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JORGE GASPAR

THE STRUCTURING ROLE OF URBAN SYSTEMS
IN PERIPHERAL EUROPEAN REGIONS

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The Structuring Role of Urban Systems in Peripheral European Regions

Abstract

Jorge Gaspar
CEG- University of Lisbon

A number of authors have concentrated on the territorial consequences of the process of European integration. Particular attention has been given to issues of inter-urban and inter-regional competition in order to find explanations for the changes that have been noted in the urban dynamics of the European space since the 1980's.

There is already significant empirical evidence that the process of European integration functions as a lever on territorial competition and, particularly, on inter-urban competition. The sub-regional consequences of this process are not uni-directional, nor can an unequivocal relation between the dimension of cities and their competitive behaviour be found. Nevertheless, some studies do demonstrate some urban-territorial tendencies, where a strengthening of Europe's central nucleus (the core) and its urban system can be noted. This tends to spread towards its immediate "fringe", while at the same time increased dependency and reduced competitive capacity of peripheral urban systems occur.

On the other hand, the process of integration may lead to the specialisation of territorial segments, which would also result in the functional-economic valuation of the central nucleus. Taking the "historical" economic and political configuration of the European space into account, where a central nucleus was dominated by continental powers, and surrounded by maritime powers of major or minor dimensions, it can be suggested that the process of European integration has created a process of "continentalisation", which has contributed to the weakening of some cities' roles as poles of intercontinental anchorage.

By using various recent analysis and introducing some results of an ongoing investigation about the evolution of European and non-European air connections in the last ten-year

period, we will try to discuss these territorial dynamics. As focus we have used the issue relating to the importance of state capitals in structuring peripheral urban systems; cities which have in reality seen, with the process of integration, their “capitality” in the national context reinforced.

In light of these evidences, policies to reinforce peripheral urban systems at the E.U. level should be defined, in a framework of polycentrism at the highest hierarchical level, conferring on the peripheral metropolis the role of gateways (interfaces), with macro-regional specialisations, adding value to their historic heritage and comparative advantages.

1. The European Integration: territorial competition, centralization and continentalization

Various authors (Cheshire, 1990, 1999; Cheshire and Gordon, 1996; Parkinson *et al*, 1992; Rozemblat, 1998, and others) have analysed the territorial consequences of the process of European integration, offering reasonable convergence in the sense that an economic centralization is operating and in the short run, also demographic and political. P. Cheshire (1999) emphasises the increased competition between cities and territories caused by the process of integration. In general, these approaches suggest, or have made explicit, the development of a centre-periphery model (Cheshire and Carbonaro, 1996).

The use of the "periphery" concept, in the current context, acquires some transitoriness, as in this case it is being applied to a macro-regional space (the European Union) in a process of mutation. By looking at the recent history of the European Union's construction, we can see how the cartographic/spatial representation of this concept in the European space has changed: from Roger Brunet's metaphoric vision, in which the periphery was represented by South (“South”, North of “South”, as the South comprehends Greece, the South of Italy, the South of the Iberian Peninsula, and Ireland!), to the tri-partition of the Union's territory, by Parkinson *et al* (DGXVI, 1992): the “Old Core”, the “New Core”, and the “Periphery”, in this case suggesting a diffusionist type process.

One aspect that has merited little attention in studies produced on the urban systems and sub-systems of the European Community, mainly focused on the process of integration of the Union's space, is that of the role which some of the peripheral subsystems have played (or continue to play) in a centrifugal sense/outside of the European space, which result from distinct historical phenomena:

- Commercial maritime relations with extra-European territories (America, Africa, West and Southern Mediterranean);
- The maintenance of strong relations with diaspora communities (Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Sicily);
- Inheritance of colonial periods (Portugal/Spain...).

All these subsystems were systems greatly turned to the exterior, thus favouring the development of important merchant fleets and port cities, as well as air-transport activity (Greece, Southern Italy, Portugal).

Hence, the process of integration of the European space has been expressed, greatly, as a process of continentalization:

- The percentage of commercial trade has increased, in some cases dramatically, in favour of the "Centre" or secondary continental polarizations;
- The flow of goods is accompanied by (they proceed and succeed) financial flows as well as flows of information;
- The periphery loses population and ages, while the centre grows and rejuvenates, either by recovering natality rates, or by immigration flows;
- This results in the strengthening of transportation and communication infrastructures, aimed, essentially, at the Centre (principal) and at the secondary centres.

