Comparative Economic Research, Volume 20, Number 3, 2017
10.1515/cer-2017-0024

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Regional Differentiation of The Demographic Potential in Italy and Poland

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to compare the demographic potential of given Italian and Polish regions. The analysis shows that the demographic situation in Poland, unlike in Italy, is not directly related to the level of development of some regions and their geographical location. In Italy, the unfavorable demographic situation is typical of most of the less-developed southern regions, whereas in Poland it occurs in voivodships with different economic potential, situated in different parts of the country. This is probably the result of the current polycentric development of Poland, characteristic of a centralized economy, and the polar development in Italy. Certain demographic similarities, but of different levels, related to the dynamics of the population, the level of fertility, and net migration are observable in the macro-regions of Mezzogiorno and Eastern Poland.

Keywords: *demographic potential, Italian regions, Polish voivodships, regional development*

JEL: *J10, J11, J13, J18*

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1. Introduction

Unfavourable demographic changes are a characteristic feature of Europe (European Commission 2011). As a result of the low birth rate in many European countries and regions their populations are declining. At the same time the average life expectancy is increasing, reducing the proportional participation of economically active persons and increasing the percentage of people in their post-working age (European Commission 2014). Unfavourable demographic changes have drawn the attention of the European Commission (2006), because they will have a negative impact on productivity, economic growth, and the public finances of the Member States. These changes are varied spatially. Their negative effects are present primarily in areas with a poorly developed economy, while the more developed regions, offering better conditions for life and work, can compensate for the loss of people through the natural influx of immigrants (Bruni 2008). In Western Europe, this pattern has been in place for decades, while in the Central European countries it has not actually occurred yet.

This study is an attempt to evaluate these processes in relation to Italy and Poland, taking into account the situation of their regions. Therefore, the primary aim of the paper is to compare the demographic potential of given Italian and Polish regions and identify possible future trends. In both countries there are territorial differences in the levels of development and some clearly defined divisions – in Italy there are the richer northern and central parts and the poorer Mezzogiorno; while in Poland there are the more developed western and central parts and the weaker Eastern Poland region.

The study includes 37 statistical regions at NUTS level 2, including 19 Italian regions and two autonomous provinces (Trento and Bolzano), and 16 Polish voivodships. The time scope of research covers the years 2004–2014.

In order to ensure comparability of data, statistical values are taken from the Eurostat database.

2. General characteristics of the regions

Italy is divided into 20 regions, including five with special status: the Aosta Valley, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Sicily and Trentino-Alto Adige.[1] They have executive powers in the field of regional development set out in the national legislation

[1] They are much more autonomous in terms of territory, resulting from the Island character of Sardinia and Sicily as well as ethnic and linguistic differences, e.g. the German minority in Trentino – Alto Adige, Valle d`Aosta; the French minority in Friuli-Venezia; and the Slovenian minority

(Sługocki 2005, p. 95; Misiuda-Rewera 2005, pp. 155–161). Italian regions, based on their geographical location and the level of economic development, are divided into three macro-regions: Northern Italy, Central Italy and the Mezzogiorno.

Map 1. Italy's territorial division into regions

Source: own elaboration.

Northern Italy includes eight regions: Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta, Liguria, Lombardy, Trentino-Alto Adige (including the autonomous provinces of Bolzano and Trento), Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Emilia Romagna. Their total area constitutes 39.8% of the area of the country, and is home to 45.9% of the country's population. These regions, due to their higher level of urbanization, belong – with the exception of mountainous Valle d'Aosta and Trentino-Alto Adige – to the more densely populated areas (an average of 272 persons per 1 km^2, compared to the national average of 197) (Istat 2013). They are characterized by low unemployment and high GDP per capita at both the national and EU levels, ranging in 2014 from 100% to 144% of the average figures for the EU-27. The northern part of Italy, in particular the triangle Milan-Turin-Genoa, belongs to the highly industrialized areas of Europe and is strongly linked to the global economy. The biggest industrial centers are located there, especially in Milan (1,337,000 inhabitants), Turin (897,000.), Genoa (593,000) and Bologna (386,000), (see: Scorcu 1997; European Commission 2001: VIII; European Commission 2004, p. 27).

in Giulia, near Trieste and Gorizia. Their existence derives from Title V of Part II of the Constitution of the Italian Republic of 27.12.1947.

