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HERITAGE AND CULTURE – A CAPITAL FOR THE NEW EUROPE

Abstract: The paper looks into the future development of European integration in the context of the role of big cities in this process. London, Paris and Berlin are the main contenders to take the leading position. The author compares their respective strengths and weaknesses, discussing heritage as well as contemporary planning efforts. The conclusion indicates that Europe may end up with a polycentric system of capital cities rather than with a single capital.

Key words: urban development, European integration.

1. INTRODUCTION – THE COMPETITIVE CONTEXT

London, Paris, Berlin, Brussels.... The race is on as to which city will be the heritage/cultural capital city of the new Europe. The main contenders are London, Paris and Berlin – each has its disciples and each has its drawbacks. A closer look at major European capitals reveals that the race is not equal although the stakes are high.

London is the cultural capital of Europe as it is a world-class centre of culture surpassed only by New York. It has five major symphony orchestras, internationally-renowned theatre, opera and ballet companies, an enormous number of museums, galleries and accompanying training schools for all the arts. Paris, with fewer advantages, is promoting its cultural magnets far harder than London. The historic heritage of Paris is on a par with London's, but London still remains the tourism capital, with tourism revenue five times higher. Berlin has a larger amount of park space per inhabitant than London, although much of this is peripheral: but London rates better than Paris in this respect. Paris and London are similarly safe and environmentally of middle rank, according to recent surveys (LPAC, 1992).

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Individual cities may fulfil different roles: capitals of finance, politics, manufacturing and culture are emerging from the leading cities of northern Europe. Each one is trying to capture the financial markets, the industrial market and the title of culture capital by building opera houses, art galleries and parks, and improving public transport and other facilities.

1.1. The 'European banana'

A new image to describe where the political, financial and administrative power is concentrated is the 'European banana'. The centre of all gross national product activity, the centre of most of the communications activity of road, rail and air and the centre of the property market are located in a bulbous geographical area, which stretches from London to Milan (cf. figure 1) (DATAR, 1989). The banana was identified and labelled by geographers within DATAR of the French Government. Interestingly, two of the major capitals, Paris and Berlin, are outside the original banana. The French government was concerned to discover that France was not ideally located in economic development terms when EU policy makers endorsed the idea of the banana by designating Europe's favoured cities as those within it. (MOTTE, 1991).

A second important geographical area, the 'hot banana', sweeps westward into southern France along a southern corridor to Barcelona and Valencia, and is expected to attract more head offices and research facilities as a result of its superior transportation and telecommunications links. At the same time, there are counter shifts, particularly to the German cities of Hamburg and Berlin, and the new Eastern European countries which fall outside the banana (HOULDER, 1992).

1.2. The ranking of European cities

Brunet (DATAR, 1989) cites the relevant strengths of each European city in terms of particular characteristics which confer an importance such as the location of multi-national firms, the extent of infra-structure and technology, the number of engineers and technicians, financial activity, airport traffic, high technology etc, and then ranks the cities in order. The cities of first rank are London and Paris. Milan, at the opposite end of the banana, is the only European city of second rank while Frankfurt, Madrid and Brussels are third rank cities. Berlin, in its present form, is shown as a fourth rank city.

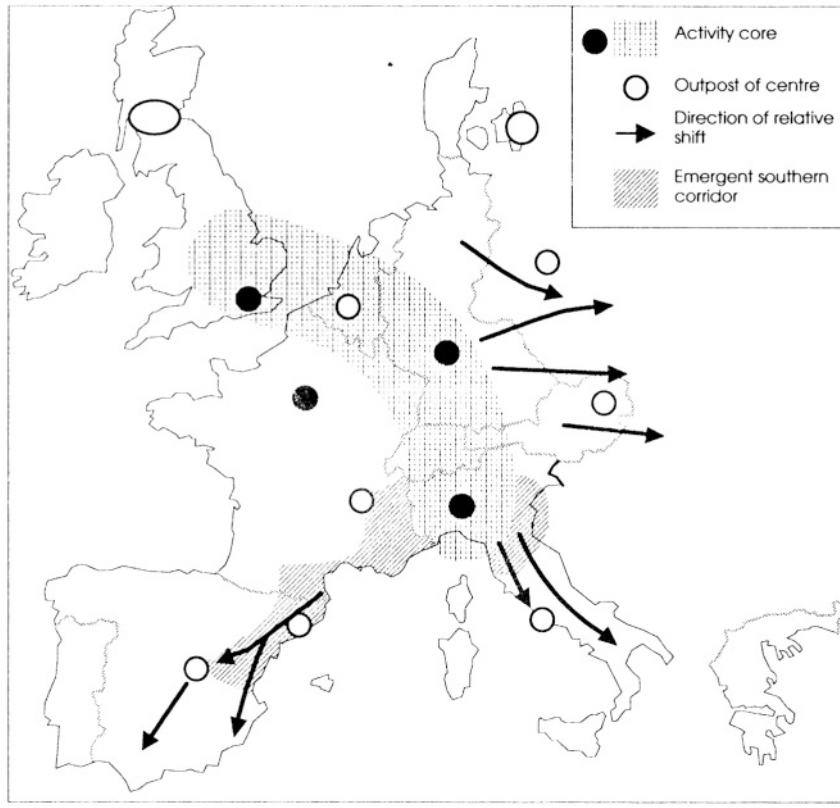

Fig. 1. The 'European banana' Source: DATAR, 1989.

