Urbanization and the Social Origins of National Policies Toward Sprawl

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Throughout advanced industrial societies, the dispersion of residence and employment presents potential problems for the governance of urban regions. Yet, as even a casual traveler through Europe and North America is bound to notice, local patterns of development in the peripheries of urban regions differ widely among nations. In much of northern Europe, for instance, a postwar pattern of urban expansion halted in the 1980s, while cities in France and southern Europe continued to disperse (Cheshire, 1994). Similarly, urban sprawl in most United States cities has far outstripped parallel tendencies in and around Canadian as well as most European cities (Goldburg and Mercer, 1986; Nivola, 1999; Sellers, 2002). Although most observers trace a large portion of these national patterns to divergent infrastructures of law and policy pertaining to land use and urban development, little systematic attention has been paid to the reasons for divergent national traditions of land use regulation. In this paper, I will argue that these traditions took definite shape in the vast wave of urbanization that swept across the Western world along with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Differences in the intensity and scope of urbanization during this era, in the place of urban areas in the contemporary national political system, and in the politics of coalition-building around the control of urban form produced divergent national institutions that continue to shape urban development into the early twenty-first century.

In North America as well as Europe, a wide interdisciplinary consensus points to the events of this period as a crucible in the development of forms for urban governance and planning. As Sutcliffe (1981), Rodgers (1998) and many others have helped establish, domestic efforts toward this end throughout Europe and North America comprised part of an international movement for political, social and economic reform within industrializing cities. What remains open to question, and even largely unexamined, is why this movement for reform of institutions for urban development produced such diverse national institutions and ultimately such divergent effects on sprawl. Histories of planning (e.g., Sutcliffe, 1981) have neglected the wider political and economic forces that help to explain these patterns. Rather than address the development of policy toward sprawl, comparative political economy has treated urbanization in relation to specific questions like the formation of urban working class movements (Katznelson and Zolberg, 1986), the development of political party systems (Bartolini, 2000) and the emergence of corporatist arrangements (Schmitter, 1982). None of these literatures has directly addressed how the social transformations linked to urbanization itself, and the political interests that emerged from this process,

affected the development of institutions for planning and urban policy.

This paper traces two ways that urbanization affected the emergence of institutions for control over land use in cities. Rapid urbanization and its consequences within urban regions gave rise to new, powerful interests in policies to control land use. At the same time, the shape of the infrastructures that emerged depended on the place of cities in the wider polity, and especially on the relation between urban and nonurban political interests. After an overview of the main national variations in planning and urban institutional infrastructures during this era, the paper will analyze how far each of these social influences affected these variations. The conclusion sketches the legacies of these earlier differences in contemporary patterns of land use regulation.

The Creation and Development of Supralocal Institutions

Across Europe and North America over the late 19th and early twentieth centuries, the main institutional instruments for the governance of urban form emerged and spread. This process differed widely among countries in at both national and local levels. Refracted through the divergent influences of subsequent periods, these differences nonetheless ultimately influenced later patterns of governance in decisive ways.

The politics of institutional development focused on the establishment of an array of tools that planners generally regard as useful for planning and regulation by public officials at the urban level. For the most part, these tools depend at least partly on application by local officials themselves. At the same time, many require either specific authorization or some other legislation at some supralocal level (whether nationally or at the level of an intermediary unit like a U.S. state). Even when this sort of higher level institutionalization is not essential, it may still encourage and reinforce local efforts. Full institutionalization of a national practice requires both widespread local application and some form of authorization or reinforcement at higher levels.

Several sorts of institutional innovations serve to indicate the development of institutional infrastructures for urban governance during this period at higher levels of government:

–authorization of local building regulation

–authorization for regulation of land uses (for new development, for other areas, either permissive or mandatory)

–authorization of public enterprises for transportation, utilities, housing, urban development

–authorization of expropriation for public purposes

–favorable formulas for municipalities to compensate expropriation

–rules to enable financing of publicly planned construction

–public subsidies for housing

Within urban regions themselves, local practices that develop elements of these infrastructures include:

–local building codes, applied

–local planning and zoning, especially when changes in preregulatory patterns of land use are mandated

–development of municipal enterprise

–active use of expropriation, other tools to pursue new development, infrastructure, land use protection

–sponsorship of public housing projects

Two general features of this complex deserve special attention for purposes of historical comparative analysis. First, most depended on initiatives and institutionalization both through application within cities and through legislation at the higher levels of states. Second, two types of more general legal institutions exerted a complex influence on the politics of institution-building at both levels. On the one hand, property rights for private firms and individuals often presented a norm that had to be altered for the national legislative supports for public control over urban development to be instituted. On the other hand, general rights of local governments often had legal implications across the board for capacities to develop public instruments for control of urban form. Property rights in particular linked a variety of potential interests and political forces, from labor and employers to homeowners and small businesses, to the politics of urban form.

