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# THE ROLE OF METROPOLES: Neglected Elements in Interpreting Globalization in Central Europe

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Jiří Musil

## I. Introduction

In most analyses of the post-1989 processes of globalization and societal transformation in the countries of Central Europe, stress is placed primarily on the systemic changes in the economy, political systems, and social structure. Less attention is given to the instruments of globalization and social change. Among the neglected mechanisms are two apparently unrelated phenomena: the functioning of large cities and the new communication technologies. Such neglect is surprising in view of the knowledge available about the role of cities in diffusion processes and of information theory studies on cities as “senders” and “receivers.”

This paper is an attempt to conceptualize the role of large cities, especially Central European metropolises, in integrating postcommunist countries with the rest of the world and with Western Europe, in particular. Attention will also be given to the diffusion of communication technologies that make such an integration easier and quicker.

Globalization is undoubtedly one of the most important processes transforming our present world. One should not forget, however, that interactions, linkages, and contacts between metropolises existed in the past as well. The relatively quick diffusion of knowledge, ideas, and styles in art and architecture on the European continent proves that in the past the centers of thought, knowledge, and style formation were *always* in lively contact. Globalization is a higher and more intensive level of

such contacts and interlinkages. It is based on extensive competition and cooperation, on exchange of information, and, principally, on a growing division of labor between metropolises. The urban centers within the continents are becoming more and more *one* system, with regularly and intensively interacting metropolises and large cities. Two to three decades ago, the highest levels of continental urban systems began to integrate into a network, or quasi system, of global cities. London, New York, Tokyo, Paris, and Frankfurt now function as an interconnected global financial market. Similar global systems are emerging in some areas of science. A *conditio sine qua non* of such functional, quick, and reliable interaction between metropolises and centers of knowledge, which knit together the continental as well as the global urban systems, is the existence of new communication technologies and their rapid spread around the world, even in poor countries. As expressed by Manuel Castells, poverty is not a big obstacle in the diffusion of new communication technologies.

At the same time, it should be stressed that societal changes after 1989 (i.e., changes in the political, economic, social, and cultural systems) in the respective countries, as well as the introduction of new communication technologies, did not start in an unstructured or nonhierarchical, urban system. Throughout history, the existing metropolises and large cities formed a hierarchy that expressed their status and power, as well as the status and power of the nation-states or regions that they dominated.

Thus, no urban system or any part of it can be meaningfully analyzed without taking into account its evolution and history. The stability of urban hierarchies (particularly that of large cities) throughout history is presented as being surprisingly strong. For this reason, a relatively extensive part of the following paper is concerned with the history of the Central European metropolises' system. Because my knowledge of Prague is better than that of any other Central European metropole, many comparisons are illustrated from the perspective of that city.

This paper is divided into four sections: (a) large cities in Central Europe and their interaction in the past, present, and future; (b) linking the Central European metropolises to the Western European urban system; (c) the effects of globalization processes on Central European metropolises; and (d) the emergence of new

disparities created by globalization inside the region and inside the Central European states, including the benefits and costs of globalization.

## II. Large Central European Cities and their Interaction in the Past, Present, and Future

In the present phase of the dramatic change in European political structure, the roles and interactions of the continent's capitals are undergoing rapid alterations. Some of the transformations are of a geopolitical nature, some are sociocultural, and still others pertain to the general features of traditional intercity interactions. The network of Central European capitals—Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Warsaw, and Berlin—provides a good subject for the examination of these changes. In addition, there are a number of practical reasons why Central Europe, particularly the Czech Republic, should be carefully observed.

Central Europe has always been a nerve center for Europe as a whole; and in the near future, the organization of Central Europe can have a positive or negative effect on the processes of overall European integration. Bismarck's famous maxim that whoever reigns in Bohemia has the potential to rule the whole of Europe does not apply to present-day European constellations. There is no denying, however, that Bohemia is a small core area in Europe where numerous wars have started and ended and where various modalities in East–West relations have been repeatedly tested.

In the emerging *New Europe*, conceived as a kind of confederation, Prague might shed its postwar peripheral position and become part of a new dynamically growing region. Another possibility, however, is that the shift from a centrally planned economy to a market economy might plunge it into a lengthy recession.

There are some intellectually intriguing questions that legitimate the quest for a greater understanding of the new forms of intercity interaction. At this point, I propose that we rediscover and reinterpret some of the concepts first formulated by the fathers of human ecology at the University of Chicago.<sup>1</sup> They developed the concept of symbiotic competition that can be

used, it seems, not only for analyzing intra-urban processes but also for improving our understanding of the interactions among cities.