The implementation of the "Fortress Europe" concept will certainly contribute to the weakening of peripheral urban subsystems, from the Mediterranean flank to the Baltic, passing through the new Eastern frontier/border. On the other hand, a strengthening of the centre is expected, which will migrate towards the east, strengthening the Berlin-Prague-Vienna axis. (Is there to be a new "wall" eastwards?)

On the other hand, the redefinition of sub-regional urban systems is expected: in the Baltic, along the Stockholm-Copenhagen-Hamburg axis; in the Iberian Peninsula, with the strengthening of Madrid's centrality; in the East-Mediterranean flank, possibly including the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Southern Italy.

2. Some empirical evidences

The growing internationalisation of the economy and the development of telecommunication technologies have revalued the role of cities, namely of capital and finance cities. European integration has accentuated the phenomenon of the economy's concentration, which has assumed maximum expression at the Centre of Europe. Cheshire's (1990, 1992 and 1999) empirical studies on the performance of growth in 120 of Europe's largest urban regions point to the reinforcement of central regions in relation to medium-sized regions. Considering that different forms of criteria for the evaluation of results have been used, these predict the maintenance of top positions by the cities of Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, and the urban regions of Europe's "old centre", although the positive affirmation of some cities which comprehend the "new centre" (the case of Barcelona and Madrid) is also noted.

The author highlights the importance of the international economy's integration process for the increase in competitiveness and considers that there "has been given a deliberate and powerful political boost by the creation of the EC" (1995, p. 111). The abolition of trade barriers, the creation of the single coin/currency and the application of the principle of free movement of people, goods and services, has led to the process of re-structuring of large firms. These organise themselves in order to serve "Europe" and not the various national European markets, thus explaining the process of economic and financial concentration and geographic centralization.

Rozenblat's studies (1992; 1996) also relate aspects of the centralization caused by the process of European integration. An analysis of branch/plant location by a number of some of Europe's largest firms, in 1990 and in 1996, shows a clear "decline" in the choice of peripheral urban systems, in favour of the central system- which heads towards

polycentrism, and, in a way, a relative strengthening of peripheral capitals.

Taking account of the space of the 12 plus Switzerland and Austria, the “emptying” of the following areas is noted: Scotland and North England, Ireland (with only Dublin remaining); Portugal and Spain (Madrid, Barcelona and Lisbon with relative distinction), South and Southwest France, Southern Italy and Greece.

The author goes further, highlighting the fact that in 1996, in Eastern Europe, the branches are located fundamentally in national/state capitals, which, as she stated, was not the case in Western Europe in 1990- however, this changes if 1996 and the peripheral urban systems of Western Europe are taken into account, where the prevalence of national capitals is evident: Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Dublin, Lisbon, Madrid (in spite of Barcelona...), Paris (!), Athens..., the Italian case requiring a divided reading (North and South...).

In this author’s view there is large margin for “non urban locations” in Sweden, Norway and Greece, which, in my belief has more to do with a definition of urban perimeters, as they correspond mainly to the peripheries of capitals. For, as in the Swiss case, a great majority of residential spaces belong to an urban quasi-continuum: the corridor between the Jura and the Alps, from Geneva to Zurich.

Also noted is the fact that a great number of multinational branches with “non urban locations” are the “production” ones, although these are the ones with most relative significance and the poles of “investigation/research and development”, two typical situations of peri-urban location.

Kunzmann (1996) relates 3 spatial development tendencies in Europe: specialization, spatial differentiation and increasing spatial polarisation. These tendencies are verified at the European, national and regional level.

It is obvious that a process of “regionalization” (construction of the European Union) will aim at spatial/sectoral specialisation, which may or may not increase polarisation.

The map about the biunivoc relations of the main banking markets of the 15 E.U. countries, relative to 1993, produced by Flora Pagetti (Pagetti, 1998) shows with great clarity the dependency of the periphery's main markets in relation to the Centre. This map shows, after London and Paris, the emergence of five sub-regional poles: Frankfurt, Brussels, Amsterdam, Milan and Madrid, aside from the very particular case of Luxembourg- with the exception of Madrid, all of which are located at the Centre.

It would be interesting to investigate the evolutionary tendencies of the last decades, namely the changes in relations with the United States, between the EFTA countries, and with USSR (the case of Helsinki).

In Lisbon's case, a process of sub-regionalization is clearly noted (integration with Madrid) and continentalization and the incrementation of relations with the Amsterdam-Brussels-Frankfurt-Milan axis. If Switzerland (Geneva/Zurich) was introduced the continentalization would be more obvious. This process has various determining factors: EFTA "integration"- European EC; flows of structural funds from Brussels, Portuguese emigration mainly towards France, Switzerland, Germany; regional internationalisation of E.U. country firms.

