

NEUTRAL VALUE-JUDGMENTS VERSUS DOMINANCE OUTCOMES: THE DILEMMA
OF GROWTH CENTER CONCEPTS

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Introduction

In a recent review of the state of regional economics, Richardson [51] noted that one of its leading elements, the growth center, had recently gone through a cycle of boom and slump. He attributes the present backsliding popularity of the growth center to the discouraging results emanating from its application in Third World spatial-economic contexts where it was largely inappropriate, or to its use in poorly-designed Western regional policy where the growth center instrument played an equivocal part at best. These criticisms can be supplemented by two other flaws. On the one hand, academics and theoretical planners have been unable to remove some of the ambiguities surrounding the development mechanisms embodied in the growth center notion, and, on the other hand, the growth center has been inured with an ideologically-neutral mantle which lulls the planner into the false presumption that it is capable of application to any regional development situation regardless of the political overtones of the host society.

The conceptual area of concern fits four-square into the traditional academic concern for better theory and the wherewithal to implement it. Unlike the usual case in the social sciences however, the concepts surrounding the growth center idea have found ready and rapid acceptance by practitioners in the field [43], and this hasty adoption of incomplete theory is, indeed, one of the prime reasons for the unsatisfactory nature of much of what goes under the banner of growth center planning. The ideological area of concern, meanwhile, is much more elusive in the sense that it questions not only the competence of the agencies responsible for planning formulation, but it raises the question of the degree of commitment by these agencies to effective regional planning and all the restructuring that such an objective entails. In other words, before arriving at any conclusions about the merits or demerits of growth center strategies, full allowance must be made for the ideological stance of the planning authority along with recognition of the concomitant that political constraints hinder the realization of regional rejuvenation (despite prima facie suggestions that such influences are absent in objective planning).

This paper adopts the notion of dominance as a cornerstone of the growth center methodology and argues that, in its various manifestations, it pervades both the aforementioned conceptual and ideological concerns. As such, the

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dominance idea goes some way toward clarification of the factors responsible for growth center spin-offs and thus, is an important prerequisite for any attempts to model growth center outcomes. In addition, though, dominance necessitates acceptance of fundamental hierarchical relationships within the social system. Effective growth center implementation requires selection of favored locations and their accompanying social groups as initial beneficiaries. The decision-making which accords priorities of this kind is fraught with dangers of lack of impartiality operating through the aegis of political patronage. Even without such political piccadillos, ready acquiescence by society to deliberately planned favored versus unfavored areas which is, after all, the nucleus of the growth center program, is not at all certain, especially when the much vaunted spread-effects into the unfavored periphery are perceived to be mere trifles by the residents of that area. The almost invariable friction involved in growth center designation together with the massive government intervention required to ensure that spread-effects do, in fact, occur are sure deterrents to real planning. However, when coupled with an ideological reluctance to intervene in market processes or to disrupt the status quo of social elites, then an effective growth center strategy becomes moribund.

The idea of dominance was first invoked in this context by Perroux, the instigator of growth pole thinking. Subsequently, its relevance has been downgraded as the growth pole graduated into the growth center and became a planning tool. Nevertheless, the idea of dominance has been resurrected in new guises as a major socio-political consideration in development processes [16]. The intent here, is to consider the dominance idea as a multi-faceted concept encompassing social, political and economic dimensions; all of which have spatial implications for growth center planners.

Dominance and the Conceptual Concern

Logically, we should first turn to the Perrouxian idea of dominance and note how it acts as the quintessence of growth pole theory as originally conceived. Extension of this view of dominance in accordance with the transition of growth pole concepts into growth center concepts would follow quite naturally. In so doing, coverage is given to the role of dominance in the conceptual aspects of the growth center theme.

