



The Danish National Spatial Planning Framework

Fluctuating Capacities of Planning Policies and Institutions

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Geography, Population, and Economy

Located in northern Europe, Denmark is the southernmost of the Nordic countries and consists of the Jutland peninsula and an archipelago of several hundred islands situated in the Baltic Sea (figure 9.1). Excluding the overseas, self-governing territories of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Denmark proper covers an area of approximately 42,916 square kilometers, roughly the same as the sum of the areas of Maryland, Delaware, and Rhode Island in the United States. A total of 66 percent of the land is used for farming and agriculture, while forests and heathland cover 16 percent. Urban zones and transport infrastructure make up about 10 percent of the country's area, and the remaining 7 percent consists of bodies of water, such as lakes, marshes, and wetlands (Statistics Denmark 2014a).

As of 2014, Denmark's population was about 5.63 million, with a density of 130.5 inhabitants per square kilometer. The population is predominantly urban. Approximately one-third of the population lives in the Greater Copenhagen Region (1.75 million), while an additional one-fifth resides in the country's next three largest urban areas: Århus (324,000),

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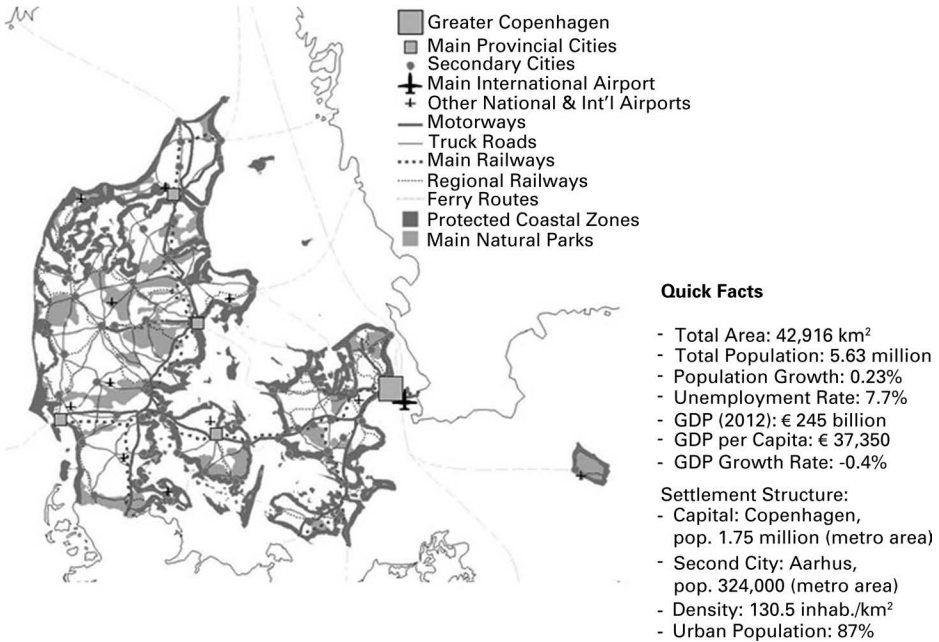


Figure 9.1 Map of Denmark

Source: Statistics Denmark (2014a, b).

Aalborg (205,000) and Odense (195,000).¹ Current demographic projections are that these four urban areas will continue growing in the coming decades (Statistics Denmark 2014b).

In 2012, Denmark's GDP was €245 billion. Public and market services accounted for 77 percent of the GDP, manufacturing and construction for 22 percent, and agriculture for 1.5 percent. Denmark has been traditionally characterized by high employment rates (72.6 percent in 2012 for those 15 to 64 years old) and low unemployment (2.1 percent long-term unemployed, defined as one year and over) (OECD 2014).

Denmark has a large public sector that should be viewed as the counterpart of the Danish welfare system, which offers free and wide access to education and healthcare. Subsidized by one of the highest taxation levels in the world (48 percent of the GDP), the welfare system has long succeeded in providing the population with a high level of well-being in material conditions and quality of life. Moreover, Denmark has an active labor market characterized by its so-called flexicurity model, which combines flexibility for companies to hire and fire employees with security for the

¹ These data refer to municipality populations.

unemployed at relatively high levels. This model has helped the country adjust to shocks while limiting the social cost of unemployment. The Danish welfare system, combined with labor-market flexicurity, has ensured low poverty and inequality rates over time.

System of Government and Administrative Structure

Since the enactment of its first constitution in 1849, Denmark has functioned as a parliamentary democracy headed by a prime minister and exercising executive, legislative, and judicial powers. The cabinet carries out the executive functions of the country and is composed of several ministers whose core responsibility is to head specific government departments (ministries) in charge of particular sectors of government administration (there are normally between 18 and 20 ministries). Among other tasks, the cabinet deals with draft legislation; proposals for parliamentary resolution; reports to Parliament; appointments to boards, councils, and committees; decisions on proposals from the opposition for legislation; and parliamentary resolution (Folketinget, 2014).

The Parliament exercises legislative power and is the only branch of power enabled to adopt legislation. Consisting of 179 members (MPs) (175 elected in Denmark, 2 in the Faroe Islands, and 2 in Greenland), the Parliament is responsible for adopting and approving the state's budgets and accounts. It also exercises control of the government and takes part in international cooperation. At the practice level, the Parliament is organized into 26 standing committees dealing with bills and proposals for parliamentary resolution. Among them, the Parliament's Environment and Planning Committee takes care of planning-related affairs.

Denmark has traditionally had minority governments consisting of two or more political parties, which have established coalition governments occasionally supported by nongovernment parties. The election system is based on the concept of proportional representation, and elections are carried out every fourth year, although the prime minister may call for elections more frequently. Since October 2011, a left-wing coalition has been in power, originally formed by the Social Democratic Party, the Danish Social-Liberal Party, and the Socialist People's Party; the last withdrew in February 2014.

Judicial powers are exercised by the Danish courts, which since 2007 have consisted of the Supreme Court, the two high courts, the Maritime and Commercial Court, the Land Registration Court, 24 district courts, the courts of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, the Appeals Permission Board, the Special Court of Indictment and Revision, the Danish Judicial Appointments Council, and the Danish Court Administration. The Nature

TABLE 9.1
Five New Administrative Regions in Denmark

Region	Population	Area (Km ²)	Number of Municipalities	Largest Urban Area (Population)
Capital Region of Denmark (Region Hovedstaden)	1,749,155	2,546	29	Greater Copenhagen (1.75 million)
Region Zealand (Region Sjælland)	813,795	7,217	17	Roskilde (84,000)
Region South Denmark (Region Syddanmark)	1,200,956	12,256	22	Odense (195,000)
Region Central Denmark (Region Midtjylland)	1,278,480	13,000	19	Århus (324,000)
Region North Denmark (Region Nordjylland)	579,972	7,874	11	Aalborg (205,000)
Total	5,622,358	42,893	98	

SOURCE: Based on data from Statistics Denmark (2014b).

and Environmental Board of Appeals is concerned with planning-related matters.

In 2007, the liberal-conservative coalition government then in power implemented a reform of local-government structure that changed the geographies of intergovernmental arrangements in Denmark. The reform merged 275 municipalities into 98 larger units, abolished the county level, and created five administrative regions whose main task is to undertake healthcare administration (table 9.1). This territorial and administrative restructuring generated a major redistribution of tasks and responsibilities among levels of government that had a profound impact on the Danish planning system (Galland and Enemark 2013).

Denmark has a decentralized system of public administration whereby local authorities administer most of the total public expenditure. The municipalities are authorized to levy taxes and are currently responsible for numerous tasks related to employment, education, social services, culture, and physical planning, among other areas. The regions have no legal authority to levy taxes and are dependent on central government and municipal funding. Both municipalities and regions are led by elected councils, which are elected every four years.

Evolution of National Spatial Planning in Denmark

In 1997, the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) contended in its *EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies* that spatial

planning in Denmark had a comprehensive-integrated character, a label normally attributed to “mature” planning systems (CEC 1997). This assertion essentially derived from the statement that the planning domain in Denmark consisted of a “systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, which coordinate public sector activity across different sectors but focus more specifically on spatial co-ordination than economic development” (CEC 1997, 36–37). Accordingly, the Danish planning system distinguished itself from several other European planning systems by its harmonized and coherent institutional and policy framework across different levels of planning administration. Table 9.2 presents the milestones in the history of national planning in Denmark.

