

# Managing Building Adaptation

*A Sustainable Approach*



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### Lesson-drawing

When drawing lessons from one place to another, it is important to understand the level of policy transfer and the likelihood of transfer. The following text originates from a dissertation (Heurkens, 2012: p.122-124) focused on lesson-drawing in the academic field of spatial planning and urban development. This work illustrates the methodological issues involved in drawing lessons in the field of the built environment recognizing the importance of context.

"Institutional comparison, policy transfer and lesson-drawing in spatial planning are quite commonly used terms in essence addressing the same question: "under what circumstances and to what extent can a programme that is effective in one place transfer to another" (Rose, 1991). In general, it refers to the fact that planners in different countries generally face the same problems, and one can *learn* from practices abroad. The question then is "whether planners can learn from each other and whether there are policies which stimulate cross-national lesson-drawing in the field of planning" (Spaans & Louw, 2009). Hence, Rose (2005) argues that "the primary concern of [comparative] studies is to explain why countries [e.g. planning practices or projects] differ in their policies, implying that differences persist."

Various authors conducted cross-national comparative urban studies focused on either *policy transfer* (e.g. Abram & Cowell, 2004; De Jong & Edelenbos, 2007; Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Masser & Williams, 1986), *policy instruments* (e.g. Bulkeley, 2006; Janssen-Jansen et al., 2008; Muñoz-Gielen, 2010; Van der Veen, 2009), *institutional transplantation* (e.g. De Jong, 1999; 2004; De Jong et al., 2002), *urban governance* (e.g. De Jong & Edelenbos, 2007; Di Gaetano & Klemanski, 1999; DiGaetano & Strom, 2003; Salet et al., 2003; Sanyal, 2005) or *social/planning systems* (e.g. Dühr et al., 2010; Nadin, 2007; Nadin & Stead, 2008). We acknowledge the importance of such comparative urban studies, as it provides insight into *differences*

and *similarities*. These differences and similarities can be constructed rather than observed (Pickvance, 2001: 17).

In line with this research, the Dutch Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving [PBL] (2012: 17) indicates that the *value of comparison* with other countries is that it can bring about a '*better self-image*', that can provide support for discussions about new directions in the recipient country. Also, Nadin (2011) argues that such comparisons help to position and understand one's own practice. Moreover, PBL (2012) sets out *comparison limitations* of cross-country lesson-drawing by arguing that country-specific institutions produce specific conditions for development processes, including land development policies, and fiscal and financial arrangements. Such conditions cannot be transferred or copied from one country to another rigorously. They belong to a comprehensive system, in which issues like market situation, cultural factors and 'path dependence' play a crucial role (PBL, 2012). In our research we acknowledge both the potential value and existing limitations of comparisons and lesson-drawing.

Also, we need to be more specific about the level of lesson-drawing we are aiming at. Spaans & Louw (2009) argue that several authors have distinguished various *degrees, ways, and levels of transfer*. Dolowitz & Marsh (2000) for instance distinguish four different degrees of transfer: copying, emulation, combinations, and inspiration. Rose (2005) established seven alternative ways of lesson-drawing including photocopying, copying, adaptation, hybrid, synthesis, disciplined inspiration, and selective imitation. As these classifications do not entirely fit the purposes of our research, we will follow the three levels of lesson-drawing provided by Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008): *inspiration, learning, and transplanting*. [Figure 1] gives an overview of these levels of lesson-drawing, its definitions and the likelihood of successful transfer. As the table indicates *our level of transfer focuses on inspiration and learning.*" (Heurkens, 2012: p. 122-123).

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Level of lesson-drawing	Definitions	Likelihood of Transfer		
		Transfer within one country	Transfer between countries with a similar system	Transfer between countries with a different system
Inspiration	Collecting & evaluating data & information on innovative experiences & practices	LESS LIKELY	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
Learning	Adopting the information collected & evaluated in the inspiration phase, including retrieving underlying ideas & recognizing obstacles & differences	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY	LIKELY
Transplanting	Looking at specific conditions under which the transfer of policy, instruments or other elements to another context is possible	VERY LIKELY	LIKELY	LESS LIKELY

Figure 1: levels of lesson-drawing

Figure 1 illustrates two main aspects of lesson-drawing, the *levels of lesson-drawing* and the *likelihood of transfer*. The levels of lesson-drawing indicate that there is a difference between inspiration, learning and transplanting. Inspiration refers to: collecting & evaluating data and information on innovative experiences and practices. Learning involves: adopting the information collected and evaluated in the inspiration phase, including retrieving underlying ideas and recognizing obstacles and differences. Transplanting is the most ambitious form of lesson-drawing aimed at: looking at specific conditions under which the transfer of policy, instruments or other elements to another context is possible.

Then, there is the likelihood of transfer, which takes into account the characteristics of a country and its systems. Systems can be broadly understood, formulated or defined (e.g. a country's political, economic and legal system), and can be defined more specific (e.g. planning system, property rights system). When drawing lessons it is important to define such systems, and determine whether the country you are drawing lessons from has a similar or different system. These systems could also be regarded as (institutional) contexts, for which we can use and apply a PESTLE-analysis for instance.

