Conceptualizing City-Regions as Spaces & Places

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Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

- 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

Why have city-regions come into ascendance?

- 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?

- 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

- 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

- 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

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
  - Example: Reading the creativity script for property development – the significance of growth coalitions
Implications for How We Study City-Regions

- 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