

DEBATE

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I would like to say that New towns are really part of the metropolitan areas today and, make two remarks:

First, it was interesting to see the differences between Western and Eastern Europe and it would also be interesting, if you have the data, to analyse the differences between Northern and Southern Europe, looking at the already unbalanced map.

Second, you identified 247 metropolitan areas in only 27 countries. Do we know every name?

The second presentation shows that not every metropolis has an international development. We need to keep this in mind.

Lewis Dijkstra

I think these are absolutely pertinent questions. Yes, I made crude distinctions between West and East but there also are significant differences between the North and the South, the South-East and the North-East...

What I presented here were first explorations of trends that are happening in metropolitan regions and I think the question will need a longer time, serious data, a finer grid and see what is happening in different parts of the country, between different sizes of cities, within particular areas. You can find areas where smaller sized metropolitan regions are performing very well and you will find other parts where they are not doing well at all.

To comment on functions and names, I do not know the 247 names by heart but I do have them. They obviously do not all play a global role. I would be very keen to get the LAU-2 level data from Peter Schön. If we get that, we could actually try and see if we can come up with a rough classification of these metropolitan areas which goes beyond: capital, second city and smaller one.

As part of the work we do with EUROSTAT, we are actually discussing whether we could not come up with a more stable functional classification of these metropolitan areas. Although they probably would not recognise the data that Peter used, they may agree to use some of it. I think there is a possibility to come up with a finer grind or a more specific functional classification of those metro regions and this is a work that we want to do. We want to take on board the functions that regions will have and also I think in our case, we may want to make progress to try and identify if they play a regional political role since for some city areas that might make a big difference.

Karl Peter Schön

The 12 biggest metropolitan areas have 25% of all the metropolitan international functions. Whatever you do, even throwing out some indicators, it is always London and Paris at the top. This is very stable. At other levels, it can change according to what indicators you take.

Second remark: yes, we have a high concentration of metropolitan functions in the Pentagon area between London and Milan, including Paris, not excluding like in the blue banana. In that area there is a huge concentration of metropolitan functions and the periphery is small in comparison. We still have to study Southern Mediterranean countries.

Vincent Fouchier

Thank you for these two highly informative presentations which offer precious insights. The research of Peter Schön reminds me of a study conducted for the DATAR a few years back and which compared 200 European towns and cities with 15 indicators and which shook our beliefs in France on the strengths and weaknesses of our towns and cities and on the fact that towns and cities, especially major towns and cities drive economic development. Your two presentations challenge and question these beliefs. This is not that obvious depending on the context and we would like to go into each context in a little more detail.

My reaction in listening to you was dominated by the prism of analyses conducted by Europe. Paris and London are two major international cities almost without equivalents in Europe and for that reason they shatter the indicators used, whereas based on some criteria. Other smaller cities rank between them and outdistance them. We would also like to know who the challengers are, to know about the position of our cities in relation to the competition, a term I do not like since it is contrary to intuition.

We also face a problem of terminology: are we a metropolitan region? Are we a mega-region? The presentations today will help us to refine our definition of the Ile de France versus other regions. However, it is apparent that the very term "global city" raises questions and that Europe is not necessary the best framework of analysis.

The research conducted by Lewis and the OECD is very helpful in determining the data we require to conduct reliable analyses to guide our thinking and action. I would like to point out that through inventories, absolute numbers and fixed "descriptions" on metropolises, we have interesting data but it must be enhanced fairly quickly with information interchange and sharing and with contact since metropolises cannot only be described in terms of

numbers, square meters or numbers of jobs. Our metropolises are about networks; they form a system. We will then see whether or not London and Paris belong to the same system.

Regarding the city of Paris, several of the maps and graphics give the impression that we are returning to the Sixties, to the gap between "Paris and the French desert".