Another intriguing question is the continuity and discontinuity of regional patterns of linkages among cities and the positions of cities in the urban rank order. To what extent is the power of a city stable? To what extent does it change? If it changes, how rapid can a change of this kind be?<sup>2</sup>

### **A. Before World War I**

Any serious examination of the interaction between Prague and the neighboring capitals in the Central Europe of the future should be based on a historical perspective. The starting point for a historical analysis should be the second half of the nineteenth century. Two paradoxically different events mark the beginning of this period: the emergence of a unified German Reich under Bismarck and the emancipation of Hungary within the Hapsburg monarchy, which was an important step toward the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>3</sup>

The regional status and hierarchy of the five cities after 1870 is quite clear: Vienna and Berlin in very strong positions with a gradual rise in the status of Berlin, Budapest with a medium and rising status, and Prague and Warsaw in relatively low positions. Unlike the situation in some countries, where the capital cities were not important industrial centers (e.g., Madrid, Rome, and, to some extent, Paris), the economic and industrial functions of all the cities referred to above were well developed and quite strong. The Central European capitals, particularly Vienna, Budapest, and Warsaw, were in their countries' industrial islands, where industrialization processes had often started. Prague was different in the respect that it was part of a larger industrialized area, Central and Northern Bohemia.

The sociocultural roles of the capitals in question exhibit a different pattern. Vienna played an obviously dominant cultural role in the empire as a whole, and its influence radiated to other parts of Europe as well. Although Berlin's position was less important at the beginning of this period, it improved rapidly alongside the growing economic and political power of the German Reich. Budapest and Prague both played a less significant

sociocultural role. Budapest was the ethnic center for Hungarians, and Prague was the cultural center not only for Czechs but, to some extent, for Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs as well. The weakest position was that of Warsaw, which not only suffered from the division of Poland into the three parts but was also confronted with stiff competition from Kraków, another important Polish cultural center. One should also not forget that during the time of Poland's partition, Warsaw was a mere regional center of the Russian part of Poland.

The kind of division of labor that played a role between Glasgow and Edinburgh or Rome and Milan was virtually nonexistent in the Czech region. Prague was a regional cultural, industrial, and political center all in one. Brno and Ostrava, the two potential competitors, were predominantly industrial cities at the time without any considerable cultural influence.<sup>4</sup>

The interaction among the five cities at the start of the twentieth century mainly consisted of symbiotic economic competition and political rivalry based on growing nationalism. A great deal has been written about the economic competition between Vienna and Berlin<sup>5</sup> and about the political rivalry between Prague and Vienna.<sup>6</sup>

This period was marked by intensive trade as well as extensive cultural and social contacts. It was a period of great technological advances that did much to improve human interaction; it was a period of flourishing railways, telegraph and telephone systems, and European integration processes. It was also an era of intensive intercity competition and of great fears on the part of cities not in the top ranks that they would be reduced to provincial towns. The nervous anxiety of Prague, Salzburg, Dresden, and Kraków was notorious in this respect.

The large cities were an integral part of the growing tendency toward nationalistic particularism, although, surprisingly enough, this was also the period when the *Mittleuropa* idea began to take root.<sup>7</sup> However, the fragmentation processes continued, particularly in the political and cultural spheres. Due to the existing political and economic structures, most importantly the predominance of conservative feudal-aristocratic policies in the Central European states, nationalistic differences predominated. The technological changes and economic developments that were to lead to the integration of Europe were taking place

at precisely the same time. The disparity between these two processes was tragic. The potential of this region prior to World War I was not developed.

It should be noted that social interaction among the large cities was confined to contact among their respective economic and political elite groups.<sup>8</sup> Personal contact in the fields of science or literature was far less intensive and frequently took place by way of letters. The role of journals and books was, however, rather important at that time. Books published in German were read in Vienna as well as in Berlin and Kraków. There was no mass tourism on the part of the middle and lower classes. They still spent their holidays in their own countries. Compared to today, there were very few conferences where academics of various countries could meet and exchange ideas.

In short, the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth were characterized by a combination of fragmentation and cooperation. To a certain extent, this combination can be described as symbiotic competition. The integrating processes furthered some of the features of a common Central European culture that extended to include not only the Austro-Hungarian Empire but Germans as well.<sup>9</sup> This was most vividly apparent when the region was compared with Western Europe. The cultural similarities of Central Europe could be explained sociologically. In most of the countries of Central Europe, even Germany,<sup>10</sup> there was a feeling of backwardness in comparison with Great Britain and France. Efforts to catch up with the civilization of Western Europe constituted an important factor in the social changes taking place in the region. The specific position of intellectuals in Central Europe played an important role in this respect.

Without losing sight of the general picture of Central Europe, we should also focus on the considerable cultural differences between the five major cities there. Each of them had a different relationship with the West. The difference between Vienna and Berlin was the most illustrative in this respect.

## **B. The Interwar Period**

It has often been claimed, and rightly so, that World War I was one of the most disastrous events in European history and that

World War II was a continuation of that calamity. One of the consequences of WWI was the deepening of the prewar fragmentation. Cultural and national differences were projected onto political and economic ones. Three old empires—the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czarist Russia, and the Ottoman Empire—all collapsed. Numerous new national states emerged. Some of their founders were of the opinion that this meant the victory of democracy over theocracy.<sup>11</sup>

If we examine the capitals of Central Europe, it is clear how they differed in the interwar period. They were either part of the victorious or of the defeated nations. Prewar animosities were reinforced by this fact: Prague versus Vienna, Prague versus Budapest, Warsaw versus Moscow. Old markets crumbled, and some of the nations and cities had to radically redirect the focus of their markets as well as their general economic policies on foreign trade.<sup>12</sup> Of course, the war also destroyed the traditional commercial links among the five cities, which were slowly rebuilt in the subsequent period.