By analysing the evolution in air connections of six metropolis of three European peripheries- Nordic (Helsinki and Stockholm), British Isles (Glasgow and Dublin) and Mediterranean (Lisbon and Athens), we note the strengthening of connections to Europe, in relation to the rest of the World. In the group of these six metropolis, the volume of weekly flights to European airports was 87.2% flows in 1989 and 93.6% in 2000.

The reduction in connections to the rest of the World is common to the six airports. In the four Northern airports, the percentage of connections to Europe reaches much more than 96% of the total, reaching 98,6% in the case of Helsinki. Although they have lost relative importance, connections to other destinations in Athens (31,2% in 1989; 18,4% in 2000) and in Lisbon (25,1% in 1989; 17.6% in 2000) are frankly above the relative significance of other metropolis. This must be a result of the emigrant market, and, in the case of Lisbon, of the links that are still kept with old African colonies.

As expected, this growth is particularly high in the connections of these cities to Brussels, but the incrementation of the attraction of London and Paris is also very strong. The results also suggest a strengthening of sub-regional dependencies, illustrated by the strong growth in connections between Lisbon and Madrid: from 27 weekly flights in 1989 to 160 in 2000, but also in Lisbon-Barcelona, from 4 to 57. Similarly, there has been a large increase in the connections of Helsinki, Stockholm and Athens to Eastern European airports.

In this context, the increasing importance of connections from Athens to the Near and Middle East, also suggest a sub-regional strengthening and the potential of Athens as the gateway of Europe to the Southeast Mediterranean.

The intercontinental connections suggest, on the one hand, concentrations in large European centres: London, Paris, Frankfurt and some specialisation among these. Thus, while London offers increased advantages in connections to North America (+19.6%) and Australia (+57%), Paris accentuates its dominion in Central and South America (+206%) maintaining its leadership in connections to Africa. Frankfurt has the largest increase in flights to India/Southeast Asia/ Far East (+135%) and to Africa (+102%).

It is also interesting to note the tendencies of centralisation; centralisation at the intercontinental scale, well illustrated by the case of New York (J. F. Kennedy and Newark), both in relation to the main European airports, as in relation to the metropolis of peripheral Europe that we have analysed.

Thus, Frankfurt as well as Paris, who decreased their direct connections to North America between 1989 and 2000, have registered increases in connections to New York. London already has a much higher relative increase to New York, than to the North America group.

In regard to the 6 peripheral metropolis, with the exception of Helsinki which has lost direct connection with New York, all have registered more positive evolution in connection with New York than in the group of North America.

From this brief analysis of an unfinished project, we can extract some early conclusions:

- The large increase in air connections of European metropolis, both at the centre and the periphery, have suffered different orientations during the 1989-2000 period;
- Most significant growth has occurred in the interior of Europe, with or without consideration of Eastern European countries and CE: in which, from six peripheral metropolis or from three of the "centre", the relative significance of connections with European cities has increased in relation to the rest of the world;
- In the meantime, some tendencies of specialisation are noted in intercontinental connections: London versus North America, Asia and Australia; Paris and Frankfurt to Africa and Central and South America;
- The results suggest that the response to globalization, through "regionalization" (construction of Europe), have had a greater impact than European "adhesion" to globalization. On the other hand, globalization has implied the concentration of intercontinental connections, well illustrated in the case of New York, which between 1989-2000 has concentrated connections to Europe, in detriment of other destinations in North America;
- The emergence of sub-regional reinforcements is also noted, in the interior of Europe, of which the clearest evidence is the increase in connections between Lisbon, Barcelona and Madrid;
- Some peripheral metropolis indicate their vocation to polarise relations with sub-regional spaces out of the (15) Europe context: Helsinki to an extent, Stockholm and Athens in relation to Eastern Europe and, also the former in relation to the Near and Middle East.

3. A Long term perspective

K. Kunzmann selected a group of tendencies which in the next 50 years are to change the structure of cities and regions- which is a more promising view than "Europe in the Year 2046, i.e. in 50 years from now, will not look too different from today's Europe..." (Kunzmann, 1996, pp.151).

The determining factors will be:

- “The completion of the Trans-European High-Speed Rail Network”- although the political conditions are not very favourable to its implementation.
- “The Unlimited Growth of International Airport Complexes”.
- “The Spatial Implications of New Telecommunication Technologies”.
- “The Removal of Inner-European Borders”.
- “Immigration or Integration”.
- “Urban and Regional Competition”.
- “A Paradigm Shift of European Agricultural Policies?”
- “The Emergence of a New Regionalism?”