Central Italy is divided into 4 regions: Lazio, Tuscany, Umbria and Marche. They occupy 19.2% of the total area of the country and are home to 19.6% of its population. These regions, with a GDP per capita of between 87% to 114% of the average EU-27, are slightly less developed than in the north of the country. They are distinguished by a well-developed settlement network of medium-sized cities, their spatial concentration of small and medium enterprises, and educated institutional structure actively supporting economic development. The largest towns in the central part of Italy are Rome (2,872,000 inhabitants) and Florence (381,000).

Mezzogiorno covers six continental regions: Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, and the islands of Sardinia and Sicily. The area is inhabited by 34.5% of the total population of Italy. The biggest cities are Naples (978,000 inhabitants), Palermo (679,000), Bari (327,000) and Catania (316,000). The Mezzogiorno is the largest region in terms of area (almost 41% of the country) and the poorest Italian macro-region (65% of the average GDP per capita of Italy). It is characterized by low population density (167 persons per 1 km^2), an unfavorable structure of the economy with a high concentration of employment in agriculture, and high unemployment rates. These factors are determinative of the low standard of living of the inhabitants of the South of Italy and intensive economic emigration (Oltre il Pil 2013).

Poland is administratively divided into 16 voivodships (NUTS 2 regions).

Map 2. Poland's territorial division into regions

Source: own elaboration.

Due to the level of economic development, the regions of Eastern Poland, namely Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmia-Mazury, have been placed into a separate group. They cover a total of nearly one-third of the country's area (31.6%), which is inhabited by 21.2% of the country's population. The largest cities include: Lublin (340,000), Białystok (295,000), Kielce (198,000), Rzeszów (185,000) and Olsztyn (173,000). The average population density of this macro-region (82.4 people/km^2) is about 50% lower than the national average. The Polish Eastern voivodships are among the least economically developed regions in the country and in the European Union. Despite some positive changes, they are still characterized by low levels of GDP per capita, an unfavorable employment structure, the high economic importance of inefficient agriculture, a lack of innovation in their economies, and weak investment attractiveness (Ocena wpływu realizacji polityki spójności… 2010, p. 33, Wpływ funduszy europejskich… 2015, Ministerstwo Rozwoju 2016, pp. 8–15).

There has also been an initiative to develop a separate development strategy for the Western part of Poland, encompassing the regions of Dolnośląskie, Lubuskie, Opolskie, Wielkopolskie, and Zachodniopomorskie. They cover 30.7% of the country and have a population of more than 26.28% of the total population of Poland (Strategia rozwoju Polski Zachodniej 2020, 2014).). This area is characterized by a lower than the national average population density (105.2 people/km^2, compared to the national average of 123), but a slightly higher degree of urbanization. The macro-region comprises the highly industrialized areas of Lower Silesia (Dolny Śląsk) and Greater Poland (Wielkopolska). They are characterized by a favourable economic structure associated with specialized industries and a high degree of marketisation of agriculture. The largest cities in Western Poland are Wroclaw (635,000), Poznań (542,000) and Szczecin (405,000) (GUS, 2016). An important role in the region's socio-economic development is also played by the capitals of the Lubuskie region: Zielona Góra and Gorzów Wielkopolski, as well as Opole in the Opolskie region.

Taking into account the above-mentioned separate classification of eastern and western Poland, the remaining six voivodships are included in the present analysis in central Poland,[2] comprised of the Pomorskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Łódzkie, Mazowieckie, Małopolskie, and Śląskie voivodships. This area constitutes 37.4% of the country (117,575 km^2) and is inhabited by the population of 20.18 million people (52.6% of the Polish population). The average population density is high, especially in the regions of Śląsk and Malopolska (*Strategia rozwoju Polski Południowej do roku 2020*, 2014). The Polish central voivodships have higher than the national average share of employment in services (60.5%), and lower shares in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fisheries (13.4% vs. the 17.2% average in Poland).