The cities of the victorious nations, particularly Prague and, to a lesser extent, Warsaw, began to focus politically and culturally on their Western allies; and the Czechs stressed their liberal democratic orientation. For Prague, the models were France, the United States, and Great Britain. With regard to the Czech interwar developments in the social sciences, literature, and architecture, there is a great deal of documentation to support this thesis.<sup>13</sup> The history of Prague's avant-garde architecture in the twenties and thirties is one of the most interesting examples.<sup>14</sup>

During the interwar period, the five cities also exhibited considerable differences in their growth patterns. These patterns might be classified into three categories: (1) rapid growth, e.g., Prague and Warsaw; (2) slow recovery and slow growth, e.g., Berlin and Budapest; and (3) stagnation and, to a certain extent, decay, e.g., Vienna.<sup>15</sup>

The precarious interwar equilibrium did not reduce the fragmentation of Central Europe, and the prewar symbiotic competition was weakened. Improved transportation and communication technology and economic internationalization only served to make the basic inconsistency of the interwar arrangements even more obvious. Multinationals were already in existence at the time. The interconnectedness of Western and



Central European cities was continuously eroded by political rivalries based on narrow-minded national interests. Nonetheless, there were many people in Central Europe, mainly in the 1930s (Coudenhove-Calergi, Karel Čapek, Kurt Tucholsky, and Max Brod, to name just a few) who devoted themselves to the struggle for European universalism and understanding. Efforts to bring together Czechs and Germans were also made, as expressed in the writings of President Masaryk, the philosopher Rádl, and others.<sup>16</sup>

How were all of these complex processes reflected in the concrete positions of the five capitals referred to above? In the late 1930s, Prague became a modern European metropolis. Its residents, however, were plagued by deep feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Vienna struggled along from one crisis to another, losing its population—particularly its intellectuals—its spirit, and its economic prosperity. Budapest slowly came back to life and, in the late 1930s, exhibited a relative rise in its economic and cultural output. After a brief, gloomy postwar period, Berlin stabilized its economic power in the 1920s and became one of the most flourishing cultural centers in Europe. This came to an end, however, with Hitler's ascension to power. In the 1930s, Berlin became a capital preparing to reconquer lost positions of power. Warsaw slowly built up its position in the Polish macroregion, all the while competing closely with Kraków. Compared with the prewar period, its status improved.

In order to explain some of the lesser-known aspects of Prague's development, I would like to say something more about it in the interwar period. To quote Ferdinand Peroutka, the leading Czech journalist at the time, the energy of the population was, to a large extent, concentrated on building a state.<sup>17</sup> The unresolved problems of the German minority in Czechoslovakia also had a negative impact on life in Prague. Compared with the other Central European capitals, Prague retained certain important liberal features: it functioned much as Vienna did in the period after 1955, as a refuge for political emigrants<sup>18</sup> and as a place where the Jewish students refused in Hungary, Poland, and Austria could register at the university. Last but not least, Prague was to remain the one and only democratic capital in Central Europe almost until the outbreak of World War II.

### **C. Post–World War II**

Compared to the situation following WWI, the post-World War II period introduced a number of radically new patterns to the relations among the five cities.

Europe was soon divided into two blocks, and two of the cities in question were divided as well. This time, the war caused extensive damage to most of the cities. Warsaw was almost completely destroyed, as were parts of Budapest and Vienna, as well as Berlin to a great extent. The only city to escape almost intact was Prague. These war events had a much greater effect on the civilian populations than did those of World War I, and they led to far greater social changes and disruptions.

The division of Europe not only meant a political separation; it also gave rise to differing regional processes. In the socialist countries, the capital cities and their growth were more strictly checked by the state than in the liberal democracies. In fact, anti-urban policies were introduced. Due to this check, Prague, for example, now has approximately the same population as in 1940 (1,050,000 in 1940 and 1,211,000 in 1980).

Although history did repeat itself in a way by placing Prague and Warsaw once again on the side of the victors with Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest on the side of the defeated, this fact was soon to lose whatever significance it might have had.

The five cities became the capitals of nations that had undergone considerable changes. The most radical change had taken place in Germany, where part of Berlin became the capital of only one part of the divided country. Warsaw was suddenly near the eastern border of Poland, since the entire country had been shifted westward. Prague ceased to be the capital of Slovakia and Ruthenia. Discounting the war period, the fewest changes of this type were observed in Hungary and Austria.

