



# Conceptualizing City-Regions as Spaces & Places

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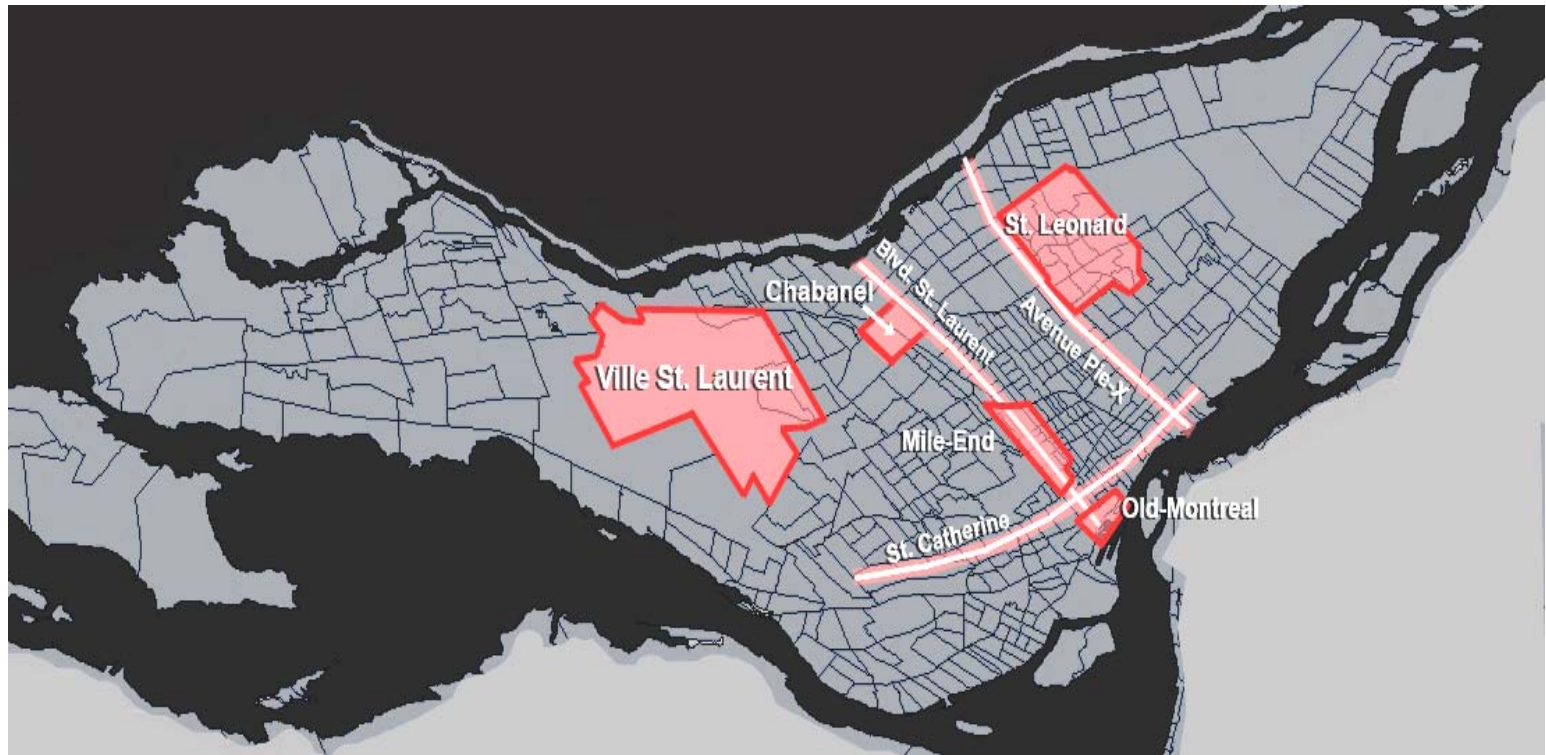
# Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

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- New spatial distribution of economic functions
- New theoretical conceptualizations
- New political imperatives