These rankings are based on quantitative aspects of each city's activities. For example, London is the leading financial capital ahead of Frankfurt and Brussels. Frankfurt is its chief financial rival and has been strengthened by German re-unification and now hosts the European Central Bank. Brussels is in line to be the most important political centre for the new European Union. Berlin promises to exploit the largest opportunities from re-unification, both because of the decision to reinstate it as the seat of government, and also by its position as a crossroads between Eastern and Western Europe. However, owing to Germany's decentralised structure, Berlin may not dominate the country in the way that London dominates the UK or Paris dominates France.

There are so many 'maybes' in the economic analysis of the future of the major European cities that, in this author's opinion, the race between them will depend on the leadership of the individual countries and how they perceive the role of their capital cities'. This perception will necessarily place a major emphasis on the quality of life and it is thus important to examine the physical planning and cultural heritage of the major capital cities in order to choose the

new capital of the new Europe, or alternatively there may be several new capitals – a mono-centric Europe or a poly-centric Europe?

2. LONDON

London is a world first-rank city (DATAR, 1989), in its attractiveness for multi-national companies (five times that of Paris), activity in advanced technologies and for research activity. It is the top financial centre in Europe; likewise its stock exchange and commodities exchange have no rivals in Europe. Its position as an international capital of university education, retailing, the arts, advertising, international communications and tourism is said to be at its highest in this century. It ranks alongside its only rivals of New York and Tokyo. It must endeavour to enhance its position in the global economy while enjoying an advantage over the latter in that English is the primary global language.

London is of first rank in terms of volume of airport traffic, although its port is now only of second rank, having been overtaken by the European ports of Rotterdam, Hamburg and Le Havre. In terms of culture and tourist activities, conference facilities, the press and telecommunications, London is again of first rank.

2.1. Strategic planning

From 1888 to 1963, the efficient and competent London County Council (LCC) managed the county of London, with the boroughs subordinated to it. In 1963, when the Greater London Council (GLC) was created, London doubled in extent; but the GLC had difficulties working with the new boroughs who gradually took the real control of local government. Thus a British pattern re-emerged of making piece-meal incremental adjustments that respected tradition, rather than grand schemes in the French manner (SAVITCH, 1988).

The old LCC fulfilled many of the ideas in Abercrombie's plan for London: decentralised population; urban sprawl controlled by the Green Belt and successful new towns (ABERCOMBIE, 1945). But, Abercrombie's plan also caused serious problems. The decentralisation of people and industry removed jobs and left industrial buildings empty. The commuter belt meant more people entering and leaving London, clogging the motorways. In addition, the docks closed, owing to major changes in the shipping industry, and office development was restrained in the interests of keeping a more humane city.

After 1986 the Conservative Government substituted a new advisory body, the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC), on the basis that only the central government is powerful enough to force the London boroughs to work together through a commission directly responsible to it.

Now, both Labour and Conservative parties have agreed that the old centralised master planning is too inflexible for today's rapid pace of change and are calling for a small strategic Greater London Authority, with a difference in concept. Labour's strategic authority would have a statutory authority to plan the economic development and transport infrastructure, while the Conservatives, who will not relinquish any power to Labour-controlled boroughs, desire only an advisory strategic London body with the power to implement vested in the Department of the Environment. The Conservatives have installed a Cabinet sub-committee of ministers to co-ordinate policy for the capital and promote a modernisation programme designed "to sustain into the next century London's special position as one of the world's great capital cities" (LPAC, 1992).

After its re-election in 1992, the Conservative government, despite its liberal political structure compared to that of France, needed to produce a programme to keep London as a first-class European city. The Conservative government then published the LPAC's report London: World City Report (LPAC, 1992) sponsored by the City of London, London Regional Transport, London Docklands Development Corporation and Westminster City Council. The consultants' task was how to preserve London as a dominant world city and to assess London's competitiveness compared to Paris, New York, Tokyo and Frankfurt, in financial strength, infrastructure, the costs and quality of life. The consultants found that London is reasonably competitive in terms of wealth creation and the arts, but there were grave concerns about (a) the falling standard of public transport, (b) the lack of city wide strategic planning, (c) the lack of sufficient low income housing, (d) failure to accommodate new business in the East End of London, and (e) the lack of self-promotion in business matters and in terms of heritage/cultural assets.