In those parts of the macroregion that were allotted by the Yalta Conference to the Soviet Union's sphere of power, the most striking changes occurred in the sociopolitical and economic systems. These changes played a decisive role in determining the status of the capitals. Soviet-style central planning suppressed the growth of large cities, especially of capitals. Strict checks were enforced in Prague and Warsaw and, to a

lesser degree, in Budapest as well. The consequence of these policies was obvious, as these cities lost their positions in the hierarchy of European cities. Particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, the macroregional policies combined with the economic autarkic policies to eliminate the traditionally intensive multilateral interaction among Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Berlin, and Warsaw was replaced by bilateral linkages to Moscow.

The situation slowly improved in the late 1960s. There was more and more contact among scientists, artists, and writers from Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, and East Berlin. Tourism also expanded. In comparison with what was happening at the time in the West, however, this interaction was still negligible.

According to Enyedi, the most dramatic changes pertained to the position of Berlin.<sup>19</sup> The Soviet section of the city became the capital of the German Democratic Republic. East Berlin was to control an industrialized and developed country, albeit a small one, while West Berlin remained an enclave without any direct attraction zone. It has, however, exhibited remarkable cultural development, to a certain extent affecting Vienna and Budapest.

During the course of this period, there were frequent changes regarding the relations between Budapest and Prague. After the war, relations were uneasy and often almost hostile. They began to improve in the 1950s, and the events of 1968 did much to enhance them even more. From then on, they continued to gain in strength, particularly in the unofficial sphere, but to a certain degree in the official sphere as well.

Even though a considerable segment of the Viennese population was of Czech extraction, relations between Vienna and Prague remained lukewarm virtually throughout the postwar period. For a long time, both Prague and Warsaw were cut off from Vienna, with less contact than at any other time in the history of Central Europe. Vienna completely forfeited its position as leading metropolis of the area. This separation of Vienna from its international hinterland in the first few decades after World War II was one of the most striking phenomena in the region.

Although it had a better starting position than Vienna, Prague declined into a provincial city during this period. It never made any effort to become a junction between East and West, a gateway from Western Europe to the USSR or the Balkans. In the

new context, its position resembled that of the pre-1918 period. Soviet strategic considerations undoubtedly played a role in this connection. Prague was the westernmost capital, a city inside a region (Bohemia) that was slowly but surely losing its industrial and cultural significance. This trend came to an end in the 1980s.

The COMECON planning policies were responsible for the dwindling and even the disappearance of some important industrial activities in the individual capitals. Prague lost its optical industry and, to a large extent, its electrotechnical and some consumer goods industries. They were replaced by industrial activities — steelworks in Warsaw, the manufacture of trams in Prague, and buses in Budapest—that did little to benefit the capitals themselves.

In this third period, Vienna was the only capital to become a major international transport center. Its airport served as a gateway to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Balkans. It also took over Prague's prewar role as a transit place for political refugees. In his book *Porträt Europas*,<sup>20</sup> Salvator De Madariaga rightly noted that Vienna was the hidden capital of Europe, since it was where East met West. By examining Berlin in this period, one can see that it lost its traditional position. Even financial injections from the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) could not stop its long-term decline from its macroregional position.

In the final stages of Real Socialism, all the Socialist capitals began to compete for the favor of the West. Budapest and Warsaw were the most successful in this respect, followed by Prague and East Berlin. The principle of symbiotic competition once again came into effect but under new conditions. It was not merely a return to the conditions of the late nineteenth century.

#### **D. Present and Future Developments**

What will shape the role and power of cities in postindustrial society? The term itself indicates that there will not be the same kind of industry as in the nineteenth century. Opportunities for growth will depend on computer technology, science, culture, and services to bring people together, principally in interregional and international capacities. Whether competing for deindustrialization or for new industries, cities will be rivals

with respect to the quality of the environment, attractive architecture, cultural and sporting events (e.g., the Olympic Games), freedom of information, quality of education, intellectual creativity, and the internalization of culture. Last but not least, cities will be competitors in regards to the quality of life, particularly the quality of human relations.

Aside from Vienna, from where will the other four capitals begin? Due to Soviet "unification" of the region, current competition among these cities is, paradoxically, not very strong. However, it is quite possible that old rivalries and even antagonisms will soon reappear. The most important question today is whether the conditions can be created for new and less hostile forms of rivalry and competition without reverting back to the conflicts that plagued Eastern and Central Europe in the past.

With respect to the basic position of the five capitals, the following major patterns might emerge. In the not too distant future, Berlin will have the highest status in the area. Within two decades, it will be on a level with Paris and London. However, since the FRG is a federation, there may be some jealousy on the part of Bonn, Munich, Hamburg, and perhaps the cities of the Ruhr. There also might be obstructions from other countries, and, of course, the formation of a new capital will take time.

The change will probably have a detrimental effect on Vienna. In the past few decades, large amounts of German capital have flowed into Austria, but in the future, it will be channeled to the entire area of the former German Democratic Republic and, of course, to Berlin itself. Nonetheless, Vienna's position is so strong that, although this might slow down its development, it will not stop it. Vienna will remain the site of international agencies and the gateway to the southeast of Europe. As a trade center, it can attract people from nearby regions in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

However, the high cost of living in Vienna, due to the presence of the international agencies, will make it impossible for many of the people who use it as a regional center to permanently settle there. Moreover, there will be a westward shift of economic and commercial activities inside the country toward Salzburg and the Tyrol. But not to be overlooked is one of Vienna's principal advantages: it is the capital of a neutral country.

