Polycentric Development and Metropolitan Governance

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The 21st C. is the first *urban* century

- **Before 1850**, no society was predominantly urbanised.
- **By 1900**, Britain was the only urbanised society.
- **In 1975**, 38% of the world’s population lived in cities.
- **Today**, over half of the world’s 6.3 mill. population are urban dwellers.

Ginza District, Tokyo
The pace of urbanisation is even faster in developing countries

- It took London **130 years** to grow to a population of 8 mill.
- Mexico City reached that mark in **30 years**
- Bombay is expanding even faster
The ‘urban millennium’

• For the first time in history, across the world more people live in urban areas than in rural areas
• 4 out of 5 European citizens live in urban areas
The 21st C. is a globally networked century

• Revolution in information technology has led to:
  – ‘time-space compaction’
  – ‘space of flows’ but,

  – not to the ‘death of distance’
Agglomeration forces

- Population and economic growth tend to gravitate to major urban centres
- Leading to monocentric development
Megalopolis

*East Coast of America*

“coalescence of a chain of metropolitan areas, each of which has grown around a substantial urban nucleus”

(Gottman, 1957)
Ecumenopolis?

BeSeTo
Urban Corridor
in East Asia:
– Beijing
– Seoul
– Tokyo

Population: 98 m.
Area: 1500 Km.
Air travel time: 1.5 h
Uneven development of the EU

- A prosperous, highly connected core stands against an underdeveloped periphery
  - Economy
  - Labour market
  - Demography
  - Environment
  - Hazards
  - Accessibility
  - Spatial structure
Depicting the EU core–periphery image

- **European Megalopolis**
  (Gottman, 1976)

- **Golden Triangle**
  (Cheshire & Hay, 1989)

- **The Blue Banana**
  (Brunet, 1989)

- **The pentagon**
  (ESDP, 1999)
European Spatial Development Perspective

• *The pentagon* was coined by the ESDP in 1999

• A non-binding, yet influential, strategic framework for EU spatial development
EU Core – Periphery Image

The ‘pentagon’:
London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg
- 20% of area
- 40% of population
- 50% of GDP
- 75% of R&D
- Seen as the only globally competitive economic zone in EU
The Main Thrust of the ESDP

- Creation of multiple zones of globally significant economic growth

- Making the EU:
  - Economically more competitive
  - Socially and spatially more cohesive
European Polycentric Development

- A *Bunch of Grapes* (Kunzmann & Wegener, 1991)

- A more balanced development of the EU territory
Polycentric Urban Region

What is a PUR?

- Three or more cities
- Historically and politically separate
- No hierarchical ranking
- Reasonable proximity
- Functional complementarities
European Examples of PUR

Flemish Diamond in Flanders, Belgium

- Brussels
- Leuven
- Antwerp
- Ghent
European Examples of PUR

Padua-Treviso-Venice Area in Northern Italy
European Examples of PUR

The Basque Country

- Bilbao
- San Sebastian
- Vitoria
Other Examples of PUR

Kansai in Japan

- Osaka
- Kyoto
- Kobe
A Classic Example of PUR

**Randstad** in Holland:

- A ‘ring’ of cities around the Green Heart:
  - Amsterdam
  - Utrecht
  - The Hague
  - Rotterdam

- European Delta Metropolis
Problems of Definition and Measurement

• A PUR consists of 3+ cities of *reasonable proximity* and with *functional interconnections*.

• **What is a reasonable proximity?**
  – One hour (Geddes, 1915)
  – 40 minutes (Blumenfeld, 1971)
  – 30 minutes (Batten, 1995)
  – 45 minutes (ESPON, 2004-6)

• **How do we measure functional interconnections?**
  – Labour market flows (common criterion)
  – Non-work trip-generating activities (shopping, leisure)
  – Inter-firm flows of goods, information and know how
Key challenges to the ESDP’s normative approach to polycentricity

• Is PUR a panacea for solving regional problems?

• Is PUR a more sustainable form of managing urban growth?

