

'Cooperation and competition between metropolises in SE Europe: the couple of Athens and Constantinople. Evolution and perspective'*

Introduction: the role of a metropolis nowadays

According to contemporary perceptions (Economou, 2000: 446), a city needs to meet two conditions so as to be considered a metropolis: firstly, a population of, at least, 1, 5 million inhabitants and the incorporation of the city in international corridors of development, often via a vast concentration of leading corporations, which serve a wider area. On this base, the SE Europe presents only a few metropolises, usually the capital cities of certain countries (Economou& Petrakos, 2002), and more specific Athens, Boukourest, Sofia, Belgrant, Thessalonica and Constantinople.



Picture 1: Athens and Constantinople in SE Europe

In recent decades, there are European metropolises that are included in world cities or have a high profile internationally; because they met the conditions below

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(Petraikos and Economou, 1999: 26-27) and they grasped the top of the network of cities in the continent. There are four criteria for a world city:

- The economies of scales, created by the co-existence of several headquarters of great corporations –multinationals, banks etc.
- The concentration of many and different businesses that offer services using massive and skillful workforce –consultants, researchers etc.
- The great variety of infrastructure, facilities and improvements, which provide land and accessibility to corridors and networks
- A high cultural ratio, including famous museums, theaters, opera houses etc.

Cooperation between metropolises is not an easy task, especially in issues concerning ‘hard’ politics, considering the fact that a metropolis usually has got a role in a national context. However, the ongoing process of diminishing the power of national states –through globalization, regionalism and regionalization –has often led metropolises into forming networks, based on administrative and financial activities.

The cooperation takes place, usually, on exchanging know –how for challenges and threats mutually confronted, or creating lobbies to support common interests in international organizations. The cooperation is often an agreement between municipal authorities or state services. In recent years, lobbies, professional unions and non government organizations boost also cooperation and ‘growth coalitions’ between cities, especially metropolises, according to their own interests in each city (Getimis, 2000: 475). Especially in Europe, the European Union funds the networks among cities (Beriatos, 1999: 532)

On the other hand, competition between metropolises and cities in general, is getting stronger every year. Until some years ago, the cities tended to compete for secondary activities such as storage, manufacturing and transporting goods. Headquarters, research labs, services which demand highly skillful workers, such as consulting, used to concentrate in global cities –New York, London, Tokyo –or other metropolises of the highest rank. In 2004, maybe for first time in contemporary history, several headquarters left their central location (Hidle, 2003: 102-103) to grasp positions as Singapore, near to the most promising economies in earth, China and India.

It is easy to assume that a new division of labor is going to occur, in favor of the new industrial countries. On one hand, SE Europe is, unfortunately, far from such places. On the other hand, it is nearby one of the most affluent continents of the world, Europe. On this base, the cities examined in this work, Athens and Constantinople may have the opportunity to attract financial and human capital of Europe, although the latter could probably be focused on other than headquarter or R&D activities. In any case, this is not an easy task. Although European metropolises, usually, lack the institutional facilities that the metropolises of the United States have so as to attract financial activities, however, they still compete very hard for them (Getimis, 1999: 364).

Another point to consider is the fact that, while cooperation can mainly be evaluated by a general consideration of it, an analysis of the competition may end in conclusion using quantitative methods. This is partly because it is easier to measure the exchange of financial and human capital among metropolises, other than computing the specific impact of each common action on every metropolis. Additionally, both governments and corporations tend to consider competition as more important than cooperation in our era, basically because of the extreme financial antagonism.

Finally, it is necessary to underline the fact that both human and financial resources affect the political, economic and cultural importance of a city and sets its order in the international rank of the cities. This order, generally, is connected with the lifestyle and the level of education and, therefore, an upgrade of a city in this rank, is always welcome.

A long past, an obscure present and a promising future: the case of Athens

Athens is the capital city of Hellenic Democracy for more than 171 years. It was evolved from a small village to a huge city of a member state of EU inhabited by over 4 millions (Economou, 2000: 452). It is also at the top of the network of the cities in Balkans (Economou & Petrakos, 2002: 108), mainly because of its demographic growth, political stability and geographic advantages, such as transport networks and a crossroad among three continents. Furthermore, some Greek corporations located in Athens Metropolitan Area (AMA), they recently settled on other Balkan capital cities, forming relations between them (Labrianidis, 2000: 244). AMA is famous all over the world for its magnificent cultural heritage –Parthenon is the symbol of UNESCO. It is also considered the birth land of democracy and philosophy. This advantage is used, so far, only for the attraction of tourists.