Importantly, the table indicates that the likelihood of transferring lessons in the form of 'inspiration' is very likely between countries with different systems. For instance, creative ideas about building adaptation are generated in the Netherlands might serve as valuable inspiration for practitioners in India, and vice versa. However, 'transplanting' concrete building adaptation policy instruments and targets from the Netherlands to India and vice versa, are less likely, as the institutional context, various systems but also the practice of building adaptation of these countries differ tremendously. At the same time, drawing lessons within countries or between countries with similar system creates opportunities to move up the level of lesson-drawing to 'learning' and 'transplanting'. Note that such a table provides a way of thinking about purposeful lesson-drawing, but that it is not cast in stone, as much depends on the definition of the system and context.

## PESTLE-analysis

A way to systematically analysis a specific country's context or system is the PESTLE-analysis. Applying a PESTLE-analysis assists in understanding political, economic, social-cultural, technical, legal and environmental factors that may influence business planning, or, in our case, lesson-drawing about building



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**adaptation. What follows here is a short explanation of the questions and factors involved in the PESTLE-analysis.**

The following text is adapted from the website <https://processpolicy.com/pestle-analysis.htm>.

Within the text you can replace 'the business' or 'a business' by 'building adaptation' as subject of the PESTLE-analysis.

"PESTLE Analysis is an analytical tool for strategic business planning. PESTLE is a strategic framework for understanding external influences on a business. There are many macro-environment factors that affect strategic planning: New laws, tax changes, trade barriers, demographic change. Macro-environment factors includes all the factors that influence an organization, but are out of its direct control. Macro-environment factors tend to have a long term impact. PESTLE stands for "Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental" and is used for business and strategic planning, marketing planning, organizational change, business and product development and research reports. By understanding these external environments, organizations can maximize the opportunities and minimize the threats to the organization.

PESTLE analysis answers 6 key questions:

1. Political - What are the political factors that are likely to affect the business?
2. Economic - What are the economic factors that will affect the business?
3. Sociological - What cultural aspects likely to affect the business?
4. Technological - What technological changes that may affect the business?
5. Legal - What current and impending legislation that will affect the business?
6. Environmental- What are the environmental considerations that may affect the business?

### **Political Factors**

Political factors relates to the pressures and opportunities brought by political institutions and

to what degree the government policies impact the business:

- Government policies
- Government term and change
- Trading policies
- Funding, grants and initiatives
- Lobbying and pressure groups
- Wars, terrorism and conflicts
- Elections and political trends
- Internal political issues
- Inter-country relationships
- Local commissioning processes
- Corruption
- Bureaucracy

### **Economic Factors**

Economic factors relates to economic policies, economic structures and to what degree the economy impacts the business:

- Local economy
- Taxation
- Inflation
- Interest
- Economy trends
- Seasonality issues
- Industry growth
- Import/export ratios
- International trade
- International exchange rates

### **Social Factors**

Social factors relates to the cultural aspects, attitudes, beliefs, that will affect the demand for a company's products and how the business operates:

- Demographics
- Media views of the industry
- Work ethic
- Brand, company, technology image
- Lifestyle trends
- Cultural Taboos
- Consumer attitudes and opinions
- Consumer buying patterns

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- Ethical issues
- Consumer role models
- Major events and influences
- Buying access and trends
- Advertising and publicity

### **Technological Factors**

Technological factors relates to the technological aspects, innovations, barriers and incentives, and to what degree these impact the business:

- Emerging technologies
- Maturity of technology
- Technology legislation
- Research and Innovation
- Information and communications
- Competitor technology development
- Intellectual property issues

### **Legal Factors**

Legal factors relates to the laws, regulation and legislation that will affect the way the business operates:

- Current legislation
- Future legislation
- International legislation
- Regulatory bodies and processes
- Employment law
- Consumer protection
- Health and safety regulations
- Money laundering regulations
- Tax regulations
- Competitive regulations
- Industry-specific regulations

### **Environmental Factors**

Environmental factors relates to the ecological and environmental aspects that will affect the demand for a company's products and how that business operates:

- Environmental regulations
- Ecological regulations
- Reduction of carbon footprint
- Sustainability
- Impact of adverse weather

PESTLE Analysis is also known as ETPS, PESTEL, PESTLEE, PESTLIED, SLEPT, STEP, STEPE, PEST-G, PEST-E and STEEPLE, and is used for business and strategic planning, marketing planning, organizational change, business and product development and research reports. By understanding these external environments, organizations can maximize the opportunities and minimize the threats to the organization." (<https://processpolicy.com/pestle-analysis.htm>).

Particularly for drawing lessons about building adaptation ideas, concepts, tools, instruments from different countries, the PESTLE-analysis can be helpful. For example, legal regulations (L) related to building adaptation in one country can be compared to those from another country. The same goes for political willingness (P) economic circumstances (E), social needs/acceptance (S), technological progress (T), environmental awareness (E), and so on. In this way, a combination between the contextual understanding and characterization, and the levels and likelihood of lesson-drawing can be made.

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