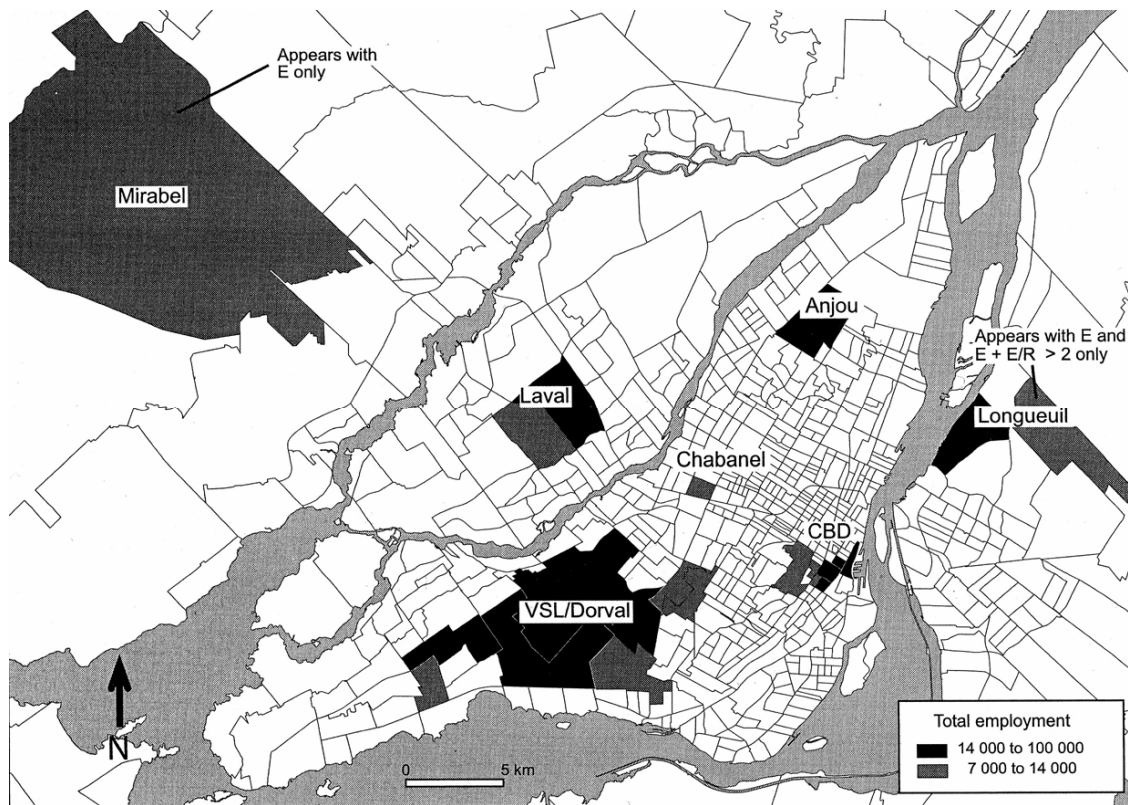
# Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

New spatial mosaic of apparel production in Montréal



# Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

## Montréal CMA, employment centres



Source: William J Coffey and Richard G. Shearmur (2001)



# Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

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- New theoretical conceptualizations

Early phase:

- Urban and hinterland previously compartmentalized, viewed as atomistic
- Growing recognition of functional interdependence between the two, particularly in context of regional inequalities

Recent phase:

- The functionality of city-regions for innovation, creativity and competition in a global economy (Scott 2001)



# Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

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- Political vacuum and the need for new sites of governance:
  - Demise of Keynesian, welfare state
  - Mobilization of resources for 'international competitiveness'
- Canadian context: local historical and geographic specificities as well as state structures remain significant (Donald 2005)



# Conceptualizations of City-Regions

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- Traditionally defined in economic rather than political terms
  - Commuter flows, business supply chains, shopping
- From territorial to relational perspectives
  - Amin (2004); Massey (2004)



# Merits of Relational Perspective

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- Problematizes the notion of 'city-region' as a fixed entity
- 'City-region' as a spatial formation constituted by multiple scales simultaneously:
  - National
  - International/Transnational





# Grounding a Relational Perspective

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- Qualified *Re-territorialization*
  - Territorially bound material resources and structures enable local and translocal relations to be forged
    - Transportation/telecommunication infrastructure
    - Social infrastructure
    - Land use and land rents
  - Politics of place matters: Morgan (2007); Jonas and Ward (2007)
    - Example: Reading the creativity script for property development – the significance of growth coalitions



# Implications for How We Study City-Regions

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- Marrying relational & territorial conceptions can shed light on the 'moments' when city-region dynamics are significant.
- Such moments can be drawn out through the following modes of analysis:
  - Comparative Analysis
  - Sector vs. Space? From *Either/Or* to *Dialectic*
  - Focus on Outcome as well as Process