It is the conceptual nature of this planning model which appears to have reached some kind of hiatus at the present time. A host of studies attest to theoretical inadequacies in growth centers [2, 13, 25, 34, 57] and detailed discussion of these points need not be replicated here. However, it is evident that a common concern of these analysts is the insufficient understanding of the processes of change emanating from the growth center vehicle; for want of a better word, the mechanisms of the "polarization" process. Polarization is a spatial, sectoral, temporal amalgamation which is not only responsible for creating the forces of development, but is also responsible for disbursing their impulses throughout the spatial extent of the specific socio-economic system. The general expectation is that the mechanisms of polarization provoke concentration of development-inducing phenomena which are manifest spatially through a set of clustered locations, or growth centers. In practice, therefore, it is the growth center which perforce must ensure that development

spinoffs penetrate the contiguous territory in the form of positive "spread-effects." It is precisely the existence of growth center-based mechanisms for development generation and transmission which are being called into question. In view of the ambiguity surrounding the existence of positive processes associated with growth centers, it is hardly surprising that many strategies have been unsuccessful in promoting that regional resuscitation to which end they were presumably intended [11, 52, 58]. Indeed, the key issue of effective size of growth center for creation of development stimulants remains unresolved [20, 49], let alone the form and intensity of development spill-overs into peripheral areas [19, 50].

Sectoral Polarization and Perrouxian Dominance. As alluded to above, the first concept of dominance is that associated with the aggregation of sectoral activities in growth "poles". It owes its instigation to Francois Perroux [44] and has since become the cornerstone of much French writing on the issue of disequilibrated growth [24, p. 105]. In essence, Perroux conceives of a pole as being a node of attraction and repulsion, resplendent with its own "field of forces". This field acts as a regulator of the opposing centrifugal and centripetal forces, and is the basis for the concept of dominance. In Perroux's [45, p. 85] view, dominance

"...consists of an irreversible or partially reversible influence exercised by one unit upon another. An economic unit exercises this effect by reason of its dimension, its negotiating strength, the nature of its activity, or because it belongs to a zone of dominant activity"

The end result of the dominance effect is consolidation of the dominant unit at the pole along with a concentration of other economic activity stimulated by the preponderance of centripetal movements to that node of economic space. Nevertheless, once the pole is established, a dynamic process of concentration or "polarization" can be partly offset by centrifugal forces disseminating growth spinoffs outside of the pole.

It is important to stress that the movement of the field of forces to the pole was conceived in abstract terms; the pole being (at least, initially) unrelated to a geographical node and instead representing the "core" of the economic concentrating process. Accordingly, a "polarized space" demarcated the set of relationships between economic activities centered on the dominant units at the pole, and the manner in which these relationships changed through time was the concern of the "polarization" process (in Perroux's sense of the term). To ensure dynamic conditions, this process required one industry or firm within the pole to adopt the mantle of dominance or leadership. Prerequisite attributes of dominance were large size, high degree of inter-industry linkages, higher than average rate of product growth, above average rate of productivity increase and an expanding share in the total output of the sector concerned [54]. Ultimately, size, new product expansion, productivity gain and increased market share were dependent upon the dominant unit's willingness to promote inventiveness or accept innovations. Structural change within the economy was, thus, very much in the hands of the dominant "polarized" industries. Moreover, "polarization" ensured that the whole economic fabric was contingent upon the changes promulgated from the core because of the dependency of interlinked, subsidiary sectors on the positive externalities created there by the key firm [3].

The Perrouxian idea that sectoral dominance acts as the leading route to economic development has since been severely criticized, most notably by Blaug [6] and Hansen [23] and is, accordingly, greeted with skepticism by planners when presented in this unadulterated form. Nevertheless, it survives in disguised form as a major mechanism for provoking growth generation in the growth center model, that spatial off-shoot of Perrouxian growth pole thinking, and here its acceptance by planners is accompanied by much less uncertainty. Essentially, it re-emerges under the guise of a belief in the merits of urbanization economies for stimulating plant scale economies and threshold requirements. Implicit in this belief is the assumption that the most effective growth activities will be precisely those capable of realizing urbanization economies, and sectors unable to benefit from agglomeration externalities will be deficient in scale efficiencies and subsequently, will have poorer growth prospects. Consequently, increasing size of growth center is expected to have a commensurate positive effect on those economic activities oriented to its location. The large growth center (larger the better) and its accompanying economic trappings now adopts the mantle of instigator of change within the spatial economy. Of course, the corollary of this perception of the growth center is the complementary tributary area, either the smaller urban center (micropolitan center to use Tweeten's terminology) or non-urbanized region, and these are assumed incapable of stimulating their own growth. Instead, they must hope for the eventual transference of extensive development impulses from the growth center itself and be patient with the satellite status accorded to them whereby they supply the center with its required inputs (e.g., labor, capital, raw materials) and receive some factor earnings in return. A quotation from Klaassen [35, p. 36] is demonstrative of thinking along these lines. Considering growth center strategies, he stresses that optimum growth centers should be determined according to the minimum requirements necessary to stimulate urbanization economies:

"Once the minimum is given, the problem for a government is to draw up a plan in which a time pattern is fixed for designating centers to growth poles. If this time pattern is built on economic arguments, the largest regional centers selected as growth poles (in the shorter or longer run) will be assisted first, since they are where the highest returns on investment can be obtained. Then, smaller centers will gradually be designated to growth poles until the investments that have to be made in accordance with this policy give returns that are too low to be attractive."

It does not tax the imagination to realize that planning criteria favoring the "dominant" centers may effectively create growth without relieving the social welfare problems of non-urbanized regions. The telling issue will be the growth center's propensity to distribute meaningful spread-effects into the peripheral area.

The Growth Center as Dominant Agent in Spatial Diffusion. The benevolence of the growth center is ultimately incumbent on its power to diffuse spread-effects into its tributary area. This basic proposition is fundamental to the planners' perception of the merits of the growth center as a development instrument. Yet, as Richardson [5], p. 29] notes:

"It speaks volumes for the fuzzy nature of most growth pole research that even simple relationships of this kind have never been tested."

The inability to come to grips with this fundamental attribute of an effective growth center is not through want of trying. Rather, it is because conflicting evidence arises to suggest that under certain conditions the growth center itself may be a victim to other centers, it may flourish at the expense of its hinterland, it may impose benefits on places far removed from the areas abutting on it, and it may have no discernable effect whatsoever on its contiguous region. Three main strands have been developed which undertake to examine the role of the growth center as an agent in the spatial transmission of economic and social impulses.

The first, and conceptually the simplest, assumes that growth centers enjoy a spatial monopoly over the territories - usually rural - adjoining them. Accordingly, the supposedly predominant spread-effects are analogous to urban spill-overs and are decisive in improving the poor straits of proximate areas. However, in practice the incidence of spread-effects dissemination through the hinterlands is not an automatic consequence of growth center operations. At one extreme, some workers are satisfied that a distinct positive development response surface exists around a growth center, even though its geographic extent may be fairly limited [41, 53]. At the other extreme, though, Gilbert [19] concludes that rural areas are certainly influenced by growth center spill-overs but these are most decidedly of the backwash-effects kind. Richardson [50], in constructing a model for the joint effects of positive and negative impulses on hinterlands, allows for a 'sea change' whereby initial backwash-effects are replaced by spread-effects in due course.

Part of the reason for the contradictory results just mentioned follows from the assumption that growth center impacts are confined to areas spatially contiguous to the center. However, a substantial body of work has indicated that this is not the case. Spatial diffusion theorists, for instance, have noted the relationship between innovation adoption and economic development and, moreover, have attempted to regularize the spread through space of such development-triggering devices [1, 9]. They recognize two basic processes of diffusion: contagious and hierarchical. Urban spill-overs which pervade adjacent territory would fall within the contagious diffusion field at least inasmuch as they represent innovations such as "modernization" of social behavior and the diffusion of new technology. Brown [8] makes the point that at least a modicum of infrastructure needs to be available in hinterland areas before those areas will be in a position to absorb growth center spill-overs. Hence, he regards infrastructure as a *sine qua non*, or "enabling innovation" for growth center impulses because its availability affects the likelihood of spill-over acceptance. Establishment of a number of growth centers as innovation sources in a region enables a longitudinal comparison of the time-frames required for hinterland penetration and also allows for a comparison of the relative efficacy of centers as development-transmitters [21].