2.2. Public transport and low income housing

Although the Government spent £ 750 million on the London Underground in 1992, and will be adding the Jubilee Line extension from the City to Docklands, the Cross Rail and the additional rail link to Heathrow from Paddington Station, there is a need not only for extending and improving the Underground system but also for supporting it by a rapid transit system to the outer areas. The development of a high-tech integrated public transport system could also include a series of new transport interchanges where people could

leave their cars and switch to public transport, thus helping to reduce the traffic on the roads.

LPAC's own policy supports the long held concept, that London is a "city of stable and secure residential neighbourhoods capable of sustained community development" (RASMUSSEN, 1937). The large local authority housing estates are seen as a difficulty because they restrict labour mobility. In 1993, the Conservative government offered financial incentives to transfer local authority housing into their tenants' ownership.

A programme of infill housing; of 'densification' is now necessary. One-fifth of London's built-up area is derelict and many houses stand empty. A programme of increasing housing densities would build houses for low rent or sale on these derelict sites, thus offering low income families somewhere to live. Dense neighbourhoods with mixed activity would save people having to commute from a dormitory suburb to a financial centre.

The problem still remains of rebuilding the inner city housing estates which have fallen into disrepair and disrepute. There will probably not be enough money for both housing rehabilitation and grand schemes such as those proposed for the Thames Embankment. It may come to a decision between maintaining London's place as a cultural and financial centre of Europe, which would benefit the whole country, and putting money into the housing and community needs of London's poorer boroughs. There is always the danger that the poor housing estates will deteriorate, becoming the ghetto of an underclass who will then turn to drugs, violence and other social crimes.

President Mitterand in Paris has chosen the former approach and has neglected the suburbs, where there are now considerable social and ethnic problems. Although Prime Minister Major may do the same, it is to be hoped that some money will be provided for the low income housing estates.

2.3. Proposals for improving London's culture and heritage areas

The main heritage characteristic of a city such as London is its polycentricity, with its cultural and heritage areas concentrated in selected districts, as islands of culture (ASHWORTH and TUNBRIDGE, 1990). These specific clusters of historic cultural areas appeal to Londoners and tourists alike. London has five major tourist clusters which rank among the most popular in Britain with over a million visitors per year: (1) the Science, the Natural History and the Victoria and Albert Museums in South Kensington; (2) the National Gallery and Trafalgar Square; (3) the Tate Gallery; (4) the British Museum and (5) the Tower of London, Tower Bridge and HMS Belfast. Other tourist clusters exist in Westminster, The City, and Greenwich and the Docklands.

The enhancement proposals for London, or les grands projets in the French manner, concentrate on those selected areas, linking these islands of heritage by transport. One such proposal is the enhancement of the Thames River. There is a need for a coherent plan for development along the river, but no action has as yet been taken. LPAC considers that the Urban Development Plan of each borough, when strung together, will produce a Thames River strategy. But this will not be enough. London needs a Thames River London grand projet for the 21st century, for the people of London and for the tourist. Sir Richard Rogers (1990) suggested the creation of a major park and pedestrian areas alongside the river, with the motorway beneath the Embankment; bridges for pedestrians; the development of derelict sites, and a scheme for lighting the major buildings; eventually the banks of the Thames would become a single interconnected linear park, interconnected by new pedestrian bridges. The movement corridor of the Embankment Drive as proposed in the Rogers scheme (ROGERS and FISHER, 1992) would be covered making it a tunnel open on one side to the river. Above would be a terrace the length of the river. The proposal would also reorganise Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square and create pedestrian links to the Embankment and the South Bank.

The National Gallery Trafalgar Square area is one heritage island where enhancement has resulted finally in success. After various urban design battles, the National Gallery's new Sainsbury Wing designed by Venturi and Scott-Brown, compares favourably with and is as impressive as the high-tech glass pyramid designed by I. M. Pei for the Louvre in Paris.

Covent Garden is both a prestige tourist island and one of the few successful grands projets for London. Many battles between 1968 and 1980 finally resulted in Covent Garden becoming a Conservation Area (ANSON, 1981). The final scheme included the preservation of the market, based on Inigo Jones's arcaded square and St Paul's Church, the 19th century range of market buildings and the new extension to the Royal Opera House.

These heritage/tourist clusters create physical problems of traffic congestion; and land use conflicts between housing and tourism. The Underground links these tourist clusters, with the exception of the Docklands, where a new light railway is already inadequate for the task. In neighbouring clusters, the tourist corridors of movement are Oxford Street, Regent Street, the Mall and Bond Street. But it is becoming increasingly apparent that more movement possibilities are required.

Through various urban design battles, London is revealing a reluctance to achieve grand urban schemes, in the English tradition of preferring a democratic classicism in which the desire for individualism took precedence over the preference of kings and their master planners. Upon entering the new Europe, London is showing a passive sense of urbanity rather than any unified vision for the urban future.