Picture 2: Athens is in the center of Greek territory

AMA has reached an astonishing population growth, which, sometimes, is considered as the source of many problems of the Greek territory. The tables below show the demographic strength in numbers and percentages.

Table 1: The evolution of population during last three censuses

Geographic Region and Department	Population			Percent change between	
	1981	1991	2001*	1981-1991	1991-2001
Greece	9.740.417	10.259.900	10.964.020	5,3	6,9
Attica	3.369.424	3.523.407	3.761.810	4,6	6,8
Greater Athens Area	3.038.245	3.072.922	3.187.734	1,1	3,7
Attica (rest)	331.179	450.485	574.076	36,0	27,4

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, censuses 1981, 1991, 2001, from Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 109

Table 2: The percentage of Attica, Greater Athens Area and the rest of Attica

Geographic Region and Department	1981	1991	2001
Greece	9740417	10259900	10964020
%Attica	34,6	34,3	34,3
%Greater Athens Area	31,2	30,0	29,1
%Attica (rest)	3,4	4,4	5,2

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, censuses 1981, 1991, 2001, from Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 110

AMA concentrates a major part of economic activities of Greece and it has a profile compatible with European metropolises. Furthermore, many young, highly skillful

scientists aged 25-29 live in Athens (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 3), which is a crucial advantage in the accelerating competition between cities. However, Athens is not a competitive place for attracting investments and people (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 35).

Moreover, investments in tourism, public infrastructure and maritime transportation took recently place due to Olympic Games and the growing connection between Greek and European economy. These investments, so far, confront a lot of problems and challenges. The former derives from the malfunctioning city planning (Economou & Coccossis, 2002), the latter from the central location of Athens in SE Europe and the use of euro (€). What is really good for Athens is the fact that tourism, public infrastructure and maritime transportation are the leading sectors of the Greek economy that is they have a lot of ‘backward’ connections with many other sectors. As a result, they can have a leading role in national and metropolitan development. On the other hand, the investments that took place in these sectors were based mainly on funds from Greek companies and public sector.



Picture 3: The position of Athens Metropolitan Area in the boundaries of the Region of Attica

There are also certain sectors which have significantly grown in last years in relation with the leading sectors. Banking and construction have been vastly

empowered by making transactions with corporations and ministries concerning tourism, public works and maritime transportation. Of course, banking is also favored by fiscal policies, whereas construction expands over the demand of private housing and offices.

According to Gospodini, urban design and urban renaissance strengthen the leading profile of a metropolis (Gospodini, 2000: 198-200). Additionally, flagship developments enhance the profile of the city and test the scope and the directions in which marketing process should follow (Smyth, 1994: 265). The Olympic Games was an excellent opportunity for Athens to form a strategy of strong metropolitan development. Unfortunately, Athens adopted an alternative model of development –in contrast, for example, to Barcelona –based on the sparse Olympic facilities. However, it is doubtful if this strategy succeeds (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004: 87).

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) tends to be a crucial factor in the competition of cities. Although there isn't any evidence for AMA, however, there is evidence for Greece and it is safe to assume that AMA concentrates a great part of it. Foreign Direct Investments lead often to new companies, strongly connected with the maternal ones, which transfer know-how and prestige to less developed countries.

The Hellenic Center for Investments has approved and reinforced plans of investments of a total budget of 502.8 billion drachmas –about 1.476 billion euros. There seems that Germany, Belgium, USA and Denmark were the countries where most of this capital derived from. Additionally, the pharmaceutical –chemical branch, metallurgy, food and drinks are the sectors mostly favoured (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 69).

