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# HIGH-SPEED RAIL STATIONS AS PLACES TO WORK: THE CASE STUDY OF NAPLES

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**Abstract:** Today, rail stations tend to be considered as nodes but also as places within an area. In this respect, different types of shops and services can be present in rail stations. High Speed Rail services tend to increase the importance of the train station as a place. Our aim is to show that in some cases, some firms extend the role of the station as a place by using high speed train stations to provide temporary offices inside them. Thus the role of the station as a place is transformed in a place to work for mobile workers, a kind of third-place. This is the case of Regus, which is the world's leading provider of flexible workspaces all over the world, supporting over 1 million customers everyday.

The objective of this contribution is to identify the characteristics of the clients of the temporary Regus offices in the Naples HSR station and the role of HSR in this context. For this purpose, a recent survey has been employed, interviewing clients using Regus offices. Data concerning the clients have been collected, such as socio-economic characteristics, transport mode chosen to reach Naples and the Regus services used.

**Keywords:** High Speed Rail, temporary offices, mobile workers, Naples HSR station.

## 1. Introduction

According to Bertolini and Spit (1998) stations are no more considered as just nodes but as places within an area "*all the built and open spaces, together with the activities they host, contained within the perimeter designed by a walkable radius centred on the railway station building, as amended to take account of case-specific physical-psychological, functional-historical and development features*". The result of this statement is the redesign of actual national-to-regional-to-local transport nodes to also function as local pedestrian nodes. In general, this is not an easy task (Cascetta and Pagliara, 2008). HSR systems increase the recognition of the station as a place (De Jong, 2009; Mannone, 1997) and a "station system" based on the interaction between several activities and entities that providing access (Bourdin, 2011). Indeed central stations are renewed on the basis of the existing ones and in some cases new ones are built. Around the stations in an urban environment, business park or business centres have been built, therefore renewing the surrounding district. The HSR service arrival induces urban renewal around the station. Public actors implement public policies to renew the station district. Therefore these actors give a positive message to the promoters concerning the future use of this district. Promoters develop a new business real-estate supply, around train station itself. Indeed if the new real-estate supply depends on promoters strategies, they also depend on public strategies (see also Mérenne-Schoumaker, 2003). It was the case in France (Bazin et al., 2009, Delaplace et al., 2014), but also in other countries (cf. Yin and al., 2014, for a review). These strategies also encounter those of private actors in partnership with rail managers in the station itself. In some cases, HSR services give birth to temporary offices inside the station, reinforcing the role of station as a place and therefore as a place to work. This paper is organised as follows. In section 2 the question of temporary offices inside and around HSR stations will be explained. The case study of the Regus HSR station in Naples will be dealt with in section 3. Section 4 reports some concluding remarks.

## 2. Temporary offices inside and around HSR stations

The development of temporary offices inside the rail stations is fostered, changing completely their image. Providers of these services are companies, like Regus, Buroclub, Multiburo, but also smaller ones like the RPAD in Reims, in France. These temporary offices meet the growing demand of mobile-workers always looking for places to work without the costs of a full-time office.

The British entrepreneur Mark Dixon was inspired to start Regus during a business trip to Brussels, where he noticed how many businessmen were pushed to work in hotels, bars, etc. given to the lack of a more professional place. In 1989, he launched Regus with a single business centre in Brussels. Met with strong demand, Dixon quickly developed a global network of fully equipped, furnished workplaces for businessmen. Very recently, some of the types of offices have been inaugurated inside the stations.

