Polycentric Development and Polycentric Governance

Metropolitan and Capital Regions
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The 21\textsuperscript{st} C. is the first \textit{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”

(Gottmann, 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**
  (Gottmann, 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 the EU spatial development
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
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 in *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 and information (hard to measure)
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 spatial manifestation of 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 a counterbalance to the Dublin CR

- 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 interconnections are 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

- Addressing the Mismatch between the strategies that are promoting polycentricity and the operation of formal government structure
The Challenge of Governance

- **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.

- How can the administrative boundaries and the wider functional areas be better aligned?
Mismatch of Functional & Administrative Boundaries

• No one local authority has administrative control over the whole metropolitan or city-region area
One size does not fit all!

• A city-region approach to strategic planning and hence a better alignment of governance and functional geometry is needed, but,

• Re-aligning does not necessarily mean having a single, all powerful city-region authority for the whole functional area

• It is even more perverse, to argue for such an authority at the level of PUR
Why?

• **First**, it is politically sensitive, and creates unnecessary rivalries and resentments

• **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 leisure 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. What about environmental footprints?

- Flows of waste are typically in opposite direction to the dominant economic flows.
- 58% of municipal waste from Gr. Manchester is exported out to Warrington for disposal.
One size doesn’t fit all!

• There is no single overarching city-region boundary

• Hence, no justification for a single, city-region authority

• It is even less justifiable to have a formal PUR-wide government structure

• ‘Fuzzy’ functional areas don’t fit in tightly-drawn administrative boundaries, small or large
Variable Geometry

- A variable geometry of informal and flexible inter-municipal collaborations is needed

- Multi-agency partnerships and flexible forms of networking at various spatial scales are already happening across Europe

- Reflecting the transition from government to governance: “horizontal self-organisation among mutually interdependent actors” (Jessop)

- Political polycentrism is on the rise but, needs further incentives!
• How can policy intervention facilitate functional inter-connections between neighbouring cities of a potential polycentric urban region?

• By incentivizing inclusive, inter-municipal coalitions for different functions across the PUR geometries
Conclusion

• Collaboration is the hallmark of effective governance!

• Effective governance is a prerequisite for the development of polycentric urban regions