Table 3: Foreign Direct Investment in Greece during 1996-2000

YEARS	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
COUNTRIES					
Austria	3.428	1.863	1.998	715	74
Belgium	31.365	36.854	34.505	48.451	54.836
Germany	136.025	162.473	366.775	314.370	392.375
Denmark	2.523	2.695	9.729	9.309	13.407
Spain	9.970	1.199	3.046	6.957	4.914
Finland			18	53	33
France	120.221	127.378	624.682	524.057	388.656
United Kingdom	96.844	98.695	130.310	229.855	383.615
Ireland	7.905	10.146	48.066	161.630	24.865
Italy	66.143	70.562	87.495	92.916	130.282
Luxembourg	150.794	324.695	883.471	1.420.900	941.824
Netherlands	192.954	211.046	1.187.277	1.463.252	1.120.469
Portugal			406	411	415
Sweden	7.434	5.467	8.411	8.635	12.106
TOTAL EU COUNTRIES	825.606	1.053.073	3.386.189	4.281.511	3.467.871
Other European Countries	83.740	85.352	173.207	365.895	537.537
Asia	15.868	17.834	30.564	24.571	15.264
Africa	11.760	17.272	20.819	12.597	15.811
Australia	185	793	295	1.087	1.494
USA	53.498	66.654	78.193	113.915	304.892
Other America countries	31.112	22.056	7.935	469.038	227.131
TOTAL (in million Dr.)	1.021.769	1.263.034	3.697.202	5.268.614	4.570.000
TOTAL (in million USD)	4.244,81	4.469,33	13.084,66	16.041,33	12.499,00

Source: Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 134

There are an alarmingly increasing number of foreign investments in Greece, the past few years. While Greece is not a large national market, it is easy to assume that the investments were made as a part of a master plan concerning SE Europe and, maybe, Eastern Mediterranean. In that case, the international profile of the city is enhanced. Moreover, the Common Market creates major economies of scale (Mousis, 1994: 115) and improves the mobility of international funds.

Table 4: Greek universities in Attica and in the rest of Greece

UNIVERSITIES	Number of Departments	Percentage
1. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	30	12,8
2. National Technical University of Athens	9	3,8
3. University of Piraeus	9	3,8
4. Athens University of Economics and Business	8	3,4
5. Panteion University	8	3,4
6. Agricultural University of Athens	6	2,6
7. Harokopion University	3	1,3
8. Athens School of Fine Arts	1	0,4
LOCATED IN ATTICA	74	31,5
9. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	42	17,9
10. University of Patras	22	9,4
11. Demokritos University of Thrace	18	7,7
12. University of Ioannina	16	6,8
13. University of Crete	16	6,8
14. University of the Aegean	16	6,8
15. University of Thessaly	15	6,4
16. University of Macedonia	8	3,4
17. Ionion University	4	1,7
18. Technical University of Crete	4	1,7
LOCATED IN REST OF GREECE	161	68,5
TOTAL	235	100,0

Source: Ministry of Education, from Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 138

In addition, Athens has a great variety of university and research centers, a few of which have high profile internationally. Thus, there are a satisfying number of researchers, scientists and students, which can be a major advantage in metropolitan competition. However, it is thought that Greece lacks about 5,000 till 10,000 workers in computer and information technologies (Doukidis, 2002: 182). Another point to mention is that Spatial Plan of Athens (*Rythmistiko Schedio Athinon*), which is still in power, examines education only as a question of spatial concentration (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 71). It is obvious that Attica concentrates most of the departments of the universities in Greece. It must be underlined that some of them are not located in Attica only.

Table 5: The share of each group of sciences of the total number of students

Areas of Study	Percentage (number of students of an Area of Study/total number of students)
Humanities and Social Sciences	22,3
Economics	18,2
Sciences (Physics, Mathematics)	15,1
Engineering	11,3
Education	8,2
Medicine	5,9
Law	5,5
Other	3,5
Agricultural sciences	3,3
Sport Sciences	2,4
Computer sciences	2,4
Fine Arts	1,7
Total	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, from Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 140

On the other hand, Athens tends to be a city that does not promote entrepreneurship, especially in modern scientific fields and sectors as information technologies, genetics, synthetic fibers etc. Furthermore, the Spatial Planning of Athens failed to provide services and new types of activities required by businessmen (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 71). In addition, Greece lacks an integrated policy in education and funds to keep up research and development. As a result, Athens hasn't created yet an innovation milieu or an industry in advanced technologies. Even worse, according to some researchers "there are few initiatives to establish clusters of high-technology industry and research in AMA" (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 3). If AMA had accomplished this goal, it would have probably been by now a metropolis of a higher rank.

Additionally, the demographic growth is based both on immigration and on the births of infants. Although Athens tends to concentrate the highly skillful laborers of Greek periphery, however, most of immigrants tend to be lowly skillful laborers from Balkans and Eastern Europe. Overall, this fact makes the city desirable for labor –intensive activities but it also has a detrimental effect on knowledge –intensive or capital –intensive activities –which, usually, upgrade a huge city to a metropolis.

