

Abstract

This thesis focuses on regional differentiation of Japan with the aim to find somewhat more developed and less developed regions at the hierarchical level of prefectures. This work stems from a summary of the historical-geographical context of Japan's development and then works with the description and analysis of selected indicators and their following synthesis. This synthesis finds basis in utilizing factor and cluster analysis of selected indicators. Factor analysis is mainly used to reduce and saturate selected indicators which are subsequently used in cluster analysis. As a result of the cluster analysis, five clusters are identified, which to some extent represent regional differences of Japanese prefectures. One of the final conclusions of this thesis is the assumption that urban areas are greatly affected by selected socioeconomic indicators which have a major impact on the development of the prefectures. Another conclusion is that peripheral areas, often of rural and agricultural character, are rather less developed.

Keywords: *Japan, regional differentiation, historical-geographical context, Japanese prefectures, factor analysis, cluster analysis, regionalization*