

# JOINT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

**10<sup>TH</sup>** EDITION  
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION  
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

**5<sup>TH</sup>** EDITION  
THE GLOBAL ADVANCEMENT  
OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

## Where Are You Going, Humanity?

Constantin Frosin<sup>1</sup>

### Preamble

On the sidelines of life, stands... starting point - Genesis

On the sidelines of Genesis stands Death

In the center of the Periphery, stars... the Centre

In the center of the Center, there is the point. No point, no Center...

At the origin of the Center and of the Periphery, there is a point.

On the sidelines of the Point, there are so the Centre that the Periphery...

The Point, unlike the Centre and the Periphery, has no limits. The only Nothingness limits the unlimited Point...

From *Ne/No* to *Point/Not* at all, there is but a No... In the presence of *Pas*, Point becomes positive, or if you prefer, disappears as Negation...

The Point, the infinitely small ... The Infinite, the infinitely large...

And the Centre, then? Can we speak of the center of a Point or of the center of the Infinite?

Not even of the Centre of the Periphery, the less of the Centre of the Marge...

The Centre, would it be something that “is between” willingly or by force in the infinitely Grand/Large, which is unrealistic and utopian? Can we redefine the Infinite with the means at hand? Or «le S entre», but what is this «S»? The “no-Tr” (sans Tr) could mean the abandonment of materiality (Tr is for the land, for example).

One question remains: this center does it really exist? Compared to what? What geometrician/surveyor (or Geo-Master...) could decide? Or there he has that thinks he’s the Center of the world, or the navel of the Earth?

Alas, everything passes, everything breaks while tired... In the past, we dreamed of a storefront, now it's the Rush Green, the return to Nature - only, this does not risk lead to a recurrence of the Noble Savage? This is not likely to lead...

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor, PhD, Faculty of Communication and International Relations, Danubius University of Galati, Romania. Address: 3 Galati Blvd, Galati 800654, Romania, Tel.: +40372 361 102, Fax: +40372 361 290. Corresponding author: constantinfrosin@univ-danubius.ro.

According to evolutionary spiral, every point is a center and any center becomes a point... No trace of a Centre, but just a too small Point... Or, more down to earth (with a mundane speech) , we speak of greatness and decay of a society, a state, a nation...

Apparently, the space is the place where East passes (in the West), is the place where it is it is appropriate to speak of the animation of the place, the place where life lives, where a life is intense all points of view: economic, political, cultural etc.

But is it true that everything is going to the center? Jacques Chaban-Delmas said that “The center is stationary: the wheel forwards, the center does not move”.

It was Alain Reynaud who applied the model center - periphery in his book *Society, Space and Justice*, in 1981. The Centre is the place where one enters in the heart of the matter, in the heart of the issues to the agenda, in the field of life and living matter. This is the place which imparts a rotational movement of revolution, while the periphery is driven it, in a revolu (=past)-tion of movement. It's a bit like the sun that illuminates, and the Moon, which is illuminated. Without a center, the periphery cannot choose which way to turn, could not cope... And I mean a center because no matter the Periphery that nests in the center of her world, she needs a center, a point, that's all. Or a Point is / knows All?

In his typology, Alain Reynaud distinguishes, beyond the peripheries, blind spots (such as the Sahel, the Andes, the Himalayas), “abandoned by the centers,” or isolated “relying on their own strength” (Korea north). The geometric metaphor of center and periphery is often used to describe the contrast between the two basic types of places in a system: one that controls and benefits from the center and those affected in peripheral position. This conceptual pair backs at least to Werner Sombart (*Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 1902), if not to Marx (relationships city / campaign) and was used by the theorists of imperialism (Rosa Luxemburg, Bukharin) but it is economists studying inequalities development that gave it its contemporary form (Samir Amin, *Unequal Development*, 1973).

But especially at the global level that it made a fortune, as equivalent of developed world / underdeveloped world or North / South. Centre / Periphery allow description of the opposition of places, but mostly offer an explanatory model of this differentiation: periphery is subordinate / conditional because the center is dominant - and vice versa. Thinking in terms of center (s) and periphery (s) allows a reflection on the interaction between the scene of the World: reciprocal dependencies where inequalities are the rule, but that does not work one way. In order for the couple to have meaning, it must exist relations between the two types of places, so flows (of people, goods, capital, information, decision...) and that these relationships are asymmetrical (unbalanced balance of flows, hierarchy of power relations...).

