

Regions that Are the “Locomotives of Growth”: Their Essence and Criteria

Savelyeva Marina Vladislavovna¹

¹ The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Russian Federation

Correspondence: Savelyeva Marina Vladislavovna, The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Prospect Vernadskogo, 82, Moscow 119571, Russian Federation. E-mail: marina.savelyeva@gmail.com

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Abstract

A special role in resolving the issue of social-economic inequality between Russia’s regions is played by the interaction and economic integration of regions that are the “locomotives of growth” with self-sufficient regions and dotational ones. In this article, based on the criteria for economic development and contribution to fostering national competitiveness, the author marks out regions that are the locomotives of growth and lays out the major dimensions of their impact on the development of other regions: stimulating the development of linked and mutually complementing sectors in neighboring regions, developing infrastructure, amplifying innovation processes, and making a multidimensional impact.

Keywords: regions, competitiveness, economic development, interregional interaction

1. Introduction

At present, the social-economic inequality between Russia’s regions is becoming a burning issue, which, above all, is reflected in the lagging of “poor” regions, in terms of the population’s standard of living, behind those that are better off economically. This subject is currently becoming central in studies conducted by Russian and foreign scholars (Pelyasov, 2009; Pelyasov, 2012; Minakir & Dem’yanenko, 2010; OECD, 2007; Vazhenina & Vazhenin, 2014).

One of the solutions to this problem is to develop regional competitive advantages based on partnership between regional authorities and all interested parties.

At the same time, regions are constantly interacting, impacting on each other’s social-economic development. This impact is both positive and negative. An increasingly more decisive role in the social-economic development of the country as a whole, and particular RF constituents is being played by regions that are the “locomotives of growth” (hereinafter “growth locomotive regions”).

Their role lies in economic integration with self-sufficient and dotational regions and facilitating the formation of the latter’s competitive advantages. Consequently, there arises a need for determining the criteria for marking them out. These criteria could prompt us on how growth locomotive regions can facilitate the development of other regions.

The role of such regions is, above all, determined by their contribution to boosting national competitiveness as a whole, as well as their own economic development (Figure 1) (Savelyeva, 2013).

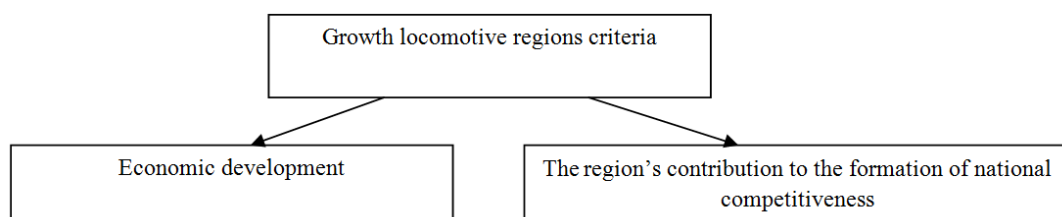


Figure 1. Criteria for marking out growth locomotive regions

2. Method

Assessing Russian regions against these criteria involves marking out a number of indicators, against each of which we need to calculate specific indicators via the following formula (1).

$$I_j = \frac{x_j - x_{\min}}{x_{\max} - x_{\min}} \quad (1)$$

where I_j is the estimate of a region for this indicator;

x_j is the value of an indicator for a region under study;

x_{\max} and x_{\min} are the best and worst values of an indicator for competitor-regions (all the constituents of the Russian Federation).

This formula enables us to determine a region's position among other regions on each indicator. Using the formula, we transform the indicators into dimensionless indicators, with regions arranged on a scale from 0 (a low level) to 1 (a high level). Then, against the first and second criteria we calculate a cumulative index for each region as the arithmetic mean of indicators that make it up. A region is considered a "locomotive of growth" if the values of cumulative indexes against both criteria are above the average regional values, each of which is computed as the arithmetic mean of cumulative indexes for all the constituents of the Russian Federation.

Marking out growth locomotive regions by their contribution to fostering national competitiveness involves identifying the spheres of national competitiveness, the sources of the country's competitive advantages, and regions that have achieved the highest results across these areas. Experts (Russian economic miracle, 2007, p. 352) maintain that the competitiveness of the Russian Federation relies on its vast reserves of hydrocarbons, powerful scientific-research potential, and transit potential in the interaction of Europe and the Middle East. Note that regions' contribution to national competitiveness lies in the use of their unique reserves of hydrocarbons, large volumes of oil and gas extraction and export, and securing a substantial share of federal budget revenue; the development of the scientific-research base; the arrangement of cargo traffic (Table 1).