[2] Supra-regional development strategies were drawn up for four regions, including the Łódzkie and Mazowieckie regions within Central Poland and Małopolskie and Śląskie regions within Southern Poland (*Strategia rozwoju Polski Centralnej do roku 2020 z perspektywą 2030*, 2015).

Table 1. Basic data related to Italian regions and Polish voivodships in 2014

Name of Italian regions/ provinces	Population in thous. people	PKB *per capita*		Unemployment rate	Name of Polish regions	Population in thous. people	PKB *per capita*		Unemployment rate
		thous. euro	UE=100				thous. euro	EU=100	
Italy	60 782.7	26.5	96	11.9	Poland	38005.6	18.8	68	7.5
Valle d'Aosta/	128.2	36.5	133	8.9	Dolnośląskie	2868.3	20.8	76	7.0
Piemonte	4424.4	27.6	100	10.2	Kujawsko-Pomorskie	2065.8	15.1	55	7.9
Liguria	1583.2	28.7	104	9.2	Lubelskie	2126.3	15.6	47	9.3
Lombardia	9973.3	34.7	126	7.9	Lubuskie	1007.4	13.0	57	6.4
Provincia autonoma di Bolzano	518.5	39.7	144	3.8	Łódzkie	2498.8	17.4	63	7.7
Provincia autonoma di Trento	537.4	33.7	123	6.8	Małopolskie	3324.5	16.6	60	7.1
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1227.2	27.8	101	8.0	Mazowieckie	5309.7	29.8	108	6.4
Veneto	4927.5	29.8	108	7.1	Opolskie	956.9	15.5	55	6.5
Emilia-Romagna	4450.5	32.2	117	7.7	Podkarpackie	2084.2	13.2	48	11.6
Toscana	3752.6	28.7	104	9.2	Podlaskie	1162.3	13.4	49	7.0
Umbria	894.7	24.0	87	10.4	Pomorskie	2271.5	17.7	64	6.6
Marche	1550.7	25.3	92	9.9	Śląskie	4535.7	19.3	70	7.2
Lazio	5892.4	31.4	114	11.8	Świętokrzyskie	1247.9	13.5	49	10.1
Abruzzo	1331.5	23.1	84	12.6	Warmińsko-mazurskie	1418.5	13.3	48	9.5
Molise	313.3	20.5	75	14.3	Wielkopolskie	3447.6	20.0	73	5.8
Campania	5861.5	16.7	61	19.8	Zachodnio Pomorskie	1688.4	15.6	57	7.5
Basilicata	576.6	19.0	69	13.7					
Puglia	4090.1	17.2	63	19.7					
Calabria	1976.6	16.1	59	22.9					
Sicilia	5092.0	17.0	62	21.4					
Sardegna	1663.2	19.9	72	17.4					

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. General and regional statistics: http://ec. europa.eu/eurostat/data/database (access date: 27.04.2017).

The biggest, most developed, and most internally diverse region, both in the macro-region and in the whole country, is the region of Masovia (Mazowsze). The scale of the differences in GDP per capita between the capital city of Warsaw and the weakest sub-region NUTS 3 in Masovia is approximately 4:1. According to Gorzelak and Jałowiecki (2010, pp. 37–45), this large difference is the result of weakening ties between Warsaw and its regional base. Also of significance with respect to this trend is the level of investment expenditures in the sub-regional system observed for many decades.

Apart from Warsaw, the most important urban centres include Kraków (population of 761,000), Łódź (700,000), Gdańsk (462,000), Gdynia (247,000), Bydgoszcz (355,000) and Katowice (299,000).

