

**Regional economic development in the canton of Bern
and its destinations –
an analysis of the structure with a focus on the hotel industry**

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Abstract

In tourism in general and in the Swiss hotel industry in particular a structural change has taken place regarding the indicators *employment* and *added value*. The presented paper intends to analyse this change in the canton of Bern and its five destinations (Jura-3-Seenland, Destination Bern, Gstaad-Saanenland, Oberland Mitte, Oberland Ost) on a regional level and with a focus on the hotel industry. Further, the paper discusses the possible explanation of the observable change through the determination of *the change in the economic structure* and *in the attractiveness of location*.

First, structural change in the hotel industry and possible factors of it were discussed based on a literature review. Then, an overview of the economic structure and the tourism development in the canton of Bern and its five destinations was given.

With the method of the shift-share-analysis the structural change in the five destinations with a focus on the hotel industry was analysed in depth. The shift-share-analysis allows characterising the development in a regarded economic region and compare it with a superior reference region. Employment data of the whole economy and the hotel industry in the five destinations for the years 1995 and 2008 provided by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office were used. In this analysis, the canton of Bern was compared with Switzerland and the five destinations of Bern were compared with the development in the whole canton. The shift-share-analysis allows separating the economic development into an effect of the economic structure and prevailing site conditions.

The paper shows the importance of tourism in the canton of Bern and the decline of importance during the observation period, particularly in three destinations of the Bernese Oberland. Out of the analysis, the paper gives indication that the hotel industry in particular lost importance as an employer in all destinations except Oberland Ost. With regard to the development of business-sizes in the hotel industry it can be said: the smaller the size of the hotel, the sharper the fall of employment in the period under review.

Keywords: Regional economic development, shift-share-analysis, structural change, hotel industry, employment, added value