In Italy, HSR nodes have become centres for services and urban renewal. The HS stations in the major metropolitan nodes of Turin, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Rome and Naples have been renewed or built by well-known architects. The first new HS station completed was Rome Tiburtina, inaugurated on 28 November 2011. Stations are considered as protagonists of significant urban redevelopment operations and the expression of a new architectural language, and

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conceived as spaces not only dedicated to railway activities, but also meeting and communication places. The restyling of Rome Termini and more recently of Milan Central stations are pilot projects of the new way of interpreting stations as city squares (Delaplace et al., 2014). The renewal of Milan Central, centre of urban mobility and a real gateway to the city, also for future visitors to Expo 2015, marks a milestone in the expansion of regional and metropolitan transport and exploits the role of the station as a junction for the new HS/HC lines. In Naples, the new HS station, designed by Zaha Hadid, built in the municipality of Afragola, will be integrated with the major roads and regional railway lines. The four-level building will take up 20.000 m<sup>2</sup> and Afragola will be a strategic station for domestic and international traffic and it will be a fundamental junction point for the Naples – Bari line (Ferrovie dello Stato, 2012).

In France, central stations have been also renewed and in some cases new ones have been built outside the city centre. For example, on the south-east axis, for the stations that only benefit from a couple of daily stops, the renewal has been minimal, whereas in some bigger cities, with very good services, the central station has been completely renewed (Dijon, Chambéry) or a new station has been built (Lyon Part-Dieu) (Manonne, 1997). Concerning the South West Line, the new Novaxis business center has been built near the HSR station (Chevalier, 1997; Bazin et al., 2009; Facchinetti-Mannone, 2009; Facchinetti-Mannone and Bavoux, 2010). Concerning the North HS Line, a new TGV station and a business centre, EuraLille, has been conceived near the existing rail station (Menerault, 1997). More recently, in the case of the East European High-Speed Line, new stations have been built near the city (Champagne-Ardenne station) or outside (Meuse TGV, Lorraine TGV), and in bigger cities like Reims, Metz and Strasbourg, the central stations have been renewed to make them new places in the city.

The role of a HSR system in fostering the location of firms has been studied by several authors (Facchinetti-Mannone, 2009, Facchinetti-Mannone and Bavoux, 2010; Willigers et al., 2005).

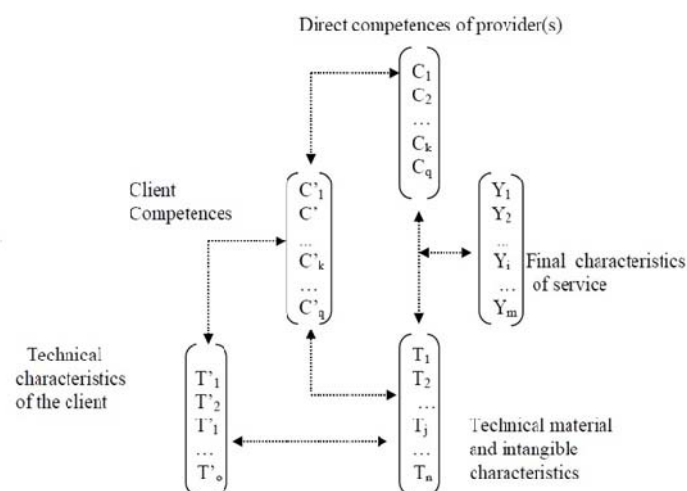
Bazin et al. (2009) have highlighted the new perspective that investors have given to a HSR service, trying to limit the risk of the investment. The image effect, in terms of dynamism and modernity, can foster the choice of locations not considered before.

As reported in the literature, land-use impacts brought by rail systems determine urban physical transformations such as land development or renewal interventions (Pagliara and Papa, 2011) and activity pattern changes, such as residents and jobs reallocation. Most of the studies present in the literature, concentrating on urban rail transit systems, have found some level of land use change, resulting from transit improvements and an activity clustering effect close to urban rail stations. The economic transformations related to HSR systems consist of microeconomic impacts, such as property and rent value changes for different land uses, and macroeconomic effects such as urban economic competition variation, potential development increase, etc. (Pagliara et al., 2011a; 2011b).