Yet, processes of hierarchical diffusion have immense relevance for growth center theory as well. Now, the onus is on inter-center diffusion rather than the urban-rural transference process embodied in contagion diffusion. Further-

more, innovations may spread down the hierarchy from larger centers to smaller, up the hierarchy from smaller centers to larger, laterally among places of equivalent size, or various combinations of these. Pred [48] has studied intra- and inter-corporate linkages in spatial terms both with respect to innovation diffusion and the ramifications of nonlocation-specific multiplier effects. His conclusions can be paraphrased as:

- (1) multilocal business organizations have vibrant nonlocal intra-organizational linkages;
- (2) interurban growth transmission does not readily fall into a preconceived hierarchical-ascendancy pattern;
- (3) nevertheless, corporate growth-transmission linkages mostly bind together metropolitan areas;
- (4) yet, smaller towns often play a part in the corporate network of growth-transmission channels;

and he highlights an obvious implication for growth center planning [47, p. 164]:

"...any assumptions that the nonlocal growth impacts of large-scale investments or 'propulsive' industry expansion in a growth center will be mostly or totally concentrated in the center's 'hinterland' is quite likely to be very wrong."

The very fact that Pred recognizes that small places may act as key constituents of corporate power partially allays the conventional proposition that metropolitan areas hold all the advantages for growth transmission. In a way, it is analogous to the disclaimer of Mansfield [39, p. 465] that technological innovation is a preserve of corporate giantism, because small firms (who perchance may be located in small centers) have been shown to demonstrate a facility to innovate and adopt technology at least as commendable as their corporate "big brothers". Thus, even though the cumulative advantages of agglomeration economies and pure inertia continue to favor large centers, the fact that a city of the stature of Boise City can ably accommodate the important management functions of three large corporations holds out hope for the viability of smaller centers as genuine focal points for development [46, p. 139].

Dominance as a Spatial Phenomenon. Although the growth center can simultaneously operate to transmit impulses punctiformly and areally, it has traditionally been accorded pride of place in the latter role. Indeed, a whole paradigm of dependency concepts has arisen whereby "spontaneous growth centers" such as Third World primate cities are presumed to dominate a definable piece of territory with respect to a gamut of activities ranging from the political to the economic. The more explicitly spatial version of this viewpoint is subsumed under the mantle of the core-periphery model [7, 15, 16].

The core-periphery model, along with other means of associating growth centers with urban systems [43], necessitates acceptance of the crucial role played by the center in instigating growth and societal change for the better. In other words, regional transformation and improvement is inexorably dependent

upon the city for initiating development of virtually every kind. Thus, the city is the dominant agent of regional organization being responsible for diffusing dynamism into the rural structure and, by the same token, peripheral areas have neither the initiative nor the resources to promote self-induced development. Accordingly, a spatial concept of "dominance" would encompass the forces of urban dynamism, concentrated in geographic space, but which ultimately spill-over to affect contiguous rural territory and shape its resultant form. Such qualitative differentiation between center and periphery is embodied, according to Langholm, in political science. There, the center is assured to be "superior" because of its economic development, and the periphery is "inferior" because of its lacking in economic development [36].

Perceptual biases in core-periphery relations such as these, are representative of current views in social science and, as such, have been grafted directly onto the growth center, with it adopting the "dominant" position and the peripheral area acting as passive receptacle because of its assumed inability to do otherwise [37]. Geographers, for instance, have a long-standing tradition of acceptance of the pre-eminant status of urban centers within the spatial scheme of things. Urban systems are consistently, if loosely, defined by their spatial nodality and hierarchical structure; the latter of which presupposes a degree of control both over smaller elements in the urban system and over interstitial territory [38]. This regulatory aspect of centers is seldom treated explicitly by geographers, at least insofar as its social or developmental implications are concerned, and this may reflect the discipline's well-known tendency to steer clear from other than "value-free" issues. Nevertheless, this implicit dependency function is readily carried over by geographers from consideration of general urban systems to concern with growth centers which are, after all, merely particular elements of urban systems. This failure to come to terms with the socio-political consequences of regional dependency, is not confined to geographers, but typifies regional scientists as well [30].

