The creation of a new area of specialization is always a matter of interest in any academic field and the phenomenal rise of what has come to be known as "regional analysis" in economics is no exception.

The manifestations of this emergence are many. Within the last decade both a new professional association and a journal dealing with problems of regional development have come into being. This new journal, published by the Regional Science Association, has, moreover, all the hallmarks of academic success; it has consistently grown in size, scope, number of contributors, and even in quality of typography. Also within the last decade, a full-edged and highly successful research institution, Resources for the Future, has been created which is greatly concerned with problems that conventionally are described as falling within the province of the new field. This organization reported in 1957 [102], furthermore, that no less than about 140 U.S. universities had serious research or education programs underway in regional studies and there are substantial reasons for believing that the extent of these activities has probably enlarged rather than contracted since that time. Similarly, conferences, almost innumerable, have been organized to discuss, evaluate, and promote regional science studies both here and abroad. Indeed, perhaps one of the most impressive testimonials to the appeal of the new field is that it has enlisted the official or semi-official interest of such diverse governments, among others, as those of Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Argentina, Turkey, Venezuela, India, Colombia, and Pakistan.

Economists and economics have long had, of course, special surges of interest or, less euphemistically, fads and fashions in their studies and research. Furthermore, if we construe economics as an applied science and argue, at least within limits, that most of the great steps forward in economic understanding and theory have come in response to specific policy challenges, this tendency toward temporarily pursuing certain lines of research with seemingly exaggerated zeal is not necessarily unfortunate. It may be, rather, the very substance and requisite accompaniment of intellectual progress in a field where progress often is concerned with generating principles or concepts for the understanding and solution of practical problems. Understanding
such research and its conceptual results or creations normally requires, in turn, an appreciation of the policy problems that have provided the stimuli. It would be wrong, though, to infer that identification of these stimuli would fully explain the rise and recent popularity of regional economics. Nor would these alone provide an adequate basis for understanding recent developments in the field. Regional economics has very obvious and important intellectual forebears, and indeed it seems high probable that certain theoretical developments in general economics, particularly having to do with general interdependence systems, provided the conceptual basis without which regional economics could not have flourished. One very straightforward explanation of the surge in regional economics, in fact, is to say that it resulted from a fortuitous blending of many economists' desires to apply certain recently honed conceptual tools and policy makers' desires to seek more adequate and analytical answers to complex problems related to regional and urban growth.

Sensible discussion of either the stimuli or the conceptual precursors of regional economics requires, moreover, a definition of just exactly what constitutes this new field. Special semantic problems, unique to the new field, are also quickly encountered, not the least of which is simply defining a region. The definitional problems will be considered, therefore, in Section I. As will become clear there, definitions of and in regional economics are not always easily come by, a difficulty probably shared in common with almost all new fields of specialization. Following these definitional exercises, a more thorough consideration of the policy-problem stimuli will be undertaken in Section II. Then in Section III, the theoretical foundations of regional economics, as borrowed from general economics, will be treated. This will be followed in Section IV by a discussion of the different approaches to regional economics that have emerged in actual regional studies. Finally, Section V attempts to summarize and provide some evaluation of all that precedes.

I. DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS

An almost unavoidable temptation when first coming to grips with the problems of defining regional economics is to assert that it is simply all of economics scaled to whatever level is required to adequately measure or forecast economic activity for a specific geographic area. There would be considerable truth, moreover, in such a characterization, for regional economics has been, if anything, ambitious in its selection of objectives. Also implicit in such a definition is a strong urge to define regional economics in terms of particular study and policy objectives, thus emphasizing its pragmatic origins.

Difficulty in giving regional economics a distinct character in terms of conventional economic disciplines also partially explains and is explained by