The Conservatives pushed ahead with the Docklands as a major enterprise zone, subject only to market forces, but to town planners it is a lesson in how not to redevelop the port and dock facilities of a capital city. For example, the London Docklands Development Corporation developed new streets, roads, paths and office facilities at a fast pace, without much regard to local housing, community facilities or local shopping. The lack of shops, primary schools, clinics and community centres has caused what has been described as a human desert (GOSLING, 1988). The dearth of these facilities, the isolation of the existing dwellings, the lack of a Docklands civic centre and the total disregard of its relationship to the rest of east London have all been mistakes which will have to be expensively rectified.

Proposals for the East End of London are predicated on the need to shift development eastwards away from expansion on green-field sites to the west. An excellent scheme for the East End of London known as the 'East Thames Corridor' includes extending the underground line, improving the motorway, providing a rail terminus for the end of the Channel Tunnel railway at Stratford, and a new east London river crossing; and extending the facilities of the City Airport.

2.4. Promotion of London and its urban planning

The French have a permanent exhibition in the City of Paris at the Pavillon de l'Arsenal, visited annually by thousands of people. London has no equivalent, although the Architecture Foundation is creating a small permanent exhibition. In 1992 the government proposed a new Festival of Britain to celebrate the millennium. The Festival will be held in the year 2001, 50 years after the original Festival of Britain, which symbolised the start of the 'modern' post-war era. The Millennium Fund will provide funds for cultural/heritage projects as restoring Britain's crumbling heritage of cathedrals, historic houses, concert halls, etc; building new buildings to celebrate the millennium, such as community centres, and arts centres, and other sport and trade activities. The new Festival could be the grand gesture to regenerate London the way that Presidents Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterand have used *les grands projets* to regenerate Paris.

3. PARIS

The overall impression of Paris is created by its gardens, broad avenues and harmonious façades, two-thirds of which were created during the last century, first by Napoleon I and secondly, under Napoleon III, by the engineer Baron

Haussmann, whose corps of engineers devised neutral spaces punctuated by 'special monuments' such as the baroque Opera House, which constituted landmarks around which the newly-created perspectives turned. After Napoleon III, totally different political regimes altered the typology of traditional monuments. The power of the trinity of church-castle-palace declined in favour of the symbols of the modern metropolis, such as town halls, court houses and libraries.

Although the medieval city mostly disappeared in Paris, the baroque and nineteenth-century neo-classicism were carefully and beautifully integrated with the new monuments. Thus Paris had a long tradition of building monuments and preserving the urban fabric of the city long before the administrations of Presidents Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterand began their decades of *les grands projets*.

3.1. Early initiatives under Presidents de Gaulle and Pompidou

Since President de Gaulle, French presidents have chosen the course of integration with Europe, with the idea that France could lead the way, with the consequences that France changed the way it thought about itself in spatial terms. Previously, the *aménagement du territoire* policy controlled development of the Paris region and developed regional cities (*métropoles d'équilibre*) in order to balance and spread the benefits of French economic development. Now, the French urban system is structured by the Paris metropolis. With 9.06 million inhabitants in 1990, a large part of the French population and economic activities is concentrated there. Investment in public infrastructure became one of the main priorities of French urban policies, particularly with respect to motorways, high speed trains and telecommunications. Communication infrastructure is essential for the European-scale development of both Paris and the French regional cities, because they are on the edge of the 'banana' (DAWSON, 1992).

The TGV, or *train à grand vitesse*, has given priority to radiating routes from Paris, for economic reasons and for connections to the major European cities in Germany and Italy. The trains are punctual, clean and fast: the famous TGVs are the world's fastest scheduled passenger trains, quicker even than those of Japan. The Paris Metro's local subsidised trains are frequent, usually every two or three minutes. The *réseau express régional* (RER) provides a new express service stopping at every fifth or sixth station and extending well into the suburbs, a boon to commuters. Created at great expense, the RER is now showing signs of physical deterioration.

In the 1970s, the first undertaking by President Pompidou which proved to be a master stroke, was the great arts centre called the Centre Pompidou. In

opposition to post-modernism, the Pompidou Centre, by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, represents one of the first demonstrations of high-tech architecture, making particular use of solar energy.

3.2. *Les grands projets* of Presidents Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterand

The history of the government of Paris is quite the opposite of that of London. Whereas London had responsible government from 1888 until the abolition of the GLC in 1986, Paris did not receive self government until 1977, when it elected Mayor Jacques Chirac and an administration with greatly increased power which was anxious to maintain and enhance the traditional urban character of the city. Unlike those who believed in total redevelopment, Chirac and his town planners strove to retain the existing urban fabric of the city, with regard to (a) street patterns, (b) the line of existing street frontages, and (c) limitations on the height of new buildings. Large-scale urban roadworks were cancelled and the existing Parisian street pattern was retained and enhanced. Not everything was to be preserved. Although he was against megastructures, he preferred redevelopment, if necessary, on a small scale.