Brief History of Danish Spatial Planning

The comprehensive-integrated tradition of planning systems and policies is mainly associated with Scandinavian countries. It explicitly seeks to deliver a certain degree of horizontal and vertical integration of policies across sectors and jurisdictions (CEC 1997). In this sense, comprehensive-integrated planning aims to achieve spatial coordination through a hierarchy of plans occurring at multiple scales. In Denmark, the birth of comprehensive planning should be understood as a direct response to the significant sociospatial challenges posed by the country’s industrial development and rapid economic growth after the Second World War. The most significant of these were urban sprawl, industry requirements for extra land, and a general decline in the living conditions of a considerable part of the population. Population distribution also became a relevant issue, particularly at a time when a high migration rate to Copenhagen left several other regions of the country lagging behind. This lack of balance and these challenges required the design of solid planning capacities and schemes aimed at rethinking the spatial arrangement of Denmark’s urban centers (Gaardmand 1993).

During the 1960s, planning per se was mainly a private exercise that dealt with the preparation of land development plans for single-family housing in suburban areas, as well as cottage areas along the coasts. The establishment of the National Planning Committee during that decade, however, led to the publication of an indicative planning exercise that specified areas for urban and industrial development, environmental preservation, summer housing, and agricultural production. In the 1970s, a territorial reconfiguration of the administrative division of counties and municipalities took place through a reform of local-government structure. The rationale behind this reform was that every new municipality embraced a single town and its hinterland. Based on the provision of goods and services, coupled with a hierarchical positioning of each center in

relation to others, this spatial pattern eventually replaced the former land demarcation that made a sharp distinction between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, this structural reform also led to the institutionalization of Danish planning based on the social democratic ideology of equal development, which called for decentralization as the means by which development needs (e.g., better access to public and private services that would have otherwise remained in a few urban centers) could be met throughout the entire country. In this sense, the Danish planning domain in the 1970s could be portrayed as “the spatial expression of the welfare state” (Jensen and Jørgensen 2000, 31).

Spatial planning underwent a period of ambiguity during the 1980s. The 1981 national planning report signified the peak of the long-term welfarist planning exercise developed in accordance with an urban hierarchy pattern aimed at securing and enabling equal resource distribution throughout the whole territory (Ministry of the Environment 1981). Toward the end of the decade, subsequent national planning reports were based on a neoliberal vocabulary that reinterpreted the notion of equality. Influenced by international agendas, the center-right government at the end of the 1980s thus played an important role in shaping national spatial planning policy along the lines of diversity and modernization (Ministry of the Environment 1987, 1989; Nielsen and Olsen 1990).

As national planning moved away from welfarist logics, regional planning remained confronted with the task of spatial coordination, as well as the implementation of the hierarchical urban pattern. The counties therefore continued to delegate key roles to specific cities and towns as providers of services and infrastructure development. Additionally, the counties assumed a cross-sectoral focus stemming from the need to balance multiple interests and objectives by delivering a sound spatial planning framework for municipalities to advance their own land use regulations. Binding regional plans defined urban development zones (e.g., for infrastructure, traffic, business development), countryside regulations (e.g., for recreational areas, nature protection, environmental resource management), and regional facility-siting objectives (e.g., for waste or energy facilities) (Galland 2012a).

During the 1990s, the objectives and contents of Danish spatial planning were significantly reframed. The Planning Act that came into force in 1992 replaced equal development with the aim to achieve “appropriate development in the whole country and in the individual administrative regions and municipalities, based on overall planning and economic considerations” (Ministry of the Environment 2007b, 5). This new catchphrase could be interpreted as an outcome of the agenda of international competitiveness promoted by European spatial planning policies at the

time (Amin and Thrift 1994; Newman and Thornley 1996). Spatial structuring and positioning of Denmark became influenced by more market-oriented and polycentric growth thinking. Notions inspired by a language of competitiveness replaced spatial concepts that were based on the logic of urban hierarchy (Ministry of Environment and Energy 1997, 2000; Ministry of the Environment 1992, 2003). Despite this policy discourse, planning at the national level continued to adopt regulatory measures in the form of planning directives on such issues as coastal protection and out-of-town retail development, as well as the EU directive on environmental impact assessments. These directives are still legally binding on local planning authorities.

A significant shift in Danish spatial planning was linked to the enactment of the 2007 reform of local governments, which radically reconfigured the political and administrative map of Denmark. In regard to planning practice, the reform transferred the counties' tasks and responsibilities to both national and municipal authorities. The new municipalities acquired responsibilities for town and country land use planning, while responsibilities for sectoral planning were transferred to the national level.²

After the structural reform, national planning clearly positioned itself in accordance with globalization. The 2006 national planning report stressed the need to renew spatial planning as a prerequisite for pursuing competitiveness demands (Ministry of the Environment 2006). In responding to these challenges, the report focused on promoting differentiated settlement regions, most notably on creating two metropolitan regions—the Greater Copenhagen and the Øresund Region—as one cohesive urban region, and to the Eastern Jutland Region, consisting of multiple cities along a single urban corridor. In principle, then, Danish spatial planning continued the strategic turn of the previous decade. At the same time, the reform brought an unprecedented planning directive for Greater Copenhagen, which could be understood as a case of recentralization that enabled the Ministry of the Environment to assume planning powers in that metropolitan region (Ministry of the Environment 2007a).

The 2010 Danish national planning report did not explicitly exhibit any particular spatial development tendency. The diverse settlement patterns and strategic spatial approaches adopted by former national planning reports during the previous two decades were abandoned (Ministry of the Environment 2010). Thus, the planning approach at the national level

² National and municipal planning were “strengthened” by one-third and two-thirds, respectively, in relation to the tasks formerly run by the counties, as calculated by the total number of civil servants who were transferred to these entities (Galland 2012b, 1390).

TABLE 9.2*Milestones in Denmark's National Spatial Planning*

1925	The first Planning Act is approved, but it is barely applied because the use of planning regulations involves an economic risk of liability for compensation to landowners.
1938	A new Town Planning Act is approved, which requires towns with more than 1,000 inhabitants to prepare land use plans that do not imply a duty to pay compensation to landowners.
1947	The Finger Plan is published, an advisory plan prepared by the Danish Town Planning Institute to coordinate the planning of 29 municipalities making up the Greater Copenhagen Area.
1949	An updated Town Planning Act is approved that is aimed at controlling urban sprawl. Urban development committees are set up for all expanding urban districts to provide urban development plans dividing the expanding areas into zones and preserving open country areas. This zoning forms the basis for the present zoning division of the whole country. Over the following 20 years, this zoning also forms the basis for many master plans of Danish cities and towns, and district and regional plans are voluntarily prepared for several development areas.
1959	Projection of the Great-H, a motorway system aimed at connecting the Jutland Peninsula with the islands of Funen and Zealand.
1962	The National Planning Committee is established. It publishes the National Zone Plan for Denmark, based on the zoning from 1949 onward and in accordance with land use areas.
1966	The Physical Planning Secretariat under the Ministry of Housing suggests a hierarchical urban settlement pattern based on central places in which cities and towns are assigned specific service functions.
1970	A reform of local governments abolishes 25 regional and about 1,400 local administrations and creates instead 14 counties and 275 municipalities. The idea of equal development is adopted in response to a discourse of an "unbalanced Denmark." The new counties and municipalities are empowered to levy taxes and to use the revenue to undertake a range of responsibilities that are transferred from the national to the regional and especially the local level through decentralization.
1970	The Urban and Rural Zones Act is approved. It divides the country's territory into three zones: urban, summer cottage, and rural. In urban and summer cottage zones, development is allowed in accordance with adopted planning regulations, while in rural zones, covering about 90 percent of the country, developments or any changes of land use for purposes other than agriculture and forestry are prohibited or require special permission according to planning and zoning regulations.
1973	The National and Regional Planning Act is approved, which specifies responsibilities and procedures for providing national and comprehensive regional planning.
1974	The Greater Copenhagen Council is created, but is given quite limited powers.

