

The issue of city regions

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National planners are anticipating the growth of connected networks of metropolitan areas or 'megaregions' in America 2050 (DEWAR and EPSTEIN, 2007) and in Europe the reach of urban areas is conceived as spreading from city centres to the remote countryside across 'city-region' territories (RAVETZ, 2000). Urbanization, in this sense, is both an empirical and an imagined/discursive question. The focus of a recent article, published by Neuman / Hull is whether and how the 'city region' constitutes a new departure in urbanization, and if so what are the key elements of that difference.

The article gives a brief overview of the spatial definitions of city regions and empirically based theories of spatial form. Then the discussion marks out how the city region has been imagined in the recent past in the form of linkages, gradients, and cartographic and geographic representations. The third and fourth sections pose the question of whether the new constructs of mega-regions and city regions will help to establish new institutional structures at these scales. The possibilities and challenges and the consequences for institutional design are looked at before, finally, setting out an agenda for future research.

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