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# METROPOLITAN CITIES A NEW HOPE



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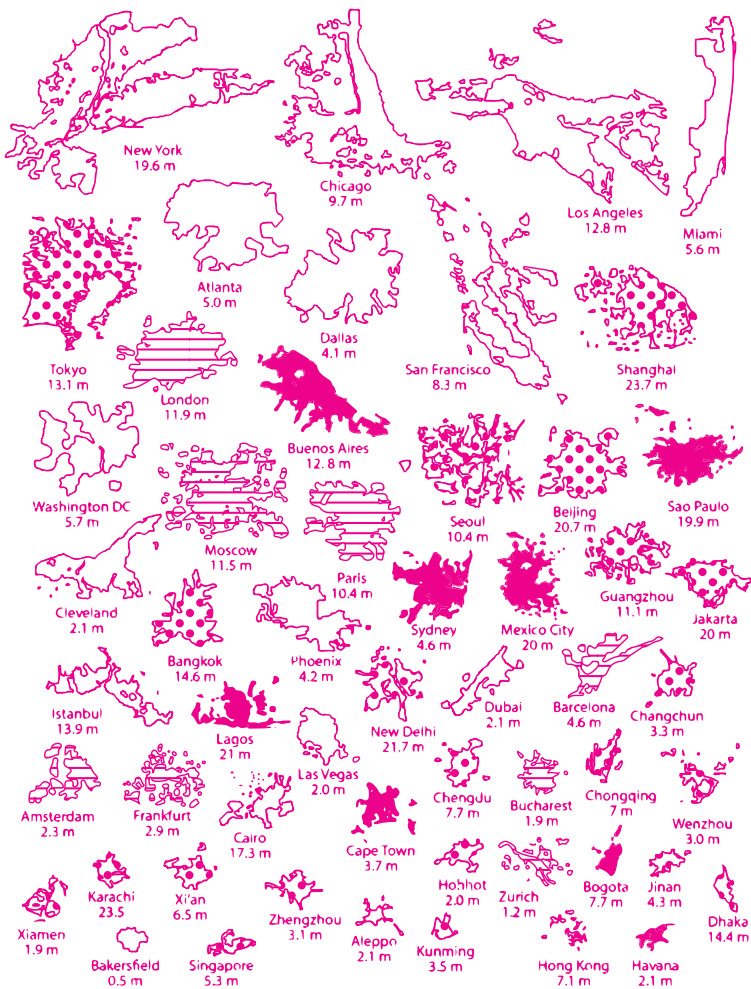


Figure 1. Footprint of the world's major metropolitan areas.

## 01.

# INTRODUCTION

Even in the presence of a general demographic recession, cities — not just the largest ones, but all cities — expand in the region and “explode” according to low-density settlement patterns of suburbanization and periurbanization.

Different terms have been used to describe this phenomenon: more than a decade ago, especially in France, people spoke of “exploded city” or “dispersed city”, today it is called “common city”. This disintegration of the city in the region, this fragmentation of urban functions, proceeds in parallel with other fragmentations that represent, in part, and in part are the result of the concomitant causes of the phenomenon in question. In this regard, the following may be recalled:

- Strong reduction of salaried labor in large companies, growth of professionalism and specialization organized in the form of self-employment relationships, fragmentation of the labor market with the use of temporary, part-time, and interim labor models, intermediate cooperative structures ,etc. with;
- social fragmentation in the growing inequalities between areas and neighborhoods within large clusters and growing processes of social segregation: a “two-speed” city is emerging, a city of the

- excluded and the defeated and a city of the winning classes. All historical cities, especially the Fordist city, have created discrimination, but in these cases the persistence and development of strong class solidarity and the reduced extension of housing and mobility basins, processes of socialization. In the “exploded” city, these are “segregated divisions”, islands of poverty and exclusion randomly located within a discontinuous urban fabric;
- finally, the fragmentation of actors, jurisdictions and regions of urban “regulation” with the overlapping and proliferation of actors involved in decision-making.

The result is a city with a continuum of “booming” but highly interconnected settlements that is expanding, integrating with other regional and urban systems in a new landscape that is no longer city and no longer rural.

We can say that the patterns of residence, work and displacement are fragmented and individualized; Therefore, the regional model is a new type of model of metropolitization, a model of metropolitization-regionalization.

Faced with this model of urban development, it is necessary to question the general rationality of the new models of regional organization from a perspective of local and global sustainability; on the new issues and new roles required in regional planning, particularly in terms of strategic orientation of relevant public and private decisions; on governance and systems of government best suited to the new complexities.

At different times and in different ways, urbanization was of such great importance in continental Europe that Europe is now the most urbanized continent. This is because it is not only the continent with the oldest rate of urbanization, but also the continent in which about three to a quarter of the total population lives in urban areas.



Although many cities in Europe developed near major rivers for defensive and commercial reasons, the urbanization of Europe can be traced back to the industrial revolution and business development. Economic dynamics, hence urban structures, vary greatly depending on whether large ancient or modern cities originated.

More systematically and organically, however, the European urban system can be described using the following three main theoretical models:

- the christallerian networks, which consider the urban network as a hierarchical system at multiple levels, defined by gravitational relationships, in which the “nodes” (the central locations) tend to be equidistributed and, consequently, the relationships between the nodes themselves are determined by a principle of vertical (hierarchical) complementarity subject to the constraint of spatial proximity;
- the center-periphery hierarchy, which describes an urban system with multiple hierarchical levels of centrality, spatially polarized where the higher level nodes tend to concentrate in a central area (core), while those of lower level are distributed in increasingly peripheral crowns, so that the centrality tends to be an inverse function of the distance from the core;
- multilevel interconnection network, which describes spatially distributed systems in which the relationships between nodes do not depend on proximity, but on the development of relationships. Finally, the third model represents the relations of the tertiary economy based on all information, characterized by the multiplication of distance connections between actors, both vertical and horizontal.