Kunzmann's more operative “arguments” (the high-speed train, more and larger airports, development of accessibilities and telecommunications, the end of internal frontiers/borders in Europe) will contribute, at first glance, to the strengthening of polarisation and the concentration of power, of wealth, and of population at the heart of Europe. Yet, it doesn't have to be forcefully like this! Looking back at the history of the 15th to 18th century- technological revolution, sailing of the oceans, navigation of rivers and channels, the opportunities being seized from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from Great Britain to Spain ... in a Europe which built itself through the unification/addition of Nation-States.

So, the new airports may bring opportunities for Athens, Helsinki, or Lisbon reviewed as peripheries of sub-regional comparative advantages in a regional (Europe) and global (every continent) context.

The high-speed train has contributed to the strengthening of the centre, always strengthening those closest to the network, yet the more it is connected, the more the peripheral sub-spaces benefit, who may, in return, acquire other specific importance: Athens-Thessalonik; Lisbon-OPorto; Malaga-Valencia-Barcelona; etc.

From this collection of evolutionary tendencies and hypothesis, Kunzmann (1996) “designs” some scenarios, that are in no way contrasting, they may even be joined/conjugated: the “Euro-megalopolis”, may coexist with “Themepark” Europe (with

actual existence of synergies), and even with an apparently opposite and voluntary scenario of “the Europe of Sustainable Regions”: a megalopolis and a very strong tourism may constitute levers for the sustainability of non-central regions. Obviously, the scenarios developed for “sustainable regions” are no longer compatible, as they presume drastic reductions of mobility, which do not seem necessary, or reasonable, even as a working hypothesis- in any way- contrary to what this author claims, the development of telecommunications will be an accelerator of other types of movement.

That “Europe, (is) going East”, with greater or lesser intensity, we have no doubt, and the “Californian model” proposed in the “Virtual Europe” scenario, at a major or minor level, contemplating more or less vast areas of the “centres” and the “peripheries” will also not cease to occur. The author concludes by stating that “There is some probability that European space in the 21st Century will be characterised by a combination of these spatial scenarios.”

Kunzmann and Wegener’s “European Grape” (1991, in M. Wegener, 1995) is, in a certain way adequate to the dominant concept of polycentrism which has been object/focus of reflection in the ambit of the study produced for the construction of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP, 1997, 1999). But, polycentrism must be seen at different levels and articulated with the principle of subsidiarity to be operative. In other words, at each territorial unit it must correspond to a sharing of “power” on behalf of the specific urban centres of this territorial level. This way, at the highest level, a group of metropolis, from the centre to the periphery, must share functions which correspond to the territories of the Union, the same principle must be applied to the national, regional and sub-regional context.

In this context, polycentrism must grow out of a political view in order to share power, and seeking to make use of the comparative advantages of each urban pole at a certain territorial level; from the Union to the sub-region. This includes, not only the network of accessibility infrastructures, but also the location of public investments of the territorial base. But the real achievement of polycentrism is a result of private investment decision. The complementarities as well as the synergies developed between urban centres are mainly a result of private investment, strategies, although made possible or catalysed by

public sector infrastructure provision (Camagni, 1991, cited by Roura and Rubalcaba-Benegio, 1998). Thus, it is important to look at the European Union's peripheral urban systems, seeking to define comparative advantages for each of the territorial levels.

The success of the European Union depends on the Union's capacity to share the various segments of its space, the "capitality" which results from the supra-state level: which means, the strength (energy) achieved through the co-operation of the Union countries should not be concentrated on any one pole, but be divided- judiciously- by the capitals (or other cities) of the various states.

The same principle should be promoted at the level of each country, as already clearly occurs in the cases of Germany, Holland, and, in a way, Italy. National/State capitals, which through the Union have indeed seen their capitality strengthened¹ should participate in this capitality with other poles in the interior of each country- through the dislocation of State functions to metropolis, which, by sharing this (real and symbolic) power, will not only contribute to a strengthening of this internal cohesion, but also acquire a new strength and legitimacy in regional, national and international plans.