Recently, some spatial analysts have advocated a Marxist theoretical paradigm as a framework within which urban-hinterland relationships can be placed. This paradigm presumes that profits created in an economy can best be organized through the medium of the urban system. Not only would production be facilitated there through reaping the advantages of agglomeration economies, but in addition, entrepreneurs would best be able to organize hinterland economies from a central base. Harvey [27, p. 233] invokes Hoselitz's distinction between "generative" and "parasitic" cities in order to illustrate the manipulative role of centers on hinterlands. In a word, "generative" cities are the source of spread-effects which positively stimulate the hinterland, while "parasitic" cities "...exert an unfavorable effect upon economic growth of the wider geographical unit of which they form a part" [31, p. 188]. Thus, the conceptual equanimity stemming from Myrdal and Hirschman whereby each city is capable of disbursing both positive and negative spill-overs is disrupted and replaced by a sharp differentiation between cities promulgating spread-effects (the generative kind) and those responsible for backwash effects (the parasitic kind). According to the Marxist paradigm, the latter predominate for the duration of the capitalist era of development. Whether one accepts the conceptual assumptions of the Marxists or not, the fact remains that duality between center and hinterland persists in the real world, and development instigation rests largely with the

center. An element of dominance-subdominance in the organization of territory seems to be an invariable accompaniment of natural development and its existence in empirical processes must be accommodated in programs aimed at inducing developmental spill-over from planned centers into peripheral areas.

Ideological Impacts on Growth Center Operations

Elaboration of the various sectoral and spatial conceptions of dominance which impinge directly on the theoretical fabric of the growth center model serves to highlight several issues crucial to the understanding of regional development, but these concepts, per se, do not come to grips with the fundamental problem of ideological commitment on the part of the planning agency. As intimated above, many academic disciplines adopt what they believe are "neutral" (or "positive") ideologies and this precedent is often maintained by their offspring who subsequently occupy positions of responsibility in the planning field. The problems of this situation have been aptly demonstrated in spatial analysis where the upholders of Marx's dialectics have enjoyed a field day in exposing the limitations and inconsistencies of a discipline which purports to be "value-free" in its ideological stance but yet accords pride of place to the machinations of "superior" urban systems. We have already alluded to some of the consequences of a Marxian interpretation of the role of cities in regional development and the design of measures taken to alleviate regional problems may obviously be very different from current North American practice if one subscribed to this view of the scheme of things.

In any event, the proposition of neutral ideologies in planning is blatantly false. That eminent social scientist, Sir Geoffrey Vickers, has convincingly shattered the myth of value-free judgments by arguing that the outcomes of every decision confronting an individual, and not least a planner, are flavored by the particular ideology of the person, and that ideology is a compendium of imprinted ideas and experiences acquired since birth [59]. Sir Geoffrey asserts that our perception of what needs doing is not an abstraction of some absolute truism, but is "...meaningful only in relation to standards which define the success of action, the relevance and importance of facts, even the truth of propositions," and that all such criteria are instilled by the cultural milieu of the individual [59, p. 169]. In order to illustrate the fatuity of the contention that valuation is neutral, Vickers presents a simple comparison between the ecologist as scientist and the ecologist as social scientist. The former must discipline himself not to apportion values to the consequences of the behavior of living things be they predators villainously devouring their prey or the succession of herbaceous species with some pretty plants being crowded out by others of the weed variety. In the final analysis, the scientific ecologist should act as a mere observer even though some natural calamity should come along and disrupt the local environment. Conversely, the human ecologist must trace the impact of that highly emotional creature, Man, on the environment and the pretensions of unemotional involvement and perfectly objective evaluation are rapidly assigned to the category of preposterousness precisely because the evaluator is inseparable from the evaluated and the actions that are perpetrated in their name. Thus, human ecologists and, by extension, all social scientists will never be able to accord truly neutral value-judgments to socio-economic systems.

