

Management and development of urban regions and its influence on consolidated urban areas

The development of the transport infrastructures in Spain and the influence of the Metropolitan Area of Madrid on the surrounding cities with the high speed train transport

The development of the transport infrastructures in Spain, is changing the social and urban morphology of some cities and, consequently, we need to reconsider how we approach their analysis.

The high speed train is a new transport option in Spain. From 1992 when the high speed train was inaugurated between Madrid and Seville, this type of development has been increasing every year.

At the moment the latest connection is between Madrid and Barcelona, with a very important stop in Zaragoza. The Spanish Administration has also been working on the route from Madrid to Valladolid and, finally, it has been study other different routes. Some of them may be developed in the next few years, for example, Madrid to Valencia and Madrid to Toledo.

Today, we will analyse the specific impact on the urban nuclei within the development of the metropolitan area of Madrid and, more precisely, the consequences the cities with high speed train transport within a short distance of Madrid. In these cities have experienced a very positive transformation and their development has been increasing, principally in housing investment.

While the new development is going to have a significant quantitative impact on the demography, economy and social fabric, we will focus on its qualitative elements, especially if the opportunities granted by new technologies are properly used.

In this paper I will look at two different questions. Firstly, how these cities have been absorbed by Madrid and, secondly, how in the future they could actively take of advantage of new opportunities offered by the high speed train.

The cities around Madrid

With Madrid as a reference, we can study the influence of this kind of transport on cities with a population of around 100,000 inhabitants, such as Ciudad Real, Guadalajara, Toledo and Segovia. In some cases this transport has become a reality and in other places, a new development is planned and new investors are showing great interest.

We can also superimpose two different maps. One of them could be an isocron map showing the transport time and another one could be a geographical map with the distance in kilometres between the different cities and Madrid. For example, thirty minutes and one hundred kilometres or sixty minutes and two hundred kilometres.

This analysis has two different points because we can compare different cities and different options. Historical cities have more problems of integration with new infrastructures than more modern cities. On the one hand I will examine the cities with and without the high speed train. On the other hand I will look at possible future development in the historical cities.

The historical cities of Toledo and Segovia do not currently have high speed train transport. Both of them are world heritage cities and are close to Madrid, which gives rise to problems which differ from those of others types of nuclei, such as the non-historical cities of Ciudad Real and Guadalajara, both with high speed train transport.

Firstly, I will talk about the present situation and the development of the cities of Ciudad Real and Guadalajara which are in Castilla la Mancha, to the south and to the east of the city of Madrid respectively

The city of Ciudad Real, with a population of 70,000 inhabitants is two hundred kilometres from Madrid and at a time distance to Madrid of one hour. High speed train transport came here in 1992.

At the present moment, the city is increasing its development in an active way and a considerable number of people are moving to the city to live, while working in Madrid.

In 1990, before the arrival of high speed train transport Ciudad Real had a population of 65,000 inhabitants. Now, ten years after the development of the high speed train it has a population of 80,000 (an increase of around 20%).

At the same time, the city of Segovia with similar characteristics and without high speed train transport had a population of 55,000 inhabitants in 1990 and currently has a population of 60,000 (an increase of around 8%).

The city of Guadalajara, with a population of 170,000 inhabitants is very near Madrid, at a distance of fifty kilometres. High speed train transport came here in 2003.

At the present moment, Guadalajara is a dormitory city around Madrid and in recent years an important number of people has moved to the city, increasing its population and its development in an active way.

In the foreseeable future, this positive action could lead to further development, and new opportunities to become less dependent on Madrid.

Secondly, I will talk about the present and the future situation and development of the historical cities of Segovia (in Castilla y León, to the north of Madrid) and Toledo (in Castilla la Mancha, to the west of Madrid), both of them heritage of the world. Whose growth is currently stagnated and could experience an important development.

This development will probably be more difficult than that carried out in the other cities because we must integrate the historical city into the new global development.

The historical city of Toledo is fifty kilometres from Madrid. It is the capital of the regional government area of Castilla la Mancha and it is a University City.

At the present moment, Toledo is increasing its population and this development is positive because the Administration is working actually with real estate investors to facilitate house building.

For example, Toledo has a management office that helps the citizens with investment works and offers facilities in terms of time and cost to help new development opportunities.

Toledo has also encouraged development that integrates the historical city into the global development.

In the future, current positive action could result in new development and new possibilities that will be integrated into the city as a real alternative to the development of Madrid.

The historical city of Segovia, with 50,000 inhabitants is one hundred kilometres from Madrid. High speed train transport will probably come here in 2006.

Presently, the city of Segovia has been absorbed by the development of Madrid in a passive way.