Contrary to Chirac's conceptions, the next Presidents, despite being of opposing parties, accepted the challenge, so that both Giscard d'Estaing (1978–1983) and François Mitterand (1983–1995) concentrated their monumental works on Paris (RAGON, 1986). First, President Giscard d'Estaing commissioned Riccardo Bofill to build a large monument on the site of the old fruit and vegetable market, Les Halles, but Mayor Chirac found the design too overwhelming and stopped it. Nevertheless, at a later date, Les Halles was totally destroyed and the ground floor transformed into a shopping centre, called Le Forum designed by architects Vasconi and Penchreach, with a socio-cultural complex underground by architect Chemeton. Meantime Giscard d'Estaing and his government created la Villette Park and Science City by the architect Adrien Fausilber on the outskirts of Paris. A further 'projet' was the rehabilitation of the Gare d'Orsay, a magnificent nineteenth-century railway station, into a grand museum of nineteenth-century art.

Unlike other European cities, where central sites are islands in the urban fabric, the historic heritage and culture areas of Paris are concentrated in the single centre and protected by total conservation rules first created by André Malraux. Many parts of the centre of Paris were pedestrianized as the centre--city population dropped and the pressure for office space pushed the people to the suburbs and even to the new towns. The later period of *les grands projets* was also the time of the building boom of the 1980's during which a great deal of construction occurred and many skyscrapers were built.

In order to ensure that the historic fabric and traditional scale would not be destroyed by the large scale requirements of corporate big business, President de Gaulle and his government decided in 1958 to create a new business centre on the fringe of Paris at La Défense. This urban planning concept has worked well, for most of the new skyscrapers are now located at La Défense and traditional Paris has been saved. La Defénse is directly orientated on the east-west axis of Paris, Le Notre's great projection from the Louvre to the Tuileries to the Champs-Elysées, continued by Napoleon to the Arc de Triomphe and then westwards to La Défense, one of the great nineteenth-century defensive bastions of the city.

To make the progression on the east-west axis and create a landmark which signified the business complex at La Défense, the governments of both Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterand embraced the idea of The Grand Arch at La Défense, an Open Cube by the architect Johannes O. von Spreckelsen. Spreckelsen's mighty arch has simplicity and unity, an open cube – an immense 100 m square block of building, slightly turned on the axis. Over the central plateau is a stretched fabric tent, highlighted by the metallic gridwork of fifteen panoramic lifts, as an airy canopy of tent cloth to represent 'clouds'. The Grand Arch is a minimalist sculpture on the scale of the metropolis and is intended to symbolise reconciliation between big corporate business, whose skycrapers line the avenue of approach, and the bureaucratic needs of the socialist state, whose departments it houses.

From 1981 onwards, President Mitterand's government pursued an even more energetic architectural programme. The Ministry of Finance building by the architect Chemeton, in a neo-brutal style, looks like an enormous rod that juts out perpendicular to the Seine, where it rests on two enormous pilings. Some people call it a lopped-off viaduct which stops in the river. The Ministry is the building of the 1980s which best expresses the power wielded by the centralised state in France. Cynics have compared it to a yoke, symbolising the heavy tax burden imposed on ordinary citizens by the Ministry of Finance.

The new Opera House at La Bastille was intended to provide a wholly different experience from the expensive elitism of the old Opera House. It was meant to be a popular venue open to everyone, serving many operas quickly, like fast-food restaurants, and thus requiring vast areas of blind accommodation for back stage scenery requirements. The Opera House is a building for the masses and mass culture. The poor human being is lost. The Opera House reduces its visitors to consumers, rather than participants in the grand occasion which Garnier understood so well in his nineteenth-century opera house.

Other grands projets include the Bibliothèque de France, the Institut de Monde Arabe, the rehabilitation of the Palace of the Grand Louvre and its expansion by the unique device of a high-tech glass pyramid designed by I. M. Pei to shed light on the innards of the new enlarged Gallery. The pyramid is

consciously designed to provide a reflected image of the old palace, and has attracted as much attention as its direct competitors in London and New York.

Les grands projets all have traits in common, as architectural symbols of the late-twentieth century: (a) geometric shapes; (b) uncluttered volumes and (c) modern materials. All of these reflect a desire on the part of France's leaders to show the dynamism and the confidence of the French in their future. Rather than falling back on the prestigious historic remains of the past, as London tends to do, the French capital is vigorously asserting its determination to hold its rank in the fast-changing landscape of contemporary international architecture. In answer to the critics of the *les grands projets*, Strategic Plans for Paris have been created for the eastern part of the inner city, aiming to create mixed use and residential areas on abandoned industrial sites. This imaginative programme includes the establishment of new cultural institutions settling in the run-down quartiers to act as catalysts for further regeneration, while special attention is being paid to the creation and rehabilitation of public spaces – streets, canals, squares and parks (DAVEY, 1989).