• What kind of policy intervention can facilitate the development of a PUR?
Is PUR a panacea for economic competitiveness?

• No conclusive evidence of a correlation between economic competitiveness and PUR as a specific *spatial structure* but,

• The concept of polycentric development has become a powerful *political discourse* for promoting spatial equity and balanced development

• It is seen as the appropriate spatial model for achieving the EU’s *territorial cohesion* agenda
Ireland’s Monocentric Growth

- **Dublin City Region:**
  - 40% of national population
  - 48% of national GVA
  - 70% of major Co. HQs
  - 80% of government agencies
  - 100% of financial institutions

Source: Polynet Project
Dublin: the Engine of ‘Celtic Tiger’ but,

- Its over heated economy has created social and environmental problems
- Its excessive growth has led to the widening of regional disparities
The ‘pull’ factors

• In Cohesion Countries, the EU funds have been absorbed by major urban centres, particularly capital cities due to their:
  – Critical mass
  – Infrastructure
  – Institutional capacity

• A similar trend is happening in the new Member States
‘Atlantic Gateways’ as counterbalance to Dublin City Region

- Irish NSS aims to maximise the potential of the city regions outside Dublin by forging cooperation between neighbouring cities in SW:
  - Cork
  - Limerick / Shannon
  - Waterford
  - Galway
The Northern Way Megalopolis

- With 8 city regions:
  - Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Hull, Central Lancashire
  - Tees Valley, Newcastle / Gateshead

- Aiming to close the North-South divide in England
Functional interconnection is the key to PUR

Central Belt of Scotland:

- Physical proximity does not necessarily lead to functional interdependencies
Forging functional synergies between neighbouring cities requires:

- ‘**Hard infrastructure**’: efficient transport and telecommunication networks
- ‘**Soft infrastructure**’: effective institutions and governance arrangements
The Mismatch

• Between **functional areas and administrative boundaries**
  – Government operates on the basis of: communes, municipalities, boroughs, local authorities, Kreise, …
  – Industries, businesses, and households operate within functionally defined areas

• 40% of the UK working population cross at least one local authority boundary during their journey to work.

• What is the alternative?
Aligning Functional & Admin Boundaries

- No single local authority has administrative control over the whole city-region
One size does not fit all!

• Co-aligning does not necessarily mean creating a new layer of formal government structure for the functional area

• It is even more perverse, to argue for such a formal structure at the level of PUR
Why?

• **First**, it is politically sensitive

• **Second**, the geography of functional areas varies depending on:
  – the methodology applied to define them
  – different functions and markets
  – travel to work patterns may be different from patterns of travel to shopping and entertainment centres
The Cultural Draw of Met. Cities

• The catchment area of less frequently used services, such as theatres, is much wider than that of daily travel to work

• Breakdown of customers attending any of 8 theatres in Greater Manchester, 1998-2003

Source: ODPM 2006
3. Catchment areas differ for different occupations

Source: ODPM, 2006
4. Cross-authority flows of waste

- Typically from metropolitan areas to shire counties
- 58% of municipal waste from Gr. Manchester is exported to Warrington for disposal
Hence: One size doesn’t fit all!

• There is no single overarching city-region boundary

• Hence, little justification for a single, formal city-region government

• Even less justifiable to have a formal PUR-wide government

• ‘Fuzzy’ boundaries of the functional areas don’t fit in tightly-drawn administrative boundaries
Variable Geometry

• Informal, flexible, yet purposeful inter-municipal collaborations and networking

• Reflecting the transition from *government* to *governance*

• Representing alternative models of managing *collective affairs*, based on:
  – horizontal self-organisation among mutually interdependent actors
• How can policy intervention facilitate functional inter-connections between neighbouring cities of a potential polycentric urban region?

• By incentivising inclusive, inter-municipal coalitions across the PUR geometries
Conclusion

• Collaboration is the hallmark of effective governance!

• Effective governance is a prerequisite for developing polycentric urban regions