TABLE 9.2 (continued)

1975	The National Agency for Physical Planning is created under the Ministry of the Environment, and the first (annual) national planning report is published.
1977	The Municipal Planning Act is approved, with duties and procedures providing for comprehensive municipal planning and also local plans before implementation of any major development proposal. The planning procedures at the regional and local levels are based on the principles of decentralization, comprehensive planning, and public participation.
1979	On the basis of the spatial logic suggested in 1966, the National Agency for Physical Planning publishes the influential <i>Report on the Future Urban Settlement Pattern for Denmark</i> .
1981	In accordance with the 1979 report, the national planning report officially designates a hierarchy of urban centers for the whole country.
1982	A conservative government influenced by Thatcherite neoliberalism assumes office, and national planning enters a standby period.
1989	The national planning report asserts that the notion of equal development is outdated. Instead, the regions of Denmark should develop differentially to strengthen the country's position internationally.
1992	A revised and modernized Planning Act is approved that merges the regulation of the former acts on urban and rural zones, national and regional planning, and municipal planning into one piece of legislation. The National Planning Report <i>Denmark Towards the Year 2018</i> promotes the Øresund Region as the international gateway and leading urban region in Scandinavia. International competitiveness is promoted, and other Danish provincial cities are portrayed from such framing.
1994	A national planning directive on coastal protection is adopted. The directive establishes a protection zone of three kilometers along the coastline where any development activities are subject to specific coastal planning considerations.
1997	A national planning directive on retail trade is adopted that limits large-scale, out-of-town retail development. The national planning report <i>Denmark and European Spatial Planning Policy</i> adopts the idea of polycentricity, which creates new planning concepts based on the merger of former and updated spatial logics.
2001	A liberal-conservative coalition government assumes office and attempts to adapt the scope of planning to fulfill growth-oriented agendas.
2006	Influenced by the preparation of a structural reform, the national planning report <i>The New Map of Denmark—Spatial Planning Under New Conditions</i> portrays spatial planning as a tool to meet growth and competitiveness demands. The Ministry of the Environment advances initiatives to create partnership and dialogue among municipal councils, regional councils, and the state on the future development of two metropolitan regions.

(continued)

TABLE 9.2 (*continued*)

2007	A structural reform is implemented in Denmark that modifies intergovernmental arrangements by creating larger municipalities (98 instead of 275) and five new administrative regions. The county level is abolished, and its spatial planning tasks are redistributed to the national and especially the municipal levels. The former comprehensive regional plans are replaced by visionary regional development plans, while the land use content of the former regional plans is transferred to municipal plans. As part of the structural reform, the Finger Plan is adopted as a national planning directive to regulate and control land use in the Greater Copenhagen Region.
2010	Planning at the national level is chiefly aligned with environmental sustainability and sectoral agendas. The first national planning report published since the structural reform exhibits no spatial development tendency.
2013	In response to a number of criticisms, mostly from municipalities, national planning takes a more spatial approach based on the concentration of growth in city-regions, although the national planning report largely remains an indicative document with limited capacity for implementation.

clearly broke away from the differentiated spatial reasoning associated with previous planning.

However, the national planning report published in 2013 does attempt to articulate a spatial approach based on the idea of concentrating growth in the Greater Copenhagen Region and within potential city-regions located along the national highway system, the so-called Great-H (see Ministry of the Environment 2013b) (figure 9.2). In so doing, the report provides a national spatial structure based on ad hoc spatial analyses (such as commuting patterns) and also adopts a “green growth” discourse in relation to climate and the environment. It can be argued, however, that this report is mainly indicative because it does not provide any direction to meet spatial coordination challenges at intermunicipal and regional levels. The national level formerly had the capacity and competence to coordinate spatial planning across scales through regional planning, but it currently has limited resources to adopt such coordinating roles. Hence, except for the 2013 Finger Plan Directive for Greater Copenhagen, Danish national spatial planning continues to have a limited say in the implementation of spatial planning policy within the national territory. The diminishing power of national planning suggests that plans, policies, and reports at this level of administration are likely to have less say in future spatial development decisions (Galland and Enemark 2013).

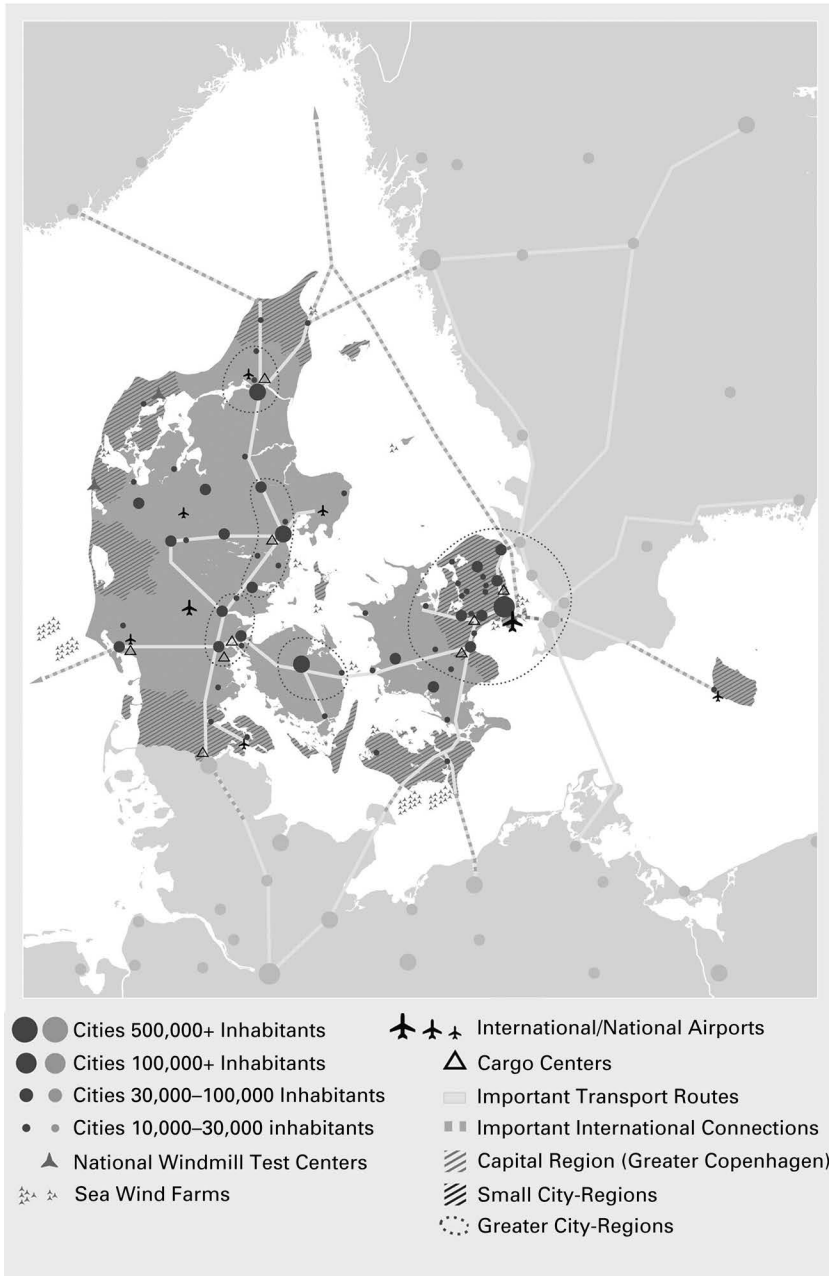


Figure 9.2 Government Map of Denmark in the National Planning Report, 2013

Source: Ministry of the Environment (2013b, 19).

Factors Shaping Danish Spatial Planning

Planning systems originally appeared in several Western European post-war welfare states during the 1960s and 1970s. Behind their emergence was the rise of “Keynesian welfarism,” under which capitalist states intervene to secure full employment and economic growth by linking the national economy, the national state, and national society (Jessop 1990, 2000). Planning systems and policies emerged in this context as spatial frameworks to tackle mounting socioeconomic disparities among regions. In regard to spatial concepts, these objectives were materialized within specific national territories (such as Denmark and Germany) on the basis of hierarchies of central places (Christaller 1966).