Budapest can benefit from its proximity to Vienna. Although it may never attain the economic importance of Vienna, it can certainly compete as a site for international conferences and meetings. Its strength lies in its intellectual potential and creativity. Budapest's main drawback, however, is its relatively small regional hinterland. It is still a large city in a small country, though it is skillfully striving for a better position in the wider urban network. Thanks to the efforts of Hungarians living abroad, Budapest will soon house affiliated branches of various U.S. universities.

The great future potential of Warsaw is largely based on its role in a large country. Although Warsaw is half the size of Budapest, it is in a country that today has one of the most ethnically homogeneous populations in Central Europe. As the economic conditions in Poland improve, it will undoubtedly witness rapid growth. The traditional competition with Kraków will probably be relatively unimportant. Warsaw can begin to function as a macroregional center of the northeastern part of Central Europe, and perhaps it can also serve the emerging Baltic republics. It may, however, be threatened not only by Prague and Berlin but by Budapest as well.

Prague is a latecomer. Its position is more complicated; however, there might be some advantages to this. Its position will also be precarious because of its geography. Between up-and-coming Berlin and the three-city agglomeration of Vienna, Budapest, and Bratislava, it will not be easy for Prague to establish a role for itself that is not confined to mezzo-regional functions. Will Prague have a chance to become anything more than the capital of the Czech Republic? According to the central place model, the prospects are, indeed, quite poor; but there is also the more realistic network model based on the interaction among centers all around the world. As a result of modern communication technology, this model presents a more optimistic outlook for the future of Prague.

From a purely regional perspective, Prague is in danger of becoming solely a regional center for the Czech Republic, which has a total population of ten million. The advantage in comparison with the prewar period is that it is ethnically quite homogeneous. However, the emergence of regionalism in Moravia and Silesia are examples of new centrifugal forces. These regions

began to strengthen their position with new universities and other institutions. The regions were reinforced by the fact that they — together with western Slovakia — were part of the most dynamically growing areas in the Czechoslovak Republic in the postwar period. The other positive point about the Moravian macroregion is that it is one of the oldest and most advantageous North–South axes, connecting Warsaw with Vienna, Berlin with Vienna, and so forth. Compared with this, Prague was never part of the important European communication network. It is a remote place. No wonder Leontes had so much trouble with the location of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare: “Where is Bohemia? Speak! Bohemia. A desert country near the sea.”<sup>21</sup>

Prague's regional position is also endangered by its eccentric position inside the state. Its peripheral location has long been responsible for its provincialness and stagnation. Prague's prospects would be far better if it were in the heart of a region. But is this feasible? And if so, which region? In the current situation, Prague is in a region that is gradually becoming depopulated, a region twice subjected to radical industrial conversion in the past century. The first occurred after World War I when the decaying textile industry was replaced by machinery industries, and then again following World War II when the Stalinist iron option was followed by a recession in the machine industry, engineering, and heavy industry in such cities as Plzen and Kladno.

In addition to these changes within the Czech Republic, the growing economic strength of Slovakia led to Slovak dreams of independence and a true Slovak Republic. These factors will undoubtedly stimulate another wave of Bratislavan growth.

This discussion can be summarized quite simply: certain endogenous regional forces will lead to the quantitative growth of the city of Prague. These factors include the removal of artificial planning barriers to growth, the increase in the number of students, the increase in the number of visitors from the rest of the country and abroad, and the growth of the service sector. However, all of this can do little to alter the secondary position of Prague. In a rapidly changing Europe, greater quantitative growth is not enough. Neither Prague's size nor its regional role will be sufficient to play a decisive role in securing a better posi-

tion in Central Europe. If we accept James Vance's theory of network systems,<sup>22</sup> as opposed to central place systems, then Prague's chances—and those of Budapest and Warsaw as well—depend on the qualitative input of their cultural role. This brings us to the social and cultural problems, interaction patterns, division of labor, and exchange and specificity of each individual city.

### **III. Linking Central East European Metropolises to Western European Metropolises and to the Western European Urban System and Globalization Processes**

The most important mechanisms of globalization in Central and Eastern Europe include the formation of new and stronger linkages between East Central European metropolises—i.e., the core areas of economic, social, and cultural transformation—and the existing urban system in Western Europe. To better understand the role of large cities in the processes of globalization and in the deep reunification of Western and Central Europe, two perspectives need to be explored separately: (1) the probable future developments of the Western European urban system and (2) the probable trends in the regional and urban systems in Eastern Central Europe.

#### **A. Urban Futures in Western Europe**

Recent studies on the future spatial organization of Western Europe<sup>23</sup> describe three key scenarios: growth, equity, and environment. The polarities among these scenarios are based on economic growth and the reduction of social and spatial disparities. In the given political situation in Western Europe, taking into account the orientation and strength of the most important political parties, the growth scenario is the most likely. In some countries with strong social democrats, it will be, however, supplemented by elements that come from equity and environmental scenarios. But even in countries with strong conservative parties, some environmental and equity scenarios will be included in urban and regional futures.



