

Geographical differentials

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One of the primary questions that a geographer must answer is with regards to what, where, and why. Each of these questions is essential in determining the reason for why certain events, interpretations, attitudes, religions, economic realities, environmental hardships, and a litany of other factors are unequivocally tied to specific places throughout the globe. In seeking to answer the “ what”, “ where”, “ why” of unemployment rates throughout the world, the following analysis will provide a brief overview for why this author believes each of these factors impacted heavily upon delineating such a reality.

Within the current world, unemployment rates effectively determine what regions will experience the greatest level of poverty throughout the world. Even a cursory overview of unemployment rates within the United States reveals the fact that unemployment is ultimately tied to a lack of infrastructure development, a lack of resources, and oftentimes a lack of educational achievement on the part of the individuals that live within a given region. ¹ As such, the “ why” and the “ where” for unemployment within the United States can ultimately be answered through such an approach. ²

However, as was discussed within the introduction, the “ what” of unemployment is perhaps the more effective question to answer. In seeking to answer the what of unemployment, the reader must focus upon the fact that unemployment in and of itself does not only mean a lack of opportunity, it also has a direct level of connotation with the lack of ability to engage in work. Through such an understanding, unemployment can also have the

tangential definition of the physical and/or psychological unpreparedness of the individual, or, in the worst case of all, a lack of motivation and/or laziness that prohibits them from engaging in useful work. 3

Evidence of the way in which each of these factors can impact upon unemployment rates can be seen with regards to Elkhart, Indiana. Although it Elkhart, Indiana can oftentimes be understood as indicative of nearly any city within the United States, it is unique due to the fact that it has built its economy almost entirely upon the production of recreational vehicles; and industry that took one of the hardest and most definitive economic as a result of the downturn of 2007 to present. 4 With a general lack of education of the populace, a lack of infrastructure, and the inability to retrain and retooled the industries that existed within Elkhart Indiana, the hardships of the downturn were most painfully felt within this region as compared to many others that were more diversified within the United States.

The information that is thus far been provided, it can clearly be seen that the determinants of unemployment themselves are quite broad. 5 Whereas many politicians they seek to promote the understanding that unemployment is a relatively simple problems that can be fixed painlessly and with little effort, the fact of the matter is that complex factors such as the overall level of state and federal/local investment that a given economy is able to direct towards benefiting their education and/or infrastructure is ultimately partially responsible for the rate of unemployment that may be evidenced within a given area.

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