

ABSTRACT

Exploring and monitoring change in educational level on national, regional and city level

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The last century has witnessed a significant rise in educational level among residents in Europe and throughout the most of the industrialised world. Education has been perceived as an important factor for the economic development of countries and governments have invested to expand the scope of their education systems. Despite the overall increases in educational level, national, regional and district-level disparities still persist, however, and can be rather wide within and between countries. This paper explores and monitors changes in educational level in Finland on national, regional and city level. Education is known to be an important predictor of individual's life chances. For instance, it is well-known that the educational level of parents, particularly, educational achievements of a mother, predicts educational outcomes of the children. Regional disparities in educational level can therefore influence wider social development in countries. The paper draws on the high-quality Finnish population registers that enable compiling of a wide range of regional and neighborhood-level time series on various socio-economic indicators. Unlike census data that is usually updated on five to ten year intervals, the Finnish register based statistical system is maintained and updated nowadays yearly. The aim of the paper is two-fold. The main objective is to analyse regional differences, and changes, in educational level in Finland since the 1970s to this date. The second aim is to develop and explore different ways to visualise these changes with the innovative use of GIS methods. Furthermore, a special focus is laid on the analysis of the regional differences in the educational level of the youth. The rising level of youth unemployment, and a risk of subsequent social marginalization of young adults, has raised increasing concern about the faith of the youth in many European countries. Exploring the changes in the educational levels of the youth, and monitoring their labour market participation, can therefore be considered important issues.

Key words: education, youth, time-series, GIS-analysis