

Abstract

The main aim of this master's thesis is to reveal patterns in spatial differentiation of unemployment at the municipal level in selected Central European countries and its changes in the new millennium. For this purpose, Central Europe is defined as the area of Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This research is focused on the identification of spatial clusters of unemployment rates in selected countries by using advanced spatial and statistical methods, such as the Hot Spot Analysis. The outputs of the analysis categorize all municipalities into two main groups – clusters with high unemployment rates and clusters with low unemployment rates. Thereafter, these two categories are subjected to detail quantitative research, which examines their stability over the selected period (from 2005 to 2021). A cluster membership for each municipality is further explained by binary logistic regression models using also spatial, size, and resistance determinants. Finally, the results are explained in historical, social, and economic contexts from the socio-economic geographical view of each country. The analysis work with a database of unemployment rate consisting of data provided by national statistical and labour offices. Data from each office was collected, edited, and entered into a unique database.

The main finding is that the unemployment rate creates a spatial pattern of high and low unemployment rates in Central Europe. These clusters of municipalities are usually stable over time; however, they are less stable in Poland. The cluster membership is dependent on the distance from a regional or a national centre and on the population stability of municipalities. The areas in the low unemployment cluster seem to be less stable at the beginning of the economic crisis in 2009 and the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.