

transport, reducing the need for the car, and increasing the range of services and facilities for residents to make use of.

While this theoretical discussion appears convincing on paper, there are many reasons why successful high-density living is currently not the case in the world's cities. These range from an apparent need for large living spaces (often with a garden and/or garage), a desire to live away from the city which was often a result of post-war planning (certainly in the UK, (Clapson, 1998)) and a strong attachment to the car that many urban dwellers will seemingly not give up. In Japan, such phenomena are also occurring: counter-urbanization has persisted since the 1960s; residential densities have fallen and car ownership has risen dramatically.

### **The compact city in Japan: policy**

Recently interest in the concept of 'compact city' has been demonstrated in Japanese planning. Some new policies illustrate a change of direction from urban sprawl towards a more compact urban form. For example, new development in suburban areas has been restricted and urban regeneration zoning has been introduced in metropolitan areas, particularly in Tokyo. There have been many policies introduced for the revitalization of city-centre areas, including the introduction of more pedestrian-oriented urban zones.

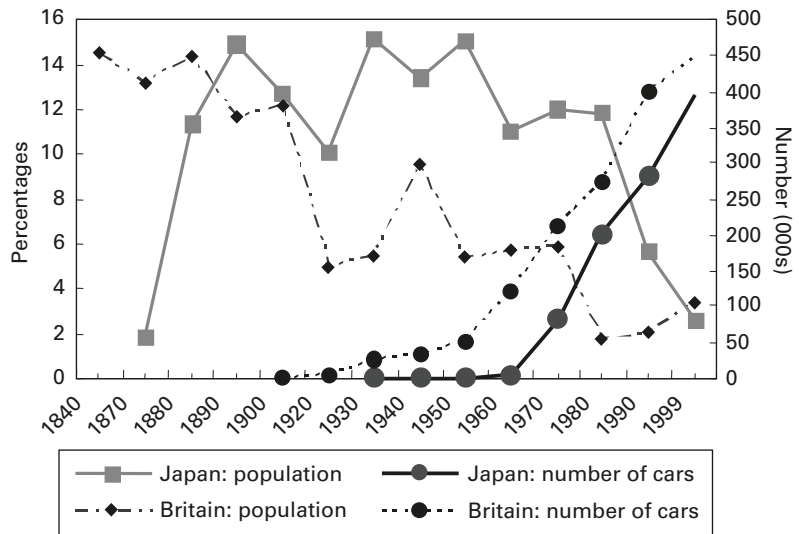
Several characteristics of the Japanese planning system should be noted:

- **Radical, clear and consistent changes in planning strategies are not decided by central government**
- **Policies and implementation can have various aims and expectations, for example, economic revitalization, countermeasures against public finance difficulties, regeneration of declining urban centres, reform of confused regional spatial conditions and environmental issues. They are introduced in response to factors such as projections of low population growth and of an overall ageing population**

### **Population change and growing car use in Japan**

The rate of population growth in Japan had been consistently high for 100 years until around 1980 when it began to slow down considerably. From the 1960s to around the same time as

**Figure 16.1**  
Percentage of population change and car ownership in Britain and Japan.



the population decreases, economic growth, large-scale urbanization and motorization occurred. Figure 16.1 shows a comparison of population change and car ownership in Japan and Britain. Both the countries have experienced some population decrease in the last 50 or so years, with Britain’s population increasing gradually between 1985 and 1995, and more rapidly to date. Japan, on the other hand, apart from a period of slow growth from 1960 to 1980, has experienced rapid decline. Car ownership has increased significantly in both the countries, which occurred earlier for Britain, around the mid-1950s, and in the mid-1960s in Japan. The urban forms that had been constructed to house such large populations were strongly affected by changes in economic and social conditions. They manifested themselves in transportation growth, planning policies and development control. In addition to these factors, relaxed planning controls encouraged urban sprawl.

### Designated land use in Japan

Table 16.1 shows the composition of national land in Japan by designated planning use. Japanese City Planning Areas (CPAs) and Urbanization Promotion Areas (UPAs), cover 25.7% and 3.7% of national land area, respectively, within which a high proportion of the population resides. Densely built-up areas are defined in the Japanese census as Densely Inhabited Districts (DIDs<sup>1</sup>). The percentage of DIDs of the total national area