Unfortunately, AMA lacks a metropolitan level of governance (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 101) and urban governance –based on NGOs –is inadequate. There is no doubt that the metropolitan governance should primarily aim at the integration

of sectary policies that often executed. Instead, political reasons—that is tactics in election – have led any relative proposal to failure. Moreover, urban governance neither has social partners motivated nor it has promoted cooperation between cities with similar features, so far.

Another point to consider is the high cost of land, residence and living which may put of some investors and definitely many workers. Athens is one the most expensive capital cities of Europe, which, combined with the poor standards of urban planning, can be disastrous in attracting financial and human capital. However, it is also true (Economou and Coccossis, 2002: 5) that Athens is one of the capital cities with the least crime rates in Europe and a very low income disparity.

Constantinople: an Islamic metropolis on Europe

Constantinople is settled at the borderline of the continent of Europe, in an excellent location. Historically, it was a smooth passage from Europe to Asia and from Aegean Sea to Black Sea. Having been a capital city for almost seventeen centuries, it lost its geopolitical and financial privileges during the twentieth century due to world and Balkan wars and the political transformation of Turkey. However, the city has still high profile internationally as it is shown by its declaration (en.wikipedia.org) as the European Capital of Culture for 2010.

Although Constantinople is no more a capital city, it is Turkey's largest city, and its cultural and economic center (Ahtisaari et al, 2004: 10). It is located on the Bosphorus strait, and encompasses the natural harbor known as the Golden Horn, in the northwest of the country. Constantinople extends both on the European (Thrace) and on the Asian (Anatolia) side of the Bosphorus, and is thereby the only metropolis in the world which geographically is situated on two continents (en.wikipedia.org).

Moreover, Constantinople has presented an outstanding demographic growth. In 1975, the population was 2,534,839 –in the metropolitan area the population was about 3,300,000 –while in 2000 Census, population is 8,803,468 (city proper) and 10,018,735 (province), making it, by some counts, one of the largest cities in Europe. The census bureau estimate for July 20, 2005 is 11,322,000 for Istanbul province, which is generally considered as the metropolitan area, making it one of the twenty largest metropolitan areas in the world (en.wikipedia.org).

As a result, the rapid urbanization created a great scale of economies and it boosted the demand of residence and certain goods. Government policies last two decades supported the transformation of Constantinople to a modern metropolis, a gateway to Europe. Thus, the city's economy is greatly influenced by macro – economic environment and it has attracted many foreign investments, especially in manufacturing industry and tourism. The economic potential of the city, just like the rest of the country, was interrupted by three facts: the uprising of Kurds during the decade of 1990, the devastating earthquake in 1999 and the financial crisis in 2001. Although Turkey seemed to recover –at least according to the indicators –the years after, Constantinople had already lost vital time. Ironically, the earthquake brought

closer Greece and Turkey, a fact that will probably boost Constantinople's development in near future. By then, Turkey will suffer a macro –economic instability and structural deficiencies (Ahtisaari et al, 2004: 45).