3.3. Effects of the transformation of Paris

Although it seemed that France had understood the need for an extensive amount of transformation in order to be acceptably integrated into the new Europe, it is now becoming clear that the cost has been extremely high. Paris is increasingly beset with social problems, totally unsolved by *les grands projets*, which include large areas of deteriorating housing, and overwhelming numbers of migrants flooding the suburbs and the new towns. Unlike London, which built its new towns at least fifty miles distant from the centre as part of the regional plan, Paris built its new towns rather closer to its centre and now has the acute social problems of the immigrants on its doorstep.

In addition, Mitterand has spent a great deal, particularly in the last years of his presidency, without regard to the financial costs. He is leaving his successors with debts which they may find overwhelming. The centralized government has laid a large burden on the ordinary citizen.

4. THE SECOND TIER OF CONTENDERS: BERLIN

Berlin cannot comfortably look back and celebrate a bi-centennial as could Paris in 1989. Its history has been too painful, too fraught. Berlin can only look

forward and hope that it can make a major contribution to the 21st century. Although Berlin was an important European city in the 1930s, today it has to be content with a fourth rank position, making it part of the second tier of European contenders for the top capital city. This second tier position is due to its historical heritage prior to the Second World War and by its peculiar politio-geographical position after the war.

4.1. Berlin's historical heritage before the Second World War

Berlin's former structure contained far less of an historic urban fabric than most other European capitals. The medieval city, for example, was overlaid by developments under first, the Prussian Friedrich I (1657–1713) and then Friedrich Wilhelm I (1688–1740), in a series of grid-patterned new districts, laid out by surveyors for militarily controlled order and for centralized governmental power, unrelieved by open space or monuments. Frederick II 'The Great' (1712–1786) added a number of new buildings including the Opera House (1741) which was destroyed in the Second World War but later restored, and the Brandenburg Gate, the ceremonial Doric gateway which became the symbol of the divided Berlin. Friedrich Wilhelm II (1744–1797) had schemes for the rebuilding of Berlin, but these were not implemented.

In the 19th century, the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel attempted to give some form to the city following the Napoleonic Wars, but little was accomplished save the new city gates at Leipsinger Platz. Berlin's development in the 19th century was confronted by the demands of the expanding railway system and the ever-expanding population working in the ever-expanding industrial factories. Bismarck (1815–1898) united Germany under the first *Kaiser* in 1871, and Berlin, the Prussian capital, therefore became the national capital until 1945 (MATZERATH, 1984). By the mid-twentieth century, there was little to distinguish Berlin architecturally save isolated individual buildings by architects such as Eric Mendelssohn. Therefore Hitler, through his competent architect Albert Speer, could start with a clean sheet, as there was relatively little heritage needing retention. After building the new Chancellery (1938), Albert Speer created a detailed master plan for a Berlin of ten million inhabitants, between 1937 and 1940, and immediately whole streets of houses were purchased and torn down to implement it. Notwithstanding Hitler's view of the plan as an instrument of political propaganda to demonstrate his immense power in architectural terms, Speer wished to design a metropolis as if it were a work of art (BALFOUR, 1990). In this respect Speer was in a direct line with the tradition of the *Beaux Arts* in Paris. The *Beaux Arts* effect was particularly noticeable in the planning and architecture of the main axis, which led from the

southern station to Hitler's huge hall, whose dome was to be larger than that of either the Panthenon or St Peter's in Rome.

Speer's plan was based on this north-south axis, and a series of circular and square plazas, but he changed the concept of the north-south axis from being a traffic artery to evoking the new Rome. Each façade along the boulevard was separately designed to enhance the overall effect, and even skyscrapers were designed in the Roman idiom. In Hitler's eyes and by Speer's hands – 'Berlin, rebuilt as the new Rome, would be the great fruit of the war by which Hitler's presence and power would be maintained into an infinite future' (BALFOUR, 1990, p. 102). The long shadow of Hitler through Albert Speer's works hangs over the re-creation of Berlin. That is one reason foreign architects are being employed to rebuild Berlin. No one can accuse them of redoing Speer's Berlin, even though architecturally some of their answers are repeating Speer's architectural solutions.

4.2. The turbulent years 1946–1990: Berlin after the Second World War

After the Second World War, Allied bombing and the Russian attack left Berlin in ruins. Divided by the great powers into four zones, a British, French, American and Russian: by 1948, the Russian Zone became part of an equally divided Germany, the German Democratic Republic, leaving Berlin located 200 kilometers inside the Soviet Zone.

