nazaire à Nantes*. PhD thesis. Nantes: ENSA Nantes. Retrieved from <http://archive.bu.univ-nantes.fr/pollux/fichiers/download/a889bf5a-0366-475c-a290-0408ffc91517>
- Parnet, C. (2016). Two faces of the city: Varieties of metropolitanisation in Lyon and Marseilles. In A., Cole & R., Payre (Eds.). *Cities as Political Objects. Historical Evolution, Analytical Categorisations and Institutional Challenges of Metropolitanisation* (pp. 241–264). Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12619>
- Purkarthofer, E., Humer, A., & Mäntysalo, R. (2021). Regional planning: an arena of interests, institutions and relations. *Regional Studies*, 55(5), 773–777. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2021.1875128>
- RVR (2023). *Regionalplan Ruhr*. November 2023. Essen: Regionalverband Ruhr.
- Salamin, G. (2023). The mapping of forms of spatial planning: An instrument-oriented tool for the international comparison of spatial planning activities. *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 30(1), 55–78. <https://doi.org/10.18778/1231-1952.30.1.03>
- Schmidt, S., Siedentop, S., & Fina, S. (2018). How effective are regions in determining urban spatial patterns? Evidence from Germany. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 40(5), 639–656. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2017.1360741>
- Sellers, J. (2019). From Within to Between Nations: Subnational Comparison across Borders. *Perspective on Politics*, 17(1), 85–105. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718002104>
- Siedentop, S., Fina, S., & Krehl, A. (2016). Greenbelts in Germany's regional plans—An effective growth management policy? *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 145, 71–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2015.09.002>
- Smas, L., & Schmitt, P. (2021). Positioning Regional Planning Across Europe. *Regional Studies*, 55(5), 778–790. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1782879>
- Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). Introduction: institutional change in advanced political economies. In W., Streeck & K., Thelen (Eds.). *Beyond continuity: institutional change in advanced political economies* (pp. 1–39). Oxford: University Press. Retrieved from <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoor-194981>

- Tilly, C. (1984). *Big structures, large processes, huge comparisons*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- van Straaten, F. M., Janssen-Jansen, L. B., & van den Brink, A. (2014). Delivering planning objectives through regional based land-use planning and land policy instruments: an assessment of recent experiences in the Dutch provinces. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 32(3), 567–584. <https://doi.org/10.1068/c1277>
- Vanier, M. (2018). SRADDET, la carte et le territoire. *Revue Urbanisme*, 408, 51.
- Verhage, R., Baker, M., & Boino, P. (2007). Strategic spatial planning at the metropolitan level: The case of Manchester and Lyon. In P., Booth, M., Breuillard, C., Fraser, & D., Paris (Eds.). *Spatial planning systems of Britain and France: A comparative analysis* (pp. 83–98). London, New York: Routledge.
- Waterhout, B., Othengrafen, F., & Sykes, O. (2013). Neo-liberalization processes and spatial planning in France, Germany, and the Netherlands: an exploration. *Planning Practice & Research*, 28(1), 141–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2012.699261>
- Zimmermann, K., & Feiertag, P. (2022). *Governance and City Regions: Policy and Planning in Europe*. London: Routledge.

