Rising Spatial Disparities and Development


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### Abstract

The UNU-WIDER project on 'Spatial Disparities in Human Development' has collected and analyzed evidence on the extent of spatial inequalities within developing countries. The studies find that spatial inequalities are high, with disparities between rural and urban areas, and also between geographically advantaged and disadvantaged regions. In many countries such disparities are increasing, partly as a consequence of the uneven impact of trade openness and globalization. While there are efficiency gains from the concentration of economic activity in urban centres and in coastal districts, the associated regional inequalities are a major contributor to overall inequality. They are particularly worrying if they align with political or ethnic divisions. What policy measures can be taken to assist lagging regions? Policies are needed both to facilitate de-concentration of existing centres (for example, by infrastructure investment) and to facilitate migration between regions.

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dimensions of spatial disparities in no fewer than 58 developing and transition economies. Some of the papers are country case studies; others are comparative, covering several countries. The UNU-WIDER project on ‘Spatial Disparities in Human Development’ has collected and analyzed evidence on the extent of spatial inequalities.