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I. INTRODUCTION TO URBAN NETWORKING AND THE CONCEPT OF DIPOLES

- ✱ The spatial expression of the interdependencies of networking of cities is the **'system of cities'**
- ✱ The urban functions which are the main motors of the above scheme are the so-called **"central place functions"** or **"central functions"** that tend to be distributed in space according to hierarchical ranks
- ✱ A very different kind of urban functions are the **special functions** that refer to functions which are carried out for non-local, non-contiguous areas, and are located according to the random fixed spatial distribution of specific resources. Such functions, as extractive industries or tourism, are attracted where these specific resources pre-exist
- ✱ A more recent term is that of the **"network of cities"** that suggests a policy option, which has been promoted by the European Commission since the mid 80s

INTRODUCTION B'

- ☀ The concept of **urban dipoles** fits in the tradition of networking, comprising elements both from the classic hierarchical urban systems and the recent networks of twin cities. It presupposes two centres which belong to the same urban system, and have a similar order in the system, serving equivalent hinterlands. Thus, the two cities are playing similar roles regarding the central place functions. However, when these two cities also contain (usually different) special functions, their profile can also be relatively differentiated
- ☀ three **related issues** must be tackled:
 - Is the advent of comparable processes possible among more than two similar size cities? Such a thing may not be excluded, but the nodes of a multi-polar urban structure cannot exceed a small number, for reasons of proximity and of carrying capacity of the wider area of the “multi-pole”
 - Is the emergence of a dipole independent of the original size of the cities? The answer will be usually negative, because the fundamental factor of the integration of a dipole is the existence of economies of scale and concentration
 - Can similar processes occur between cities of different rank? Literally, this is hardly feasible because it is a situation where no distinct hinterlands exist; on the contrary, the hinterland of the smaller centre is a subset of that of the higher centre and, regarding the higher rank functions, it is served by the latter

II. OBJECTIVES AND PREREQUISITES FOR THE EMERGENCE OF URBAN DIPOLES

- ★ The objective of the creation of dipoles is the **promotion of externalities** - economies of scale and economies of urbanization. The considerable growth of the internal market allows for the existence and use, by both cities, of specialized equipment and services which either were not viable in the original cities separately or existed but operated on a sub-optimum level
- ★ these tendencies lead to the **increase of productivity and competitiveness** of the firms located inside the dipole. This is particularly true when the two original “poles” had already a relatively high rank in the system of cities and concerns both the central and the special functions, albeit in different ways (e.g. administrative functions, higher education & research, health, culture, transport/ telecommunication/ energy, organised areas for manufacturing/ logistics etc., retail, special types of tourism, high level business services (consulting etc.)

OBJECTIVES AND PREREQUISITES FOR THE EMERGENCE OF URBAN DIPOLES B'

- ★ A fundamental prerequisite for the possibility of two cities to form a dipole is their **mutual accessibility**. Two objective requisites for the creation of a dipole are: (relatively) small geographical distance and adequate transport infrastructure connecting the two poles
- ★ more “subjective” conditions may be crucial for the creation of dipole, as the existence of **political will**
- ★ the social acceptance and **public consensus** of the idea of the two cities must also be added

III. THE POSITION OF THESSALY FROM THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING POINT OF VIEWS

- ★ **geographical framework:** The Region of Thessaly is situated at the eastern central part of continental Greece, also comprising some small islands. It is surrounded by mountains and hills, which enclose a unified internal plane zone that contains the majority of the population and economic activities. This configuration, almost unique among the Greek regions, gives Thessaly an unusual geographical cohesion
- ★ With a **population** of 753.888 (2001), which corresponds to 6,9% of the population of Greece, Thessaly ranks in third place
- ★ the main feature of Thessaly is its central place as well as its crossing by the main post-war **development axis** of Greece: Athens-Thessaloniki
- ★ the emerging northern (Egnatia Road) and western axes (Igoumenitsa-Patras) are situated in small distances from the borders of Thessaly

POSITION OF THESSALY B'

- ★ GDP per capita in Thessaly is less than the national average, representing 90% of the latter (2002). The **economic base** of the Region is still (2001) excessively depended upon
 - agriculture, which contains 27,9% of the total employment
 - with a secondary sector participation of 19,4%, and
 - a tertiary sector of 49,6%
- ★ The unemployment rate is one of the more pronounced in Greece
- ★ The two bigger cities are characterized by **specializations**:
 - Larissa (active population 53458) one (manufacturing)
 - Volos (active population 33791) two (manufacturing & tourism)
- ★ Thessaly, like Greece, is situated in the margin of the European Union (EU) territory, and has (2001) a GDP per capita equal to 66,1% of the EU25 average (EU 2004). A beneficial side-effect is that the Region will still be eligible for full-scale community financial aid during the next programming period 2007-2013, which could facilitate the financing of policies and development programs

