



The Influence of Regional Policies on National Planning Systems

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My paper will examine the influence of regional policies on national planning systems. It will be stated that these policies led to an imaginary contrast between an underdeveloped rural periphery and an overdeveloped, urban centre. The power of these frames will be addressed by investigating the national planning systems in the Netherlands and Germany from 1950 till approximately 1980. These planning systems will be seen as social systems. Drawing on the theory of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, the questions are focused on the communication between politicians and planners on the national as well as the urban/regional level.

In both countries the interplay between actors resulted to the construction of urban-rural frames. Differences can be observed in the intensity of the frame. In the Netherlands a strong awareness of the 'urban-west' and 'rural-rest' was created, which led to a stronger frame compared to Germany. Within the perspective of social system theory, this difference can be explained from a geographical and political point of view. Because of the small size of the country, the symbolic differences between urban and rural characteristics could be exaggerated in the Netherlands. Within the Dutch political system there were fewer actors involved by matters of planning. As a consequence, the Dutch reached consensus sooner and more explicit compared to Germany. To conclude with, the paper will relate the decreasing influence of urban-rural frames from the 1970s onwards to the emerging field of 'peri-urban' landscapes.

KEY WORDS: Planning history, peri-urban landscape, development policies.