## 2.1 Temporary offices as service innovation

Temporary office spaces can be conceived as service innovations inside and around the station from the point of view of promoters (Aguiléra et al., 2013). These new work-spaces change completely the image of the station, turning it into a place to work. Stations become formal third places (Morizet, 2011; Felstead, 2012) or third spaces (Brown and O'Hara, 2003) for mobile workers.

Indeed using the analysis of Gallouj and Weinstein (1997), improved by De Vries (2006), a service can be represented by vectors of technical characteristics, services characteristics and competences of the client and of the provider(s) (see Fig. 1).



Sources: De Vries (2006)

**Figure 1. The innovation service representation**

Given this definition, renting an office can be analyzed as a service that can be defined by several characteristics. The technical characteristics for the office can be the surface, the equipment, etc.; for the building, they can be the location, the heating, etc. and for the neighborhood, they can be the architectural style, the centrality, etc. The final characteristics of the service related to the office are comfort, internet connection, etc. and of the building are security, comfort, etc. Accessibility to public transport, parking facilities, accessibility to shops and services can be considered depending on the neighborhood. The service is co-produced by a provider (i.e. the company selling the building or the provider itself) and the client, who uses the service, taking part at the definition of it.

Using Gallouj and Weinstein analysis of service innovation (Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997 p. 547-557) temporary office rental can be described as incremental innovations regarding to the service characteristics<sup>2</sup>, i.e. innovations which add one or several new service characteristics, improving the client utility. For example, this new service proposes flexibility, some technical and administrative supports (e.g. telephone, wifi, printing, secretariat services, etc.) which are chosen by the client. *"From the customer point of view, the service delivery can be considered as a form of externalization of a function of the company, fostering the implementation of innovations in work organization. Temporary office rental is indeed characterized by a high flexibility at different levels: service delivery, ease of the procedures, technical and administrative supports"* (Aguiléra et al., 2013).

But following Delaplace (2012) using relational service innovation (Berry and Dupuis, 2005, Djellal and Gallouj, 2002) applied to high speed rail services, temporary office rental can also be analyzed as a relational innovation, since it corresponds to the establishment of particular relations between clients, providers, public authorities, competitors, station managers and rail operators.

## 2.2 The development of temporary offices

In March 2007, Regus has signed a partnership with Thalys, according to which businessmen, moving between Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and Cologne and being members of Cybelys Gold program from Thalys, can have access to the 950 places of Regus in 70 countries all around the world. Regus clients can access to the Thalys Lounge located in the Brussels-Midi station. In France, in 2011, Gares & Connexions - the subsidiary of SNCF- has chosen Regus to develop projects of business centre in TGV stations to make waiting rooms connected working spaces (Aguiléra et al., 2013). Some test stations have been selected: Le Mans which has been inaugurated in 2013, Lille, Bordeaux in Saint Jean station, Nancy in the SNCF business centre. The objective is to *"develop a network of modern and innovating working spaces inside stations to meet the needs of mobile workers"* (CP Gares & Connexions - Regus) and to reduce waste of time (ESSEC, 2013).

In Italy, the development of flexible workplaces in train station emerges with the partnership between Trenitalia and Regus. Regus opened its offices in Italy in 1996. Milan Duomo was opened at that time. Milan Montenaполеone at Monte di Pietà was opened in 1998 as well as Rome Popolo, at Popolo Square, inside the prestigious building Valadier; following Milan North Park in 1999, Milan Velasca in 2000, Milan Brera in 2001 together with Rome Barberini and Rome EUR. In 2008 new offices were opened in the third Italian city, Turin, as well as their sixth centres in Milan, Carrobbio, a few steps away from the main square where the famous cathedral is placed. In September 2013 the Naples centre was opened inside the high speed rail station Garibaldi. Since Regus opened in Italy, centres occupancy has always been above 85% and the trend is still the same. In its centres there are co-working spaces where different companies can share their space. The services offered for mobility workers are business lounges, videoconferencing services, day office services and meeting rooms. Last year Regus was able to report the statistics of the typology of mobile workers, using their services in Italy. People involved in the chemical industries (13%), in finance (11%), in insurance (11%), in tobacco industries (10%) are the main clients (www.assotemporary.it).

