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ARTIGOS

REGIONAL CONVERGENCE AND R&D INVESTMENT: APPLIED INVESTIGATION IN PORTUGAL

Gertrudes Saúde Guerreiro¹ e António Henriques Martins Guerreiro¹

Abstract R&D investments are seen as having an enormous potential impact on the competitive position of regions and perhaps on regional convergence (or divergence) too. The aim of the paper is to study both the localization of R&D investments and regional income distribution among the NUTs 3 regions of Portugal to conclude if these variables are related or not. To study the spatial convergence (approximation) of per capita income (GDPpc) and R&D investments in the regions of Portugal, we use a standard methodology of spatial econometrics. We conclude that regions with higher GDPpc are not the same with the highest concentration of R&D investments, with the exception of the northern coastline. The R&D investments are geographically linked to the network of higher education institutions, especially in the interior regions of the country. The northern regions reveal more dynamic in terms of R&D, which apparently is not felt in the population's standard of living measured by GDPpc.

Keywords R&D Investment, Income Distribution; Regional Inequality; Regional Convergence; Spatial Econometrics

1 Introduction

Investment in research and development (R&D) is discussed in the literature as an enhancer element for economic growth and determinative of regions competitive position, notably via the creation of knowledge. Kim (2011) reports that the R&D investment is an important input in the production function of knowledge and as such in human capital.

On the other hand, according to Rego & Caleiro (2010, 2012) and Rego et al. (2012), cited in Guerrero & Caleiro (2014), human resources with a high level of training are an essential element in territorial development and binomial social / territorial cohesion.

In this context, Guerreiro & Caleiro (2014) conducted a spatial convergence analysis of knowledge in Portugal (Mainland) and concluded that this is an unequal country in terms of location of its most skilled human resources. Between 1991 and 2011, despite the qualifications (percentage of resident population with higher education) have risen considerably, the process of regional convergence was insignificant (Guerreiro & Caleiro, 2014).

In this paper we intend to deepen the study of regional imbalances in Portugal, in particular as regards the R&D investment and its consequences, or reflection, in terms of GDPpc growth and convergence (or divergence) of regions.

In most applied studies, regional (or spatial) economic convergence is studied with GDPpc growth (see is the work of Barro and Sala-i-Martin). However, since R&D investment is a key factor in economic growth is important to know the pattern of spatial

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