Although it is easy to establish the presence of bias in any individual tasked with promoting regional development, it is much less easy to predict the effect of that bias on the subsequent course of action. Of course, the broad principles of the ideology favored by the planners will act equally as broad constraints as to what is perceived as being preferable, or, for that matter, acceptable; but the very absence of explicit recognition of the contribution of ideology to planning formulation frequently acts to cloud the issue. At this stage, the continuing debate on the role of religion in stimulating economic activity is worth mentioning for it does bear on the case at hand. Thus, the so-called "Protestant Ethic" was presumed to have considerable impetus in the formation of capitalist societies, indeed, some would claim it to have been the catalyst for that kind of socio-economic system. Notwithstanding, this, the association between ideology in its religious guise and economic outcomes, as manifest in the capitalist system, remains controversial because of the difficulty in finding evidence for a causal link between valuation and performance [22]. Given such obfuscation on the grand scale, only a rash man would advocate a direct link between ideological prejudice and planning outcomes in the North American regional development field. Nevertheless, observations made by analysts in the Third World do point to the major conflicts that can arise when planning ideologies fail to conform with the ideologies of realpolitik.

In Latin America, for instance, Coraggio [12] has highlighted the deficiencies of growth center strategies through a synthesis of the critiques of various regional workers. Essentially, the problem reverts to the issue of incompatibility between a strategy which is a Western brain-child with overtones of equity and industrialization, and the reality of national economic fabrics which are satellites of the Western global economy and deficient in both the social equity tradition and the industrial development upon which redistribution is dependent to a large degree. Together, the two deficiencies have created an equilibrium which effectively confines regional planning to a straight-jacket despite pretensions to the contrary through official growth center programs in peripheral areas. On the one hand, the national elites, ensconced in the capital city, have a vested interest in maintaining the patterns of trade which have been in operation since colonial times. These trading patterns depend on exploitation of hinterland resources for the benefit of the elites who act as collective "middleman" for the markets located in the developed countries. On the other hand, the periphery is locked into a subservient, exploited state which comes from paying tribute to the powers-that-be in the national capital. Any attempt to break out of the linkage and diversify the regional economy is severely hindered by a lack of peripheral entrepreneurs as well as the region's ineffectual political voice among the nation's men of affairs. In perpetuating this setup, the elites are imposing a kind of double dominance on the bulk of their country's residents. This is manifested, firstly, through the dominance following from subservience of the Third World to the West in classic core: periphery mold, and secondly, through the processes of sub-national dominance where the hinterland, against its own best interests, is subjected to organizational control imposed by the national center (capital city) in a manner reminiscent of Hirschman's South that was ravaged by polarization effects. Ultimately, in Coraggio's view, Latin America planners are faced with the stark choice of accepting on-going dependency relative to the West with some benefits accruing to the elites, or else resigning themselves to the prospect of stagnation that would follow the declaration of

economic independence and the withdrawal of Western capital, expertise and market outlets. The interests of regional development planning are unlikely to be served by either scenario, but present regional planning is stymied anyway by its inability to dislodge the prevailing dominant ideology of the elites. Consequently, regional development along with its growth center paraphernalia, as presently constituted, is hardly better than a hollow exercise in Latin America.

The mismatch of ideologies in the planning arena is, perhaps, even more deleterious to effective regional development in Africa. There, nations have absorbed a plethora of political ideologies from the European tradition which, as in the typical case of Tanzania, range from direct Marxist intervention to an implicit retention of laissez faire values through that country's acceptance of its trading position in the international capitalist system. Paradoxically, this illustrates the relative inability of some developing societies to marshal centralizing forces (as manifest through socialist planning) because of extraneous factors, and despite ideological assertions to the contrary [40].

In consequence, problems of inconsistent ideology [56] are compounded when alien forms of spatial organization are superimposed on societies not equipped to handle them. In other words, the native cultures of these nations are at odds with the societal values of Western style planning whether they be motivated by socialist or free enterprise principles, and in this sense, the modernization implicit in regional development has much further to go in Africa than in Latin America. Some analysts on the scene have suggested that the growth center model be revamped to accommodate a "native" component. Santos [55] points out that income disparities in Third World countries are very much a function of the individual's spatial location; which is to say, it depends upon access to the limited part of the nation's space which is operating as a "modern" sector of the economy. That part of the economy which has been transformed is termed the "upper circuit" and is localized in certain areas of cities, while that part which still abides by traditional forms of organization falls into the "lower circuit" category and is found in the amorphous spread of the non-Western part of the city. In Santos' view, it is a fallacy to focus on planning only for the modern sector and its concomitant urban structure because that sector cannot be divorced from the international core: periphery apparatus with its accompanying dominance-satellite entanglements. In his words [55, p. 22-23]:

"The city can therefore no longer be studied as a monolithic entity...The upper circuit is the direct result of technological modernization and its most representative elements are the monopolies. Most of its relations take place with organizations located outside of the city and surrounding region for this circuit is based on a national or international frame of reference. The lower circuit, composed of small-scale activities and involving primarily the poor population, is by contrast well established in the city and maintains privileged relations with its region. Each circuit constitutes in itself a system or rather sub-system of the urban system".