In Italy, like in other parts of the world, the Regus Gold Card gives unlimited access to all the facilities of Regus, distributed in 550 cities of 95 countries. It offers business lounges with work areas, free internet access and catering services. Thanks to the partnership between Trenitalia, the Italian State railways company, and Regus, since 2012 holders of Gold and Platinum Cartafreccia can have access to the 11 FrecciaClubs of the main Italian stations (number expected to grow in the coming years), even in the nine Regus centers, all within easy access and in areas of great prestige. The agreement allows those, who frequently travel on Trenitalia High Speed trains "Frecciarossa" and "Frecciargento", to enjoy unlimited access to Regus business lounge, as members of the Businessworld program. The benefits of the program include internet access and complementary refreshments in its 1,200 business lounges. Members also receive the discount on the rental of meeting rooms, one-day offices and videoconferencing services. The business lounge areas are reserved and comfortable, located in the central districts of major cities, where it is possible to work at any time of the day. The products and services available include personal computers, wifi, internet, international newspapers, hot drinks, reception and secretarial services, meeting rooms, videoconferencing, international courier services, printing, photocopying and fax services.

Access to Regus business lounge, in Italy and in the world, is a plus because it extends prestigious incentives and benefits to the customers even after they have reached their destination, helping them in their business and in their

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<sup>2</sup> The authors distinguish 4 other types of innovations that are not relevant here: radical innovation, improvement innovation, recombination innovation and ad hoc innovation.

meetings (www.fsnews.it). According to Mark Dixon this new generation of business centres in rail station can be analysed as “*an extension of the Regus network to the mobility chain*”.

According to this analysis it is an incremental service innovation from the point of view of business real estate. This innovation allows to meet the growing demand of mobile workers. The location inside the station adds new characteristics to the office rent: flexibility and modularity of the rent, in many locations, connected to the HSR network. By locating flexible working places inside or around HSR stations, these promoters contribute to the creation of a specific model that associates third places and mobile workers.

Due to the development of business centres in the rail station with the supply of meeting rooms, the rail station itself gets new functionality: a working space for mobile workers and therefore a place.

Temporary offices rental allows also mobile professionals to make profits of the time spent in stations and/or to decrease the total travel time since they do not have to make additional trips from the station to meet the clients. The meeting can be organized inside the station or around it! This service is also an incremental innovation regarding to the labor organization, contributing to the optimisation of the waiting time spent between two trains. Indeed, it increases the utility of the mobile worker, since it contributes to increase his/her productivity (Klein and Claisse, 1997).

### 2.3 Who are mobile workers?

New information technologies, changing work force demographics, rising customer expectations, transnational companies, and cost pressures are forcing companies to reconsider ideas of what the workplace is. New strategies such as telecommuting, teleworking centers, non-territorial offices, and team space are creating the “virtual workplace”.

Two factors promote acceptance of teleworking or telecommuting: employee flexibility in work space, time, and productivity and employer profit margins and cost savings. Savings in time and effort mean money earned or saved on each side. Workers are drawn to the flexibility afforded by working at home or from mobile locations.

New technologies are making such flexibility increasingly possible. Groups of workers for whom travel represents an extensive part of their job descriptions may use internet for collaborative and community-building activities as well as for training, market review and product tracking (Dyszel, 1999).

These extended work options are appealing to many workers and are becoming more state of the art. Drawbacks appear to be the lack of one-on-one communication and team building that occurs through daily contact with co-workers.

A mobile workforce appeals to employers as it can save money typically spent on office space, computer equipment, travel time and conflict resolution.