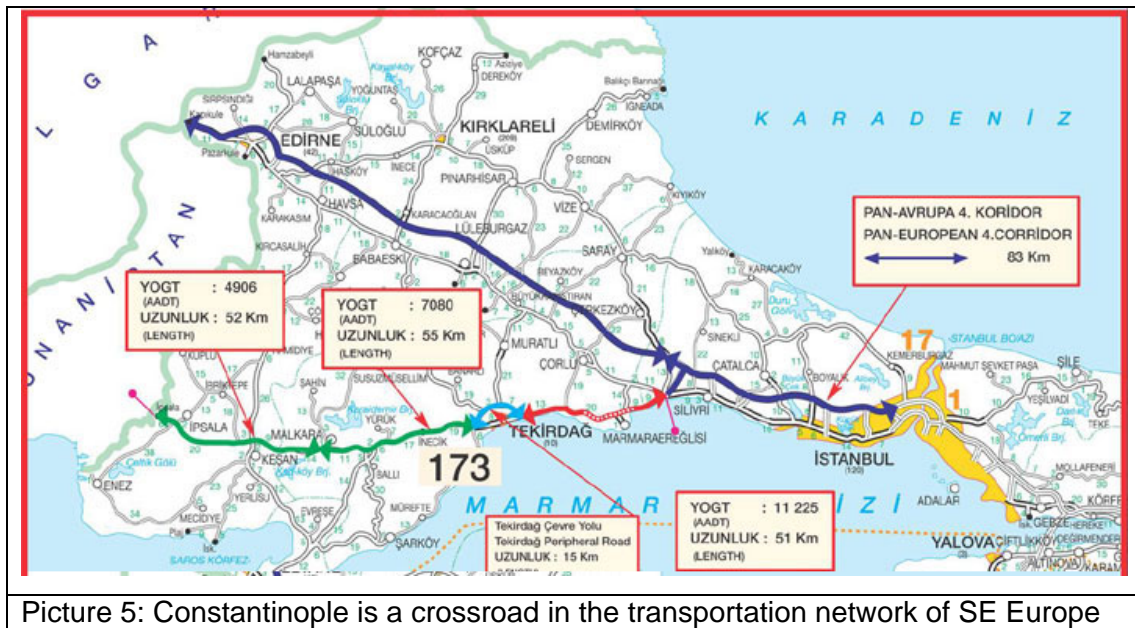


Picture 4: Icon of Constantinople taken by satellite (www.singlix.com)

Despite the political misfortunes and the strokes of nature of past years, Constantinople keeps its crucial role in national and international networks of cities as a pole of development. The importance of the location is further empowered by the construction of Trans –European Networks, some of which connect Constantinople directly with great European metropolises. The extension of those facts is getting longer considering that a great amount of oil and gas are going to pass through Bosphorus, from Central Asia on their way to Europe. Trans –European Networks are also pivotal in SE Europe's development because they connect the metropolitan areas of this part of the continent (Kafkalas, 2002: 72).

Another point to consider is that the metropolitan infrastructure tends to be adequate. Constantinople has a modern airport and it plans extended works on the railway network. Although the level of the university departments is higher than the

rest of the country, however, the government tends to focus on basic education (Zhang & Woicke, 2003: 15) making the production of advanced human capital more difficult.



Picture 5: Constantinople is a crossroad in the transportation network of SE Europe

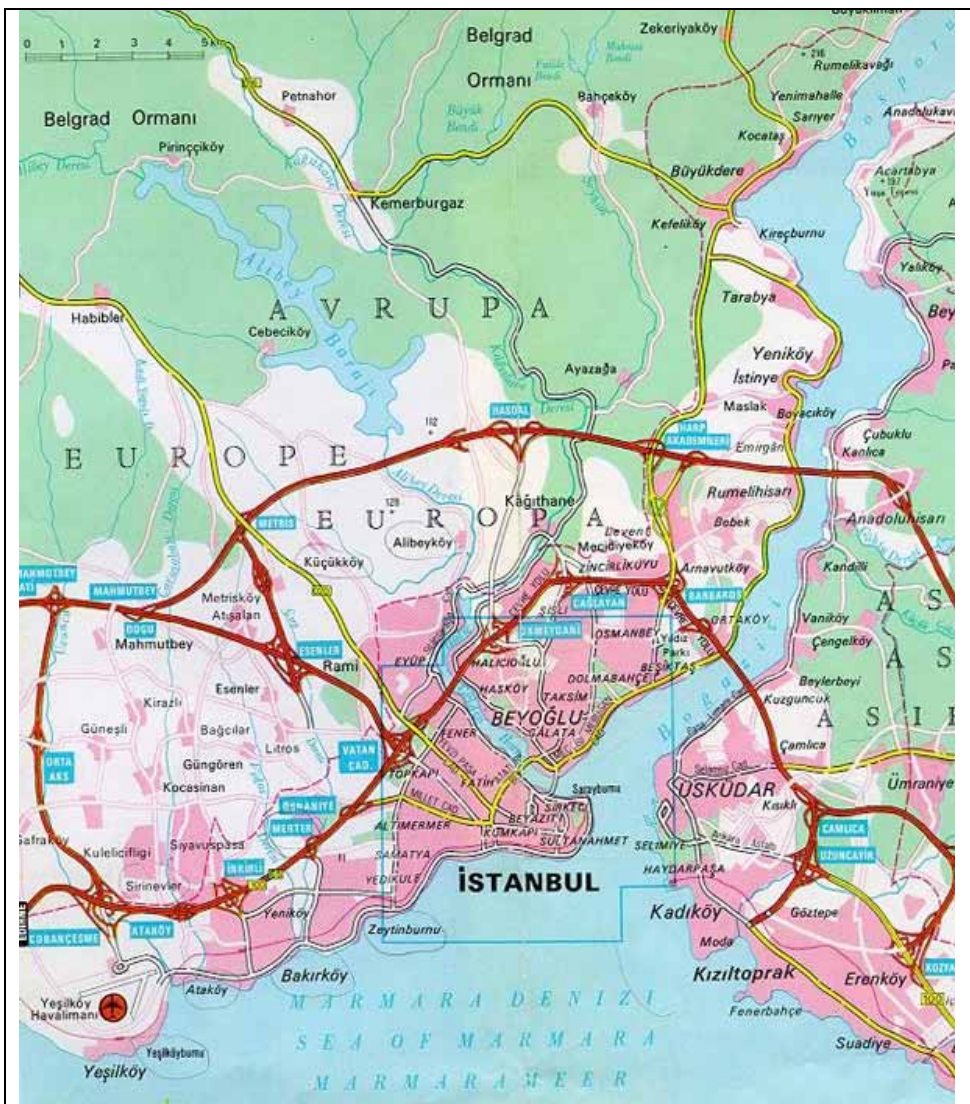
According to a database concerning Turkey, it has a standard –though not high – export share of medium–high technology industries in OECD countries. Constantinople is going to become major factor on the national effort to transform an economy that is based on low technology to an economy that exports products of high and medium technology (www.turkstat.gov.tr). According to statistics for 2000 and 2001, the share of turnover of affiliates under foreign control of manufacturing is almost three times higher than the share of employment of affiliates under foreign control (www.turkstat.gov.tr). Overall, this fact imply that foreign investments use specialized workforce and they produce goods of higher value, in comparison with national corporations. It is safe to assume that Constantinople has a central role on this evolution due to its population, location and economic profile.