Seeking to articulate this concept with the preoccupations of the Community, its importance for the attainment of the following three fundamental objectives is highlighted; "the economic and social cost, sustainable development and balanced competitiveness of the European territory" (ESDP, 1997)

4. The Southern -Peripheries- Centralization, Litoralization and Marginalization

The growth of the tourism phenomenon since the 1950's has constituted one of the strongest elements of the new economic base of Southern European cities, from Portugal's South Coast to the Crete Island. Processes of regionalisation/location also fortify the role of some coastal cities (Malaga, Valencia, Barcelona, Palma de Maiorca, Iraklion, Palermo...); these two phenomena, together with the development of the Huerta agriculture (intensive irrigation) promoted the litoralization of settlement, spreading along

¹ In the sense that they are the interlocutors of new international relationships, with growing dynamism.

the rest of the maritime fringe/border of the Iberian Peninsula, France, Mediterranean and Italy. The new highways have reinforced this phenomenon. In a way in some case we find a “contradiction” between the “litoralization” of the settlement and the “continentalization” of the economic flows: the Iberian Peninsula shows some examples of that “contradiction”.

The renaissance of coastal trade, with changes in some polarised ports, could contribute to reinforce this prospective scenario: an area expressed spatially as a continuous/linear coastal urbanisation, as already evident in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Thus, linear urban systems tend to develop a polycentric urban model marked by stronger polarizations, generally constituting anchors to the hinterland and the foreland; on the other hand the urban continuum catalyses the development of complementarities especially in areas well supported by systems of ecological transport.

The peripheral urban systems aside from serving, at the highest level, as anchors to the European and extra-European systems- providing robustness and cohesion to the Union's space- must also be strongly articulated with and embedded to the territories in which they are inscribed.

The structuring role of these urban systems is fundamental in the fight against the marginalization of Europe's more peripheral areas. This is applied particularly to the “empty” hinterlands of large parts of these urbanized coastal fringes, where the population density is very low and traditional Mediterranean agriculture declined.

It has been proved that CAP does not have appropriate measures to stop the spread of these marginalized rural areas, on the contrary, during its periods of activity, it caused the expansion of abandoned rural areas- by production and population, leaving vast areas depressed of the presence of rural activities on the territory's environment and image. Thus, an important step is to design coherent urban policies which encourage the recuperation of small and medium sized cities in these vast areas undergoing processes of marginalization.

Alentejo, a vast region covering almost one-third of Portugal, constitutes a good example of this type of policy. In light of a steady decline in agriculture and the emigration of a large number of its population (between 1960 and 1991 Alentejo went from 760916 inhabitants to 543442), the small urban nuclei corresponding to heads of municipality and a certain number of intermediate cities, had developed poles resistant to desertification and today, with improvements in accessibilities, they have started to gather the conditions required for the settlement of new activities and populations, and, in return, see their rural spaces valorised.

At the same time, these small urban nuclei where great efforts were made to edify basic infrastructures and social equipment, gathered conditions for the development of ecological, rural and cultural tourism. Lastly, but very importantly, this process revalorised both the agrarian and edified patrimony.

This process is also represented in large parts of Portugal's Northern interior and Spain, although in this country the modernisation of agriculture has frequently served as a base for the creation of agro-business poles. Another situation, one could refer to as "local additionality", results from a combination of Community funds and the application of important monetary flows of emigrants aimed at investments, no longer in the villages of origin but rather in the closest urban centres (head of municipalities and province capitals), contributing to the "rebuilding" of local urban systems.

If we add State monetary transfers to these resources, we find the ingredients that explain the halt in rapid demographic decline and the diminishment of territorial asymmetries, in terms of economic and social development. In fact, after integration with the European Community (1986), it was possible to reach to some extent a real convergence, both in regard to the country in relation with the Union's average, and in regard to the different regions and sub-regions of Portugal, as measured by NUTE II, and NUTE III, as by GDP, and as by summary indicators. In the Portuguese case, which in my belief can be extended to the Spanish case- here supported by the regionalization process (creation of Comunidades Autonómicas Regionais which, however, are not much more efficient)- the reinforcement and cohesion of local/regional/national urban systems does not result from explicit urban policies but rather, from implicit integration of distinct sectorial policies.

It is now essential to deepen policies in areas such as tourism, local accessibilities (public transportation) and education towards a culture of quality food consumption, so to start a rebirth of rural areas pushed by urbanism.

5. The increase in “capitality” of periphery state capitals

While a certain number of measures and actions taken at the level of the Union seek to “weaken” identification with the State, namely through the valorisation of regions- “Europe of the Regions”- in the urban systems of peripheral countries there is a distinct valorisation of the “capitality” of the national/state capital: Athens, Lisbon, Madrid, Dublin, Helsinki.