His preference is to devote most attention to the support of the more promising

elements of the "lower-circuit" urban structure¹ for it is there that spread-effects have the best chance of materializing. In his opinion, extensive programming of the "upper circuit" will result in the loss of many spread-effects through leakages out of the country. Thus, the growth center idea is deliberately transformed to intervene directly in the mainstream of local society and move that society, as a whole, toward modernization. In this manner, the growth center strategy is re-emerging as an instrument of development with an explicit ideological purpose that dispenses with the Western ambivalence about interference in market economies.

Coming to Terms with Economic and Social Dominance

In view of the examples given above of suggested modifications to the growth center concept so to make it more admissible to different political circumstances, it becomes almost tautological to state that its survivability as a planning tool rests on its ability to handle the forces of dominance which create social and political disparities within the spatial dimension as well as the duly recognized economic disparities. However, the future relevance of the growth center is but one facet of a much bigger planning problem, namely, the need to make regional development planning a viable means to the overcoming of peripheral backwardness. If regional development planning is to be made meaningful in most parts of the world, it must be invested with a masterly touch such that the stubborn persistence of core periphery disparities will succumb to orderly socio-economic transformation. A first prerequisite is the undermining of the polity dominated by disinterested political elites and on the heels of that there must be a revitalization of the planning body armed both in terms of the ideological motivation to foment more equitable development and with the powers to apply instruments for fulfilling these ends.

If motivation can be aroused and the resources committed to regional development (in many societies, a major, perhaps literally, a revolutionary step), the next stage is to resolve the ideological conflicts intrinsically involved in the alternative means for fostering development. An obvious concern is to decide whether regional development should be encouraged primarily on national efficiency grounds or mainly for promoting social welfare. This dichotomy between national efficiency and interregional equity has been of some concern to regional analysts especially in considering the ways in which variations within one of them rebounds on the other [18, 28]. However, no clear evidence exists to suggest that either one of the two approaches to development is superior to the other. In the final analysis, the decision to opt for equity over efficiency is a political one. The U. S. for instance, has implicitly decided on pursuing the national efficiency route after toying with regional policies in the 1960's. By default, the market is allowed to be prime mover in resource allocation and this has had the result, fortuitous or otherwise,

¹Note the analogy with Hansen's intermediate city as growth center in a North American context. Functioning between the metropolis and the small district center, the intermediate center assumes the intermediary role, just as the better lower-circuit center operates as a bridge between traditional and modern society in the African context.

of promoting regional convergence in incomes and a surge in the population of some peripheral areas as a result of urban out-migration [5, 26]. Nevertheless, governments elsewhere feel compelled to intervene directly in the socio-economic milieu and prescribe goals for tempering efficiency with welfare enhancement. In this respect, the Netherlands is a typical Western case. It advocates selective growth in order to maintain environmental quality, full employment distributed spatially "in a reasonable way," just distribution of incomes, minimization of inflation and no shortfall in the balance of payments [4, p. 6]. Arguably, some of these goals are contradictory and some such as improved balance of payments and (perhaps) betterment of incomes, are dependent on national efficiency criteria, but the overall tenor of the government aims is to adopt an equity stance. In view of the persistent structural problems afflicting most countries, this kind of government statement of intent is much more relevant than the U. S. example.²