The center is central precisely because it benefits from this inequality and, reciprocally, or periphery (s) are characterized (s) by a deficit which maintains their dominated position. The described system is self-regulated: the center reproduces conditions for its centrality and vice versa for the periphery. Speaking of dominated periphery is so redundant. However, precisely because it is based on a logic of exchange (uneven), the system is dynamic.

1. THE CENTRE This is where things happen: This definition applies to all scales. We talk about development center, home or Northern Region, we define the center around several criteria: a certain population mass, significant production capacity, a high standard of living and seniority development relative to neighboring territorial subsets. The center also requires a capacity for innovation and ability to attract and promote the concentration of activities. Finally, the center is associated with the notion of power (headquarters) So the center is “the place where one gives orders.”

2. THE PERIPHERY. It is defined negatively to the center and is characterized by a lower standard of living, less elaborate productions and especially by weakening and loss of tissue from the center. Net migration and long-term financial balances reveal inverse process of the home area, and contribute to the gap center / periphery, one of the main handicaps is the lack of autonomy in decision-making matters.

However, we distinguish different categories of peripheries, depending on the nature of relations with the Centre: If the Centre becomes congested, crowded with too many activities, then pours into the Periphery (which may be geographically close or more distant) lower quality activities, some flows (investments) are reversed. It comes out an *integrated or attached outskirts*. The Centre needs labor-intensive and cheap or natural resources in certain peripheries: the center economic actors will enhance them. Thus is born an *exploited periphery*. The Centre finds no or very little interest in some peripheral areas, which are then abandoned (except food aid and loans): they are *neglected peripheries*. Finally, there are sparsely populated areas, where the constraints are many, they are *the blind spots* where sometimes locate pioneer fronts.

Worldwide:

Centre = Australia and New Zealand + the Triad is to say:

- North America (USA, Canada);
- Western Europe;
- Japan.

Why? The HDI is strong, the GDP, too, is where we find the decision-making centers.

The rest of the world is the peripheries that can differentiate:

- Integrated periphery: for example, the Pacific coast of China. She sees it converge investment flows from around the world and especially of the Triad. If this space has experienced economic growth of 10% per year (which will no doubt tomorrow, one of the central components), it is the industrial activities with low added value, such as textiles, which make up the bulk of these investments.
- Exploited periphery: for example, the oil producing countries of the Persian Gulf where the center procures oil.
- Periphery neglected: for example, the least developed countries in Africa. These countries are poorly integrated into the global economy, have a very low HDI, etc....
- Blindside: for example Antarctica where the cold is a major obstacle to the development of this space.

To a certain scale, a space may be considered a center, while at a scale with a wider space, this space becomes a periphery. Conversely, a wide periphery of a State may be in the center in the world.

Example: the space center in China's Pacific coast. It concentrates most of the population, the bulk of economic activity, decision-making centers are located there (e.g. the capital Beijing). At the scale of the Pacific coast, however, China's Pacific coast is a periphery because: the average standard of living is lower than Japan (center of this space); industrial activities that are installed are primarily enforcement activities (textile, manufacturing sports shoes); lower capacity for innovation (the "designers" are in Europe, the USA and Japan).

Another example: at the scale of the United States, the Midwest is a periphery because it is a farming area. Or: it's raw products; they are sent to the coast to be exported there (the downtown area where

centre-spaces are located); prices of most of these commodities are set at the Chicago Bourse (Stock Exchange) where are the “principals” (hence a lack of decision-making authority in the Midwest). Yet globally (where we will neglect this national characteristic), the Midwest will be included in the inner spaces as part of the US.

By the polarization it generates, the Center is a powerful driver of territorial integration. However, the asymmetry of the exchanges is based on this integration. With lower levels of life, the periphery, often isolated and insulated, sends massive migration flows towards the center. It is dependent, subordinate, and always comes in negative relative to the center. Its main weakness is the lack of autonomy in decision-making matters. Like the infernal couples, center and periphery are inseparable. They only make sense in the dialectic relationship between them.

A dual representation of the world. Fernand Braudel identifies centralities World economies that have followed since the Middle Ages around a major intersection or a political capital such as Venice, Antwerp, Genoa, Amsterdam and London. By an extraordinary ability to accumulate wealth, these cities have, in turn, accounted for the main center position and organized for their benefit the entire global space. Today, although everyone agrees to think that there is no center of the uniqueness and the need to identify major polarizations plural in order not to sink into a too simplistic schematic, it is clear that the United States - or more precisely their Northeast facade - are often described as the center of the world. The main center with the two secondary centers that make up the European Union and Japan then define the Triad, seen as the potential economic, financial, political and cultural world.