On balance, Constantinople suffers extreme urban malfunctions. Although the urban planning has a long tradition, it failed to create a modern metropolis (Tekeli, 1994: 267-268). The rapid urban development in last decades has led the metropolitan area to several problems concerning the infrastructure, the land uses, the environment and the transportation. The concentration of immigrants creates severe problems in public goods as health and education. In addition, the management of land uses loses

control so that conflicts between irrelative uses cause the congestion of infrastructures and negative economies to urban environment.

Although Constantinople has a lot of monuments, the traditional neighborhoods were devastated by building residence for immigrants. This fact reflects the great inequalities based on income and it seems to harms both social cohesion and the potential of the metropolitan economy. The intense of this situation is major and it may explain the continuous preference of the voters for the Islamic parties –Prime Minister Ertoghan was once a Mayor of Constantinople.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that urban governance is totally inadequate. Constantinople has a unified metropolitan administration –many metropolitan areas, including Athens, lack this advantage –but the feeble social structure prevents the city from taking any advantage.



Picture 6: The corridors and the airport near Constantinople

Furthermore, the level of education in Turkey is considered as the lowest by far in all OECD countries (Zhang & Woicke, 2003: 18). Not only does this fact imply that Constantinople can not compete other European metropolises based on its own human capital, but also diminishes the likelihood of deriving human capital from other Turkish regions. There is no way to attract knowledge –intensive activities without having a high level of education. Often, the capital –intensive activities need skillful executives and workers too. As a result, the low level of education will probably have a detrimental effect on Constantinople’s development on the long run.

Conclusions

Overall, this analysis leads to some conclusions about the evolution and the perspective of the couple of Athens and Constantinople. To sum up, Athens and Constantinople are two high ranked metropolises in SE Europe, which affect the form and the structure of both their national economies and the international development of South East Europe and Eastern Mediterranean. On this base, there some points that must be underlined.