The new mobile work arrangements creating the virtual workplace - telecommuting, telework centers - are changing the way companies and workers do business with each other and with their respective clients (Corso et al., 2006; Vilhelmson and Thulin, 2001). Key elements to consider in these arrangements are flexibility in work time, space, and performance; cost-effective production of goods and services; worker satisfaction and learning through social interactions with others, and strategies for facilitating brainstorming, team work, problem-solving and collaboration. The main categories involved are executives; people involved in sales as well as many company directors (Aguilera and Proulhac, 2012; Haynes, 2010).

The reasons behind the increasing demand for mobility can be found in the globalisation of companies, the expansion of multi-facility companies, the introduction of multi-site team working, the growing reliance on outsourcing and partnerships with other companies. These trends have effectively contributed to an overall increase in the need for companies to communicate with geographically remote interlocutors (customers, suppliers, etc.) (Aguilera, 2008; 2014).

A survey carried out in France (Boboc, 2007) reports that 13% of French workers are mobile and 21% are “partially” mobile (regular workplace + irregular workplace= 15% and home + regular workplace + irregular workplace= 6%) (Delaplace and al. 2014). In Italy, the phone survey by Corso et al. (2006) reports that 46% of the firms have mobile workers, representing, in general, less than 5% of the workforce. Data have provided the need of new and temporary workplaces, named third places (Felstead, 2012; Moriset, 2011). They are hybrid spaces for private and professional practices, such as internet cafes, hotels, airports, rail stations, etc. However they can also be spaces dedicated to temporary occupation by professionals: tele-centres, co-working spaces and temporary offices for rent (e.g. an hour, a day, etc.), offering given services (e.g. meeting rooms, printers, etc.).

New workspaces, and especially temporary offices for rent, are meant firstly for workers, trying to decrease commuting distances, without working at home. Secondly they are meant for mobile professionals, trying to increase the productivity of business travel by working in good conditions, while waiting for an appointment or a train, a plane, etc. and/or by reducing overall distance travelled by organizing meetings in or near airports and rail stations, i.e. in a highly accessible (and often central in the case of rail stations) location.

The case study of Naples, described in the following section, will give some information concerning the occupation of temporary office space.

### 3. The case study of the Regus office inside the HSR station of Naples

The HSR station of Naples, in Garibaldi square, hosts the office of the worldwide company Regus. The inauguration of the temporary office space was in September 2013. The Regus business centre in Naples occupies the sixth floor of a 16-storey modernized building located directly inside the Naples Central station railway station. The workspaces offer

clear views of the square and the area's historic buildings. The business centre is strategically located in the heart of the city's most important business and cultural centre, close to the financial district (see Fig. 2) (Pagliara, 2014).



Source: Pagliara (2014)

<http://www.regus.co.uk/locations/business-centre/naples-garibaldi>

**Figure 2. The Regus offices inside the HSR station in Naples**

On Regus website, it is quoted that around 137,000 people pass through the railway station every day and that Napoli Central is a big railway node with nearly 400 trains a day, linking to the entire national railways system. The website also quotes that the station is also a major public transport hub with the Garibaldi underground station, where two national railways tracks can be found, the Circumvesuviana local railway station, the metro line and the bus stop (website of Regus Naples)<sup>3</sup>.

A Revealed Preference survey was employed. The questionnaire, submitted to Regus clients renting offices in the HSR station of Naples, was made of 21 questions concerning the socioeconomic characteristics of the clients, the transport mode chosen and the services used.

This questionnaire was submitted to the clients for a period of ten month, from January 2014 to October 2014. The total number of questionnaires collected was 172. Tables 1, 2 and 3 report some results.