The next calamity to befall Berlin was the land blockade by the Russians, successfully overcome by the Allied airlift in 1949, but the aftermath was the creation of separate municipal governments, thus splitting Berlin into East and West Berlin. By 1961 the East Germans stopped the flow of refugees from East to West by building the Berlin Wall. The Wall was grim and terrifying, and very few who attempted to cross it survived.

Each side attempted to rebuild its part of Berlin in its own ideological image. In West Berlin, the West built the 1957 Congress Hall, restored the Chancellery building, built the marvellous 1963 Philharmonic Concert Hall by the architect Sharoun, and a new National Gallery of Modern Art by Mies van der Rohe. In East Berlin, the communists built the prestigious television tower in 1969, rebuilt, as a vast housing project, Karl Marx Allée; and restored Unter den Linden, lining it with hotels and shops, portraying Stalinist architectural rigidity of the 1950s.

In 1990, the Communist regime collapsed, the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist and in October 1990, East Germany was reunited with West

Germany. In November the Berlin Wall was destroyed, and by December the Brandenburg Gate had been symbolically reopened. The way was clear for the rebuilding of Berlin after 42 years of turbulent history.

4.3. The rebuilding of Berlin: post unification

Berlin is attempting to rebuild itself, first as the capital city of a re-unified Germany, and second as a great European capital. But both of these goals are elusive, as Berlin has hardly been either of these for very long in all its 700 year history. Berlin, an ugly city, nevertheless has a most beautiful regional setting surrounded by enchanting forests and lakes, which have been carefully preserved and provided with recreational facilities. Berlin is in the process of transformation, trying to forget its painful past and look to a brighter future.

The municipal authorities are besieged by planning applications which must be referred back to a master plan. Berlin has the chance to become the representative urban form of the 21st century and to contemplate radical changes to suit the next decade. But citizens and architects alike seem to be uncertain as to the kind of Berlin they want, unlike Paris where citizens and politicians are firmly united. Any plan for Berlin must: (1) unite East and West; (2) resolve the symbolism of the Wall area; and (3) provide landmarks and also provide housing, schools and community facilities for its people.

The shaping of Berlin as the new capital city of Germany will now take longer than originally conceived during the unification euphoria of 1991. The official timetable of the German Federal Government is to have all ready for the 1998 parliamentary session but it now looks as if this will be in the 21st century. Graver still are the enormous problems created by the different levels of technological development and of cultural diversity.

The central historic core is still compact. In East Berlin is the Unter den Linden, a great European boulevard, although not continuously linear like Haussmann's Champs Elysées in Paris, as some buildings are set back surrounding subsidiary spaces. Former East Germany's greatly debased neo-classical buildings and huge prefabricated blocks are visually arid and the inhuman scale of its planning is about power rather than about people. West Berlin contains the developed part of the city but still it is patchy and mixed. The Tiergarten is next to East Berlin, heavily forested, with architectural set pieces. In the last thirty years, all the development out from the core has taken place along the railway lines. It is thus becoming a star-shaped city with a compact centre.

The planners have designated two sections of Berlin to accommodate the new government centres. The largest of the two is around the historic Reichstag

on the banks of the Spree River. Parliament will sit in the Reichstag and the surrounding buildings will house members of Parliament and their staff. The Chancellery will be located nearby. The second centre will be a mile away, near Alexanderplatz in what was East Berlin, and consists of the Ministries, housed in some of the former buildings of the East German Parliament.

The Berlin planners are caught between the developers on the one hand, and the idealistic architects on the other hand. Potsdamer Platz has been largely bought by the developers Sony and Daimler Benz, and subsequently the Munich firm of Himler and Sattler produced a conservative master plan (CRUICKSHANK, 1993). Himler and Sattler's brilliant contribution has been to break the western side of Potsdamer Platz with a new avenue which extends the vista to the west and thus makes the important visual connections between the former West and East Berlin. At the same time twenty-five international architects were asked to prepare a new overall urban development concept for the central area between the Brandenburg Gate and Alexanderplatz and between Lustgarten and Mehringplatz, and also to give examples of architectural solutions for specific individual problems within the particular area. (LAMPUGHAM, 1991).

Sir Norman Foster's scheme concentrated on a revitalized north-south axis of Friedrichstrasse intersecting the refurbished area of the Unter den Linden, reinforcing the existing street pattern and rejoining the two halves of the city. The area of the Berlin Wall is mostly turned into a public park to remind future generations of its history. This is contrary to the desires of the city authorities who want to build over the entire wall area. The Americans, Venturi and Scott-Brown, take the victor's attitude, as does Foster, that the Berlin Wall should be a public park to remain forever on the conscienceness of future generations, but they give it even greater emphasis by creating a Brandenburg Stair over the famous Gate as the symbolic location for the commemorating removal of the Wall. Aldo Rossi's scheme would fill up the entire Berlin Wall area half with traditional attractive street blocks.