What are the implications of the equity vs. efficiency tussle for growth center strategies? Evidently, induced growth center programs have been used to promote both of these objectives. Generally, growth centers designed to fulfill equity ends are oriented to the stimulation of their immediate hinterlands. In the parlance of the diffusion analysts, they emphasize contagion processes at the expense of hierarchical processes. Hence, equity oriented growth centers aim to disburse a large volume of spread-effects which are spatially curtailed to the subject development area and are not lost to the region as leakage effects. In this manner, rural revival is got underway even though it may entail government subventions in what might otherwise be a suboptimal urban center. On the other hand, growth centers intended for boosting national efficiency will attempt to promote multiplier-accelerator impulses in the most efficacious way. As a result, the activities in these centers will be integrated into the hierarchical pattern of network linkages and will promote backward, forward and horizontal linkages throughout the urban system (thereby fitting a slot comparable with the original aspatial Perrouxian poles). Little attention will be given to the areal dissemination of growth impulses from such centers.³

Conceivably, both kinds of growth center will be needed by many developing nations. It may be permissible to concoct strategies mixing both types, but the ultimate urban-regional development policy will evolve from the particular political context. This decision-making context must not only take account of the drive to development on equity or efficiency grounds, but also must be cognizant of the special claims of certain groups. In other words, regionalism-cum-separatism may have to be deliberately pandered to. Moreover, because of

²This tendency for government intervention is accentuated by the existence of regionalism in the majority of old and new sovereign states. As a socio-cultural entity, regionalism is a somewhat dissembled phenomenon, but its intensity will depend on the emergence of elite-peripheral group relationships. In particular these relationships are molded by (1) traditional links; (2) spatial proximity between the groups; (3) differences in group size; (4) myths involving ancestral relationships; and (5) precedent of self-determination [10, p. 30].

³Footnote on following page.

the existence of privileged minorities in most developing societies, affirmation and reaffirmation of a commitment to equity will serve to further the national identity. Therefore, the equity approach will most likely have the edge over the efficiency approach, even though this may not be the case in the actual instruments used in stimulating development.

Regional science is not altogether ill-equipped to proffer advice on goal resolution. Not only can it prescribe a set of outcomes for preferred policy tools such as the growth center, but in attempting to conceptualize a general equilibrium theory it explicitly accommodates a hierarchy of government actions within production systems [32, pp. 617-620]. More specifically, "program plan functions" can be designed for each region in a way which will allow for the progressive development of the economic and social sectors deemed necessary for regional planning [33, p. 413]. In the context of a growth center strategy, these may implicate increases in production activities of various types (perhaps an "industrial complex"), subsidies to local entrepreneurs to encourage a regional business environment, infrastructural projects such as transportation facilities, industrial estates, offices, schools or housing and community functions as neighborhood centers, theaters, museums, clubs and the like. As well as being integrated in a comprehensive regional strategy, such "program plan functions" will have implications for other regions in the nation. Hence, the need to trace intra- and interregional externalities issuing forth from planning action. Some steps have been taken along the road to conflict resolution both with respect to assigning priorities to different goals and to minimizing the negative consequences of planned courses of action as they reverberate through the spatial system [14, 29, 42].

As the tools for conflict resolution and program evaluation are improved, so too will be the planning instruments. The growth center can only benefit from this process because its association with the kind of political dominance typical of Third World situations which is conducive to the perpetuation of spatial inequities will perforce be recognized. A revamped growth center program capable of reinforcing regional interests at the expense of parties of centralizing dominance would then be outfitted to encourage sectoral dominance at the regional level. In so doing, it would promote a revival in local self-confidence which would work not only to reduce disparities in standards of living, but might serve to mitigate those sources of dissatisfaction that lead to separatism.

³Equally, the two kinds of growth center can be accorded different organizational roles. The equity-oriented growth center is essentially involved in territorial control whereas the efficiency-oriented growth center is concerned with functional control. Territorial control is contingent on localization such that local initiatives reside mainly in the hands of local residents. Functional control, however, operates through a hierarchy of authority-dependency relationships such that the greater the gap between a given decision-making level and the apex of the hierarchy, then the lower are the powers for initiating action at that level [17]. In a nutshell, equity-oriented centers allow for considerable local planning involvement while efficiency-oriented centers are inextricably tied into national-level planning.

All of these desirable outcomes rest on the activation of a firm ideological commitment to more equitable development on the part of the planning community and their government overseers. In short, the reformation of the growth center as a viable development option is incumbent on better theory, but even more so, is contingent on planning frameworks shorn of their "value-free" pretensions.

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