Along 900 centuries of history, Portugal’s peripheral situation in the Iberian Peninsula and in the Europe determined the primacy of Lisbon, in other words, primacy goes hand in hand with competitiveness, which is one of the costs of being peripheral” (Gaspar, 1997, pp. 150). And after decolonization in 1975, “Portugal’s integration into the European Community on 1 January of 1986, gave Lisbon a new lease of life. It benefited greatly from the process of de-nationalization, which began in the 1980’s and strengthened the city’s economic, financial and political importance at the national and international level” (Gaspar, 1990, 1997, pp. 149).

The apparently contradictory fact relates to the new role that the capital (as seat of government and other instances of national sovereignty) should play in the relationship with European Union instances, particularly with the Commission. Thus, by maintaining the importance of bi-lateral relationships, in Europe and the rest of the world, the relationship of capitals with the European instance is magnified. On the other hand, in the context of an embryonic polycentrism at the level of the European urban system, it is mainly the capitals that share a portion of the Union’s inherent capitality, expressed in the headquarters of some of the community organisms.

Yet everything may change if the European Union opts for a strategy of polinuclear urban

systems, also at the highest level, privileging comparative location advantages, with an open perspective to the exterior. We reach the concept of a gateway-city in the context of peripheral urban systems.

History shows that many geographically peripheral cities, gained centrality by establishing trade networks away from central areas which at every moment dominated Europe. Maybe, some of the more commented examples are the Hanseatic League and the merchant and maritime cities of Italy (Genoa, Venice, Amalfi...), as well as the cases of Lisbon or Seville during the XV-XVII centuries, South of the Iberian Peninsula or until the XX century, the cases of Great Britain's West coast ports, as well as Bordeaux, or Vigo.

History also shows that the age of many of these geographically peripheral cities correspond to periods in which integration at the Centre/in central urban systems intensifies, through their performance as "gateways": Seville, Lisbon, and other ports of the Atlantic front are good examples; in the same way that Stockholm and Copenhagen contributed to the articulation between the Slav world of the north, the Germanic space/German and the North Sea, where the Netherlands-Great Britain axis emerged.

Citing, once more, Flora Pagetti's study (Pagetti, 1998), we find that the role of national capitals is particularly evident in the European banking system. Within the 15 countries of the European Union the author shows the existence of three or four levels of banking activity centres, in which 16 cities are mentioned, of which only two do not constitute national/state capitals- Frankfurt and Milan, both belonging to two national urban systems truly polycentric at the highest level.

The author concludes by stating that these cities are expected to keep polarising banking activities, noting however that this is particularly valid at the highest level. In this context, one can question if a "dispersion" on the periphery and a concentration at the centre make sense? We believe not. Recent conglomerations of banks, indicate that national peripheral "poles", will continue to function as "relais" between peripheral urban systems and the "Centre". The same can be inferred from the analysis of the main airport centres, as we tried to point out previously.

One hypothesis reverts to the principle of polarised development. In the peripheries of the European system, at the initial phase of the integration process, a concentration of firms and services occurs, mainly international services and firms, in the capital or other main cities, which strengthen the anchorage of each subsystem to the centre of the European system, in some cases we are dealing with a recuperation of “capitality” in relation to the national or regional space. At a second phase, these poles find a specific role in the context of the European space, which should make a “contribution” for the development of the system as a whole- it may also represent the affirmation of its role as junction (or gateway) relatively to the extra-European spaces in relation to which they affirm advantages in the European context, or for historic-cultural reasons, or geographical proximity or other types of affinities- in reality what may happen is the conjugation of various factors of approximation.

This process will allow a progressive strengthening of the peripheral sub-system and from this its integration through access to new opportunities and the construction of new functional networks.

One such evolution contemplates the studies of processes of specialisation (Camagni, 1990, quoted by Roura and Rubalcaba-Bermejo, 1998), as well as the concept of specialisation cycles. In reality, the new role required from larger cities of peripheral urban systems in the context of European integration, implies an adjustment with respective specialisations, in view of responding to the new challenges of competition. It also copes with two main issues introduced by Dematteis dealing with the *Italian Urban System Towards European Integration*: “cities are one of the fundamental factors for concrete achievement of the economic and social cohesion of the European Union” (Dematteis, 1999a, pp. 13); and the potential role as “exchangers” that some peripheral cities can play, namely in Southern Italy (Dematteis, 1999b).