1. Constantinople was for an extremely long period a financial and cultural center settled in SE Europe. When the Turkish government moved to Ankara, Constantinople lost its greatest advantage. Furthermore, several unpredictable events resulted in reducing the financial and political influence of the city. Even worse, Turkey has yet to proceed in constitutional, financial and administrative reforms so as to be included in EU, an effort with an uncertain conclusion. On other hand, Athens managed to catch and surpass Constantinople in last decades only, based mainly on the successful political, economic and social transformation of modern Greece and the funds of EU. Even more, the inclusion of Greece in the 'zone of euro' and the Olympic Games enhanced the image and the function of the city –but less than expected (Neelakantan, 2004: 22). However, there is much to be done, if Athens wants to attract long term investments and human capital. While a city in western countries make plans how to attract wealthy, skillful residents and to avoid homeless and illegal immigrants (Kotler et al, 1993: 289), both metropolises seem to ignore such policies. The future evolution of the relation of the two cities depends mostly on the ability of the two countries to confront the contemporary challenges and walk on their way to become an absolute industrial society –just like the ones in Northern Europe and America.
2. Considering the complex, even hostile in past, relationships between Greece and Turkey, it is astonishing how far and wide can become the cooperation between Athens and Constantinople. There is ground for exchanging know – how on several occasions. Athens organized recently the Olympic Games, while Constantinople is prepared for European Capital of Culture in 2010. Both Athens and Constantinople confront serious problems in urban planning,

pollution and the lack of vital infrastructure. If the cities manage to work together it is likely that investments and people will settle easier in both places, a beneficial situation for a wider area. Except for know –how, the cities may agree to create an image, in specific sectors, which implies that one city is compatible with the other. For instance, the most famous monuments of Athens belong to its ancient and Romaic period, whereas the most famous monuments of Constantinople belong to Byzantine and Ottoman period. Cruisers and tourist industry in general, could use this compatibility, more extensively, to offer an integrated product. Greece had already had to ask EU for a special program which should promote cooperation among cities in SE Europe (Beriatos, 1999: 549). It is obvious the incorporation of Turkey in EU would enhance this prospect. Trans –national cooperation, usually, expands bureaucracy (Aalbu, 2002: 49-50) and, therefore, there must be adopted a simple modus operandi in new political and administrative common structure. The Organization for Cooperation and Development in Black Sea may also be helpful, on any occasion.

3. The competition between the two cities is going to become much tougher. This will happen even if Turkey fails to meet conditions to become an EU member. Globalization has set free an astonishing amount of capital and has also set people into motion. While investment funds and venture capitals tend to focus, those days, on China and Far East and the endless conflicts and rivalries in Middle East put the investors off, Athens and Constantinople will still have to compete for a great deal of activities and skilled labor force. Athens has fewer problems in regional, environmental and urban planning; it favors an excellent macroeconomic environment and a satisfying educational and cultural level. Considering also the Greek communities of businessmen and scientists around the world, it is easy to conclude that Athens could concentrate capital –intensive activities easier than Constantinople. Under certain circumstances, the attraction of some knowledge –intensive activities is also feasible. On the other hand, Constantinople favors an outstanding demographic growth, based on internal immigration –that is there are many young people over there. In contrast to Athens, Constantinople is a crossroad on the energy networks. Constantinople is also oriented to a numerous national market –the population of Greece is less than the population of Constantinople.

The combination of these advantages could easily lead Constantinople to compete for labor –intensive and energy –consumptive activities. By now, it is difficult to say whether Athens or Constantinople is more capable to attract more flows, goods and humans in international transportation. On any occasion, Athens tends to have larger and better –equipped facilities and a huge merchant navy, but the result will be vastly depended on the situation in Middle East, which is going to judge whether Turkey is a border of Europe or a crossroad towards Arabic world.

4. Another point to consider is that Athens faces no political or cultural problem as a gateway of Balkans or Eastern Mediterranean. Greece is a member of EU and the relationships with Arabic countries were always close. Last years, it avoided –although not immediately –political implications by the division of former Yugoslavia. In contrast, Turkey requests an EU membership and occasionally brings back to several countries –including a few Arabic ones – memories of invasion and occupation. So far, EU consists of Christian countries and countries as Bulgaria or Romania are to be accepted as full members before Turkey. Those issues are not always obvious, but they affect strategies and political decisions. If Turkey accomplishes to become an EU member, Constantinople will be favored politically, financially and socially. In that case the competition with Athens will probably be extreme. If Turkey fails, Constantinople is going to lose funds, know –how and, above all, human capital.

Recently, there are created certain geopolitical scenarios –political destabilization of Turkey, crisis in Aegean, even dictatorship. In any of these cases, there is no point in the competition between Athens and Constantinople, as we know competition between metropolises, because competition will obtain militaristic features. Under these circumstances, foreign investments and human capital will simply move, as usual, to a safer place in the planet.

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