The following are the key elements of the growth scenario:<sup>24</sup>

- Population — low birth rates; aging society; growth-financed social security; immigration of non-European Union foreign labor; relative stability in population size.
- Lifestyles — small households; growing number of singles; fewer traditional families; stress on efficiency, mobility, telecommunication, and consumption; division of the society into “successful and affluent” and “less able and relatively deprived.”
- Economy — economic growth based on the formation of a larger European common market; technological innovations; relatively decreasing welfare expenditures of the individual states; growing income disparities between European growth areas and peripheries and within European countries; lasting disparities between Western and Eastern Europe.
- Transport — increase in mobility of people; increase in freight transport; dominance of transport on motorways; dominance of individual automobility; further decline of rail freight service; local public transport declining; competition between car, high-speed rail, and airlines.
- Communication — massive use of fiber optics and satellite communications; growth of “information city” lifestyles, jobs, and interaction forms; growth of psychological stress due to overcommunication; reinforced dominance of growth regions and of large cities.
- Culture and Knowledge — capital cities and other large cities becoming “knowledge centers,” storing knowledge as well as producing and “exporting” it; role of culture reinforced combining culture with other urban activities; “culture and economy could contribute synergetically to the knowledge base of cities.”<sup>25</sup>
- Regional and Urban Development — further concentration of economic activities in the existing growth belts; severe agglomeration diseconomies; economic and population decline in peripheral regions; expansion of metropolitan areas; formation of new functional divisions within metropolises (centers: information, power, and finance; suburbs:

manufacturing); housing of families outside cities; disappearance of the traditional countryside.

The combined effects of all the predicted changes in economy, population, lifestyles, transport, and communication, as well as in the role of culture, can be summarized for the purpose of this paper in the following way.

The changes described by the growth scenario would result in a further spatial concentration of economic activities, people, housing, and infrastructure into the already existing growth regions of Western Europe, i.e., mainly into the so-called Blue Banana, into the European Sunbelt, and into a secondary growth belt stretching from Paris through the Benelux countries, Northern Germany to Scandinavia. The Blue Banana, which was first described in a report called *RECLUS*,<sup>26</sup> stretches from Southeast England across the Channel, through the Benelux countries, Southwest Germany, and Switzerland to Lombardy. The European Sunbelt is a growth zone developing from Venice to Liguria, then along the Mediterranean down to Barcelona and Valencia. The Blue Banana and the secondary zone (Paris-Copenhagen) are already now served by the highest level ground transport infrastructure and contain six of the largest European airports as well as the principal financial centers and European Union political centers. With a population of eighty million, the Blue Banana zone forms a kind of European megalopolis similar to, but larger than, that formed by Boston and Washington. Its functioning and further growth will be stimulated by the Channel Tunnel, Gotthard base tunnel in Switzerland, and the system of high-speed trains. The density of existing motorways there is the greatest in Europe. There is no doubt that it will be a belt where communication highways will first be introduced. Due to growing trade, tourism, political interaction, and perhaps to the integration of some postcommunist countries (such as the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary) into NATO, the Blue Banana will spread its tentacles as far as Berlin, Vienna, and possibly Prague. Thus, there is no doubt that, to some extent, the West European urban system will be partly extended by means of a kind of secondary urban zone to the East. In the future, it will undoubtedly be influenced by the "opening" of the East. The evidence of such effects can be seen

in the regional and urban processes within Germany after reunification in 1990. At the same time, it should be explicitly stressed that the impact of the existing West European spatial organization and of urban and regional structures on both the Eastern metropolises, and on urban systems in general, is much stronger than vice versa. The main impulses are undoubtedly coming from the West, but their absorption and effectiveness will depend also on some endogenous factors existing in the East. Internationalization and globalization processes always have external and internal aspects. The recent history of Central European postcommunist countries proves it quite strongly.

### **B. Changes in the Eastern Central European Regional and Urban System after 1989**

After almost six years of urban system transformations in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, new patterns begin to be discernible. We can now see that the outcome of the first stage of transforming Central European urban systems reflects the interaction of four factors:

1. The so-called local potential (i.e., local cultural, social, and economic resources).
2. The strength, capacity, and dynamism of the individual countries' economies. Under the specific conditions of transformation from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, this refers mostly to the speed with which market elements are substituted for the management of the economy by administrative and political elements.
3. The ability of the metropolises to function as gateways to and from the more developed regions of Europe.
4. The ability of the Eastern Central European metropolises to function as integrators of a renewed network of large Central European cities.

The local potential is often described as a compositum of resources that function as (a) catalysts for innovation, (b) factors making the control functions of cities more efficient, and (c) factors improving interaction with other cities, i.e., promotion of contacts with the outside.

The following resources are most often quoted<sup>27</sup> as positive, innovative, and interactive.