3. Factors determining the demographic situation

At the core of demographic changes lie complex and mutually reinforcing causes of a cultural, economic, political and geographical nature. As early as in the mid-twentieth century families with four or more children, especially in rural areas and among working-class families, were a normal phenomenon in various European countries. At present, the norm is to have one child, more rarely two, and this occurs both in Italy and Poland. There is a common trend that the increase in education and standard of living of parents leads to the decrease in the number of children. Young people are increasingly inclined to first achieve a certain level of education and economic stabilization and then, usually after age 30, to have children. This phenomenon is referred to as "deferred" births (*Rapporto annuale* 2014). It is obvious that having children leads to higher alternative costs by limiting opportunities for professional development, lowering wages, and reducing leisure time. In the past, these factors had less influence on the decisions whether to have children.

Migratory movements of the population, mainly from rural to urban areas or from smaller cities to large agglomerations, are one of the main economic factors in demographic processes. One can also observe the general mobility of the population, related to education, more work opportunities, efficient communication and ease in changing one's place of residence. European integration and globalization processes are also conducive to international migration. Directions of migration are determined by the attractiveness of the areas of destination as places to work and live in. People move to the centres of modern industry and services sectors. This phenomenon is beneficial to both the centres (due to the possibility of obtaining a sufficient number of employees), as well as to migrants, because they can find a satisfying place of work. In this way, the demographic structure improves in the regions with greater development potential and depopulation occurs in the weaker regions. Flows in population reduce the statistical age of residents,[3] increase the fertility rate, improve the economic structure of age, and reduce labour shortages, thus creating the basis for future economic development. On the other hand, in regions of out-migration there is an aging of society, resulting in a reduction of labour and lower birth rates, as well as a lower share of working-age population. The dependency ratio and the relationship between budget revenue and social spending deteriorate. The financial viability of pension systems becomes unstable and the costs of health care and social assistance increase. As a result of these factors, a further reduction in the dynamism of the economy takes place and a decline in income can be expected (*Rapporto annual* 2014; Chawla, Betcherman, Banerji 2007). The causes of migration are also related to political factors and threats to human security. This phenomenon is clearly visible in the migration of people from the countries of North Africa and Asia to Italy, and in the inflow to Poland of persons mostly affected by the crisis Ukraine (Brunarska 2014, pp. 155–174).

4. Regions of population growth and decline

The changing population of a given territory, i.e. actual increases or decreases, is the result of the co-occurrence of two processes: the rate of natural increase (the difference between the number of births and deaths) and net migration (the difference between people who settled in a given place versus those who left it). The analysis of these processes in the years 2004–2014 shows that in Italy there was an increase in population of 3.9 million (5.7%), while in Poland there was a decrease loss of 184,900 (–0.5%). The demographic processes in these countries therefore were different.

In Italy, the largest population growth was recorded in the northern and central parts (7.1% and 9.7%), several times higher than in the Mezzogiorno (1.8%). The largest increase in the number of inhabitants was recorded in the capital region Lazio, whose population increased by more than 723,000, i.e. by 14%. A relatively high (more than 9%) growth in population took place in the most developed North Italian regions of Bolzano and Trento, Emilia Romagna and Lombardy (Fig. 1). With the exception of Abruzzo, the worst demographic situation occurred in the Mez-

[3] In 2013, median age in Italy was 44.4 years, an increase of more than three years in comparison to 2004. At the same time in Poland the median age reached the level of 39.1, and increase of 2.9 years from that in 2004. (Gernini, *Boom di nuovi italiani: l'età media e sotto i 30 anni* http://www.unita.tv/focus/boom-di-nuovi-italiani-leta-media-e-sotto-i-30-anni/ (access date: 16.01.2017), Istat 2011b, Istat 2015a, p. 12, GUS, 2014a, p. 106, *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski*, *Raport 2013–2014*, 2014, Warszawa, p. 44.

zogiorno, where the population growth was reported in the range of 0.9% – 2.6%, with three regions reporting a decline (SVIMEZ, 2015: 20–21). According to the demographic forecast of ISTAT (2011a) in Italy the current demographic trends will be maintained, resulting in the northern and central regions experiencing a further increase in population, whereas the population of the regions of the South will begin to decline.[4] What is worrying is that there the largest decrease will take place in the number of young people under the age of 35 (Nel 2050 i giovani saranno il 20,2% della popolazione. http://www.regioni.it/sociale/2016/04/26/istat-nel-2050-i-giovani-saranno-il-202-della-popolazione-455573/ (access date: 21.01.2017).