In the future, if we make a projection study of high speed train transport in the city of Segovia and if we use the experience of Ciudad Real as a reference, we can predict that in the next five years Segovia will probably have a population of at least 80,000 inhabitants.

We can probably make a more optimistic prediction because Segovia is nearer to Madrid than Ciudad Real and we can conclude that the population increase will be more important.

Finally, before making a rational prediction it is very important to study the structural development and its influence on housing prices. If we compare housing prices in Segovia and Ciudad Real we can predict that future housing prices in Segovia need to be stabilised. If we wish to avoid the problem of people leaving Segovia to buy properties in less expensive areas.

In Toledo, new alternatives have been created for the towns development and there is a Management Office that facilitates this. In Segovia the present situation merges very different elements together resulting in very specific features.

In Segovia until now there has been tremendous passivity in the public sector as regards the global aspect. The city has been functioning like a "theme park" at the service of Madrid, particularly due to the wealth of its historical heritage.

In both cases we can regard the analysis of the external influences such as the proximity to Madrid and the possibility of receiving tourists. The following should be taken into account:

- Positive Consequences are the creation of wealth and influence and an increase in the quality of human resources due to education and training offered by the city. There is also the possibility of the generation of more work due to growth.
- Negative consequences, as regards a decrease in quality of life, which includes the difficulties of rush hours and the busy days, and the consequences deriving from the rise in the prices of goods, such as housing, and services which are affected by the former.

Current passive growth may be alleviated by managing planned development with an adequate analysis of the environment, which will save this cities from becoming satellite cities during the week and will consolidate the idea of a theme /heritage park on weekends. In Segovia the future development of approximately 8,000 dwelling units, with a population of 50,000 people and over two million square meters has come about through private initiative and with the consensus of the administration and the team which drafted the new general plan.

This housing development is very complex. Global features (ring road, high-speed train, motorway, new shopping centres, etc) must co-exist with very marked local factors (landscape, waterways, etc). It is an example of sustainable development with its low population density and environmental protection.

At the same time it co-ordinates and consolidates an important urban area that is quite isolated from the main town but does not have a large degree of operational autonomy

The Planning that is mentioned has been undertaken by public and private entities with the approval of public authorities. The proposal timeline goes from '89 to date and according to the plan the works should start soon.

Conclusions

Most European cities were conceived in the past, and have suffered from the new possibilities rather than benefited from them. Within the context of the new transport infrastructures, at the present time suitable conditions are being created to facilitate changes in very important aspects of our lives.

Both the Public Administration and private enterprise find it extremely difficult to take decisions in this regard.

This leads us to establish an integral view of urban development, in which leadership, and the will and consensus of the citizens are fundamental to fixing objectives for development both collectively and individually.

In a more particular option, in relation with the present work, we can consider that in Spain the high speed train is a good option for transport. In particular between Madrid and the cities around it. However, we should take some points into considerations:

Firstly, we must also combine the coordination the system of local infrastructures with regional transport and we should combine flexibility and approaches. This is necessary if the possibilities arising from this new development are not to be wasted. We can identify two levels of difficulty.

One of them is the difficulty co-ordinating three different regional governments, with their own problems and expectations. This entails substantial difficulties as regards the spatial intersections and the processing involved.

Another one is the difficulty of integrating very different areas. On the one hand an area with very little heritage but certain potential socially and open to new alternatives, on the other hand several historical areas with less social potential but significant heritage. In each area of study the development has been different.

Secondly, as there are not highly developed industries in some cities (non are there conditions for such industry), new options must be created for urban development as well as for new sources of employment. The threat of being absorbed by development must be turned into an opportunity.

Moreover long-term decisions may negatively affect some current interests; thus the tendency to seek short-term results prevails. We could combine a mixed strategy, combining

the short-term and the long-term, with a concentration in the management of the options to be developed in the urban environment.

Although it is not easy to choose the most appropriate developments, the present time may be crucial when planning the future of our cities. Action must be taken in the light of the general approach while taking the following questions into account:

The area near the influence of high speed train transport has a very important influence on the Investment Market and must be developed in a global way. Strategic planning would have to be carried out while taking into account the role of the public sector with regard to the agents involved and their role in the real estate risk deriving from the uncertainty of the administration and production of the land which currently entails a great deal of risk.

Therefore the train option has advantages but this kind of transport needs a global strategy and a well-conceived structure. When the train arrives you need a communication support from the station to your final destination.

Creative urban policies are of great importance. At management level, these entail an increase in the importance of companies and local governments, which have the capacity to increase competitiveness, infrastructure, technology, etc.

In the end you have to travel to a bigger city for work and so, the transport facility has a negative effect and smaller cities can be transformed into a dormitory cities, where people only sleep. In the near future, how this urban area uses the opportunities offered by new technologies is important, and therefore, must shift toward a new idea of a city.