1. Advantageous geographic location, accessibility.
2. Diversified economic activities, sectorial mix.
3. Strong internal and external political roles (e.g., capital cities of major industrial or financial groups, etc.).
4. Efficient urban infrastructure, principally transport and communication infrastructure.
5. Social (i.e., human) potential, flexibility, readiness to accept change, knowledge of languages, and intellectual openness.
6. Good technological, legal, marketing, and other services and the existence of diversified scientific research.
7. Presence of strong cultural and intellectual traditions, rich offer of cultural and intellectual activities.
8. Architectural qualities, *genius loci*.
9. Good quality of municipal administration and general political stability.
10. Good quality of housing, diversified forms of housing.
11. Easy access to educational, cultural, recreational, and leisure facilities.

The knowledge available on urban dynamics shows that factors 4, 5, 7, 10, and 11 are most important for the *innovative* functions of cities; factors 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 are decisive for enhancing the *control function* of cities; and factors 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are key for stimulating *globalization* processes.

Using the above criteria to rate the potential of three Central European capitals, this is how they compare:

Innovative potential:	1. Budapest	2. Prague	3. Warsaw
Control function:	1. Budapest	2. Warsaw	3. Prague
Globalization:	1. Prague	2. Budapest	3. Warsaw

The qualitative estimates of the potentials of Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw document that these three capitals differ to some extent, with Budapest and Prague being rather similar and

Warsaw having slightly weaker general developmental potential.

To some extent, the differing levels of the three categories of potentials correspond to the different dynamism of the economic transition in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland and also to the general economic, social, and cultural attractive pull of the individual metropolises. In this respect, the differences can also be indicated by the number of foreign visitors entering individual countries and their capitals. The Czech Republic and Prague have the highest numbers of foreign visitors; in 1994, the country was visited by 100 million people, and it is estimated that 40 to 50 million of them visited Prague.

The rather strong control potential of Budapest, which is partly due to its relative "opening" in the 1980s, can nowadays be documented by the data on the concentration of foreign firms in the capital cities. According to a recent report by the European Commission,<sup>28</sup> among the capitals of the three states considered, it is Budapest that, in 1991, had the highest number of firms with foreign capital (56 percent) and volume of capital (57.5 percent). The respective data for Prague is 49 and 15.4 percent and for Warsaw 32.6 and 39.4 percent. On the other hand, Prague is emerging, more often than the other two capitals, as a center for scientific, professional, artistic, musical, and other meetings, festivals, and conferences. The recent data on the number of hotel beds and on air transport support this observation. The number of hotel beds in Prague is growing faster than in Budapest and Warsaw, and Prague now has more hotel beds than Vienna and Munich. The data on the number of passengers using the airports of Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw show that Prague's airport is the most frequently used. Prague's airport is now becoming the principal airport for the postcommunist countries of Central Europe and is slowly beginning to compete with the Vienna airport. The construction of a new terminal will (quite substantially) expand its capacity from 5–7 million passengers per year to 10–12 million. After Moscow/Sheremetevo, it is the largest airport in postcommunist Europe.

From all the available data on the changes after 1989, a new pattern of division of labor between the Central European capital cities, including Vienna and Berlin, is slowly emerging. It is also a pattern that can be described by the terms symbiotic com-

petition or complementary cooperation and competition. These relationships, which have begun to emerge, are, to some extent, a return to the situation that existed before 1914.

What does all this mean in terms of the spatial pattern of the Central European urban system? There are two main theories about that future. The first assumes that some urban regions within postcommunist Central Europe will become linked as peripheral units to the Blue Banana belt. The Eastern parts are, in any case, already expanding to the East, e.g., in Eastern Bavaria (Nürnberg, Fürth, Passau). Some old, highly urbanized industrial areas (e.g., Saxony and Thuringia) will be reunited with the core growth zone running through western Germany. The most eastern outposts of the main European urban growth zone, they will profit from their geographical location as well as from some other advantages (e.g., lower prices of land, smaller sizes, skilled and relatively cheap labor, good intellectual infrastructure). This school of thought can be described as “peripheral development.”

The second theory stresses the possibility of a new parallel zone of urban growth, a Central European twin to the Blue Banana. This idea was presented by Polish and Czech geographers and can be expressed in the following way. The transformation processes that will enable the four Central European countries to become parts of the European economy, culture, and society are concentrated in a boomerang. The boomerang is located roughly between Gdańsk, Poznań, Wrocław, Prague, Brno, Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest; and it will most probably expand to the West to include Berlin. According to one of the studies published by the European Commission, “Two Southern parts of this ‘boomerang’ have real chances to become the truly European centers: the region of Prague and the triangle composed of Vienna-Bratislava-Budapest. The Slovak-Hungarian part of this triangle already attracts important foreign capital that flows into Central Europe, and the location advantages of this region have been evaluated as extremely favorable even on the whole-continental scale. Further extension of the Prague region westward is very probable, since the construction of motorways connecting Prague with Southern Germany and Berlin will bring multiplier effects and will create favorable con-

ditions for economic expansion. It will allow for the full integration of Prague into the system of European metropolises."<sup>29</sup>

In ten to fifteen years, both of these regions can become urban growth areas with a status similar to that of Hamburg, Barcelona, or Turin. At that time, they will be fully integrated into the network of European international institutions and, at the same time, will perform the global function of being the main global gateways to Eastern Europe, accompanied of course by the Berlin metropolitan region.