Table 1. The spheres of the competitiveness of the Russian Federation and the contribution of regions to its formation

The spheres of national competitiveness	The areas of regions' contribution to its formation	The indicators of the estimate for regions' contribution to national development
Russia's competitive position in the world energy market	Unique reserves of hydrocarbons in given regions, large volumes of oil and gas extraction and export, and securing a substantial share of federal budget revenue	The volume of shipped goods in the sphere of extraction of fuel and energy reserves, million rubles
One of the world's most powerful scientific-research potentials	Regions' scientific-research base	The number of organizations engaged in research and development The number of researchers with a science degree Expenditure on research and development, thousand rubles
Russia's transit potential in the interaction of Europe and Asia-Pacific countries, as well as Europe and the Middle East	The arrangement of cargo traffic	Dispatching cargo by rail, million tons Cargo transportation by auto-transport, million tons Maritime transport cargo turnover, million tons

3. Results

Based on indicators reflecting the situation across these areas in 2012, we marked out 21 regions (Table 2).

Table 2. Regions leading in contribution to fostering national competitiveness in 2012 (Regions of Russia, 2013)

#	RF constituents	The volume of shipped goods in the sphere of extraction of fuel and energy reserves	The scientific–research base	The arrangement of cargo traffic	The cumulative index
1	Tyumen Oblast	1.00	0.05	0.37	0.47
2	Moscow City	0.20	1.00	0.08	0.42
3	Khanty–Mansi Autonomous Okrug (Yugra)	0.73	0.01	0.21	0.32
4	Krasnodar Krai	0.00	0.04	0.48	0.18
5	Saint Petersburg City	0.00	0.35	0.16	0.17
6	Kemerovo Oblast	0.13	0.02	0.37	0.17
7	Moscow Oblast	0.00	0.28	0.11	0.13
8	Leningrad Oblast	0.00	0.02	0.37	0.13
9	Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	0.25	0.00	0.07	0.11
10	Irkutsk Oblast	0.04	0.04	0.21	0.10
11	Krasnoyarsk Krai	0.06	0.05	0.17	0.09
12	Republic of Tatarstan	0.10	0.08	0.09	0.09
13	Primorsky Krai	0.00	0.04	0.22	0.09
14	Sverdlovsk Oblast	0.00	0.09	0.15	0.08
15	Sakhalin Oblast	0.15	0.01	0.06	0.07
16	Perm Krai	0.06	0.05	0.11	0.07
17	Chelyabinsk Oblast	0.00	0.05	0.15	0.07
18	Rostov Oblast	0.00	0.07	0.13	0.07
19	Samara Oblast	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.06
20	Republic of Bashkortostan	0.03	0.05	0.09	0.06
21	Novosibirsk Oblast	0.00	0.11	0.05	0.06

On this criterion, 21 regions had the overall index above the average regional value (0.05): the cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, Perm, and Primorsky kraies, the Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Leningrad, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Rostov, Samara, Sakhalin, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts, and the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrugs.

In assessing Russian regions against the economic development criterion, it is expedient to use indicators showing the volumes of real production of goods and services in the region: the volumes of production of industrial goods and paid services for the population, as well as retail trade turnover, the volumes of investment in fixed assets and consolidated budget revenue. We marked out 20 regions based on indicators reflecting economic development in 2012 (Table 3).

Table 3. Regions leading in economic development in 2012 (Regions of Russia, 2013)

#	RF constituents	The volume of production of industrial goods	The volume of paid services for the population	Retail trade turnover	The volume of investment in fixed assets	The volume of consolidated budget revenue	The cumulative index
1	Moscow City	0.80	1.00	1.00	0.70	1.00	0.90
2	Tyumen Oblast	1.00	0.15	0.18	1.00	0.11	0.49
3	Moscow Oblast	0.37	0.27	0.34	0.34	0.30	0.33
4	Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (Yugra)	0.60	0.07	0.08	0.46	0.08	0.26
5	Krasnodar Krai	0.12	0.22	0.22	0.55	0.16	0.25
6	Saint Petersburg City	0.46	0.31	0.23	0.24	0.00	0.25
7	Republic of Tatarstan	0.30	0.17	0.18	0.32	0.14	0.22
8	Sverdlovsk Oblast	0.30	0.19	0.23	0.23	0.13	0.22