The current European urban system can be further de-

scribed by combining these three models, although each tends to dominate in the more territorial context. In continental Europe, for example, center-periphery relationships prevailed along the axis of the Rhine, so much so that in the triangle defined by the cities of Brussels, Amsterdam and Frankfurt, values are concentrated. Location, accessibility and connectivity. Between nodes. On the other, there is a gradual decrease in the level of centrality and accessibility specific to the European periphery compared to the major European metropolitan areas. These three patterns can also be found in the Italian metropolitan network.

Certainly, in the last decades, many factors have influenced the transformation of cities and their spatial organization. Among the main issues, the crisis of the production model and of the industrial concentration of the German economy, the consequent changes in the system of production and distribution of goods and of the labor market, the role of the service sector and of financial capital, from which originated a structural shift. Industrial buildings and location creation on brownfields.

These transitions show that the success factors of the urban system do not depend too much on industrial size and structure, but on the specialization of services and the quality of human capital.

As cities are increasingly the sites of choice for the production and distribution of goods and services by large multinational corporations, the physical transformation and spatial organization of the city is strongly influenced by the fluidity of financial capital, which also determines the presence of the international professional elite.

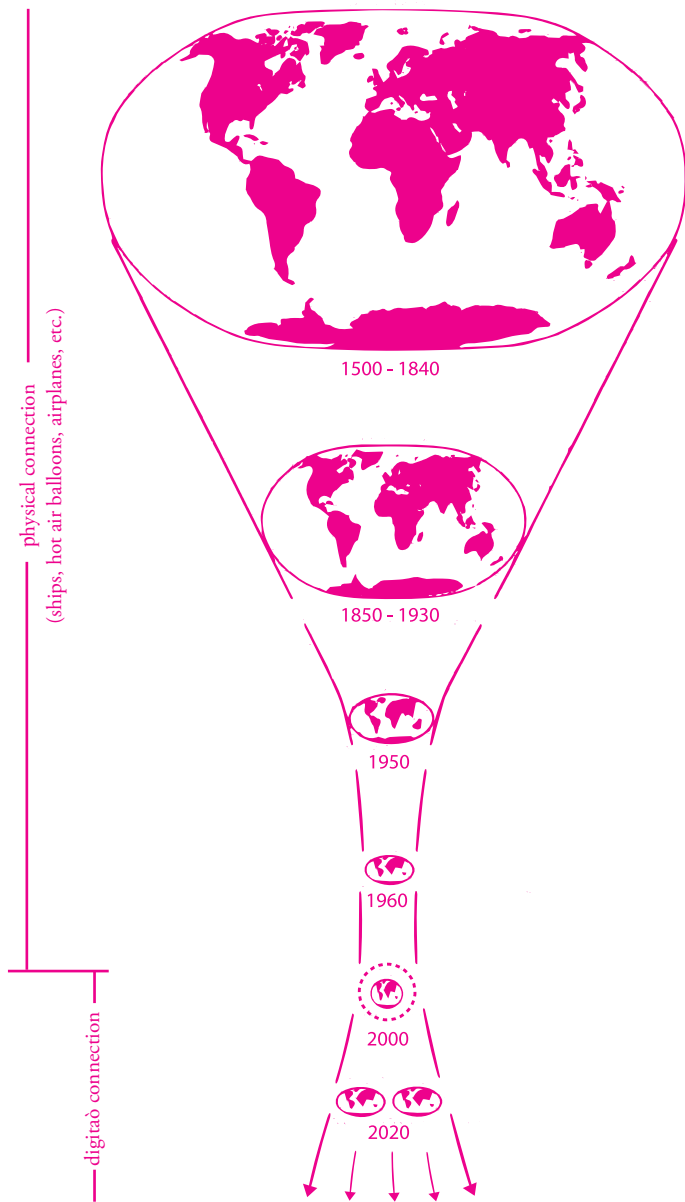
This is true for the general nature of cities, except for those located at the top of the urban hierarchy, which are called “global” or “world” or “international” cities. The main charac-

teristics of the mode relate to economic, financial, commercial and scientific relations, their position in communication networks, the presence of international organizations, as well as the implementation of various forms of urban diplomacy. Global cities — due to their particularities — are less sensitive to the presence of globalized economic activities and the circulation of financial capital, as they are clearly privileged and non-essential locations for certain activities of the economic system.

It should also be noted that an important phenomenon that in recent years seems to influence the development of the European urban system — it cannot be described as a single, integrated system — is the progression Geopolitical chemistry takes place in Eastern Europe and the process of integration. Into the European Union for many of them.

With the expansion of the European Union to the east, the diversity of European urban structures has further expanded and the imbalances in the European urban system between the center and the periphery have increased. regions. This implies the implementation of appropriate regional and territorial policies for the new spatial and economic dimensions, that is, with the aim of rebalancing and reallocating the central position, making metropolitan regions more economical. The markets of the new countries are more accessible, which must be incorporated a network of European cities to facilitate their development.

However, since the improvement of the position of individual cities in international competition does not derive solely from the external attraction of valuable functions and investments, it is necessary to emphasize that, in order for this improvement to be effective, it requires the activation — within individual nations and cities — of self-organizing development processes to make the most of existing resources in urban areas and regions.



**Figure 2.** Hypotheses on the evolution of Harvey space-time compression.