Across Europe and America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century these practices spread widely. Following around 1870, the process emerged as a diffusion of innovations from the areas that initiated many of these practices, largely in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Remarkably, the patterns of innovation diverged from the centers of innovation in previous years. France had been a leading site of innovations in planning in the eighteenth century, and even in the 1850s under the authoritarian rule of Louis Napoleon had developed some of the ideas that would later spread. But by the start of the Third Republic the forefront of innovation had shifted elsewhere, and other cities would develop far more elaborate institutional infrastructures and interventions in the urban landscape.

Over the eighty years from the Franco-Prussian War to the start of World War II, the development of these institutional infrastructures followed several distinct institutional trajectories. In several instances, though not all, the patterns of institutional development shifted under the influence of the social, economic and political transformations that accompanied and followed the First World War. Taking into account both local and national institutions, we can classify these systems as *leaders* in the development of policies and institutions in this area, as *laggards,* and as *mixed cases*.

Leaders

In several countries, most of which continue to be regarded as the most successful in limited sprawl in favor of more compact urban forms, institutional infrastructures had already developed in both supralocal legislation and local arrangements at this time.

The German principalities of the Wilhelmine empire and parts of the Weimar

Republic emerged as international leaders in the development of the planning tools now associated with public control of sprawl. Building on legal authorizations for public intervention that the liberalization of the early nineteenth century had preserved, most German states provided explicitly for building regulation, land use control, expropriation, and limits on profits from land sales. Systems of municipally owned enterprises controlled much of utilities and physical infrastructure, and aimed at control of local land. Increasingly, larger cities exploited these powers, developing extensive local bureaucracies. Aggressive municipal annexation enabled regulation of growing urban regions within consolidated jurisdictions. In the Weimar period, despite a court decision that temporarily imposed greater costs for expropriation, localities to develop local planning, municipal annexations and massive new quantities of public housing.

In national legislation as well as local development of plans and institutions, the Netherlands played a similar leading role. The first national Housing Law, passed in 1901, contained both initial authorizations for expropriation and procedures for planning new or renovated areas. With extensions in 1921 and 1931, a full-fledged national framework for urban planning emerged. Already in the late nineteenth century, cooperatives had been developing new quarters of housing for workers. In the postwar period, especially with the issuance of the Amsterdam plan of 1935, major Dutch urban areas emerged at the forefront of models for movements in other countries (Robert-Müller and Robert, 1983).

By the interwar period and in important respects before, Great Britain had developed a similar role of leadership. The Town Planning and Housing Act of 1909 capped a half-century of piecemeal legislative developments that imposed procedures for urban renewal on behalf of health and sanitary concerns, instituted building regulation (1875) and established specific land use decisionmaking authorities for specific cities (Ashworth, 1954). If the Act of 1909 remained permissive rather than mandatory and applied only to new development, the larger cities had developed growing systems of planning and regulation, and planned suburbs on the urban fringe emerged as a regular practice. Following the war, as the jurisdiction of town planning expanded, powers of expropriation widened and new subsidies encouraged public housing, town planning came into its own. During the 1920s and 1930s Britain constructed approximately as much public housing as Germany, much of it in the suburbs. British cities had also initiated widespread practices of public ownership of companies engaged in the development of physical infrastructure.

Mixed cases

In a second group of countries, development of supralocal legislation remained mostly limited up to World War Two. At the same time, increasingly extensive local institutions developed, often with the participation of national political forces or more limited legislative enactments.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the UK belonged to this category. In Switzerland urban cantons and the cities within them, like Zürich,

developed extensive systems for planning, municipal enterprise and building regulation, though with less of the public housing in Germany and Great Britain. At the same time, little federal law emerged around the new practices, and even cantonal law remained largely confined to authorizations dependent on local application (Koch, 1998; Walter, 1994).

In early twentieth century Sweden, Stockholm presented an unusually developed exception to the general rule of limited local or supralocal institution-building around planning. Although the national government had by 1874 already passed a Building Statutes Act to regulate municipal planning, planning in the capital city dated back to eighteenth century reconstruction after a series of fires. Already in the first years of the twentieth century, prior to the 1917 law that set the terms for expropriation of land across the country, the city had begun acquisitions and annexations of surrounding land in an ultimately successful effort to control its eventual expansion. In the postwar period national legislation remained somewhat limited even as the capital continued to build an institutional infrastructure of public enterprises, and develop land use planning. Only the consistently delayed plans for redevelopment of the central business district remained stymied (Anton, 1974; Calmfors, Rabinowitz, and Alesch, 1968).

