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An empirical analysis of regional poles from the perspective of Romanian sustainable development

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Abstract

Today, the new concept of sustainable regional development is extremely important for Romania when discussing the general framework of the European Union. Moreover nowadays when the reorganization of the administrative division of the country is a very hot topic, identifying the poles that can coagulate, at regional level, the available resources, is of capital importance. Thus, in this paper we will try, using statistical methods and aggregate data available in the Tempo database to identify the counties that can fuel the future sustainable regional development of Romania.

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1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable development has emerged over time and has gained special importance in terms of globalization. Over time it was noticed that business development is strongly influenced by human activity and its impact on the general environment.

Although regional development and sustainable development are two different concepts, sustainable development being mostly concerned with resource management through bringing a collective mentality change, while regional development is concerned with reducing the gap between different regions, there

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is however a point of confluence, namely environmental protection through responsible use of resources. In this context a new concept emerged in the development policies – sustainable regional development, aimed to produce a long-term economic growth, while maintaining environmental welfare.

Among the main objectives envisaged in the regional sustainable development, are: growing the environmental and social cohesion, increasing social standards, minimizing social problems, increasing the number of jobs, increasing the economic power of cities, bringing a balance between industrial development and pollution.

Key activities involved by this concept are the development and application of appropriate models for regional development based on sustainability. Applying such a model of sustainable regional development requires the construction of a chart or a map of the entire area, where all the unimportant details were removed and the key elements and actions for dynamic observation of the region were identified.

2. Literature Review

The significant importance of regional sustainable development in the nowadays environment can be seen also, at the literature level, where researchers following different study directions have created important and valuable knowledge through a large variety of research papers. Due to the fact that constructing a better economic environment (in order to increase the standard of living for the regions' inhabitants) is one of the main purposes that regional policy makers bear in mind, one of the most important direction followed by the researchers is the analysis of foreign direct investments at regional level. According to the literature the inflow of foreign direct investments is seen as one of the main determinants that can fuel the development at regional level and as Porter (2003) argues some of the main determinants of foreign direct investments are to be found at regional level. Following this direction studies conducted by Crozet, Mayer and Mucchielli (2004), Przybylska and Malina (2000) and Ghemawat and Kennedy (1999) show that market size is one crucial aspect that makes a region attractive for foreign investors. Other researchers link the inflow of foreign direct investments with other regional characteristics like: infrastructure (Wei and et al. (1998), Mariotti and Piscitello (1995), Broadman and Sun (1997)), labor market (Crozet, Mayer and Mucchielli (2004) and Lansbury et al., (1996a)) and research and development level (Cantwell, J.A. and Iammarino S., (2001), Cantwell, J.A. and Piscitello, L (2005); Chung and Alcácer, (2002)).

Another important direction followed by the literature deals with identifying and analyzing the regional disparities and differences that are very frequent today in almost every state. Studies belonging to this class analyze disparities and differences among regions with respect to a great range of fields, like: labor market related aspects (Taylor, J. and Bradley, S. (1997), Cai, F., Wnag, D., Du, Y., (2002)), infrastructure related aspects (Démurger, S., (2001)), tourism related aspects (Xue, Q., (2005), Soukiazis, E. and Proença, S., (2008)) and other socio-economic aspects (Singh, G. K., Kogan, M. D., van Dyck, P. C., (2008)).

The literature is also rich when talking about studies conducted at the European regional level. Highlighting the economic disparities that are present among European regions and providing solutions that can be implemented in order to decrease these disparities are the main concerns of these studies (Magrini, S., (1999), Dall'erba, S. and Le Gallo, J., (2008), Fingleton, B., (1999)).

After 1990 when communism collapsed in Romania, adopting the European regional policy became one of the main goals of the Romanian society. The first important step was made in 1998, when

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