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Titel des Beitrags: The Relational Geography of the Knowledge Economy in Germany. On functional urban hierarchies and localised value chain systems

Abstract: The objective of this contribution is to set out a theoretical context and then to investigate empirically Germany’s functional urban hierarchy based on the relational geography of the knowledge economy. Starting from a conceptual background that brings together the locational behaviour of multibranch, multilocation firms with a value chain approach, it looks at the extent to which this hierarchy is associated with the networking activities of advanced producer services and high-tech firms. The results provide evidence that the functional urban hierarchy in the German space economy is steeper than is claimed by the federal government. A maximum of six polycentric mega-city regions—Munich, Rhine-Main, Hamburg, Rhine-Ruhr, Stuttgart and to a lesser extent Berlin—can be regarded as strategic nodes in the global knowledge economy. A non-nested hierarchy with overlapping and transscalar urban networks challenges the traditional view of a nested hierarchy as an organising principle of space.

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