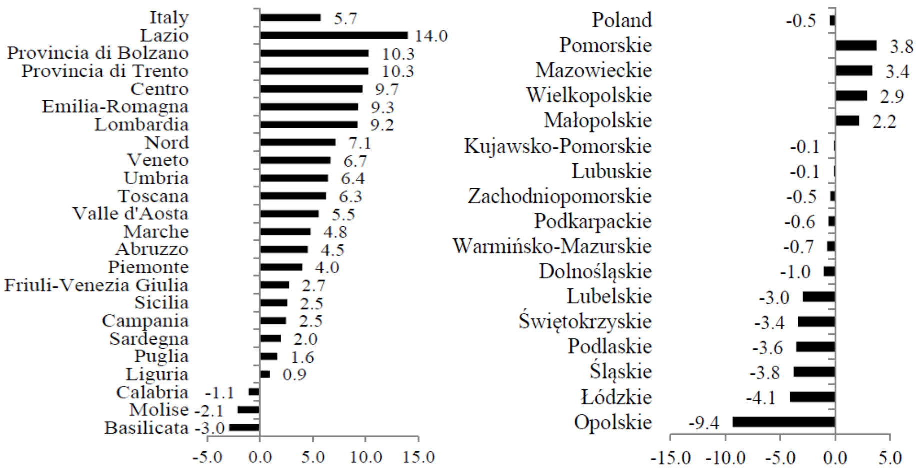

Figure 1. Changes in population in Italian and Polish regions in 2004–1014 (%)

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Population on 1 January by NUTS 2 region http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tgs00096&plugin=1 (access date: 27.04.2017)

In Poland, population growth occurred only in four regions: Pomorskie (3.8%), Mazowieckie (3.4%), Małopolskie (Lesser Poland) (2.2%) and Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland) (2.6%). All the other regions recorded a decrease in population, with Opolskie depopulating the fastest, where the number of its inhabitants decreased by almost 10% in the last ten years.[5] The next largest decreases in population were recorded in five other regions located in different parts of the country: Łódzkie, Śląskie, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie and Lubelskie (Fig. 1). The largest loss in absolute values occurred in the most urbanized and developed industrial region of Silesia (–179,300 persons) and in the Łódzkie region. Similarly to the

[4] According to the forecast, the population of 21 million in the Mezzogiorno macro-region will drop to 18 million in 2050, and 16.7 million in 2065. Consequently, its share in the total population of the country will decrease from 34.3% to 27.4%.

[5] Owing to the poor demographic situation in the Opolskie, region a Program was set up to establish a Demographic Special Zone (2012).

Italian regions, the observed demographic trend is expected to continue into the future also in Polish regions and will lead to further depopulation of the regions of Lubelskie, Łódzkie and Opolskie, as well as Świętokrzyskie – a drop of over 20% as compared to the 2013 (GUS, 2014b, pp. 112–113).

5. Natural movement of population

In the years 2004–2014 Italy as a whole, as well as most of its regions, recorded a total negative natural increase in population of –0.6%. The worst situation in terms of the number of inhabitants was observed in Liguria, where the rate reached –6.6%, i.e. –104,600, followed by Molise (–3.9%) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (–3.6%). Negative values of the natural increase rate result from the simultaneous decline in live births as well as a more moderate number of deaths (Crollo delle nascite in Italia..., http://noi-italia2015.istat.it/, access date: 20.02.2017). In terms of population growth a good situation was observed in five regions and two autonomous provinces. The largest increase occurred in Bolzano, 3.2% (i.e. 16,700 persons); in Campania, 1.6% (i.e. 94,800 persons). and in Trentino, 1.3% (i.e. 6,700 persons).

