

a selected chapter from

Rome: A New Planning Strategy

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CHAPTER 5: THE NEW STRATEGY FOR ROME

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THE NEW STRATEGY FOR ROME

Authentic "polycentrism", therefore, is founded first of all on an evaluation of the "catchment areas" of the services that define it. The location of the centers and infrastructures of such services is a subsequent question (we would say "secondary" if with this adjective is meant not inferiority in importance, but rather a temporal and conceptual subordination).

The polycentrism supported here in Rome means, first of all, a theoretical assignation of the potentiality of the catchment area of the Roman system to respective "*units*" of service that locationally assume the

role of realizing the objectives, reasserted by everybody numerous times of: *integrating functions, improving accessibility, distances, traveling times, not exceeding the thresholds that have been indicated as "overloading"*.

The locational problem of the new strategy therefore, is posed as a problem of *not* letting all the users participate in *any* function in *any* part of the system (the 2,8 million Roman citizens plus the by now recognized other 700 thousand citizens of the Roman "system"); but to functionally distribute the services in such a way as to not render "indifferent" (but on the contrary very... "different", i.e. preferred) the access to this or that function, with a process that we call "*de-polarization*"; such a process is none other than that of instituting other alternative poles to those existing already (but of a "polarizing" capacity that is adequate to those existent ones: or rather better, without the negative aspects of the overloading).

5.1 The "Catchment Areas" of the New "Urban Centers"

The new strategy was defined in 1980, very summarily but very precisely, by the "Frame of Reference for Regional Planning" of the Lazio Region (the IrspeI study already mentioned), in the point in which it asserts that the Frame of Reference intends to pursue:

"the hypothesis of "decentralization" relative only to the rare and very rare services, which consists of the identification of three or four distinct territorial ambits to be rendered autonomous, albeit within the compact and concentrated system of the city with the relative locating of the services centers in three or four fundamental catchment areas, within which the needs for services can be measured further, with the fundamental strategic aim of ensuring a "decentralization" that is not however so dispersed as to be inconclusive for the purposes of the city-effect."

The design plan of the new strategy is resolved thus in the determination of the existence (and subsequently in the study of their location) of a *certain number of systems* of central or business and administrative services (such as the SDO), that correspond to as many "virtual catchment areas".

The 3,5 million users of the Roman metropolitan or urban system may give life - at the frequency thresholds of the services allowed by current economic and social development - to about *6/7 centers* and as many *catchment areas*.

For the moment, given the still strong polarizing capacity of the historic center (which it will certainly not be easy to oppose), the distributive

nature of the morphological and urbanistic realities of the urban boundary, the importance assigned to a "spatial line of development" that integrates the communes of the East side of the city from Tivoli to the Castelli Romani, and given other conditions that it would take too long to enumerate here, the organization of these new *catchment areas* can be configured (some of which are already discounted such as EUR and the future SDO), as collected in six centers of reference and distributed in six corresponding territorial sectors:

1. an "*internal*" sector that continues to gravitate on the old Centre;
2. a set of *other sectors* (corresponding more or less to the four cardinal points of the city and its hinterland) which would be presented as the same number of *territory "cones"*, that each gravitate however on *its own center*;
3. an "*external*" sector, relative to the set of communes of the hinterland that are part of the East-South line of development from Tivoli to the Castelli Romani¹, with a "linear centrality" (if one accepts the pun), made up by the communes located to the South and East of Rome and which should begin to gravitate on the new "linear-center";

These territorial sectors, therefore, represent as many catchment areas and include evidently also the citizens of the areas around Rome (that today are part of the Roman system, and gravitate upon it); of the 700 thousand users that they represent, 400 thousand should be concentrated by afferece to the sector that we have defined as "external" or "east" or also "Latin"².

5.2 The Spatial Distribution of the Catchment Areas

The spatial distribution of the catchment areas (with its quantitative implications) has been proposed by aggregation of Rome's municipal "*circoscrizioni*" and of the adjacent communes³ (see Map 1). Only in the

¹More details and explanations are in the contribution already mentioned from 1985 (Archibugi, 1985).

²Because the ancient inhabitants of the area were called "*latins*", and because it was crossed by the ancient *via latina*; the other 300 thousand would be distributed, in very irrelevant proportions, in the other sectors of afferece, the critical mass of which would be nevertheless represented by the users of Rome (Rome municipality).

³Excluding the communes of the three districts (Civitavecchia, Anzio-Nettuno and Segni-Colleferro) which a correct delimitation of the spatial urban systems of Lazio should assign to the systems of North Lazio (Rieti-Viterbo) and South Lazio (Frosinone-

case of *Circoscrizione XIV* has it been considered opportune to divide it into two parts afferent to two sectors and gravitating on two centers.

The overall demographic summary of the catchment areas (inclusive of the population of the Roman circumscriptions and that of the communes of the metropolitan area that have been made afferent on the various catchment areas) is expressed in Table 2.

The criteria with which we have proceeded to formulate the proposed catchment area distribution are obviously territorial: postulating the best combination of the already existing gravitational areas, the maximum use of the operating infrastructures and finally the minimum access costs.

Latina).

Table 2 - *Catchment Areas of the Roman Metropolitan System (by thousands of inhabitants)*

Catchment Area	Rome Municipality	Gravitating Communes	Total
(Historic) Centre	450,00		450,00
North	329,00	131,00	460,00
East	959,00		959,00
South	597,00	40	637,00
West	505,00	41	546,00
"Latin"		481,00	481,00
Roman Metropolitan System	2840,00	693,00	3533,00
Communes outside System			163
Total for Province			3696,00

Source: Istat data

The results proposed are the following:

a) *A Southern Area (ROMA-SUD)*

The sector of this catchment area may be considered that of a vast South-West territorial cone, including the sea coast from Fiumicino to Castel Porziano (thus the so-called "marine" areas) and all the zones that with the sea lines of development (Portuense, Ostiense, Cristoforo Colombo) and those of the Pontina, Laurentina, and Ardeatina gravitate on the already well defined directional area of EUR which, with its outgrowths to the Magliana and to the Laurentina, would be configured as an actual Southern Business and Administrative System.

To this area, in fact, may be made to refer all the residential quarters of Portuense, Ostiense, Ardeatino, EUR, Giuliano-Dalmata and the areas in rapid expansion of "Circoscrizioni" XII and XIII (with an overall population of about 600 thousand people). This catchment area would include, moreover, (with not more than 40 thousand inhabitants) the users settled in the territory of some communes of the province of Rome to the