As a final reflection, I’d like to focus your attention on the fact that during its History, Europe, either through its addition/junction of spaces with unique identities and nations, or through relevance to its surrounding spaces- the maritime powers - worked with a greater opening to other continents: allowing the “entrances” and the “exits”. With the exception of Russia, the main powers, at each historical moment, had to promote openings in various

directions, always finding complementarities and opportunities.

Since the Roman Empire! Today, in one sense, it seems like we are going back 2000 years, in regard to macro-regional strategy. This may generate the danger of letting ourselves get closed and involved by “new barbarians”, awaiting the sclerosis/degeneration of the continent. The urban systems of the peripheral European regions also here can play a structuring role, as gateways and economic, social and cultural interfaces.

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Number of weekly direct connections in 1989

	North America	Central/South America	Middle & Near East	India, Ext. Orient. & SE Asia	Australia	Africa	East Europe	West Europe	Europe	Total
Helsinki	5,2	0,0	0,0	0,7	0,0	0,7	5,7	87,5	93,3	100,0
Stockholm	5,2	1,2	0,0	0,7	0,0	0,1	3,1	89,7	92,8	100,0
Athens	4,6	0,0	10,6	3,9	2,2	10,0	3,3	65,5	68,8	100,0
Glasgow	6,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,2	92,7	93,9	100,0
Dublin	4,5	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	95,5	95,5	100,0
Lisbon	6,5	8,2	0,7	0,0	0,0	9,6	1,7	73,2	74,9	100,0
Palermo	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Naples	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: *ABC World Airways Guide*, Reed Telepublishing Ltd. (1989)

Source: *ABC World Airways Guide*,

Number of weekly direct connections in 2000

	North America	Central and South America	Middle-East Orient	India, Ext. Orient. & SE Asia	Australia	Africa	East Europe	West Europe	Europe	Total
Helsinki	0,1	0,0	0,7	0,7	0,0	0,0	9,1	89,5	98,6	100,0
Stockholm	2,0	0,0	0,4	0,4	0,0	0,1	3,2	93,9	97,1	100,0
Athens	2,5	0,0	10,8	0,5	0,8	3,8	6,5	75,1	81,6	100,0
Glasgow	3,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	96,3	96,3	100,0
Dublin	3,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,7	96,0	96,7	100,0
Lisbon	4,0	6,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	6,8	0,2	82,2	82,4	100,0
Palermo	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100,0
Naples	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: *OAG Flight Guide*, Reed Elsevier Pub. (2000)

Source: *OAG Flight Guide*, Reed Elsevier Pub. (2000)

SIGNIFICANCE OF WEEKLY DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD IN 1989

Cities	Number of flights					% of total			
	East Europe (1)	West Europe (2)	Europe (3)	Rest of World	Total	East Europe (1)	West Europe (2)	Europe (3)	Rest of World
Helsinki	23	351	374	27	401	5,74	87,53	93,27	6,73
Stockholm	24	687	711	55	766	3,13	89,69	92,82	7,18
Athens	15	302	317	144	461	3,25	65,51	68,76	31,24
Glasgow	2	152	154	10	164	1,22	92,68	93,90	6,10
Dublin		486	486	23	509	0,00	95,48	95,48	4,52
Lisbon	5	213	218	73	291	1,72	73,20	74,91	25,09
Palermo		1	1	0	1	0,00	100,00	100,00	0,00
Naples		34	34	0	34	0,00	100,00	100,00	0,00

NUMBER OF WEEKLY DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

	East Europe		West Europe		Europe		Rest of World		Total	
	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000
Frankfurt	115	355	1629	2815	1744	3170	1003	1332	2747	4502
London	48	207	2620	5998	2668	6205	1533	2163	4201	8368
Paris	55	241	1650	4807	1705	5048	1154	1463	2859	6511

	East Europe %		Rest West Europe %		Europe %		Rest of World %	
	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000
Frankfurt	4,19	7,89	59,30	62,53	63,49	70,41	36,51	29,59
London	1,14	2,47	62,37	71,68	63,51	74,15	36,49	25,85
Paris	1,92	3,70	57,71	73,83	59,64	77,53	40,36	22,47

	New York		North America		Central / South America		Middle and Near East		India, Ext Orient & SE Asia		Australia	
	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000
Frankfurt	2,4	1,7	19,5	10,6	2,5	2,7	5,6	5,2	4,4	6,3	1,0	0,4
London	2,7	3,0	21,5	12,9	1,2	1,4	5,2	3,8	4,0	4,1	1,4	1,1
Paris	2,2	1,6	17,8	6,7	2,8	3,8	4,3	2,6	3,8	2,8	0,2	0,1