As the Danish case indicates, spatial planning agendas at the time were translated into plans, regulations, guidelines, and schemes dealing with land use allocation, urban expansion, infrastructure development, settlement improvements, and sectoral policy coordination, among other matters. The traditional conception of spatial planning in this and related European contexts could be understood as “the methods used largely by the public sector to influence the future distribution of activities in space . . . undertaken with the aims of creating a more rational territorial organization of land uses and the linkages between them, to balance demands for development and to achieve social and economic objectives” (CEC 1997, 24).

The downfall of welfarist regimes led to the establishment of neoliberalism, which sought to promote international competitiveness and socio-technical innovation in open economies. A result of this paradigm shift was that social policies became significantly subordinated to economic policies in allowing for greater labor-market flexibility. By the 1980s, spatial planning shifted to supporting new economic initiatives by replacing welfarist policy objectives with the promotion and regulation of distinct development projects, such as efforts aimed at revitalizing rundown areas of cities and city-regions (Healey et al. 1997).

In Denmark, however, this neoliberal turn took place more slowly than it did elsewhere in Europe (e.g., in the United Kingdom or The Netherlands). In contrast, the Danish social democratic state kept key policy sectors out of the market and introduced neoliberal policy adjustments in the mid-1980s to improve the performance of its accumulation regime (Harvey 2005; Jessop 2000). This fact helps explain why the underlying conception of Danish spatial planning at the national and regional levels remained essentially unchanged until the 1990s.

During the late 1990s and first years of the 21st century, in what was known as “the revival of strategic spatial planning” (Salet and Faludi 2000; see also Albrechts 2004, 743), spatial planning in diverse European settings

supplemented its focus on projects and land use regulation (Albrechts, 2001) with a new strategic emphasis on innovative place-making activities based on relational processes for decision making (Healey 2007). This new focus on place qualities meant that spatial planning policies were reframed as economic positioning to promote competitive cities and city-regions in European and global contexts. In Denmark, this shift was particularly obvious in the contents and orientation of national planning reports (Ministry of Environment and Energy 1997, 2000; Ministry of the Environment 1992, 2003, 2006), which were inspired by spatial planning concepts derived from *The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)* (CEC 1999; Faludi 2004) that to a considerable extent replaced the former welfarist logic that was based on urban hierarchies (Galland 2012b).³

Table 9.3 shows a series of economic, sociocultural, and political factors that help explain how the planning domain in Denmark and elsewhere in Europe has been shaped since the 1990s (Albrechts, Healey, and Kunzmann 2003). It is worth noting that most of these factors are connected to the changing conception of national and regional spatial planning in Denmark. Danish land use planning has largely been delegated to the local level (except for Greater Copenhagen), but its contents have remained largely unchanged. Moreover, political factors are intrinsically related to changing institutional arrangements, which have influenced all levels of government in Denmark, particularly since the structural reform.

The institutional arrangements of the Danish planning system have changed considerably compared to its original structure even though, in principle, the framework under which the national level steers local levels remains in place. The former steering role of the state should be understood in light of the welfarist conception of spatial planning and of the emergence of “classical-modernist” institutions, which sought to attain “territorial synchrony” during the postwar decades (Hajer 2003, 176, 182). In the transition from welfarist to neoliberal regimes, the state’s planning tasks and responsibilities have been transferred to an array of various actors operating at different administrative levels.

The abolition of the Danish counties and of land use planning functions at the regional level illustrates how the progressive loss of territorial synchrony and the “hollowing out” of nation-states (Jessop 2000, 352) have been “filled in” (Jones et al. 2005, 337) by “soft spaces” of governance (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009, 619; see also Haughton et al. 2010) occurring at regional and local scales. Examples of soft spaces are formal and

³ Denmark was the main Nordic contributor to the *ESDP* (Böhme 2002). Several concepts derived from this initiative were incorporated into Danish national planning policies.

TABLE 9.3*Factors Shaping Spatial Planning in European Contexts since the 1990s**Economic*

- Restructuring of production relations
- Global positioning of city regions through competitiveness agendas
- Widening of economic relations from local networks toward global relationships
- Rules applied by the European Union (e.g., rules for use of EU regional development funds)
- Fiscal stress of governments and the consequent search for partnerships to increase investment capacities

Environmental

- Ecological vulnerabilities and environmental constraints on economic growth
- Concern for quality of life and environmental consciousness

Political

- Decentralization of governance functions and new forms of governance and government reorganization (e.g., structural reforms of local government)
- Changes in financing local governments (need for budget sharing)
- Political/cultural emphasis on regional and local identity and cohesion
- New modes of territorial policy integration
- Discourses and practices of a European spatial planning policy community

SOURCE: Galland (2012b), based on Albrechts, Healey, and Kunzmann (2003, 115).

informal bottom-up initiatives that include public and private stakeholders working across policy sectors and administrative scales. Such initiatives in Denmark include regional growth forums and municipal contact councils influencing regional development planning, both of which are discussed in this chapter.

Several interrelated factors that stem from the implementation of the structural reform have put an end to decades of statutory (legally binding) regional planning. The most obvious factors are the rescaling of land use functions and policies, the softening of the Danish planning system, the emerging governance dynamics associated with filling in the regional scale, the emergence of soft spaces of planning and governance based on urban clusters and polycentricity (e.g., national planning reports of the Ministry of Environment and Energy 1997, 2000, and Ministry of the Environment 2003), the promotion of settlement and commuting regions at different scales (e.g., national planning report of the Ministry of the Environment 2006), and the explicit alignment of national planning with competitiveness objectives and nature-protection agendas (Galland 2012a, 2012b).

The Danish Planning System

The Danish planning system is characterized by a decentralized division of tasks and responsibilities. Since the structural reform in 2007, the Planning Act has delegated responsibility for comprehensive land use planning and regulation to municipal councils. The regional councils are in charge of preparing regional development plans to support spatial development strategies at the municipal level. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for safeguarding national interests through national planning (figure 9.3).

The Planning Act is intended to ensure that planning meets the interests of society with respect to land use and helps protect nature and the environment. It specifies the following aims (Ministry of the Environment 2007b, 5):

- To ensure appropriate development in the whole country and in the individual administrative regions and municipalities, based on overall planning and economic considerations.
- To create and conserve valuable buildings, settlements, urban environments, and landscapes.
- To ensure that the open coasts continue to be an important natural and landscape resource.
- To prevent pollution of air, water, and soil and noise nuisance.
- To involve the public in the planning process as much as possible.

Planning System Principles

Since its inception in the 1970s, the Danish planning system has been characterized by three core principles: decentralization, framework control, and public participation. The principle of decentralization has long been established as a cultural institution that strives for broad political and social consensus. As such, this principle is meant to ensure a fine-tuned relationship between national authorities and municipal councils. In this light, Denmark has a long tradition of delegating responsibility and decision-making authority to local governments. The decentralization of planning tasks is based on trust in the municipal councils, which must provide, adopt, monitor, and revise comprehensive spatial planning. The municipal councils are also responsible for delivering legally binding local plans before the execution of development projects, and for the control of land use, which is implemented through the granting of building permits.