Too media image of the “blue banana” wide main road between the southern UK in Northern Italy, and the most recent figure of the Pentagon have had the effect of freezing the organization of the European territory in a dualisation too simplistic. The center-periphery concept is a great representation of the world based on territorial continuity where distance and proximity are perceived as very structuring factors. Asking the distance as spatial organization principle, the concept expresses the idea of a progressive decrease in the concentration gradient, power, power and wealth from the center to the periphery. The position of a country relative to that center becomes serious consequences. But this representation of the global space ordered in a regular hierarchy “zones territories” from the center is increasingly questioned. The global system is a matter of networks. The center-periphery model is based on an economic and social macro reading the global space. Now it has become difficult to read even incoherent globalization as a great opposition between state geographic blocs, regional or meso-regional. The periphery is present in the center: the overall metropolitan areas include, for example, socio-spatial groups in situations of exclusion and marginalization. And international level centralities structure the peripheral areas today. The increasing interweaving of centralities situations and peripheral positions makes today the concept of center-periphery operational or less obsolete. However, the need to go beyond this concept does not mean a reduction or deletion of inequalities on the surface of the globe. Quite the contrary.

But can we talk of center and periphery in the case of the EU? Where is the center? Or, located in the part considered the center? This does not mean that it is an organization rambling... Like all good things are three, one can rightly speak of three EU-motor centers: Berlin - London - Paris. Despite the so-called three European capitals: Strasbourg - Brussels - Luxembourg, who do what they can, except that key decision makers reside in the three previously mentioned cities. It is from there, Great Trinity that leave the decisions to be review and analysis by the three capitals forming, like it or not, the little trinity... (Note which side upper bend...). Would it be more of a three-headed hydra? Or a multi-Céphale dragon? And state some ancient monster, doomed to scare? Who then? In the United States,

half as much, no, not at all... So, Russia? Too bad, this is not the case, oops... (and yet, it stinks, alas). Or in BRIC? It pays no bricks...

For an innocent game of words (without any idea behind the head...) Could periphery of both derive, say (ask...) to perish-Ferit? Pays, laughs, does/makes, laughs! Well who laughs last laughs? Is it valid in this scenario? Airhead, I said to myself, disapprovingly... But no, and freedom of thought? Better to think that heal his wounds, is not it? And Pheri (e) he has some connection with holiday, holiday, given the large number of unemployed people who live there? Or plague / phere? Is that why we avoid like the plague the periphery in preferring the center? And would therefore be off-center residents of the suburbs? Of-center bent to crazy/nuts it is only one step... Is not it? The center, the place where we will enter all of Paris say, in the Beau Monde... and the periphery would it be the Ugly World, or so the Third World? What is in the end... without necessarily wanting to play games... Finally. Such counterfeit verb could refer to introduce, or rather to insinuate? Finally... Or sneak, slip... Too pejorative, is not it?

And if it were accepted that fall could mean down to the grave, why do we accept that periphery might relate, as we said above, a kind word perish-struck, id is the place where you perishes (slowly but surely) without firing a shot! Or center he refers to “no trrr...” landless id is attached to the soles of shoes, or else no yokel? The center is this something that has nothing to do with the land in the country, so this is the image, the emblem of the city or residential area where there are only nobles and elected... In other words, it is the paradise of the rich and comp.? But Cent TR could mean anything? TR refers to transportation, to Summary in Turkish, in Test Report to Technology Review No... would be better: without (top) Turkish without Summary tables without (means of) transport to avoid pollution, is -this not? And then the car would turn around, is not it, because the center... that focuses more and more...

Too much focus to remain the center, the center may turn into points on the periphery... A perspective center easily transformed into the center of rotation, to give you vertigo (which is true God while worm as a rod...) The center of molting seasons in the center of the darkness, a center of attraction can turn into a center of pressure... But the Centre may lose its center of gravity, and the periphery is not in the center (does not feel at ease...). A vital center derives from a nerve center (?), A motor center may fail or seize... The business center is not always the center of civilization... and a small neighborhood center will never become Centre... not even downtown... And the outskirts will never be linked to a common center!

“Western Europe, the center of our concerns, “said JR Bloch in *Fate of the Century* in 1931... From the center of what policy we are the object? Finally... And to think that the geometric definition of the center said that it is “the inner point equidistant from all points of a circumference or the surface of a sphere.” Would we be so distant from each other...? Never do we find each other? Will not anyone ever be consistent nor accepted?

And the periphery, about “all the outlying neighborhoods of a city center and located on either side of its limitations (suburban suburb).” It's funny what you can get the feeling of being on the periphery of Europe, the rest of us... Yikes!

