

## (Section A: Planning Strategies and Design Concepts)

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## Editorial introduction

### *Spatial planning system integration*

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Spatial planning is a term with ambiguity because there is no generally agreed definition (Kai, 2007). “Spatial planning system” is still a complex topic strongly related to the context of administrative systems. As long as there are urbanization and development around the world, those topics will stay important along with the changing socio-economic situations. Right now there is a common phenomenon in many countries/regions where numerous layers of spatial plans are formulated by different stakeholders or governing bodies. Therefore, to avoid spatial policies overlapping or contradicting with each other, some countries/regions are promoting new ways to coordinate spatial plans, making integral spatial policy frameworks. Thus, this special issue focuses on several reviews of spatial planning system reform, as well as some relevant case studies.

Since the signing of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999, European regions and member states have reached agreements on territorial co-operation responsible for spatial planning (Kai, 2007); member states’ spatial policies and spatial planning of their respective territories are also inevitably influenced. The first paper of this issue, “Coordination through Integration: A critical review on French spatial policy and spatial planning systems”, aims to contribute several key facts and to inspire the coordination of various spatial plans formulated by different planning bodies, by reviewing the latest framework of French spatial policy, spatial planning system, as well as the implementation of both (Liu, 2018). In its review, it can be seen that France, as a typical decentralized administrative nation, shapes a multi-faceted spatial policy framework and a multi-layered spatial planning system, meaning many plans with their policies will be formulated by various entities or stakeholders. In spite of that, with the consensus goals of achieving well-balanced, sustainable development and social diversity, the system can function with coordination thanks to integrated policy framework under corresponding jurisdictions, as well as many cooperation policies in implementation through a number of multiple projects bounded by the agreements between different governments, authorities and stakeholders. French experience can serve as inspiring reference for developing countries like China that are engaging in restructuring an integral spatial planning system.

Nowadays, China has been promoting a spatial planning system reform named Integration of Multiple Planning to integrate the various sectoral

policies from four principal spatial plans. Based in this context, the following three studies are presented. The paper “Co-exist or Integration? Reviewing the Spatial Planning Reform of China from the Perspective of Central-Local Relationships” makes a contribution pointing out that the nature of “integration of multiple spatial plans” lies in the differences of governance orientation between central and local government ([Hu & Zhou, 2018](#)). As is stated in the paper, China’s central government has raised the proportion of revenue from local authorities, which in turn leads to local authorities largely relying on land sales for funding and providing the engine of city development, of which the typical policy-making tool is a City Master Plan. In cases of massive urban sprawl by land sales, however, the central government still asserts its control on local development by the tools of a National Main-function Plan or National Land-use Plan. It is the conflict of the orientation of two spatial policy modes that brings about the discoordination between multiple spatial plans. The paper suggests that other than some innovations in spatial planning tools or instruments, promoting reform is fundamental to re-establishing the relationships between central and local government, such as reducing the constraints of planning censorship systems, and rebalancing responsibilities and the public finance of local government on planning matters.

A consensus is building on integration becoming a shaper of spatial planning systems. It seems that in some aspects spatial planning is aimed at handling “the problem of coordination or integration of the spatial dimension of sectoral policies through a territorially-based strategy” ([Cullingworth & Nadin, 2006](#)). There are still discussions on how to achieve planning integration in practice in China, and as such, the third paper, “An Exploration on How to Lead the Transformation of Small and Medium-Sized Cities by Integration of Multi-Planning: Case Study of Jieshou City, Anhui Province, China”, shows a method of integrating multiple spatial plans with a practical planning case ([Wan, Li & Tan, 2018](#)). The authors pay attention to small and medium-sized cities, for they are faced with limitation of spatial resources in the course of development, and integrated spatial planning can help to make the most of the resources to achieve a better development goal.

The fourth paper, “Review on Practice of Provincial Spatial Planning: Case of a Western Less Developed Province”, contributes a new spatial planning system framework and integral spatial plan-making method based on the administrative territory of province rather than that of municipality ([Lian, 2018](#)). To integrate a current fragmented spatial planning system as well as ensure the sustainable development of Ningxia, the author introduces a two-level framework, in which the provincial level spatial plan mainly focuses on strategic spatial policy-making, whereas the city level delimits “3 zones and 3 lines” (namely ecological zone, agricultural zone, urban zone; ecological red line, urban development boundary line, and permanent basic farmland red line). The author develops a five-step planning process to demonstrate a two-level spatial planning framework, and also develops a Land Development Suitability Evaluation to support the delimiting of “3 zones and 3 lines”.

Other than spatial planning system integration, there are also papers which contribute supporting instruments to spatial plan-making and spatial policy-making with empirical study. On the regional scale, the hierarchy and distribution of urban systems is also vital knowledge in the making of spatial planning such as how to model the regional structure by city size and function. The fifth paper, “Triangle Law or Power Law? City Size

Distribution in Sub-national Levelled Administrative Areas in China”, introduces a new pattern of city size distribution within China, which is called Triangle Law (Li & Zhang, 2018). The authors argue that in China, power law distribution, which is the commonly acknowledged city size distribution law, does not fit the city size distribution in sub-national administrative regions, instead, a newly-introduced Triangle Law could provide a better fit. The phenomenon means the city administrative system has shed light on the city size distribution in sub-national China, as the result, institutional influence was the main influence factor of the city size distribution law.

In addition, newly emerging technology, methodology and database systems will also support the improvement of spatial plan-making. The sixth paper, “Determining Non-Passenger Data from WiFi Scanner Data (MAC Address), A Case Study: Romango Bus, Obuse Town, Nagano Prefecture, Japan”, contributes a data processing technique via a transportation survey of spatial planning (Hidayat, Terabe, & Yaginuma, 2018). The authors developed a data processing procedure to combine raw WiFi data and GPS log data into non-passenger data. The proposed method is appropriate for the long-term data collection of daily variations, and there is no need to communicate with human or object when collecting data.

This special issue is one of the outputs of the (virtual) Workshop on Urban Planning and Management held on 6<sup>th</sup> February in 2018 at Kanazawa University in Japan. We hope that the perspectives, approaches and solutions being acquired from the spatial planning research in these cases provide good inspiration for similar work of other cities and regions globally. Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the authors and reviewers for their efforts in their research, submissions and the hard work throughout the publication process.

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