In Table 1 the socioeconomic characteristics of the clients are highlighted. From these it is possible to deduce that the majority of the clients are from Naples and/or Province (82%); there is a majority of men in the range of age between twenty-five and thirty-five years old; most of the customers are freelance or managers with a monthly income between 500-1500€

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.regus.co.uk/locations/business-centre/naples-garibaldi>

City	%
Naples and Province	82
Other Italian cities	18
Gender	
Male	63
Female	37
Age	
25-35	64
35-50	21
>50	15
Level of Education	
High-School	57
University	43
Professional Status	
Freelance	44
Manager/Employee	46
Retired	4
Student	7
Monthly income	
500-1500	54
1500-2500	21
2500-3500	10
3500-4500	3
>4500	12

**Table 1. Socioeconomic characteristics of the clients**

Consequently, temporary offices are not principally used in relation with HSR services. Moreover and very surprising, the monthly income is quite low.

In Table 2 the data about the type of services, chosen by Regus customers, are reported. Offices are chosen by 63% of the clients; secretary and internet (e.g., wifi connection) are the most required services. The service has been mainly paid by the client himself/herself (79%). Consequently, this kind of offices is not a choice of the firm.

Type of Room	%
Meeting Room	29
Office	63
Both	8
Type of Service	
Printer	16
Internet	34
Secretary	29
Phone	21
Who pays for the service?	
Myself	79
My company	21

**Table 2. Regus's service type**

In Table 3 the percentages of the transport modes chosen by clients to reach the Regus offices in Garibaldi square are reported. 16% of them has chosen HSR. The choice has been motivated by the system being highly accessible and convenient thanks to the reduction of travel time it provides. Obviously this mode has not been chosen by those living in the city of Naples, 45%, and by those who have found it expensive (21%).

Transport Mode	%
Car	32
Bus	11
Intercity Train/Metro	36
Plane	4
HS: NTV	3
Trenitalia	13
Ferry	1
<b>Motivation for choosing HSR</b>	
Accessibility	27
Reduced travel time	39
Safety	6
Comfort	15
Frequency of Service	12
<b>Motivation for not choosing HSR</b>	
Living in Naples	45
Travel costs	21
Too many transfers	11
Inconvenient	24
Travel time	-

**Table 3. Transport mode chosen by clients**

In Table 4 the motivations of the choice of the Regus clients are reported. 37% of the total has chosen the Regus office because it is located inside the HSR station. From the data, it is possible to understand that around 40% of the clients are positively affected by the presence of the Regus office, being inside the station. But as highlighted before, this station is also the classical rail station and is linked to the metro.

	%
Regus offices were chosen because they were inside the HSR station in Naples	37
HSR was chosen because the Regus office services were cheaper	3
HSR was chosen because of the provided services	12
Regus offices were chosen because of the provided services	49

**Table 4. Reasons for choosing HSR and Regus offices**

Together with this information, the percentage of HSR users renting Regus offices, whose hometown is outside Naples and province is shown together with the monthly income of the clients. It has been also possible to know the number of Regus clients spending more than a night in the city of Naples (see Table 5).



Income of HSR clients	%
500-1500	44
1500-2500	33
2500-3500	15
3500-4500	0
No Income : Students	7
Time spent in Naples	
2 Nights	50
6-12 Hours	18
Other : Departing from Naples	32

**Table 5. Income and time spent in Naples by clients choosing HSR**

#### 4. Conclusions and further perspectives

From the Revealed Preference survey, it results that 40% of the clients have chosen temporary offices because of their location being inside the HSR station, indeed being also a classical rail station, offering metro lines. It has also been possible to show how these services have allowed workers with low monthly income to use the service inside the station. In this case, temporary offices in rail station are conceived for local workers and not only for mobile workers choosing HSR.

HSR stations are now conceived as “places”, according to the Bertolini and Spit’s theory but more as formal third places. The revolution brought by Regus and other companies deserves attention. Indeed it is something that in the past would have never occurred. Temporary offices for mobile workers, placed inside stations, can modify the worker trip behavior, changing the trip itself (Delaplace, 2014).

Further perspectives will consider the collection of other interviews, increasing the accuracy of the results obtained. The same analysis can be extended to the other Regus offices in Italy, such as in Milan, Rome and Turin, and eventually in other HSR stations in France. Naples indeed has represented a test site.

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