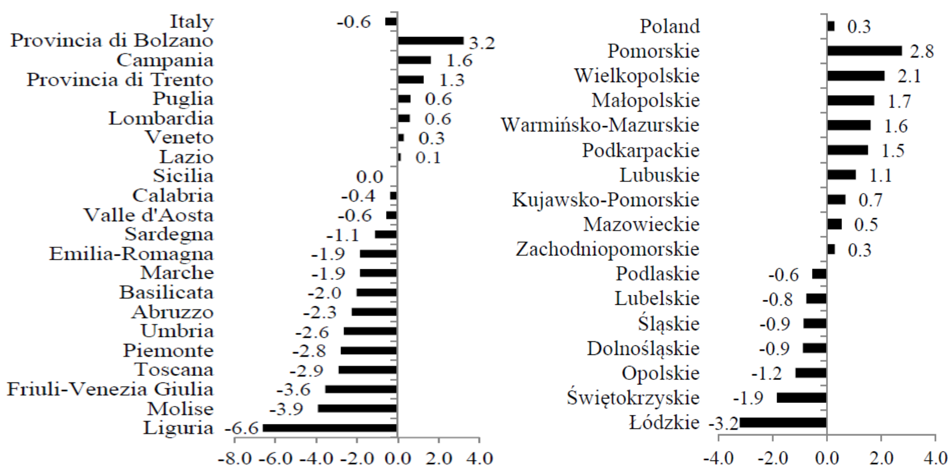

Figure 2. Total natural population growth in Italian and Polish regions in 2004–2014 (%)

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Population change: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_r_gind3&lang=en (access date: 27.04.2017)

In Poland, in most of its voivodships there has been a slight but positive total natural increase, the largest being in the Pomorskie (2.8%, or 4,500 persons) and Wielkopolskie (2.1%, or 5,800 persons) regions. A negative natural increase was recorded in seven voivodships: Łódzkie, Świętokrzyskie, Opolskie, Dolnośląskie

(Lower Silesia), Śląskie (Silesia), Lubelskie and Podlaskie. The decreasing number of births in these regions reduced the share of young people in the total population and, consequently resulted in a deterioration of the age structure and currently contributes to the aging of the population, with all its negative consequences for the regional economy and labour market.

The rate of natural growth is shaped by the fertility rate. In order for the populations to replace themselves the fertility rate should be at least 2.1, e.g. 100 women aged 15–49 years should give birth to an average of 210 children. In the Italian regions the fertility rate ranges from 1.13 to 1.63, and thus remains at a level slightly higher than in the Polish regions (Woźniak 1999, pp. 285–306). The higher number of births in the Italian regions results mainly from the relatively high fertility of African immigrants, who, unlike Italian women, often opt for two or more children (Istat 2016, p. 8). The lowest fertility rate is observed in the Mezzogiorno macro-region, with the exception of Campania and Sicily. The most favourable situation in this respect is observed in the most northern Trentino Alto Adige and Valle d'Aosta. In Poland, the lowest level of fertility is observed in Opolskie, whereas the highest is in the Pomorskie and Wielkopolskie voivodships.

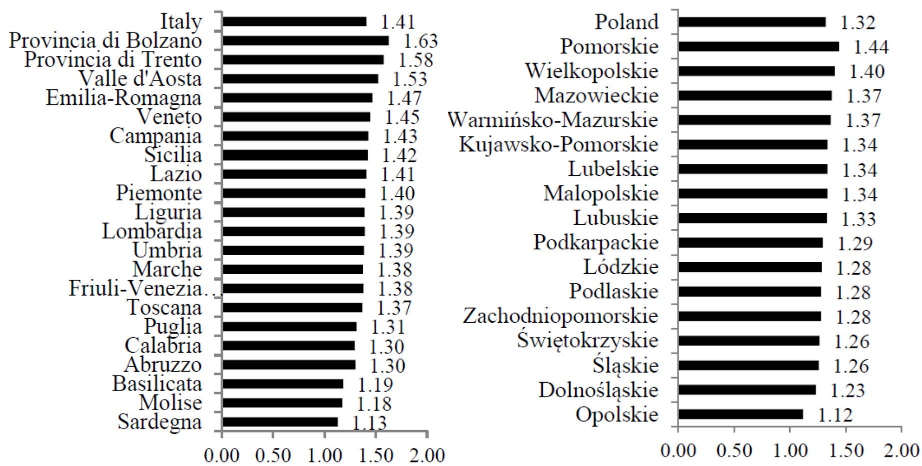

Figure 3. Average birth rate in Italian and Polish regions in 2005–2014

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Total fertility rate by NUTS 2 regions http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/tabledo?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tgs00100&plugin=1 (access date: 27.04.2017).