	Africa		Europe		Total	
	1989	2000	1989	2000	1989	2000
Frankfurt	3,6	4,4	63,5	70,4	100,0	100,0
London	3,2	2,4	63,5	74,2	100,0	100,0
Paris	11,4	6,6	59,6	77,5	100,0	100,0

SIGNIFICANCE OF WEEKLY DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD IN 2000

	Number of flights					% of total			
	East Europe (1)	West Europe (2)	Europe (3)	Rest of World	Total	East Europe (1)	West Europe (2)	Europe (3)	Rest of World
Helsinki	122	1196	1318	19	1337	9,12	89,45	98,58	1,42
Stockholm	81	2376	2457	74	2531	3,20	93,88	97,08	2,92
Athens	48	551	599	135	734	6,54	75,07	81,61	18,39
Glasgow		283	283	11	294	0,00	96,26	96,26	3,74
Dublin	8	1075	1083	37	1120	0,71	95,98	96,70	3,30
Lisbon	2	793	795	170	965	0,21	82,18	82,38	17,62
Palermo		0	0	3	3	0,00	0,00	0,00	100,00
Naples		78	78	0	78	0,00	100,00	100,00	0,00

Significance of weekly direct connections with main European city airports in 1989

	London	Amsterdam	Brussels	Milan	Paris	Frankfurt	Zurich	Munich	Madrid	Rome	Barcelona
Helsinki	5,2	5,2	0,0	0,5	3,5	7,0	3,5	1,7	0,2	0,0	0,0
Stockholm	6,1	3,3	2,6	1,8	3,3	3,5	2,6	0,9	1,3	0,9	0,4
Athens	3,7	3,0	3,3	3,0	3,0	6,3	3,5	2,2	2,2	7,4	1,5
Dublin	39,7	3,3	2,4	1,0	3,1	2,0	1,2	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,0
Lisbon	9,6	4,5	4,8	4,1	5,5	4,8	5,5	2,4	9,3	3,8	1,4

Source: *ABC World Airways Guide*, Reed Telepublishing Ltd. (1989)

Significance of weekly direct connections with main European city airports in 2000

	London	Amsterdam	Brussels	Milan	Paris	Frankfurt	Zurich	Munich	Madrid	Rome	Barcelona
Helsinki	8,5	2,6	4,7	0,6	4,2	6,2	3,1	3,6	0,0	0,3	0,5
Stockholm	9,5	3,3	3,6	1,4	3,8	4,3	2,4	1,1	0,8	0,0	0,2
Athens	8,9	5,6	4,0	5,7	6,7	6,7	2,9	4,0	1,2	6,4	1,0
Dublin	35,5	2,5	5,9	0,9	6,8	1,7	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,3	0,6
Lisbon	7,6	2,5	8,7	2,6	6,0	3,5	5,8	2,2	16,6	1,8	5,9

Source: *OAG Flight Guide*, Reed Elsevier Pub. (2000)

Number of weekly direct flights in 1989

	North America	Central/South America	Mid & Near East	India, Ext. Orient & SE Asia	Australia	Africa	East Europe	West Europe	Europe	Total
Helsinki	21	0	0	3	0	3	23	351	374	401
Stockholm	40	9	0	5	0	1	24	687	711	766
Athens	21	0	49	18	10	46	15	302	317	461
Glasgow	10	0	0	0	0	0	2	152	154	164
Dublin	23	0	0	0	0	0		486	486	509
Lisbon	19	24	2	0	0	28	5	213	218	291
Palermo	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	1	1
Naples	0	0	0	0	0	0		34	34	34

Source: *ABC World Airways Guide*, Reed Telepublishing Ltd. (1989)

Number of weekly direct flights in 2000

	North America	Central/South America	Mid & Near East	India, Ext. Orient. & SE Asia	Australia	Africa	East Europe	West Europe	Europe	Total
Helsinki	1	0	9	9	0	0	122	1196	1318	1337
Stockholm	50	0	10	11	0	3	81	2376	2457	2531
Athens	18	0	79	4	6	28	48	551	599	734
Glasgow	11	0	0	0	0	0		283	283	294
Dublin	37	0	0	0	0	0	8	1075	1083	1120
Lisbon	39	65	0	0	0	66	2	793	795	965
Palermo	0	0	0	0	0	3		0	0	3
Naples	0	0	0	0	0	0		78	78	78

Source: *OAG Flight Guide*, Reed Elsevier Pub. (2000)