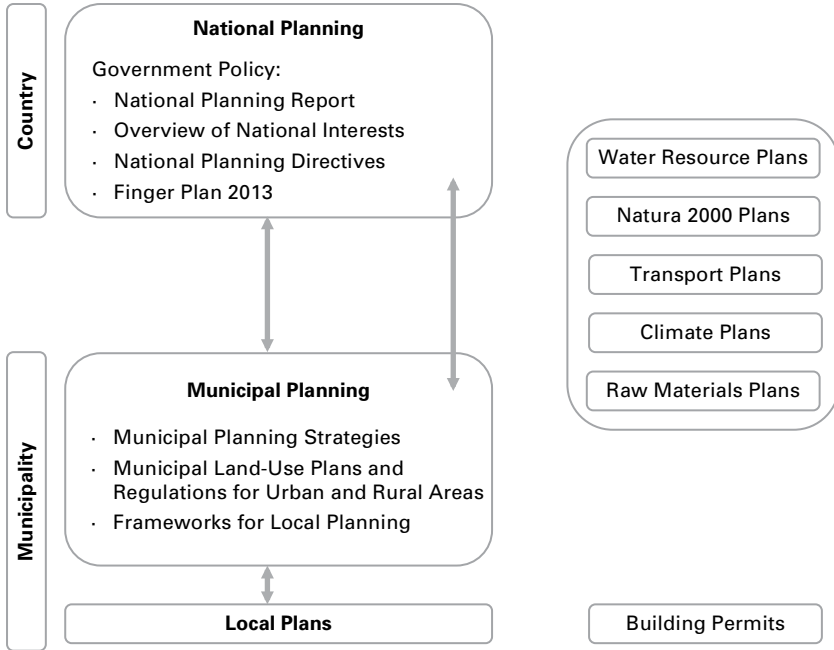


Figure 9.3 Danish Planning System, 2015

Note: The county level of planning administration, together with regional land use plans, was repealed in 2007. The so-called regional spatial development plans of 2007 were repealed in February 2015.

The principle of framework control is that planning decisions made at lower levels must not conflict with planning decisions established at higher levels. This principle is in line with the idea of coordinating interests across different institutional scales through dialogue and partnership. In doing so, framework control is operationalized through dialogue and veto. On behalf of the national government, the minister for the environment is required to veto municipal plan proposals that do not abide by the stipulations and interests put forward at the national level. At the same time, any municipality may object to plan proposals of neighboring municipalities if such proposals conflict with its development objectives.

Public participation is an important part of the planning process and is a significant democratic means through which objectives for economic development and environmental improvement are met. Together with local plans, planning proposals at the local level must be submitted for public debate, inspection, and potential objection for at least eight weeks before they are finally adopted. Particularly in the case of binding local plans,

public participation provides opportunities for public scrutiny before local changes of the spatial environment are made. Once a plan is adopted, it cannot be appealed, because the procedures of public participation are regarded as adequate to ensure the legitimacy of the political decision.

Zoning System

The zoning system, established in the 1970s, divides the country into three types of zones: urban, rural, and summer cottage areas. Development is allowed in accordance with planning regulations in both urban and summer cottage zones. Developments or any land use changes for other purposes than agriculture and forestry either are banned in rural areas or are subject to special permission according to planning and zoning regulations. Changing a rural area into an urban zone requires the provision of a binding local plan.

The Planning Act defines urban zones as (1) areas allocated to urban development as part of an urban development plan; (2) areas allocated as construction zones for urban development by a building bylaw (according to pre-1970 building legislation); (3) areas allocated to urban development or public use by a town planning bylaw (according to pre-1970 building legislation); and (4) areas transferred to an urban zone by a local plan. The act defines summer cottage areas as special zones allocated for development for such purposes by a building bylaw or a town planning bylaw, and areas transferred to a summer cottage area by a local plan. Finally, rural zones are defined as any areas other than urban and summer cottage zones (Ministry of the Environment 2007b).

Structure of Land Use Governance

The Danish planning system divides governance into national, regional, and local levels with a decentralized delegation of planning responsibilities that places most decision-making authority and its associated administrative powers mainly at the local level. Since the implementation of the latest structural reform in 2007, the Planning Act has transferred most spatial planning tasks and responsibilities to the 98 municipalities by giving them a high degree of planning control of urban and rural areas. At the same time, specific planning responsibilities have been reassigned to the national level. Table 9.4 presents the different policy institutions and policy instruments that constitute the Danish planning system.

National Level

The Nature Agency at the Ministry of the Environment has been the national administrative authority for spatial planning functions since 2011.

TABLE 9.4*Overview of the Danish National Spatial Planning Policy Framework after the Reform of Local Government Structure, 2007*

Policy Institutions			Policy Instruments		
Level	Planning authority	Number of inhabitants	Type of plan or instrument	Description	Legal effect
National	Ministry of the Environment	5.63 million	National planning report	National visions regarding functional physical development	Advisory guidelines and recommendations
			Overview of national interests regarding municipal plans	National interests arising from legislation, action plans, sector plans, and agreements between national authorities	Binding for local authorities. Right to veto municipal plan proposals when contradicting national interests
			Greater Copenhagen Finger Plan Directive	Establishes a framework for the spatial development of the metropolitan region according to spatial principles and land-use concepts	Binding for local authorities
			Other national planning directives	Maps and legal provisions (i.e., coastal zone planning; siting for wind turbines; location of natural gas pipelines and transmission lines)	Binding for local authorities
			Sectorial plans	Water and Natura 2000 plans, climate plans, and traffic plans, etc.	Binding for local authorities
Regional	5 administrative regions	~ 1,000,000 (wide deviations)	Regional spatial development plans (repealed in 2014)	Advisory and visionary plans	Binding for local authorities (until February 2014)
Local	98 municipal councils	~ 30,000 (wide deviations)	Municipal plans	Policies, maps, and land-use regulations	Binding for local authorities
			Local plans	Maps and detailed legal land-use regulations	Binding for landowners

TABLE 9.5

Timeline of the Reconfiguration of National-Level Planning Authorities within the Ministry of the Environment

National-Level Planning Institution	Period
National Agency for Physical Planning	1975–1992
Spatial Planning Department	1993–2002
Forest and Nature Agency (Spatial Planning Office)	2003–2007
Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning (Planning Office)	2008–2010
Nature Agency (Planning Office)	2011–present

It is responsible for facilitating the planning system and for monitoring land use planning tasks carried out at the local level. It advises the minister for the environment on planning issues and is in charge of preparing planning legislation. The institutional setup associated with national planning has been reconfigured several times since the Ministry of the Environment assumed spatial planning responsibilities in 1975 (table 9.5). Like its predecessors, the Nature Agency aims at using spatial planning to strengthen the implementation of the country's environmental policies while fostering spatial development through planning.

The Nature Agency represents Denmark in international cooperation on spatial planning and on the environmental impact assessment of projects, policies, plans, and programs. This cooperation takes place within the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as with planning authorities in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

The Spatial Planning Department is also consulted on planning projects outside Denmark. Besides the Nature Agency, two other entities within the Ministry of the Environment deal with planning matters, namely the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nature Protection and Environmental Board of Appeal. The former is responsible for implementing national policies regarding pollution and environmental control of air, water and soil, waste management, and environmental technology by administering the Environmental Protection Act, the Water Supply Act, and the Contaminated Soils Act. The latter is in charge of processing appeals of decisions made by municipalities under these acts.

Other ministries involved directly or indirectly in spatial planning decisions through policy intervention are the Ministry of Transport; the Ministry of Climate, Energy, and Building; the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries; the Ministry of Housing, Urban, and Rural Affairs; and the Ministry of Business and Growth. Since the implementation of the

latest structural reform, the capacities of national planning to intervene in local planning and projects of international, national, or regional relevance have been reinforced.

Regional Level

The regional level lost most of its clout after the abolition of the counties in the structural reform in 2007. Regional councils were deprived of their power in spatial planning and were mainly left with tasks and responsibilities associated with healthcare administration. In the area of planning, the administrative regions were tasked with facilitating the preparation of regional spatial development plans (RSDPs), which were meant to emerge from bottom-up, multi-stakeholder processes in collaboration with municipalities and other regional actors. The regions also handle responsibilities regarding soil pollution and raw-materials planning.

Appointed by the regional councils since 2007, regional growth forums (RGFs) are partnership-based bodies that have emerged as important arenas to influence the spatial development of the regions by fostering economic growth. Consisting of representatives from the business community, educational institutions, and labor-market entities and politicians from the regional and municipal levels, growth forums are intended to make recommendations to regional councils and the state on questions regarding the allocation of European Union structural funds. RGFs prepare business development strategies based on local conditions for economic growth, including the development of peripheral areas. These strategies are meant to be part of the foundation of RSDPs.