While it is true that every point is at the origin of a center, that any point can become a center, it is nonetheless true that every center can become point drop in its center... What a setting in abyss... This should leave us thoughtful is that said point can be strategically vulnerable but also a point of support but also a hot spot, a strength but also a sensitive point, a point of attack or point rallying, a starting-off point to point but also a landmark but a point of no return as an arrival point or hotspot, an

attachment point or return point, a black point or terminus point a drop point or impact point, a zero point or dead... A material point or point-event, a fixed point or a neutral, an extreme point or an end point...

But we can also talk about melting point, boiling, freezing, saturation, many points more or less critical... obscure points or sensitive issues... The only nothingness has no center, and there, points are lost as the centers...

But we have enough chatted about this and that... Let us come to facts, a good time! What good so much theory if the practice is lacking? Let us rather see if the navel center may affect the marginalization / marginality on the periphery... Geopolitics loses sight almost two fundamental laws governing the mutual relations between Great and Small, Strong and Weak, Rich and Poor: the law of compensation or balance, and the law of attraction.

The first says that every point A will in turn B, C, D etc.... to become a point Z, then everything starts again because the long ascending and descending curves found all these points and evolutionary spiral is never linear, thankfully... Point Z will grind the mill point A, as they say, and vice versa... You have to go through all the stages and steps, finally, it must pass through there, it is inevitable or natural-vitable, if is preferred...

The second law is that every little attract and become great, to the chagrin of the major, it is the same for the weak that attract (the beautiful satire!...) to become very strong, to the disadvantage of the strong... that do not attract them at all (why?) and that's what makes their misfortune...

There is indeed a third law, which says that everything has an end, sooner or later, even the large financial and military empires... Even the weather returns to zero, where the day will O seconds... All cyclically returns to its point start, and there, there is neither large nor small, neither strong nor weak; this cyclically driven past and future...

Science affirms lately that day has no longer (since 1986) but 16 hours (depending on Schumann and Hartmann radiation). If space folds and compresses, time thins and shrinks, how the large empires want to resist indefinitely in time and space? The United States hopes in vain to drag down here, they can at most become embedded... in the earth's crust. Like other empires that merely limit for the time being to fart higher than their ass: Russian and Chinese. What begins, must finally end...

One thing is clear: the rich aspire to become even richer, which means, inevitably, that the poor get poorer... What is seen with the naked eye, is that the more States unite in Unions of states, the more dissension, the more the poor envy the rich and will be angry against them, which may in the long run, cause movements of revolts, which will be called civil wars, because they all ablaze EU for example...

As for Romania, this country is not a periphery of the Europe, I think it keeps the middle way, being on the middle of the roads... But our ancestors, the Daces, had an enormous empire for that period of time, and now, we are a little country... That is the destiny of all the empires! The Centre has to become a Point, the Periphery to become a Margin... Sometimes, the Centre becomes a Periphery and the Points form a Margin... History repeats today and will continuously repeat... That's the lesson of Life!

As a conclusion: The center / periphery model is a robust heuristic capability, provided they do not trivialize to excess. It is appropriate to reserve the use in the formalization of any system based on unequal relations and not to use it as a simple description of spatial gradient or differentiation. The idea of center, as in geometry, evokes first a privileged position. The structure center - periphery created by a combination of the two preceding criteria is source of inequalities, asymmetries,

polarization and domination. Just look at the world map! Leave things as is! As they are! They will change of course! In the good sense of the word...! And in the good direction...

## **References**

Brunet, R. & Dollfus, O. (1990). *Mondes nouveaux, Géographie Universelle/ New worlds, Universal Geography*. Paris: Hachette/Reclus.

Cattan, N. & Saint-Julien, Th., (1999). Modèles d'intégration spatiale et réseau des villes en Europe occidentale/ Spatial models of integration and network of cities in Western Europe. *L'espace géographique/The geographical area*, no 1, pp. 1-10. Grataloup C.

Lévy, J. (2003). *Centre/périphérie/Center/periphery*. In GEMDEV, *Mondialisation. Les mots et les choses/Globalization. The Order of Things*. Paris: Karthala.

Reynaud, A. (1981). *Société, espace et justice: inégalités régionales et justice sociospatiale/ Society, space and Justice: Regional inequality and social area justice*. Paris: PUF.

\*\*\**Centre/périphérie/Center/periphery*. In Lévy J., Lussault M. (dir.) *Dictionnaire de la Géographie/Dictionary of Geography*. Paris: Belin.