Laggards

Laggards in institutional development took several forms. The trajectory of Canada resembled those of the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland, but developments at both local and supralocal levels remained more limited. National legislation did not emerge, and even provincial legislation highly limited. Although the main urban centers of the early twentieth century--Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg--developed more limited and ineffective systems of planning and little public housing compared to the leading European examples, the local governments engaged in expansive schemes for public enterprise in utilities and public transportation (Léveillée, 1978; Copp, 1979; Moore, 1979; Van Nus, 1979; Levier, 1987). These organizations would contribute greatly to postwar efforts to limit metropolitan dispersion and its effects on the inner city.

In France, despite the well-known legacies of Hausmann and Napoleon III in Paris, and more limited parallels in a few other cities, a supralocal infrastructure that supported more widespread planning was also slow to develop before World War One. Despite the Siegfried law establishing institutional forms for lower- to moderate income housing companies and the introduction of limited authorizations for natural and historic preservation, even the Haussmann schemes for redevelopment had not sprung from an integrated land use plan. Under the early years of the Third Republic, the Conseil d'Etat applied restrictions on property to limit the effectiveness of planning and to impose heavy burdens of proof on expropriation (Heymann-Doat, 1981: 12-16; Gaudin, 1983: 125-150 . In the years before World War I, several efforts to introduce planning legislation failed (Gaudin, 1985: 25-40).

With the growth of legislation and a limited amount of local activity in

France during the interwar era, France emerged as a country where the ambition of national legislation to carry out urban planning far outstripped the realities of local practice. In addition to the Cornudet Law of 1919, which originally required plans to be issued for all communes over 10,000 within three years, legislative initiatives between 1918 and 1928 elaborated conditions for subdivisions, other laws established more favorable conditions for expropriation and governmental supports for public housing (Gaudin, 1985, 1983; Heymann-Doat: 14-16). But the relatively small number of plans drawn up and approved under the Cornudet Law typically had little effect on existing practices of urban land use. Even the ambitious plans drawn up for greater Paris were never carried out. The amount of housing built remained half or less than rates of construction in Germany and Great Britain, and public housing comprised less than ten percent of this total (Stébé, 1998: 56-57).

In the United States, institutionalization took the form of a further variation. As across Western Europe and Canada, planning and local public powers for control over land use furnished much of the fodder for early twentieth century debate. In addition to building regulation and the creation of public parks, eastern, southern and mid-western U.S. states passed authorizations from the 1910s and 1920s for planing and zoning. Yet in the United States not only did Federal legal constraints shape the formation zoning and planning, but the system of local regulation, professional authority and urban development assimilated those constraints into a distinctive system of local practices. The emerging institutional infrastructure, exemplified in such cases as *Euclid versus Ambler Realty* as well as other decisions that limited public authorities to regulate private property or profits from it, became incorporated as an assumed condition into the text of statutes, the operation of local business-government relations and the presumptions of emerging professional experts in the field (Rodgers, 1998, pp. 160-208). These constraints would persist and even be revived in the late twentieth century as a limitation on land use control.

[insert Table 1 about here]

The development of infrastructures of institutions for treating sprawl thus followed several systematically different paths in the formative period of large scale urbanization and industrialization in the West (Table 1) Leaders included the Netherlands and Germany, where institutions developed at the national and local level. Eventually Britain also developed national legislation to supplement and extend growing local planning activities. In other countries such as Switzerland and Sweden, more extensive institutional development remained centered in urban locales or jurisdictions. In Canada as a result of limited local or supralocal institutional development, in the United States and to some degree in France as a result of national institutional constraints based on property rights, planning and local public powers of control remained comparatively limited in scope.

Rapid Urbanization and National Institutional Patterns

As most observers have assumed, one of the most important causes for the development of infrastructures of institutions to regulate urban development was the unprecedented growth of cities throughout much of the West at this time. Like the industrial revolution itself, however, the pace, the extent and often the character of this urban growth differed widely among the countries of Europe and North America. These variations contributed to the different trajectories of institutional development. More widespread and more intensive urbanization during this era generally gave rise to more institutionalized infrastructures for urban governance. But urbanization alone cannot explain the variations in infrastructures that resulted, or the consequences where rapid urbanization was less widespread.

The need to address new or worsening problems in urban regions played an obvious role in this relation. Cities of an unprecedented number and size generated demands for physical infrastructure, urban services, housing and management. Rapidly expanding urban populations of poor, inadequately housed and badly served workers faced the worst difficulties, but urbanization brought new problems for even the most privileged classes. Beyond functional needs themselves, however, the political interests that mobilized around those needs were crucial to institutionalization. Various studies have traced diverse elements of the cross-national reform movement that emerged across the Western world at this time: working class movements and parties (Katznelson and Zolberg, 1986), social science knowledge (Kloppenburg, 1988), middle-class movements for urban policy (Rodgers, 1998; Topalov 1998), and more specifically urban planning (Sutcliffe, 1981). Usually based in the urban or urbanizing areas of each country, powerful domestic interests linked to these movements usually played a crucial role in the process of institutionalization. New policies and institutions created at this time redefined and often reinforced these interests.