Since the implementation of the structural reform, an interest organization known as Local Government Denmark (LGDK) has acquired influence in planning matters at the regional level. As the member authority of Danish municipalities, LGDK instituted municipal contact councils at the regional level, which to some extent have functioned as competing planning arenas by developing political initiatives that foster intermunicipal collaboration. Municipal contact councils can be conceived as soft spaces of governance that serve to promote economic growth initiatives to influence spatial development at the regional level (Galland 2012a).

Local Level

Since the implementation of the structural reform, the municipal councils have assumed spatial planning and land use tasks and responsibilities, although the 34 municipalities within Greater Copenhagen must comply with the Finger Plan Directive discussed in this chapter. The newly assembled and larger local authorities have been further empowered to pro-

vide local solutions to local needs and to combine responsibility for decision making with accountability for financial, social, and environmental consequences of their decisions. Each municipality is obligated to prepare a comprehensive municipal plan covering its whole territory. In addition, municipal authorities have the right to prepare detailed and binding local plans for specific (neighborhood) areas in order to impose planning regulations. Moreover, municipalities must also provide local plans before implementation of major development projects. Altogether, the municipal plan comprises a framework for detailed local plans and for processing individual cases pursuant to the Planning Act, as well as other sectoral acts.

Key Planning and Land Use Policy Instruments

The Danish spatial planning framework consists of an array of planning and land use policy instruments that are developed by planning policy institutions at different levels. Table 9.6 provides a synthesis of these instruments.

National Level

The rules on national planning were originally introduced in 1974 and were significantly reinforced after the structural reform in 2007. As a whole, the national planning policy framework for comprehensive spatial planning and land use decision making is made up of planning reports, binding directives, rules, guidelines, and intervention in municipal planning for themes and projects of international, national, regional, and local interest.

NATIONAL PLANNING REPORTS

National planning reports set out overall spatial policies and objectives after each government election. The Nature Agency prepares these reports in cooperation with other relevant ministries and submits them as proposals with several thematic alternatives. Before the minister for the environment submits a report to Parliament on behalf of the government, a period of public debate is held during which municipalities and other stakeholders react to the proposal. The objectives of these reports are to provide guidance to the regions and municipalities and to set forth national planning policies on specific issues.

The contents of national planning reports and the discourses associated with them indicate that national spatial planning adopts distinctive roles and development orientations in pursuit of growth and development. Galland (2012b) shows how national planning reports, in liaison with other

TABLE 9.6
Planning and Land Use Policy Instruments

Plan	Status and Duration	Objectives, Form, and Use	Production
National planning reports	Statutory reports providing general guidance and policies; compulsory preparation after every national election	Sets out the current national planning policies and provides guidance for regional and local planning authorities. Their rationale, scope, and development orientation have varied widely over the past four decades.	Prepared by the Ministry of the Environment and adopted by the government
National planning directives	Statutory directives providing binding regulations on specific issues of national interest	Sets out legal provisions on specific issues of national interest, e.g., determining the path of natural gas pipelines and the siting of wind turbines and electrical transmission lines.	Prepared and adopted by the minister for the environment; binding on regional and local authorities
Finger Plan Directive	Statutory directive providing binding planning regulations; prepared in 2007 and updated in 2013	Establishes a spatial framework for the whole region by delimiting areas for urban development, green areas, transport corridors, noise-impact areas, technical installations, and other uses.	Prepared by the Ministry of the Environment; binding on 34 local authorities in Greater Copenhagen
<i>Overview of National Interests on Municipal Plans and the Right to Veto</i>	Statutory report prepared every four years before the process of revising the municipal plans begins	Determines the interests and considerations arising from politically adopted decisions in the form of legislation, action plans, sector plans, national planning decisions, and agreements among public authorities.	Prepared by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with other relevant ministries; binding on local authorities. The minister for the environment has the right to veto a municipal plan proposal if it conflicts with national interests

Regional spatial development plans (RSDPs)	Advisory, visionary development plans that describe the desired future spatial development for each administrative region; repealed from the Planning Act in early 2014	Portrayed as umbrella tools to inspire growth and development initiatives at the municipal level. In practice, RSDPs reject the aspiration to manage and control spatial development at lower scales.	Framed to emerge from bottom-up, multi-stakeholder processes facilitated by the administrative regions in collaboration with municipalities and other regional actors
Municipal plans	Statutory plans providing land use regulation; compulsory revision every four years, covering the whole area of the municipality with a twelve-year horizon	Sets out general and specific policies and regulations for land use in urban and rural areas and is the main political instrument for development control at the municipal level.	Prepared and adopted by municipal councils; subject to public consultation at two formal stages: before preparation of the plan proposal and before adoption; binding on local authorities
Local plans	Statutory plans providing binding regulations for local or neighborhood areas; compulsory preparation before implementation of development proposals	Sets out detailed regulations for future land use, including written statements and maps with scale between 1:500 and 1:5,000.	Prepared and adopted by municipal councils; subject to public consultation and objections for at least eight weeks before adoption; no possibility for appeals except in regard to legal issues; must comply with municipal plans; binding on landowners

national policies, have assumed steering, balancing, and strategic roles over various time frames since the inception of national planning in Denmark. For instance, by aligning with welfarist logics, national planning played a steering role from the 1970s until the late 1980s. However, steering was largely supplemented or even replaced by balancing and strategic roles during the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century. The balancing role can be interpreted as the reinvention of spatial planning as a policy domain characterized by the introduction of ad hoc economic and environmental agendas. In parallel, the strategic role arose after the adoption of European spatial planning concepts, which advocated competitiveness measures based on visionary strategies for spatial development.⁴

NATIONAL PLANNING DIRECTIVES AND RULES

The minister for the environment prepares and adopts national planning directives, which are binding on regional and local authorities. These instruments set out legal provisions on specific issues of national interest, for example, determining the path of natural-gas pipelines and the siting of wind turbines and electrical transmission lines. Planning directives can be used in different ways, such as planning for specific infrastructure projects and stating siting regulations for energy facilities.

In addition, national planning directives may also be used to regulate more thematic issues. For instance, after the introduction of planning directives for coastal-area protection and retail trade in 1994 and 1997, respectively, the Planning Act adopted straightforward and simplified rules for both domains. The overall rule for retail planning is that land designated for retail trade must be located in town and city centers in such a way that shops are accessible by all means of transport, particularly walking, cycling, and public transportation. Regarding coastal protection, construction within 300 meters of the shoreline is banned, and no new summer cottage areas may be designated. Within a protected coastal zone extending 3 kilometers from the shoreline, the transfer of land to an urban zone and planning for development in a rural zone are prohibited unless there is a specific planning-related or functional justification for location near the coast.⁵

⁴ Galland (2012b) provides a descriptive analysis of the history and evolution of national planning policy in Denmark.

⁵ An amendment to the Planning Act, effective in September 2011, has loosened planning rules and directives in 29 so-called peripheral municipalities to allow for more developments in rural areas and coastal zones. To a certain extent, this measure reflects the former (liberal-conservative) government's intention to minimize planning constraints.

GREATER COPENHAGEN FINGER PLAN DIRECTIVE

A special directive aimed at guiding the development of Greater Copenhagen was issued in 2007. It establishes a spatial framework for the whole region by promoting urban development in accordance with the principle of station proximity (figure 9.4). Greater Copenhagen can be conceived as one integrated region, including one cohesive labor market and common green areas. However, its governance has historically been complex because the region contains numerous municipalities (currently 34) responsible for their own spatial planning (Galland and Ferdinandsen 2013). The directive is based on the spatial conception of the first Finger Plan published in 1947 (Egnsplankontoret 1947), which vividly portrayed Greater Copenhagen in the shape of a hand that outwardly projected an ordered urban expansion along five corridors (the fingers) into rural areas to the west and north of the inner city (the palm) and in the direction of relatively nearby towns. This expansion was based on the idea of moderate population increase and housing stock positioned in function of suburban railway lines. The spaces between the corridors were to be preserved for agricultural and recreational purposes.⁶

In line with its predecessor, the 2007 Finger Plan Directive regulates land use in all 34 municipalities in Greater Copenhagen by delimiting areas for urban development, green areas, transport corridors, noise-impact areas, technical installations, and other uses. The directive and the Planning Act state that Greater Copenhagen is subdivided into four geographic zones: (1) the core urban region (the palm of the hand); (2) the peripheral urban region (the fingers); (3) the green wedges (located between and across the urban fingers); and (4) the rest of the urban region (where urban development is allowed only in connection with municipal centers) (Ministry of the Environment 2007b, 9–10).