6. In- and out-migration

The positive net population migration for permanent residence, representing the difference between the number of people that migrated into the given region and the number of people who left the territory within a specified time, significantly influenced the growth of the Italian population[6]. In the years 2004–2014 the total net migration amounted to an increase of 6.1% (3,690,000) and was spatially varied. The greatest net migration rate was recorded in the capital Lazio (12.3%), followed by Emilia Romagna (10.4%), Tuscany (8.8%), Umbria (8.7%) and the province of Trento (8.1%) (Istat 2015b, Istat 2016, p. 11). The intensive influx of migrants into the more economically developed regions of northern and central Italy can be considered natural, since they offer stable and attractive jobs and easier access to educational, medical, cultural and recreational services. With the exception of Abruzzo (6.6%), the smallest positive net migration for permanent residence was observed in two regions (Calabria and Basilicata). A negative rate was even observed in the Mezzogiorno regions, despite the that fact that due to the proximity of the African continent the majority of immigrants and refugees from Africa and the Middle East go first to this macro-region.[7] Numerous studies show that the majority of them usually emigrate further to the central and northern regions, similarly as the mass population has been doing for many decades (Basile, Causi 2007, pp. 139–159, Panichella 2009, pp. 221–246, Piras 2007, pp. 119–138, Piras, Melis 2007, pp. 437–461, Viesti 2005, pp. 678–688). In just the years 2001–2014 1,667,000 people emigrated from the South to richer parts of Italy (Svimez 2015, pp. 20–21). Most of the emigrants were young people aged 20–39, constituting the most enterprising and relatively well-educated (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2012, p. 14).

Poland, in contrast to Italy, is a country with high emigration, mainly to the more developed countries of the European Union, and therefore its population is constantly decreasing (GUS 2016, p. 166). In 2013, 280,000 Poles left Poland. In the years 2004–2011 the number of immigrants was estimated at 2,060,000 persons, which accounted for 5.4% of the population in 2011 (GUS, 2012). The loss of population due to emigration is partially compensated for by the increasing influx of immigrants (an increase from 10,000 in 2006

[6] Official statistics concerning migration do not present the real scale of the phenomenon, as immigrants fail to comply with registration requirement, mostly in connection with temporary migration for the period of over 3 months.

[7] In the first half of 2016, 36,812 immigrants reached Sicily and 10,039 reached Calabria (Noviello, 2016, pp. 85–99).

to 157,100 in 2011 and 268,300 in 2014)[8]. Nevertheless, the net effect of these processes was that number of net migration for permanent residence in 2013 was estimated at nearly –20,000 persons, and in 2014 at –15,000. The highest negative balance of foreign migration was recorded in the period 2006–2007 (respectively –36,000 and –20,500 persons) (GUS, 2015, p. 2). In the entire period from 2004 to 2014 Poland recorded a relatively small negative net migration, which amounted to –0.4% (–140,000 thousand persons) and thus remained a country of net emigration (Sasnal 2015, p. 56). At the same time there were large migration movements within the country, mainly to the large cities, and especially to Warsaw and Krakow. The largest negative value in the internal and external migration balance was recorded in Opolskie, followed by the Lubelskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie, Śląskie, Podlaskie, and Świętokrzyskie regions. A positive increase in internal migration occurred only in four regions, with the highest increase being in Mazowieckie region (2.9%), followed by a significantly lower increase in the Lesser Poland (1.0%) and Pomerania (0.7%), and quite low in Greater Poland (0.3%).