#	RF constituents	The volume of production of industrial goods	The volume of paid services for the population	Retail trade turnover	The volume of investment in fixed assets	The volume of consolidated budget revenue	The cumulative index
9	Republic of Bashkortostan	0.24	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.09	0.16
10	Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	0.21	0.03	0.03	0.39	0.13	0.16
11	Krasnoyarsk Krai	0.20	0.09	0.12	0.26	0.11	0.16
12	Samara Oblast	0.21	0.11	0.14	0.14	0.09	0.14
13	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	0.20	0.10	0.13	0.17	0.08	0.14
14	Chelyabinsk Oblast	0.21	0.10	0.13	0.12	0.09	0.13
15	Rostov Oblast	0.12	0.12	0.17	0.13	0.10	0.13
16	Perm Krai	0.22	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.07	0.12
17	Kemerovo Oblast	0.19	0.07	0.09	0.18	0.07	0.12
18	Leningrad Oblast	0.13	0.04	0.06	0.22	0.03	0.10
19	Novosibirsk Oblast	0.07	0.09	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.09
20	Irkutsk Oblast	0.12	0.07	0.07	0.10	0.08	0.09

As a result of calculations against this criterion, regions whose overall index of economic development is above the average regional value (0.08) include 20 constituents of the Russian Federation: the cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansi autonomous okrugs, the Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, and Perm krais, and the Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Leningrad, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Rostov, Samara, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts.

As a result of assessing Russian regions against their contribution to fostering national competitiveness and economic development as at the 2012 year-end, 22 regions were marked out (Table 4).

Table 4. Regions leading in economic development and contribution to national competitiveness

N#	RF constituents	Growth locomotive regions criteria	
		Economic growth	The region's contribution to fostering national competitiveness
1	Moscow City	+	+
2	Moscow Oblast	+	+
3	Saint Petersburg City	+	+
4	Krasnodar Krai	+	+
5	Rostov Oblast	+	+
6	Republic of Bashkortostan	+	+
7	Republic of Tatarstan	+	+
8	Perm Krai	+	+
9	Samara Oblast	+	+
10	Sverdlovsk Oblast	+	+
11	Tyumen Oblast	+	+
12	Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (Yugra)	+	+
13	Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	+	+
14	Chelyabinsk Oblast	+	+
15	Kemerovo Oblast	+	+
16	Novosibirsk Oblast	+	+
17	Krasnoyarsk Krai	+	+
18	Leningrad Oblast	+	+
19	Irkutsk Oblast	+	+
20	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	+	+
21	Primorsky Krai		+
22	Sakhalin Oblast		+

4. Discussion

Out of these, 19 have high indicators on two criteria (which are above the average regional value): the cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, the republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, and Perm krais, the Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Rostov, Samara, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts, and the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrugs. Three regions are leading against just one of the criteria: Primorsky Krai and the Nizhny Novgorod and Sakhalin oblasts. Calculations for previous years (2008-2011) indicate a relative invariableness in ranking regions against the given indicators.

At the same time, the development of regions and formation of their competitive advantages does not occur in an isolated fashion. One of the key factors in this process is the continuous impact on the part of other regions – especially, growth locomotive regions. Consequently, there arises a need for exploring the nature of these relations and determining the major focus areas of interregional partnership.

A key characteristic of growth locomotive regions is their impact on neighboring regions, thanks to which there is direct and indirect stimulation of the latter's social-economic development. The direct impact is manifested in that one region's advantages immediately stimulate the social-economic development of another. At the same time, the advantages of particular regions do not always directly facilitate economic growth in others. Due to this, along with growth locomotive regions' direct impact there is also their indirect impact on the development of other regions (Figure 2) (Savelyeva, 2013).

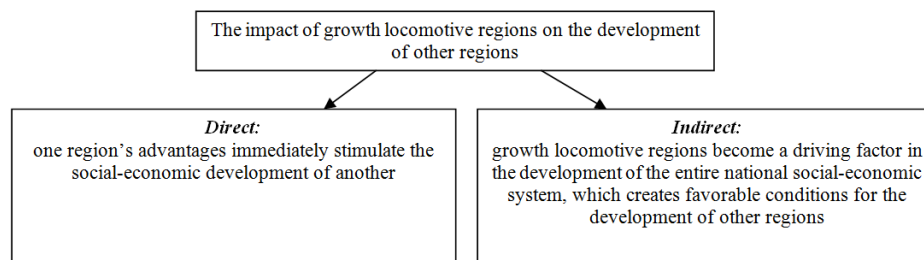


Figure 2. The direct and indirect impact of growth locomotive regions on the development of other regions

Indirect impact lies in that growth locomotive regions become a driving factor in the development of the national social-economic system, which creates favorable conditions for the development of other regions. This is due to the fact that thanks to the development of logistics and a decrease in transportation costs, territorial proximity ceases to be a deciding factor in interregional cooperation relations. The social-economic activity of growth locomotive regions is manifested not only in relation to neighboring regions but the entire country as a whole.