Although the directive itself is not strategic, it does make explicit the overall objective of ensuring a well-functioning metropolitan area to enhance international competitiveness. The binding nature of the 2007 Finger Plan Directive and the handover of its direction and execution to the Nature Agency after the structural reform illustrate how spatial planning tasks and responsibilities have been recentralized. In 2013, an amendment to the directive expressed the overall political aim to convert Greater Copenhagen into a greener urban region.

⁶ The 1947 Finger Plan for Greater Copenhagen was the first comprehensive planning attempt in Denmark to address matters such as mass transport, industry development, housing, and nature preservation coherently above the urban level.



- Inner Metropolitan Area (the palm)
- Outer Metropolitan Area (city fingers)
- Outer Metropolitan Area (rural area)
- Transportation Corridor
- Green Wedges (inner wedges and coast wedges)
- Green Wedges (outer wedges)
- Rest of the Metropolitan Area (city area)
- Rest of the Metropolitan Area (summer house area)
- Rest of the Metropolitan Area (rural area)

Figure 9.4 Finger Plan Directive for Greater Copenhagen, 2013

Source: Ministry of the Environment (2013a, 13).

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL INTERESTS ON MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND THE RIGHT TO VETO

Prepared by the Ministry of the Environment in cooperation with other relevant public authorities, the *Overview of National Interests on Municipal Planning* outlines the aims and requirements of the government with respect to municipal planning (Ministry of the Environment 2011). Arising from political decisions based on legislation, sector plans, and agreements with other ministries, the report addresses urban development (including special considerations for Greater Copenhagen), energy supply, green transport, green growth, tourism and recreation, use of rural areas, and aspects of nature protection. These issues are discussed and dealt with every four years before the municipal plans are revised.

Published every fourth year since 2007, this overview should be understood as a core national planning instrument that municipalities should abide by in order to avoid a veto. As stated earlier, the minister for the environment has the right to veto a proposed municipal plan on behalf of all the government ministers if such proposal conflicts with national interests. Vetoes are made during the public hearing period, and the municipal council cannot adopt the proposal until the minister agrees to its content. A committee of state civil servants assesses each proposed municipal plan during the period of public comment to coordinate the state's viewpoints. A national veto can also be imposed on a local plan when national interests are at stake. Thus, monitoring, dialogue, and veto work to achieve a sustainable balance between the two levels of administration.

Regional Level

Introduced in 2007, but repealed from the Planning Act in early 2014, regional spatial development plans aimed to foster spatial development in close connection with business development. The RSDPs differed notably from the former physical, land use regional plans because they were only visionary, which constrained them to offer a simple overview of growth possibilities at the regional level. Thus, RSDPs focused on potential regional strengths within diverse sectoral areas, namely, business and the labor market, education, tourism and recreation, culture, nature, and the environment. As stated in the section on the structure of land use governance, RSDPs emerged from bottom-up, multistakeholder processes in dialogue with municipalities. The role of the administrative region was thus to facilitate the process of generating such plans. Moreover, RSDPs were meant to ensure the cohesion of a series of sectoral plans and strategies, including those for business development, employment, Local Agenda 21, education, and culture.

Business development strategies are prepared by partnership-oriented RGFs and aim at improving local conditions for economic growth. RSDPs were intended to ensure the cohesion of these strategic documents, which continue to be based on the strengths of local businesses within each administrative region. Prepared every four years, these strategies center on drivers of economic growth: innovation, entrepreneurship, education, and new technology. On the basis of these strategies, RGFs are intended to make recommendations to the state and the regional councils on support of European Union funds and regional development projects.

Local Level

The municipal plan is the main political instrument of the council for development control and serves as a strategy for both social and economic development and environmental improvement. The plan combines political objectives, land use policies, and the more detailed land use regulations within a municipal jurisdiction. Altogether, the municipal plan provides the linkage between national planning interests and detailed local plans. Municipal plans must be revised every four years.

Procedures for public participation are ensured both before and after the issuance of the plan proposal. Appeals can be made only in regard to legal and procedural issues; the content of the plans cannot be appealed. This also applies to local plans.

The municipal plan is not binding on landowners, but the municipal council must strive to implement the adopted plan. Proposals for local plans, as well as land use decisions in general, must be consistent with the adopted planning regulations. The Planning Act determines the procedures, the structure of the plan, and the minimum content of regulations, but municipal authorities still have wide latitude in their planning approach. Traditional land use regulation is the basic element in order to provide the framework for control of development and implementation, but the plan can also serve as a strategic means to link sectors and coordinate municipal activities, for example, in relation to urban regeneration, environmental resilience, and policies on attracting commercial development or improving the living conditions of specific population groups. The municipal plan thus summarizes the overall political objectives and development priorities of the municipality.

Beyond land use planning functions and regulations, ad hoc municipal policies address aspects of urban master planning (such as urban regeneration, waterfront redevelopment, and strategic planning for suburban areas). More recently, municipal councils have also begun to adopt climate plans.

The local plan is the main instrument through which the municipal authority issues detailed planning regulations while also the basic means for planning control through the issuing of building permits. The plans are legally binding on landowners and hence determine development possibilities and influence property values. However, local plans regulate only future transactions and thus do not require property owners to act. Regulations through local plans are hence not subject to claims for compensation, as they may adversely affect property value.

Local plans must be provided before implementation of any major development and construction works. This power and duty of the municipal authority is a crucial element of the planning system because it ensures that larger developments are subjected to the regulation of the planning system and the provisions for public participation before implementation. The legal provisions of local plans can include a wide range of detailed regulations as determined in the Planning Act, such as zoning status; use of land and buildings; size and extent of properties; roads, tracks, and transmission lines; building density and design; and landscape features.

Before a municipal authority adopts a local plan, it must provide at least eight weeks for public inspection and comments. During this period, state authorities may veto a local plan if the proposal conflicts with national interests. The municipal council then processes the comments and objections and may make any relevant changes before adopting the plan. Municipal councils publish the adopted plans in their websites and make them available on the national planning information system, PlansystemDK.⁷

Plan Implementation Tools and Processes

The Danish planning system is mainly plan led (rather than market led). Development possibilities are determined in the general planning regulations at the municipal level and are further detailed in the legally binding local plans. However, planning regulations established by the planning system are mainly restrictive. Although the system is designed to prevent undesirable development from occurring at any time, it cannot guarantee that politically desirable development will actually occur at the right place and time.

⁷ The e-planning portal (<http://plansystemdk.dk>) provides public access to all municipal plans and local plans (either adopted or proposed) across Denmark. The map-based interface provides a range of navigation tools, including address, cadastral parcel number, municipality, and area polygons. The system provides direct access to an electronic copy of the local plans. The e-planning portal also enables citizens to provide direct feedback on proposed development plans during the statutory eight-week consultation period.

When a municipality adopts a local plan, the development possibilities are legally determined, and development proposals that conform to the planning regulation are easily implemented without any delay. When no local plan is adopted, the basic condition for approval and implementation of development proposals is the extent to which the proposal conforms to the adopted planning regulations in the municipal plan. The legal means of planning control are sufficient in the sense that the system is able to ensure that undesirable development does not occur, but it also makes it possible for desirable development to take place even if it does not comply with adopted planning regulations.

Even if the means of planning control are in place, implementation may not automatically take place as intended by the municipal plan, because most development is implemented through private developers and investments. However, the municipal authority may, in some cases and under certain conditions, use compulsory purchase (expropriation with full compensation) as a means to implement a local plan. Expropriation can also be used to implement planning for public institutions and infrastructure facilities. The municipal authority may also adopt a more active role by purchasing land and property in the free market to achieve planning objectives in a longer perspective. In this way, the municipal council becomes the developer and can take full control of the implementation process (see, e.g., Galland and Hansen 2012).