The developers of Sony and Daimler-Benz have concluded their competitions for the development of Potsdamer Platz by respectively selecting the American architect, Helmut Jahn, and the Italian architect, Renzo Piano (CRUICKSHANK, 1993). The proposals represent transatlantic middle-of-the--road urban development as the large scale required apparently ruled out any local vernacular interpretations. Jahn's scheme centres on a swirling oval pantheon around a large atrium of public space surrounded by hotel, cinema, apartment and office space. Piano's scheme for Daimler Benz is placed away from Potsdamer Platz in a free standing tower overlooking a new canal, with the theatre and other public buildings pushed against the State Library and all surrounded by lakes of blue water. Piano's scheme is a further master plan within which other architects will be invited to design individual buildings,

which allows for an incremental effect enabling diversity and the richness of a traditional city to be achieved. In this respect, the city authorities regard Piano's scheme as more in the spirit of the traditional Berlin.

4.4. Summary

In the 1920s and 1930s, Berlin was the equal of Paris and London in many fields. It was an intellectual and cultural centre of European-wide stature whether in the fields of theatre, film, art, architecture or literature. Although Berlin was in area and population one of the larger cities of Europe, it is now only a fourth rank city as rated by Brunet (DATAR, 1989). The destruction and negativism of the division of Germany into two, and the removal to Bonn of the capital function destroyed its position as a world city.

The efforts of Berlin must focus equally on trying to generate an urban character out of social housing, and, equally, on overcoming the disaster of its recent past. This places Berliners in a particular situation which will not allow the city to compete on an equal footing with either London or Paris. It is not the only city in a peculiar situation. If, for example, Brussels became the seat of the European Parliament, lobbyists would use it and it will be, *de facto*, the centre of European community political power, although in fact it is a third rank city and might be more of a financial traders jungle than a capital city (DATAR, 1989). This would put Brussels in an advantageous position in the competition for a capital city for Europe; Berlin, which should be better placed, would be unable to compete. It has now a long task ahead if it is to climb back to its 1930's position as one of the capitals of Europe. To do this in the space of a decade is an enormous challenge, particularly as it must compete also with other German cities like Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg and Dusseldorf, and possibly Eastern European Cities.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, no single city is likely to acquire all the characteristics needed to become what the Europeans would regard as their capital. It is impossible to say which of the front runners, London and Paris, is in the lead, as they have adopted different approaches.

London has made the conservation of its cultural heritage its permanent concern, with legislation to protect conservation areas, conservation grants and tourism grants focused on specific sites and events. The strategic authority has taken

a conservative approach to development (with the exception of Docklands), using and adapting existing buildings rather than entering into expensive projects.

The French have tried to make Paris an example for Europe, providing a coherent urban structure with new architecture either carefully relating contextually to the old or standing out as monuments in carefully chosen places. The individual French achievements are based on a noble re-interpretation of the concept of the European city. But the cost of a few monuments and urban space has been high. The French Government is running out of public sector finance, and Mitterand's administration is heavily in debt. Their *métro* underground system and the RER high speed rail system are becoming even more run down. There are heavy commuting flows by road as the regional structure is not as good as London and the new master plan for the Bassin de Paris has yet to be implemented. Social problems in Paris are on the increase.

London has avoided a great number of these problems. Paris is cleaner, but London has better environmental quality over all (LPAC, 1992). On the other hand, the attitude to new buildings and new public monuments marks a difference between London and Paris. London is clearly lagging behind. Its Royal Opera House can barely manage an extension, while Paris has built a new Opera House. London's National Gallery has achieved the excellent Sainsbury Wing, but built by private money, while in Paris the Republic has paid for the massive enhancement of the Louvre and the Great Pyramid. The National Portrait Gallery cannot extend, but Paris renovates the Gare d'Orsay into a new museum. The national science museums at Kensington in London are strapped for money, but Paris builds a new science museum at La Villette.

The second and third rank cities will vie for various aspects of the functioning of the European Union. The French, in order to keep the European Parliament at Strasbourg, may do a deal with the Germans and, in return for their support, agree to Frankfurt as the home of the Central European Bank. London may split some of the functions of the Central European Bank in order to reinforce its position as the number one financial centre.

In the meantime Berlin may well become part of a group of well balanced German cities. Bonn and Berlin would share the governmental functions, with Frankfurt acting as the financial centre, and Munich and Hamburg specialise in the media and publishing. Eastern European cities, like Dresden and Budapest, will not be contenders for decades, because of declining population owing to migration to the west, unemployment and lack of finance for rebuilding (although ambitious rebuilding plans are being devised).

Brussels will attempt to enhance its position as the political capital of the European Union, London will continue to be a world financial centre and Paris will adopt strategies to reach the same cultural levels as London, the capital city of culture and heritage in Europe. Thus Europe may end up with not a single capital, but a polycentric system of capital cities.

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