This broad an international process is rarely uniform. Under the influence of different patterns of urbanization, it would be logical to expect that institutionalization of infrastructures for the governance of sprawl would vary. Less rapid urbanization should create fewer problems, less effective mobilization, less power for urban interests and ultimately less elaborate institutional infrastructures. By the same token, less extensive urbanization would generate less need for, and less powerful political mobilization around, institutionalization at the national level. Rapid, extensive urbanization should give rise to the biggest problems and the strongest political movements, and ultimately the most institutionalized infrastructures at both supralocal and urban levels.

National urban historical statistics furnish a rough measure of the comparative magnitude of urbanization, and thus of the extent this process of institutionalization took place. It remains impossible to separate out urbanization as a cause of institutionalization from the process of institutionalization itself. Not only do the figures for urban populations reflect the application of such tools as municipal annexations directly, but any longer term trend in urban growth will inevitably mirror the influence of urban policies and the accompanying institutions.

But even a process of urban growth that could be traced entirely to policies and institutions rather than, say, the operation of markets should still lead to the institutionalization of an infrastructure for control of sprawl.

The patterns of urbanization separate out into several types with distinct implications for the rise of urban interests. One of the most striking was common to the two countries that institutionalized two of the most opposed systems of supranational institutions at this time. In both Germany and the United States, following the rapid economic expansion associated with the similarly dramatic industrial revolutions, the number of cities grew most dramatically (Flora 1983; United States Census Bureau 2001). In Germany the number of cities over 100,000 grew from 16 in 1880 to 60 in 1940, as the urban population in the largest cities expanded more than threefold. In the United States number of large cities exploded form 20 in 1880 to 97 in 1930, as the population of the largest cities expanded fourfold. In both countries, rates of urban population growth also persisted at high rates up to the period immediately after World War One. Aggressive municipal annexation in both countries contributed to these trends. By the 1930s in the United States, the leveling off of this expansion reflects the onset of large-scale suburbanization as well as the economic slowdown of the depression. Each country had by this time established critical institutional conditions that would guide policy toward sprawl. Clearly it was not the rapidity or scale of urbanization that determined the very different institutions thus established.

With the only comparably large number of cities, but much less rapid trends toward urban growth Great Britain (represented in these statistics by figures for England and Wales only) diverged significantly from this trajectory (Flora 1983). The institutionalization of national policy here, however, resulted from a process of urban growth that followed a much earlier and more gradual industrial revolution. Already at the end of the eighteenth century, towns in the industrial regions of northern England had begun to expand, leaving the eight cities in England and Wales over 100,000 in 1850 in any country (except for the not yet unified German territories). If the expansion of larger English cities from 1800 to 1850 remained more gradual than the rates that would later transform Germany and the United States, it outstripped rates in most other countries during this time. After World War I, growth in the biggest British cities leveled off. This trend partly reflected the success of efforts to shift new growth to planned developments in suburban communities. Even the sizeable amounts of public (council) housing built during this era consisted largely of homes built in these peri-urban areas.

Rapid urbanization could also concentrate in only a few cities. In all of the countries with smaller land areas, but even large, sparsely inhabited countries like Canada or Sweden, capital cities and no more than 3-4 others monopolized an urban expansion often even more dramatic than in Germany and the United States (Flora 1983; Statistics Canada 2001). Although usually linked to rapid industrial growth, urban transformations in these countries was also often linked to the expansion of services and administration in capital cities or regional governmental centers. In Canada and Switzerland, federalism also enabled introductions of the

institutional infrastructure for urban governance to remain confined to the most urban jurisdictions. More limited urbanization produced fewer national conflicts over urban problems, and more limited national institutional infrastructures.

In a final category, France like Italy already boasted networks of larger cities at the beginning of this era (Flora 1983). But in both countries the number remained, far below the rising totals in the other larger countries, growing in Italy from 11 to 23 between 1881 and 1936 and in France from 9 in 1876 to 18 in 1936. The largest cities themselves growth only modestly over this period, less than doubling in population even as populations in other countries grew from three to nine times. In much of France as in Italy, the economic modernization associated with the industrial revolution would in many respects come only after World War Two. The more limited transformation and growth of cities created more limited urban problems and less powerful urban interests with interests in addressing those problems at the national scale. These conditions help to account for the failure to carry out national legislation locally. In each instance, this explanation raises the question of what produced national legislation at all.