The Building Act determines the final control of implementation through the granting of building permits, which must be consistent with adopted planning regulations (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs 1998). The building permit thus functions as the final stage in the planning control system. The Building Act also provides a range of detailed regulations of construction works. Larger development proposals are subject to adoption of a local plan that will set the planning regulations. When a municipal authority is processing a building permit to implement the construction works, it checks whether the project conforms to the adopted planning regulations and other relevant legislation, as well as the detailed demands for construction works listed in the Building Act.

If there is no local plan and there are no precise regulations in the municipal plan concerning the specific area for development, the development proposal must comply with the general building provisions stated in the Building Act. These regulations imply a minimum plot size, a maximum building density and building height, and a minimum distance from a building to a neighbor's boundary. These general building provisions serve as basic safeguards for appropriate development; they do not apply when a local plan states otherwise. It should be noted that the Building Act in Denmark belongs to the Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs (formerly the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) and therefore is not

fully coordinated with the Planning Act, in contrast to many other countries where planning and building control are integrated under the same Ministry.

Zoning and sectoral land use control provides additional means of development control. Development is allowed in urban and summer cottage zones in accordance with the current planning regulations. In rural zones, which cover about 90 percent of the country, developments and any change of land use for purposes other than agriculture and forestry are prohibited or are subject to special permission from the municipal authority according to planning and zoning regulations. These provisions are intended to prevent urban sprawl and uncontrolled development and installations in the countryside. In addition to the regulations already mentioned, there are a range of other rules that may affect the possible use of land, for example, the Agricultural Holdings Act, the Nature Protection Act, and the Environmental Protection Act.

In summary, the planning system in Denmark is a mix of vertical and horizontal connections through which national and sectoral policies are implemented from the top down and are integrated at the local level through comprehensive spatial planning. Monitoring, dialogue, and the national power of vetoing a proposal for a municipal or a local plan constitute the core means that make the planning system function.

Key Outcomes and Lessons

The discussion in this chapter suggests that the Danish national spatial planning framework has diverged from the comprehensive-integrated tradition that originally characterized it. In principle, a comprehensive-integrated planning system is meant to exhibit coherent conceptual orientations, as well as stable and coordinated institutional structures within and across the various levels of planning administration. However, the Danish case has shown that planning policies and practices embedded within the system are prone to constant shifts, as illustrated by the divergence of policy agendas across levels of planning administration. Since the latest structural reform, national-level planning has been mainly concerned with promoting specific sectoral issues; regional-level planning has focused on fostering growth-oriented strategies to facilitate regional development; and municipal planning has undertaken physical land use tasks and responsibilities in both urban and rural areas, including planning for climate change. The divergence in policy themes suggests a decreasing degree of spatial coordination and policy coherence.

On the institutional side, Danish spatial planning also seems to have shifted from its comprehensive-integrated character. The institutional setup of the Danish spatial planning system originally displayed institutional

comprehensiveness and territorial synchrony. In principle, these qualities seem to have remained constant in the graphic representation and the structural configuration of the planning system (figure 9.3). However, it is evident that the welfarist scope of this former state spatial project has been significantly altered since the abolition of the county level and the redistribution of planning tasks and responsibilities to the national and local levels. In this sense, the formal institutional structures of planning within and across administrative levels have become less consistent.

At the national level, spatial planning has gradually lost an important share of its former institutional clout, particularly under the rule of the liberal-conservative coalition government during the previous decade. This is illustrated by the changing institutional arrangements within the Ministry of the Environment whereby spatial planning tasks were abridged and transferred from the now-extinct Spatial Planning Agency to an office within the Nature Agency whose agendas certainly diverge from those that former planning authorities promoted. At the regional level, a fuzzy governance landscape characterized by the emergence of soft spaces of planning lessened the narrow reach of RSDPs, which were finally eliminated from the planning system in 2014. Last, the local level continues to be the core land use actor with strong legal means of planning control, although it is still subordinate to national-level interests and planning directives. A new hierarchical relationship has been generated between national and local planning authorities, one that relies on regulatory intervention rather than spatial coordination.

These policy and institutional shifts, as well as the softening of the principle of framework control, suggest that the comprehensive-integrated approach of Danish spatial planning is worn out. Whereas the scope of the former comprehensive-integrated version of Danish spatial planning was self-evident by definition, the current version entails ambiguous conceptual orientations and unrelated institutional capacities across levels of planning administration. To an important degree, the somewhat incoherent policy framework and the partial institutional fragmentation associated with the Danish planning system—demonstrated by its less related plans and less connected administrative levels—imply that Danish spatial planning can be exercised only through a local land use regulatory framework.

To understand Danish spatial planning as a whole, it is necessary to examine the changing planning rationale and governance arrangements through which shifting policies and competing institutional capacities seem to diverge from the inherited synchronized logic of the former planning system. Although the Planning Act continues to adhere to its former systematic logic based on the principle of framework control, there is a

need to redefine or at least readjust the institutional and policy framework of Danish spatial planning.

* * *

The governance structures and policy instruments of the Danish national spatial planning framework have been considerably transformed during the past two decades. Although it can be argued that spatial planning in Denmark is currently in crisis at the national and regional levels (especially in comparison with the domain's former clout and capacities), the legacy of planning is still embedded at the local level, albeit under quite challenging conditions.

From a broader political economy perspective, this chapter has addressed a series of factors that seem to shape the performance of the Danish planning system in light of its more recent structural reorientations. It has stressed that the comprehensive-integrated character of Danish spatial planning has gradually dissolved. This argument is supported by the impression that there is less spatial coordination and coherence across different levels of planning administration, and less spatial consciousness in most policy instruments (except for municipal plans and the Greater Copenhagen directive). In contrast to its predecessor, the current planning system pays less attention to the integration and coordination of policy strategies put forward by other sectors (i.e., the tasks and responsibilities associated with the now-extinct regional plans). This absence of spatial reasoning has evidently reduced the possibility for the planning domain to have a say in present and future spatial development processes. Hence, in contrast with the configuration of its forerunner, the current Danish planning system has less power to make plans matter.

Furthermore, Danish spatial planning has proved to have the capacity to align itself with prevailing government agendas. In this respect, spatial planning ends up reflecting the ideologies and interests of the government in power. Influenced by a wave of globalization and competitiveness agendas, neoliberal-minded governments have evidently favored the relative strength of specific economic sectors within the country since the late 1980s. In contrast with the social welfarist objectives of the 1970s, these governmental preferences in support of new sectors have indirectly caused spatial planning to be regarded more as a cost than as an asset. Therefore, it is evident that the Danish planning domain has progressively lost political clout.

The 2007–2008 credit crunch and the subsequent recession seem to have diminished further the significance and weight of spatial planning in Denmark. In view of the ongoing global economic restructuring, there is evidently a common perception among governmental actors that there

is less need for comprehensive spatial planning at higher levels of planning administration. Globalization and the accompanying liberalization of world markets have led to radical changes in Denmark's role in the international division of labor. As has happened elsewhere in Europe, the Danish manufacturing industry (which traditionally played a fundamental role in the country's economy) has become more equally distributed, and a considerable part of it has been outsourced to Asia. At the same time, other sectors, such as finance, tourism, and transport, have grown significantly. These economic shifts imply that the overall profits associated with the Danish economy relate much more to international monetary flows than they do to local production. Consequently, the need for spatial planning seems to have radically diminished (except for transport and infrastructure planning). It is also in this context that the recent structural reform can be understood as a state initiative to mobilize national institutions toward different forms of economic growth promotion.

The center-left coalition government that came to power in late 2011 continues to face the challenge of dealing with the economic recession. Therefore, a continued focus on economic growth agendas is very likely to remain in place. Based on these assertions, Danish spatial planning as conceived before the structural reform is unlikely to persist under its temporary setback status during the 2010s. At the national level, planning will probably remain less spatial and be deprived of its former societal and distributive capabilities. Instead, it will be understood as an all-purpose tool designed to promote specific sectoral agendas, such as the pursuit of environmental sustainability and economic growth at different scales.

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