

This chapter sets out to illustrate why the polycentric city-region should be more attractive and sustainable compared with the monocentric when considering the city-region as both a living and working sphere. Two case studies, Tokyo and Randstad, are referred to. Tokyo in Japan is the largest example of monocentric urban development in the world, which has its origin as a single-core city, has greatly expanded and can now be considered on a regional scale. Randstad in the Netherlands is based on a polycentric urban system composed of several cities and has become a highly urbanized, well-connected region. This chapter redefines both Tokyo and Randstad as city-regions and discusses the idea that the growing interest in sustainability should lead both city-regions towards a similar spatial form despite their distinct differences.

This chapter is composed of five sections. Firstly, the reason why Tokyo and Randstad have been selected is discussed, taking into account the global developments. Secondly, the importance of discussing the city-region as a sustainable *spatial* form, rather than a sustainable *urban* form is examined. Thirdly, the spatial configuration of the two city-regions is analysed through maps of the same scale in which the spatial distribution of built-up and green areas is visualized. Fourthly, the ways in which Tokyo and Randstad are transforming their spatial structures in order to achieve environmental sustainability as well as economic and socio-cultural sustainability is explored. And finally, by way of a conclusion, three necessary conditions of sustainable city-regions are proposed.

Why Tokyo and Randstad?

Tokyo has often been compared with other large cities such as New York, London or Paris. Sassen (1991), for example, designated New York, London and Tokyo as the three global cities, defined by the considerable economic influence that they have on other cities and countries on a worldwide scale. However, Tokyo is physically too large for a direct comparison of its spatial form with that of other global cities in developed countries. Recognizing the key role of cities in an increasingly globalized world, Scott (2000) introduced the concept of 'global city-regions' with the aim of incorporating 'the notion of the wider metropolitan-region as an emerging political-economic unit with increasing autonomy of action on the national and world stages'. It is the objective of this chapter to redefine Tokyo as a global city-region.

The potential of global cities is basically judged by their population and their economic activities. It could be argued that the debate on global cities seems to be instinctively based on the premise that cities are formed by a single-central metropolitan core and its immediate surroundings. Sassen's three global cities all have a mononuclear structure in common. However, when the focus is put on the wider region, the synergic power caused by a number of overlapping conurbations can be taken into account (Scott, 2000). For example, the agglomeration of the Pearl River Delta in China is composed of different conurbations, each of them originally having a distinct degree of autonomy, after which they rapidly transformed into one whole independent economic unit. This is not a classic case of megalopolis as identified by Gottman in the 1960s, rather it represents a new spatial form of a wider metropolitan-region on a global scale (Castells, 1996). The region of Randstad is also a good example of polycentric development, encompassing well-established, economically comparable cities, which now form an important economic region in the Netherlands.

The competition between cities to increase economic activity with consequent expansion in urban populations, in many cases, has led to the formation of large urban agglomerations. However, when a city-region with a large territorial surface becomes more globally competitive than the traditional city form, two issues come to light. Firstly, the spatial distribution of populations and economic activities within the region must be explored and planned, and secondly, a balance must be struck between economic efficiency and an improved quality of life.

In this chapter, Tokyo has been selected as an example of a monocentric city-region and Randstad as an example of a polycentric city-region.

Spatial considerations of the 'city-region'

The debate on sustainable urban form has been limited to the scope of urban areas alone, to the exclusion of rural areas. However, the reality of locating urban residential areas has already extended well beyond the city limits. Whilst people who live in rural areas may access urban services on a daily basis, it can also be beneficial for urban dwellers to take advantage of nearby rural areas. This has been analysed by the French urbanist