[insert Table 2 about here]

Although rapid urbanization was itself partly the consequence of policies and institutions, the new social groups and economic interests that emerged from it would ultimately shape these institutions (Table 2). In the absence of this social transformation, these interests in national and local land use policy would neither mobilize nor acquire power. The policy imperatives linked to greater or lesser urban problems had parallel significance. The more extensive the urbanization, the more pronounced these concerns and the mobilized and powerful the accompanying interests. For all of these reasons, lower overall urbanization provides ample explanation of why France remained a comparative laggard in urban policy of this era. Less extensive urbanization also explains the mixed cases of Sweden and Switzerland and the laggard status of Canada. By the same logic, rapid and extensive urbanization would seem to account for the leadership of Germany in this area. Yet major variations clearly defy this sort of explanation. Above all, the United States poses the most glaring anomaly. There, in seeming defiance of the pattern in the other countries, the most extensive and rapid urbanization produced a laggard in the development of institutional infrastructures for control of sprawl. In the Netherlands too, however, the rapid but limited urbanization corresponded more to the patterns in the mixed cases than in the other leaders. And the laggard case of Canada differs little from the two cases of mixed success.

National Constituencies in the Development of Urban Policy

One place to look in order to account for these anomalies is the place of cities in the wider social and political configurations of national polities. Even constituencies in rapidly growing cities could still constitute a minority within the

wider society. Even pressing urban problems would furnish less of preoccupation for a society that remained predominantly rural. An analysis of urban influences that takes these wider configurations into account reinforces much of the conclusions from urbanization itself. At the same time this expanded analysis improves upon the explanation of institutional development in such settings as the United States, it raises further questions about the sources of institutional development in this and other cases.

As the second half of the twentieth century would confirm, all Western societies at this time stood on the brink of several long-term secular trends that would transform the national political constituencies and political interests concerned with urban policy. In England as early as the eighteenth century, and elsewhere throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth, predominantly agrarian economies gave way to manufacturing and ultimately service bases. Mainly rural and small-town patterns of settlement metamorphosed into urban and peri-urban forms. And with the decline in family farms, artisanal trades and independently run stores, large firms increasingly dominated workforces.

In general, these trends eroded several types of political constituencies potentially opposed to the establishment of institutional resources for urban governance. The institutional core of this potential opposition centered around various sorts of protections on rights to property. Agricultural proprietors, in most instances small family farmers, depended on secure rights to the land they owned for their entire livelihood. In small towns as well as rural communities, most families also owned their own homes, and had little interest in giving up rights and resources vested in this property. Small, traditional family shops or artisans also typically sank the biggest proportion of their costs into, say, a neighborhood or small-town store. For these groups, the transformations of property rights that was crucial to the development of infrastructures of urban governance, and ultimately the urban transformations that this governance promised to reinforce, posed immediate and direct threats. Wherever these groups continued to dominate national politics, advocates of planning and other authorizations for urban policy found themselves forced to compromise or give up ambitions for effective legislation.

Inevitably, different pre-existing regimes of property rights influenced the accommodations between these small non-urban and propertied interests and advocates of planning. Yet transformations of legal and organizational regimes accompanied urbanization in all these countries, and pre-existing institutions themselves did not dictate the outcomes. Rather, the patterns of new institutions outline in the first part of this paper corresponded to several different combinations of national constituencies.

Urban Dominance

In the leading countries of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, national urban interests clearly stood in a position to dominate national agendas. Even if urbanization had been less rapid in the U.K. and less extensive in the Netherlands,

the national development of planning at this time faced little remaining basis of opposition from the rural, agricultural, or small property-owning sectors.

In Britain, efforts to develop urban policy instruments faced a much less powerful array of non-urban or small property interests at the national scale than in any other larger country. Already in 1890, the proportion of the population living in places with populations under 5,000 had already fallen below 50 percent (Flora 1983). Both farmers and the self-employed also remained only small constituencies, with around 10 percent or less of the workforce (Flora 1983). The urban working class movements and middle class reformers who sought to develop systems of effective urban governance (Katznelson, 1986; Rodgers, 1998) thus met with less resistance than they would elsewhere. Little effective political opposition mobilized against the initial Planning and Housing Act of 1909, the expansion of planning and housing authorities during the interwar period, or the widely implemented strategy of suburban council housing that emerged at this time.

In the Netherlands, despite a larger proportion of employers and self-employed, urban interests dominated even more. The comparatively small land area of the country virtually assured that the political forces generated by rapid urbanization based in the future Randstad would confront nonurban interests of limited size and modest political clout. Even in the early 1900s the smallest places there already housed under 30 percent of the population, and the proportion in agriculture had fallen to 20 percent (Flora 1983). As in Britain, middle and working class movements to develop infrastructures for the governance of urban form faced little effective opposition from nonurban interests. More than in Britain, rapid urbanization hastened the development of these infrastructures.

Nonurban Dominance

In France, taking national constituencies into account highlights an additional source of the lag in development of infrastructures for planning. Here, since urbanization continued at much slower rates than elsewhere despite the presence of large cities, interests opposed to the development of infrastructures for the governance of urban form remained up to World War One in a position to impose important constraints on efforts to develop urban policy. Even throughout the interwar era, although significant legislation passed, local institutional development and implementation remained highly limited.