Karl Peter Schön

I still do not see any third "world city" in Europe so there is no one competing with Paris and London in this respect but of course, development is certainly not a zero-sum game. Different cities can win but on the other side, it is an ambivalent game regarding concentration and polarisation. You mentioned "Paris and the desert"; you would see a lot of polarisation in Eastern European countries. The capital cities are growing and doing quite well, whereas the rest has a lot of difficulties.

So of course, you have different views: on the one hand you have to do something for your competition and modernise your (metropolitan) area, but at the same time in some European Member States like in Eastern countries you would also need some decentralisation strategies at least in the long term to take other cities on board.

I am in favor of a two-phase model. Especially in Eastern and Central Europe, you have to support the national economy through strong capital cities and metropolitan regions. But then, maybe in a second phase, you have to fight polarization in your country and support your secondary cities. But this is not restricted to the new Member States. Also in other countries, for instance in France, as you have mentioned, you have a long discussion and debate about the adequate relationship about the balance between the capital, Paris, and the second-tier cities. To reach a good balance of polycentricity between metropolitan areas (or even world cities) and secondary cities is a big challenge and a tricky problem for spatial development policies

Lewis Dijkstra

In terms of definitions, our work with EUROSTAT over the past five years, trying to simplify and harmonise a number of these spatial concepts is quite important for a common understanding. Last year, we modified OECD definition of urban, intermediate, rural regions so that we have now one standardised definition for all NUTS-3 regions, which the entire Commission uses. This year, with all the national statistical institutes such as INSEE, we modified the degree of organisation methodology, so that if we talk about a densely populated commune, we all know where they are and what they are. To make sure that every densely populated commune is part of an urban audit city, we had to modify at both ends, reducing these multiple similar yet conflicting spatial definitions. My presentation is part of that work. I expect that it would become a very clear and stable classification of areas and

metropolitan areas. In terms of flows and exchanges, I could not agree more. A lot of metropolitan areas are defined by their links and their relationships. We did an innovation study with that, and we will continue this analysis looking at flight connections, potential accessibility and also movements of freight. The problem with flow data is that it is very difficult to get data from origins and destinations. In terms of migration: we know where people live, where they show up but we do not know where they come from or where they are going to.

In terms of looking at Paris and the surroundings or at the other cities, both the larger ones and the smaller ones in France, I definitely think there is, on a number of issues, a tendency to see a big gap between Paris and the other metro regions in France. It is very difficult to get a very clear handle on this. This is even more extreme in some Eastern Member States, since the gap in terms of productivity or services or specialised advanced producer service is so big that you only have the choice of locating into the capital or not getting access to these services at all. You actually have a much reduced scale or scope of locations.

If smaller cities can offer the same services as capitals, it might be more attractive for firms and reduce the pressure on the capital, on the wages, on the housing and real-estate markets. It is something we need to think about. The bigger the gap, the bigger the risk for a country to lose out just because firms cannot find their optimal balance between costs and access to particular services.

I tend to agree with Peter SCHÖN that indeed in a first phase, in a lot of the Eastern and Central European Member States, we will be and have been confronted with much higher growth in the capital than elsewhere. Until now growth in the other regions has still been above the EU average so it is not like they are economically declining or doing horribly or not doing as well as the capital, but the question is : when does the second phase start? And who starts it? I am convinced it will tip but I do not know when the tipping point will be reached and who is going to push it over.

And my point is: if we wait for the private sector to try and push it over so that you get higher growth outside the capital, it will not happen or it will only happen much later because the necessary services are not in place, the necessary infrastructure is not in place, the necessary quality of life is not in place in many of other locations.

Democratically, it is very hard to continue justifying underinvesting outside your capital region just because you do not think it is economically efficient and economic proof for that higher efficiency of investment outside of capital region is pretty flimsy so I think we need to really think about this and this is a debate in many countries.

And before I stop, I would like to point out that ESPON is doing a particular study on this issue, a

study about second cities, asking about when will this tipping point occur? What is the debate in the country about the role of non-capital cities and the second cities? What can they do? How are they perceived? It is a different debate in many different countries but it is a debate that is often present and there are a lot of discussions about how these issues should be addressed.