An example of regions with an indirect impact is Tyumen Oblast and the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrugs. Substantial reserves of hydrocarbons in these regions ensure a substantial contribution to the competitive status of the Russian Federation in the world energy market and a substantial share of federal budget revenue. At the same time, national competitiveness in the world energy market, in turn, facilitates the development of all the regions of the country.

The direct impact of growth locomotive regions on other regions can be viewed as multiplicative, i.e. from the standpoint of both transmitting social-economic development impulses to neighboring regions, which are spread from close-by regions to remote, and initiating their comprehensive development.

At the same time, the direct impact of growth locomotive regions on other regions has various dimensions depending on spheres it encompasses. Inferences on a specific dimension of impact are substantiated by the values of the Gross Regional Product (GRP) and the sectoral structure of the gross value added of the region, since competitive advantages that growth locomotive regions possess substantially increase the value of their GRP compared with the same indicator of other regions.

Among the major dimensions of the impact of growth locomotive regions on other regions we can mark out 1) the stimulation of the development of linked and mutually complementing sectors in neighboring regions, 2) the development of infrastructure; 3) the amplification of innovation processes; 4) multidimensional impact (Table 5) (Savelyeva, 2012).

In the first dimension, the source of impact is a region that possesses competitive advantages in the development of particular sectors and is capable of stimulating the development of linked and mutually complementing sectors in neighboring regions. Examples in this case are the Republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Perm and Krasnoyarsk krajs, the Kemerovo, Moscow, Rostov, Samara, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts. These regions are characterized by developed industry, well-developed infrastructure, a concentration of scientific-production complexes and pilot-testing production operations, and a substantial share of highly qualified specialists.

Table 5. The major dimensions the impact of growth locomotive regions on other RF regions

The dimensions of impact	Examples
The stimulation of the development of linked and mutually complementing sectors in neighboring regions	The Republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Perm and Krasnoyarsk krajs, the Kemerovo, Moscow, Rostov, Samara, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts
The development of infrastructure	Primorsky Krai
The amplification of innovation processes	-
Multidimensional impact	Moscow City, Saint Petersburg City, Krasnodar Krai, and Novosibirsk Oblast

The advantages marked out become a source of growth in the gross regional product and help the region achieve a high ranking among the eighty-three RF constituents on this value. At the same time, the impact of these regions on other regions through the stimulation of the development of kindred and supporting sectors finds confirmation in data on sectors that account for the largest share of growth locomotive regions' GRP. A high share of the gross value added is ensured by processing production operations, mineral reserve extraction, and wholesale and retail trade.

In the second dimension, the key position is held by a region that has a favorable geopolitical location and a developed infrastructure, through which there occur communication and the exchange of resources, which activates the development of regions engaged in interaction. Among regions with the highest infrastructural impact we can mark out Primorsky Krai, despite the fact that it did not make it into the list of growth locomotive regions as at the 2012 year-end.

The third dimension is the amplification of innovation processes, which involves the formation of interregional communications between scientific-research institutions and educational institutions plus commercial establishments; the creation and development of innovation infrastructure (an engineering system, a network of techno-parks, business incubators, venture capital funds, etc.); the creation of a market of innovations. The issue of the innovation development of regions has been explored in numerous works, including those by foreign authors (Asheim, 2007; Cooke, 2007; Cooke, 2011, p. 625; Christopherson & Clark, 2007; Zhou, 2005, pp. 1113-1134). Note that experts are inclined to maintain that in the innovation development of regions a key role is played by the region's administration and the development of entrepreneurship (Petrov, 2008). At present, it is hard to mark out a Russian region that could make an impact in this dimension. However, the closest to this status, in experts' opinion, is the Republic of Tatarstan, which has succeeded in putting together an innovative ecosystem.