In the France of the Third Republic, the leading political and social constituencies posed even greater obstacles to effective urban policy than in the United States. Rural and small-town populations (in places under 5,000) significantly outnumbered residents of larger towns and cities, remaining a majority of the population into the 1930s. Over forty percent of the workforce remained in agriculture. And as much as forty-five percent of the workforce, including majorities in both commerce and farming, either owned their own businesses or were self-employed (Flora 1983). Especially before the first World War, the combination of rural and propertied interests maintained a decisive voice

in opposition to the efforts of a vocal reform movement to develop instruments for public planning. Gaudin (1983: 125-130) attributes the stalemate in planning legislation to the decisive voice of rural elites in the indirectly elected Senate of the Third Republic, and to agricultural interests in the maintenance of property rights to reallocate rural land. It was only after the war, as wartime damage posed new challenges, rural and farm constituencies shrank and shantytowns expanded on the outskirts of Paris, that reformers succeeded in the national legislative process. Even then the Senate, where rural interests dominated, contributed to weakening the legislation. And both this legislation and the ambitious plans developed under it for the planned construction of Paris and other cities would fail to come to fruition before World War Two intervened.

Nonurban Dominance and Powerful Urban Interests

For the United States, parallel nonurban and anti-urban constituencies and priorities at the national level provide an explanation for why urban interests also failed to develop strong institutions for planning and related activities. Here, efforts to cope with rapid, large-scale urbanization in fact confronted powerful nonurban interests and agendas that would constrain the local opportunities for more extensive planning and related policies.

Although inherited institutions here furnished neither incentives nor political resources to facilitate the development of infrastructures for public control, efforts to change this system also confronted large constituencies with agendas opposed or unrelated to planning. Nonurban interests remained more dominant for longer than in the leading countries. Although nonurban populations declined, the U.S. statistics, based on a minimum urban population of 2,500 rather than 5,000, actually indicate a significantly higher proportion of the population remaining in non-urban places. Even based on this indicator, the proportion of the population in nonurban settings only fell below half shortly before 1920. An indicator based on a population of 5,000 might not have demonstrated an urban majority until after World War II (United States Census Bureau 2001). Although the population in agriculture declined at a moderately rapid rate compared to elsewhere (United States Department of Agriculture 2001), the farm and small-town commercial sectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century United States remained largely in the hands of small proprietors and the self-employed. Small businesses and farmers furnished powerful political constituencies for maintaining strong property rights against incursions on behalf of planning, public enterprises and public land ownership. Republican predominance in the party system of 1896 established an alliance between elements of these reform movements, business interests, and nonurban farmers and small businesses that would persist up to the Great Depression (Bensel, 1997). This configuration lay behind the development of property rights restrictions that continued to set limits on public prerogatives for zoning and urban policy.

Mixed Urban-Nonurban Dominance

For other countries, however, the balance of interests and constituencies at the national level into account prompts additional questions. For Germany prior to World War I, a view of national highlights some of the same obstacles that confronted efforts to develop institutions of planning in the United States. Only around the time the war arrived, and most unmistakably during the interwar period, did rural, agricultural and small propertied interests lose their predominance in the economy and society. Taking other dimensions of politics and institutions and perhaps even further conditions into account seems essential to explain how Germany emerged throughout the early twentieth century as a leader alongside Great Britain and the Netherlands.

In the Weimar Republic, the increasingly predominant urban areas and interests provided a bulwark of support for the major advances toward this infrastructure. The rural and small-town portion of the population fell below half, the agricultural workforce declined to 30 percent of the total, and the proportion of business owners or self-employed in the workforce stood below twenty percent (Flora 1983). But the most dramatic urbanization, and the leading role of German territories in the development of urban planning and other organizations, had emerged in the last decades of the Wilhelmine Empire. At this time as much as sixty percent of the German population lived in rural areas or villages, and the farm workforce constituted just under 40 percent of the national total. The development of leading institutions in Germany thus poses a puzzle. How could infrastructures for the public control of urban land have developed in the face of these predominant nonurban constituencies?

A combination of institutions and coalition-building offers a solution to this puzzle. As Sutcliffe (1981) has pointed out, local officials committed to the development of professionalized expertise generally occupied a more powerful position in the development of policy in the German state. In addition to bureaucratic forms of public and professional authority, the autocratic features of the Wilhelmine state and longstanding official legal authorities to set the terms of private property rights reinforced this position. At the same time, even a bureaucratic authoritarian regime like the Wilhelmine Empire had to reach some form of accommodation with powerful nonurban interests. Decentralized authorities for matters of planning and urban development within the empire made this accommodation more essential in some parts of the Empire than in others. In the more urbanized western German provinces like Saxony, the increasing marginality of landed and rural interests enabled innovations to develop relatively unimpeded (Richter, 1994). Provinces like Prussia, where the biggest proportion of rural eastern Germany lay, accommodation with nonurban interests was more crucial (Gramke, 1972). As larger enterprises already dominated much of retail commerce, small business owners made up a smaller proportion of the economy than in any country besides Great Britain (Figure 5). The alliance of large agricultural producers with large manufacturers shared interests in the development of cities as centers for economies of scale in consumption as well as production.