IV. SYSTEM OF CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS

★ The human settlement system in Thessaly is characterized by **two features**, which are not typical of the rest of the Greece:

- ★ the majority of the settlements are spatially distributed with a regularity which brings in mind the central-place theory
- ★ the centres of the same order tend to have comparable distances, with the corollary that their hinterlands are also of similar size

★ There are five cities (settlements over 10.000): the four prefecture capitals and Farsala. Larissa, which is the headquarter of the Region and the capital of the Prefecture of Larissa has (2001) a population of about 125.000 and Volos, the capital of the Prefecture of Magnesia has a population of about 115.000. These two cities are among the four major Greek cities under the metropolises of Athens and Thessaloniki. The other two Prefecture capitals, Trikala (Pref.: Trikala) and Karditsa (Pref. Karditsa) have, respectively, a population of 48.000 and 32.000

V. INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

V.i. TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PATTERNS

- ★ The **supra-local road network** of Thessaly comprises the roads that connect the Region to the main growth centres of Athens and Thessaloniki, the bordering Regions, as well as the roads that interconnect the four prefectural cities. The main roads are
 - ★ the motorway Patras-Athens-Thessaloniki (PATHE), and
 - ★ the branches Trikala-Grevena, Lamia-Farsala-Larissa-Kozani, Volos-Larissa-Trikala, Volos-Mikrothives, and Neo Monastiri-Karditsa-Trikala
- ★ **problems** exist mainly in the entries of the four major cities on distances of about 5-10 km around them

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES B'

★ Regarding the **railroad network**, besides the national axis North-South which passes through Larissa, there are four lines of regional importance, of whom solely the first one is in regular use:

- Volos-Larissa
- Palaiofarsalos-Kalambaka
- Palaiofarsalos-Volos
- Volos-Milies (not continuous)

★ The **main port** in the continental part of Thessaly is the one of Volos, with considerable capacity and supra-regional role, both for passengers and freight. There are also some private ports belonging to big industrial firms, while the remaining ports are of purely local significance

★ In the continental part of Thessaly, there are the following **airports**:

- Nea Anghialos (military-civil)
- Larissa (military-civil)
- Stefanovikeio (military)

★ there are no regular flights to/ from Thessaly, and the civil use of the above airports is limited to charters flights

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES C'

V.ii. OTHER NETWORKING TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

★ Three national level **electric energy transfer lines**

- ★ Karditsa-Larissa-Larymna
- ★ Agios Dimitrios-Larissa-Larymna, and
- ★ Karditsa-Trikala-Distomo

★ Also, the central national natural gas pipeline (Thessaloniki-Athens) which passes near Larissa and has a side-line to Volos

★ The **telecommunications network** (OTE) is already developed enough to cover the needs of the Region, on a level better than the national average. This network permits, up to a point, the development of wide zone services and connections ISDN or DSL.

★ The **environmental infrastructure** presents deficiencies, regarding solid waste management etc., but quite a few environmental equipments are under construction or programmed

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES D'

V.iii. LARGE PRODUCTIVE FACILITIES

- ☀ The large productive facilities, in the form of **industrial parks**, are few, but are located near the major cities:
 - Industrial Park of Volos: 311 Ha, 22 firms
 - Industrial Park of Larissa: 182 Ha, 41 firms
 - Industrial Park of Karditsa: 43 Ha, no firms yet
- ☀ The construction of a **major logistics park** was programmed under the current Regional Operational Programme 2000-2006, but was not implemented due to institutional difficulties

V.iv. LARGE SOCIAL FACILITIES OF SUPRA-LOCAL SCOPE

	Larissa	Karditsa	Trikala	Volos
Health	General Regional Hospital, University Hospital			
Education-R&D	Some University departments, seat of the Technical Educational Institute (TEI)	One University dept, some depts of TEI	Some University depts	Seat of the University of Thessaly, International Transport Research Centre
Culture	Library, Municipal Theater, Municipal Gallery			Municipal Theater, Symphonic Orchestra, Arts Centre, Museum, Municipal Gallery
Justice	2nd level (appeal) Court			
Security	Regional Firebrigade Division, Regional Police Division			Port Organization, Central Greece Customs