Some growth locomotive regions spread their influence onto the development of other regions in several dimensions. Among them are Krasnodar Krai and Novosibirsk Oblast, which make an impact in the first and second dimensions, which is substantiated by large shares of wholesale and retail trade, transport and communications, agriculture, construction, and processing operations in their GRP. Note that these regions have an advantageous geopolitical location and are major transportation-logistics nodes. In interregional interaction, there especially stand out the major agglomerations of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, which are characterized by a concentration of resources, infrastructure, and business entities. The latter leads to an increase in labor migration, the development of infrastructure, and the amplification of innovation processes. Questions about the development of competitive advantages of Moscow discussed in detail in the articles of domestic scientists (Valetov, 2014). Among studies dedicated to the development of major agglomerations of special interest are the works of J. Simmie, who draws a link between the concentration of business entities in large cities and reserves

of knowledge (Simmi, 2003). The inference on a leading role of major agglomerations in the development of national economies has been substantiated by the works of A.J. Scott and M. Storper (Scott & Storper, 2003).

In conjunction with the above, there is amplified the role of interregional partnership., which involves arranging interaction (in terms of transportation, information, trade, etc.) between economically successful and other regions and the transmission of additional stimuli towards development to the latter (as a consequence of an increase in cargo traffic, the spread of innovations, and the enhancement of infrastructure).

The amplification of this process can be achieved through the development and implementation of interregional partnership projects within the above dimensions by federal and regional authorities. Some projects will rely on the agglomeration effect, some on the development of economic relations, some, primarily, on the development of infrastructure, etc.

Regions capable of making an impact on other regions thanks to the links between kindred and supporting sectors are mainly concentrated in the Central, Privolzhsky, Ural, and Siberia federal okrugs (the Republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Perm, Krasnodar, and Krasnoyarsk krais, the Kemerovo, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Rostov, Samara, Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts). But, thanks to interregional partnership, their impact can spread over the entire territory of the country. For instance, as a promising dimension of production cooperation we can point up the building of a close partnership between the metallurgy and mechanical engineering industries in the regions of Ural (the Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, and Chelyabinsk oblasts, the Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrugs) and the fuel-energy and forest industry in the north-west of the country and Western Siberia.

As support points in infrastructural interregional interaction we can mark out the Krasnodar and Primorsky krais and Novosibirsk Oblast. The high potential of the development of transit functions and the formation of large transportation-logistics nodes at the intersection of rail, air, river, and sea ways enables them to achieve a central position in infrastructural interregional interaction. For instance, the Chelyabinsk-Khabarovsk-Vladivostok axis is viewed from the standpoint of the unification of central and Far East regions and central regions' reaching the Pacific coast, as well as interaction with the outside world – especially, the actively developing Asia-Pacific countries.

Interregional partnership based on the agglomeration effect has its origins in regions that are either major agglomerations themselves or have them in their territory (i.e., Moscow and Saint Petersburg). For instance, there has formed a transportation corridor between Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod, which has amplified the process of urbanization of regions adjacent to it. In this area, there stretches a strip of settlements (from Moscow, through the Moscow and Vladimir oblasts, to Nizhny Novgorod Oblast), which blend one into another.

5. Conclusions

Thus, our study into the issue of managing the development of the competitive advantages of growth locomotive regions has led us to draw the following inferences:

Growth locomotive regions are characterized by substantial volumes of industrial production, production of services, retail trade, investment in fixed assets, and high consolidated budget revenues, which provide a rationale for their economic development. Their role of the locomotives of growth is also ensured by their substantial contribution to fostering national competitiveness. At the same time, we should not overlook other regions which have preconditions for becoming the locomotives of growth as well.

Since Russian regions are constant interacting and mutually impacting on each other, activities related to the development of their competitive advantages should be developed inclusive of the “axes of development” being formed between them, which along with the “poles of growth” form the spatial frame of the country’s economic space. Note that growth locomotive regions act as the basis for the “axes of development”, as they make various types of impact on other regions: some rely on the development of economic relations or the agglomeration effect, some on the development of infrastructure, and others on the exchange of innovations.

For regions’ unique competitive advantages to emerge, one needs to ground the formation of the “axes of development” in, apart from the creation of infrastructure, the adoption of innovations, development of clusters, and orientation towards improvement in the exchange of knowledge among all participants in a “corridor”. The latter can be achieved through elevating the value of cultural diversity, originality, creativity, traditional knowledge, and crafts; path-breaking and constructive creative work; the attainment of the structural flexibility and plasticity of regional communities.

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