Explanations of this sort call on additional political variables beyond urban interests or national constituencies to account for German leadership. To account for other national variations necessitates a parallel attention to politics and the state.

Nonurban Dominance and Limited but Mobilized Urban Interests

In the remaining countries considered here, rapid urbanization confronted more dominant non-urban interests. Although a few cities in Canada, Switzerland and Sweden had grown at rates comparable to the highest ones anywhere else, urbanization in these countries before World War Two proved much less extensive than in Germany or in the United States. In all of these countries as in France and most likely the United States, over half of the population remained in places under 5,000 up to the eve of World War II (Flora 1983; Statistics Canada 2001). At the same time, the development of institutional framework for planning and governance in these countries centered at the local level in a few urban regions.

Crucial links between urbanization and institutional development here took the form either of institutional authorities or of political coalition-building. Empowered under a federal system, the most urban Swiss cantons like Zurich and Geneva developed institutional frameworks for jurisdictions that encompassed single metropolitan areas (Koch, 1998). By the same token, although the more urbanized Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec passed limited planning authorizations, the main institutional developments there centered in the major urban areas of Toronto and Montreal. In Sweden, where most early institution-building for planning also took place locally, other means enabled the accommodation of urban interests with powerful rural ones around national legislative authorizations. The special status of the Stockholm as the national capital may have furnished at least part of the basis for the mobilization of planning around urban growth there. Over part of the interwar period, moreover, the urban Social Democratic party governed at the national level in coalition with a powerful Peasant Party that represented rural and agrarian interests (Swenson, 1991).

[insert Table 3 about here]

Only in the cases of two of the leaders, then, do configurations of interest at the national scale clearly reinforce explanations in terms of interests in urbanization itself (Table 3). For the United States, national-level formations furnish at least part of the solution for the puzzle of institutional development. For Germany they lead to another puzzle. To a degree in both of these last cases, but most markedly in Germany, and even more clearly for the other cases of mixed or lagged development, a full account of the development of institutions for urban planning and governance requires additional attention to the structures of the state and the dynamics of political agency.

Conclusion: Early Twentieth Century Trajectories and Their Consequences

The more general conclusions about how to explain patterns in the development of infrastructures of policies and institutions in areas like planning and urban development should be clear. Beyond any analysis that looks to the problems and interests that patterns of urban development itself fostered, a full account cannot dispense with attention to the configurations of interests and power at higher instances of policymaking. Even with both local and higher levels of policymaking and institution-building taken into account, full comparative explanation of the national variations necessitates attention the institutions of the state and the politics of decision-making. As the density and complexity of institutional frameworks for urban policy have grown over the course of the twentieth century, the need to take these last elements more seriously has only increased. With the spread of urban development and the rise of new city forms in the latter half of the century, the national institutional variations that emerged over the previous period would contribute to distinct new trajectories.

Throughout Europe and North America these trajectories followed a trend of limited convergence in some respects. Urban regions became predominant as agriculture declined, and larger enterprises grew to dominance in the commercial and industrial sectors. All of these countries would develop increasingly elaborate, diversified and similar systems of public instruments for the control of urban growth. But, building not only on the institutional differences that had already appeared, but on the patterns of urban development that resulted, these countries separated out into several distinctive trajectories.

In the leaders of the earlier period, successful planning and institutions form the earlier eras led to increasingly ambitious planning and less sprawl. The Nazi regime in Germany and the wartime occupation in the Netherlands had already undertaken initial steps toward an increasingly systematic institution of urban and regional planning and land use controls. Over the thirty years following the war in both countries, national building and land use codes further institutionalized the systems of both countries. In the United Kingdom, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 instituted the first fully nationalized system of local land use controls. In the United States, however, this early exurban settlement would grew into an institutionalized national pattern. Efforts there to develop the same public housing, urban planning and downtown renewal as in Europe would generally contribute to the exodus of most middle class and white residents from the central cities. By the 1970s, growing suburban constituencies had created nonurban majorities in state legislatures as well as the Congress (Mollenkopf, 1983; Weir, 1996). Suburban homeowners emerged alongside the private development industry as a massive new force that reinforced the limits on land use regulation and other instruments for the public governance of urban form.