The two theories do not exclude one another. One can interpret them as two phases in the globalization processes linked to the transformation occurring in Central Europe. In the first, the growth zones are linked as a peripheral outpost to the main European urban system; in the second phase, they begin to form a new secondary urban growth zone. To some extent such development will be a return to the developmental trajectories started in the nineteenth century.

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## Notes

1. See Robert Ezra Park, "Human Ecology," *The American Journal of Sociology* 42 (1936): 1–15.
2. The changing position of cities in history is discussed in Jan de Vries, *European Urbanization 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). See also Hartmut Häusermann and Walter Siebel, *Neue Urbanität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987).
3. The unified German Reich was proclaimed in 1871, and the Ausgleich, i.e., the settlement between Austria and Hungary creating the Dual Monarchy, was agreed upon in 1867.
4. In 1890, the population of Prague was 437,000, that of Brno was 146,000, and that of Ostrava 85,000.
5. Renate Banik-Schweitzer gave an interesting analysis of this competition in her paper "Economic and Social Change in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest from the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century to the Interwar Period" at the conference "In Search of Central Europe: 20th-Century Culture and Society in the Capital Cities," organized by the W. Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. in May 1988.
6. See György Enyedi, "In Search of Central Europe: A Geographer's Overview," presented at the W. Wilson Center Conference (1988).
7. The history of the concept of *Mittleuropa* is analyzed in Jacques Droz, *L'Europe Centrale, Évolution historique de l'idée de "Mittleuropa"* (Paris: Payot, 1960). For a recent study on the idea of Central Europe, see Jacques Le'Rider, *Mittleuropa* (Vienna: Fr. Deuticke, 1994).

8. See Otto Urban, "Technika a časoprostorová představa člověka 19. století" ("Technology and the Time-Space Concept in 19th-Century Thought") in *Průmysl a technika v novodobé české kultuře (Industry and Technology in Modern Czech Culture)* (Prague: The Institute of Theory and History of Art, 1988).

9. One of the most interesting recent publications on Central European Culture is "Eastern Europe . . . Central Europe . . . Europe," *Daedalus* 119, no. 1 (Winter 1990). It contains articles by Timothy Garton Ash, Tony Judt, Bronislaw Geremek, Elemér Hankiss, Jacques Rupnik, Ernest Gellner, and others.

10. For the best analysis of the roots of the feelings of backwardness in Germany, see the first chapter of Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (Bern: Francke AG, 1969).

11. Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, expressed this idea in 1925 in *Světová revoluce (World Revolution)* (Prague: Orbis & Čin, 1925).

12. For the effects on Prague, see Jiří Musil, "Prague 1918–1939: The Social and Cultural Consequences of Rapid Urban Change," paper presented at the W. Wilson Center Conference (1988).

13. Ibid.

14. For detailed material on the Czech avant-garde, see Josef Pechar and Petr Uhrlich, *Programy České Architektury (Program of Czech Architecture)* (Prague: Odeon, 1981).

15. Jürgen Friedrichs, ed., *Stadtenentwicklungen in West-und Osteuropa* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985).

16. Emanuel Rádl, *Válka Čechů s Němci (The war between the Czechs and the Germans)* (Prague: Čin, 1929).

17. Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu (The Building of a State)* (Prague: Borovy, 1933): 36.

18. After World War I, Prague sheltered Russian and Ukrainian political refugees; and after 1933, it served the same purpose for German and Austrian antifascist refugees.

19. Enyedi, "In Search of Central Europe."

20. Salvator De Madariaga, N.d., *Porträt Europas* (Gütersloh, Germany: Signum Verlag, 1952), mainly 128–31.

21. From William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, act 5, scene 2 and act 3, scene 3.

22. As quoted from Jan de Vries, "Power and the Capital City" in Leon Deben, Wilhelm Heinemeijer, and Dick van der Vaart, eds., *Capital Cities as Achievement* (Amsterdam: Center of Metropolitan Research, Institute of Sociology, University of Amsterdam, 1988), mainly 33–35.

23. See, for example, Ian Masser, Ove Svidén, and Michael Wegener, *The Geography of Europe's Futures* (London and New York: Belhaven Press, 1992).

24. Based on I. Masser, et al, *The Geography of Europe's Futures* (195–96), and on my own studies.



25. See Judith Ryser, *The Future of European Capitals* (London: Goethe Institut, 1994).
26. *RECLUS: Les villes Européennes* (Paris: Rapport pour la DATAR, 1989).
27. See, for example, *XXI Secolo* no. 1, (September 1990): 4–5.
28. G. Gorzelak, B. Jalowiecki, A. Kuklinski, and L. Zienkowski, eds., *Eastern and Central Europe 2000* (Brussels: European Commission, 1994).
29. *Ibid.*, 134.