EU-Kandidat Serbien

Regional Disparities and Regional Development: The Case of Serbia

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with 6 Fig. and 2 Tab. in the text

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Zusammenfassung

Regionale Disparitäten und Regionalentwicklung: der Fall Serbiens


* The executive editor of this journal as well as the Austrian Geographical Society wish to remark that they do not share the views expressed in this article (including its maps) on the legal status of Kosovo/Kosovo and that this view is also not shared by the Austrian government as well as by the governments of the vast majority of EU member states.

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Summary

The paper deals with regional disparities in Serbia, considering demographic and economic regional differences. The analyses of those disparities are placed in the context of the EU and of neighboring countries. The authors used statistical instruments to show the extent of Serbian regional disparities, as well as maps to visualise these differences. The results are used to develop a rough outline of possible solutions to such regional inequalities in Serbia, considering existing Serbian and EU development documents.

1 Introduction

Regional inequality is a salient feature of many countries, both developed and developing. For example, the GDP per capita in London is much larger than in the United States, while in Wales it is lower than in Greece. Mississippi (USA) has a GDP per person closer to Slovenia than to many US states, while people in the District of Columbia or Delaware have a higher GDP per capita than most OECD countries. There are many different studies devoted to regional inequalities analysis and considerations of its roots and consequences (Yemtsov 2003; Baddeley 2006; Kim 2008; Duvo 2004; Ezcurra 2007; Hofer & Wörgötter 1997; Barrios & Strobl 2006; Magrini 1999; Petrakos 2001; Petrakos & Saratsis 2000; Rodrigues-Oreégia 2005; Terrasi 1999; Wang & Ge 2004).

The aim of this paper is to show regional disparities in Serbia, both demographic and economic, and to compare them to the neighbouring and European Union (EU) context. All the research was conducted within the theoretical framework of the existing paradigm shift in regional development policy using knowledge of geography and economics. It is very rare to find a project in which both geographers and economists collaborate in order to outline possible solutions for problems in the area of unbalanced regional development as it is done in this case.

2 Theoretical framework

Theoretical explanations for regional disparities are typically based on several different theories: growth theory (Barro & Sala-i-Martin 1995), New Economic Geography (Krugman 1998; Fujita, Krugman & Venables 1999; Krugman & Livas 1996; Venables 2011), but also some new theories rooted in the area of evolutionary economic geography (McCann & Van Oort 2009; Boschma & Frenken 2011). According to growth theory, regional inequality tends to rise as growth occurs in discrete locales, but later on inequalities will decline as equilibrating forces such as better infrastructure, technological diffusion, decreasing returns to capital in richer and high-wage areas, and the diseconomies of agglomeration become stronger (Williamson 1965).