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**GROWTH POLES AND GROWTH CENTRES IN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT: A Bibliography**

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GROWTH POLES AND GROWTH CENTRES IN  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

by

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PREFACE

Since the publication of Perroux's paper on Economic Space, Theory and Applications, and the introduction of the concept of pole de croissance there has been an explosion of literature on growth poles and growth centres. Despite these concepts being "vague, indistinct and distressingly over-simplified" (Darwent), and "in need of a thorough semantic reworking" (Hansen), the contribution of literature has been immensely rich particularly in the understanding of the process of economic development in space. Originally conceived as a tool to describe and explain the anatomy of economic development in abstract economic space, in the course of the last two decades the scope of these concepts has significantly widened and includes the normative issues of policy-intervention and planning. The theory is now "viewed as a general theory of development in a simultaneous sectoral-temporal-spatial setting" (Paelinck).

Perroux based the theory of growth poles on the observations of the actual process of development and in this context remarked that "development does not appear everywhere and all at once....

it spreads along diverse channels and has varying terminal effects for the whole of the economy." His proposition that growth poles are independent of a spatial context and, therefore, relevant in abstract economic space let another school of thought emerge which concerned itself to a discussion of the problems of clustering of economic development in areas and centres as well as the overall spatial aspects of development. Many authors, however, consider this development not an extension but a break from Perroux's initial formulation. This school believes that all units have a location and, therefore, poles are not independent of geographical space. The result of this school of thought has been the emergence of the concept of growth centres which have been defined as locations in real space - also described as places of various hierarchies depending on what functions do they perform or serve. This concept deals with the distribution of growth, and allocation of investments, in real space.

The interpretation of the concepts of growth poles and growth centres has been extended by Hirschman, Myrdal and others in their expositions of unbalanced growth and balanced growth strategies. Hirschman has emphasized that investment strategies should concentrate on a few sectors rather than widely dispersed projects; the key sectors would be determined by measuring backward linkage and forward linkage effects in terms of input output maxima. Development takes place with growth being communicated from the leading sectors of the economy to the followers, from one firm to another, which is essentially the same as embedded in the idea of growth poles. On the other hand, balanced growth strategy resembles with the features that are central to the growth centre idea.



Amidst large differences of opinions on what these growth poles and growth centres are and what role do they play in regional economic development there appears to be a convergence of views on some points of significance. See for instance, the following:

.The growth pole is essentially a sectoral and a geographical disturbance. The terms growth pole and growth centres serve for denoting geographical concentration.

.Growth centre strategies have, for the most part been designed to promote the development of lagging regions by concentrating investment so as to reap scale and agglomeration economies. The basic idea underlying these concepts is the alleged superiority of decentralised concentration of development efforts as a strategy for speeding up the process of economic growth and inter-regional integration and equalisation.

.Growth centres have been conceived as points of attraction for migrants who otherwise would go to larger congested urban areas.

Despite the relatively weak theoretical foundation as well as the inadequacy of empirical verification, these concepts are being addressed to important normative questions of regional economic development; and to those concerned with the regional allocation of investments in both time and space. These notions clearly imply that instead of some vague search for balance or equity it is best to concentrate investments in growth centres.

The concepts of growth poles and growth centres have been of interest to several countries. In India the Ministry of Agriculture and Community Development has a major programme on area development through growth centres in 20 places around the country. In the United States under the sponsorship of the U. S. Economic Development Administration, the Universities of Kentucky and Texas are carrying on empirical research on the role of growth centres in

regional development. In Canada the burden of a major research project on growth poles is being shouldered by the Memorial University of Newfoundland. In many African and European countries similar projects are under way. The contribution of United Nations Research Institute for Social Development can be singled out as outstanding for its involvement on a major programme on regional development of which growth poles and growth centres constituted a significant part.

The quest for further work on growth poles and growth centres continues unabated, primarily for the increasing responsibility of the Nations to distribute the fruits of growth to wider areas, to bridge the widening regional gap and to develop the depressed regions. The present attempt is the first stage of the independent research being carried out by the author. The second phase of the research would include the annotation of as many references as possible included in this Bibliography. In the third, final stage it is intended to bring out a rather long review article on growth poles and growth centres; this would trace the development of the concepts in a historical perspective, examine their role in regional development, and describe the contributions of various disciplines as well as the cross-country experiences.

This Bibliography is in the following five parts:

- I. Theoretical Bases, Conceptual Expositions and the Role of Growth Centres and Growth Poles in Regional Economic Development.
- II. Identification Process and Methods of Analyses.
- III. Empirical Bases and Place and Country Studies.
- IV. Background Text References.
- V. Bibliographical References and Areas of Research and Investigation.



The divisions of the Bibliography into these parts should not be considered as mutually exclusive; in fact, this is only an arbitrary division to facilitate examination of the references.

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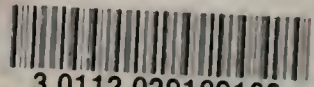
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