Elsewhere, where less extensive urbanization before World War Two had generated less institution-building at the local level in much of a country, the massive urban expansion that accompanied postwar prosperity presented an opportunity to catch up with the earlier leaders. In Switzerland and Sweden, where

some cantons and the Stockholm region had already developed leading examples of control over urban growth, postwar institutionalization consisted largely of the diffusion of domestic examples and the establishment of national institutional structures around these precedents. In Canada, effective systems of planning emerged for the first time around the metropolitan areas of Toronto and Montreal. As elsewhere, the development of effective controls helped prevent the emergence of major constituencies opposed to urban policy like the suburbs of the United States. In France this process proved more limited and delayed, but also took place. Up to the decentralization of planning authorities to the communal level in 1983, decisions of national officials often dominated this process. With the exception of regions like the area surrounding Paris, this process generated only limited control over urban form. By the 1990s, however, as the national government elaborated constant adaptations to the infrastructure of institutions for local control, local efforts toward metropolitan governance had succeeded better in some urban regions even as they continued to fall short in others (Sellers, 2002). The result was a patchwork of exurban regions with various relations to their central cities.

Table 1 Development of Supralocal and Local Institutions for Control of Sprawl, 1850-1935

Leaders	**1850-1914**	**1914-1935**
Netherlands	Building, planning and housing law; public health law; urban renewal; municipal annexation, municipal ownership, local metropolitan planning, open space protection in Amsterdam	Extensive public housing, more systematic metropolitan planning, annexations
Germany	Extensive building regulation, planning, municipal enterprise, expropriation, urban annexation in late nineteenth century; mostly under provincial authorities	Metropolitan planning, extensive public housing mostly at Land level
England (UK)	National building regulation, authorization of planning for new sites and expansion; municipal enterprise, extensive local planning initiatives, often with specific national authorization	Expansion of national planning authorization, new housing authorization, extensive public housing
Mixed Cases		
Switzerland	In some urban cantons building regulation, land use planning carried out extensively, municipal enterprise	Sizeable public housing construction, rent subsidies in large cities, limited public housing
Sweden	Planning legislation, limited planning, local annexations, municipal enterprise and land ownership (mostly in Stockholm)	Limited annexation, expropriation authorized, recreational planning, limited public housing, Stockholm renewal approved but not carried out
Laggards		
France	Planning introduced but little carried out (Paris a partial exception); building regulation; property restrictions on expropriation; limits on rents; authorization of public housing	Mandated planning; limited public housing, rent controls
United States	Building regulation, planning, annexation in many states but property restrictions limit development; expropriation also limited; park purchases, some municipal enterprise, little effective planning	Limited planning and zoning; limited public housing
Canada	Planning introduced in some provinces but rarely carried out; municipal enterprise in some cities	Limited planning and zoning; municipal enterprise strengthened; limited public housing

Table 2 Mass Urbanization and Urban Interests in Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries, by National Legislation

Legislative Patterns	Patterns of Urbanization	Urban Interests in Institutional Development
Leaders		
Netherlands	Rapid, limited extent	Mobilized, limited power
Germany	Rapid, extensive	Mobilized, powerful
United Kingdom	Slow, limited extent (but previously more rapid and extensive)	Somewhat mobilized, limited power
Mixed Cases		
Switzerland	Rapid, limited extent	Mobilized, limited power
Sweden	Rapid, limited extent	Mobilized, limited power
Laggards		
France	Slow, limited extent	Little mobilization or power
United States	Rapid, extensive	Mobilized, powerful
Canada	Rapid, limited extent	Mobilized, limited power

Table 3 National Constituencies and Urban Interests in Institutional Development During Late 19th and Early Twentieth Centuries, by National Legislation

Legislative Patterns	Urban Interests in Institutional Development	National Non-Urban Constituencies	Social Bases of Institutional Development
Leaders			
Netherlands	Mobilized, limited power	Subordinate	Dominant urban interests
Germany	Mobilized, powerful	Partly dominant (rural, agricultural, but large property-owners)	Dominant urban interests or urban-nonurban coalition around planning (Territorial variation)
United Kingdom	Somewhat mobilized, limited power	Subordinate	Dominant urban interests
Mixed Cases			
Switzerland	Mobilized, limited power	Dominant (rural, agricultural interests)	Dominant urban or nonurban interests by cantons (Territorial variation)
Sweden	Mobilized, limited power	Dominant (rural, agricultural interests)	Urban-nonurban coalition around planning
Laggards			
France	Little mobilization or power	Dominant (rural, agricultural, small-property interests)	Dominant nonurban constituencies, property-based coalition
United States	Mobilized, powerful	Dominant (rural, agricultural, small-property interests)	Dominant but challenged nonurban constituencies, property-based coalition
Canada	Mobilized, limited power	Dominant (rural, agricultural interests)	Dominant nonurban constituencies, but some urban-non-urban coalitions around planning (Territorial variation)

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