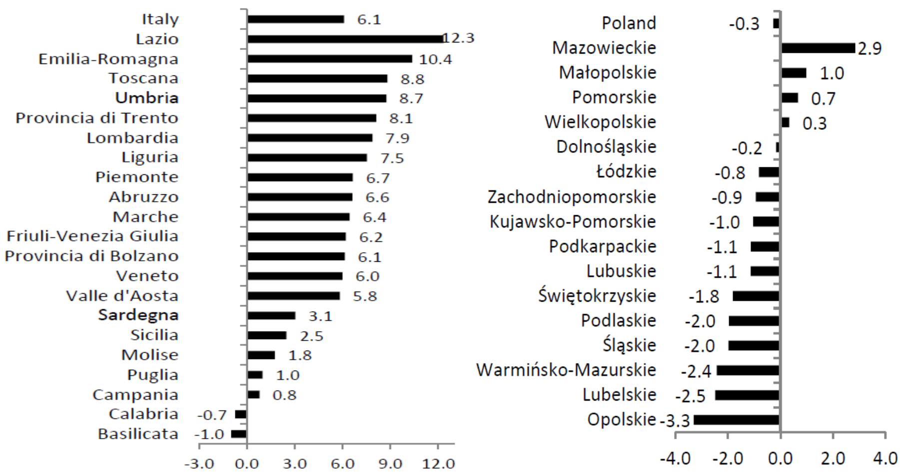

Figure 4. Total migration balance in Italian and Polish regions in 2004–2014 (%)

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Population change: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_r_gind3&lang=en (access date: 27.04.2017).

[8] The exact number of foreigners reaching Poland is not known, which results from the difficulties in assessing unregistered migration, the specific character of immigration to Poland, which is usually of a circulation nature, as well as the mobility of immigrants (*Sprawozdanie krajowe – Polska 2016 r.*).

7. Changes in the age structure of the populations

The changes in the structure of the population according to age groups results from the demographic changes, and, above all, from the decline in the number of births while a constant number of deaths can be observed since the 1990s. In Italy, during the period of 2004–2014, the number of people in pre-working age (0–14 years) increased by 2.5% (about 200,000 persons); in working age (15–64 years) by 2% (796,500 persons); and in the post-productive age (65 years or older) by 17% (913,800 persons). As a result, the share of children under the age of 14 in the general population decreased by 0.34 percentage points, people in the working age by 1.88 percentage points, while people in the post-productive age increased by 2.22 percentage points. For many years, the percentage of the pre-working population was decreasing fastest in the Mezzogiorno (Libro verde…http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_ situation/responses/a9947_it_2.pdf access date: 12.02.2017). At the end of 2014, the smallest share of this group in the total population (below 12%) was recorded in Liguria, Molise and Sardinia, and the highest (over 15%) in Trentino Alto Adige and Campania. The fastest aging population is observed in Sardinia, Puglia and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, but the highest proportion of people of retirement age is recorded in Liguria (28%), followed by and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (25.1%), Tuscany (24.8%), Umbria (24.6%), and Piedmont (24.5%) (L'Italia tra le invecchiamento… 2013).

Table 2. Population of Italian regions according to economic age groups in 2004 and 2014 (%)

Name of Italian regions	2004			2014			Change 2004-2014, in points. percent.		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Italy	14.13	66.34	19.52	13.79	64.47	21.74	–0.34	–1.88	2.22
Valle d'Aosta/ Vallée d'Aoste	13.22	67.31	19.97	13.90	63.62	22.48	0.68	–3.19	2.51
Piemonte	12.33	65.95	22.25	12.90	62.63	24.47	0.57	–2.80	2.22
Liguria	10.96	63.08	26.44	11.54	60.46	28.00	0.57	–2.13	1.56
Lombardia	13.51	67.74	19.20	14.17	64.20	21.62	0.66	–3.08	2.42
Provincia autonoma di Bolzano/Bozen	17.08	66.73	16.43	16.08	64.96	18.96	–1.00	–1.53	2.53
Provincia autonoma di Trento	15.30	66.43	18.54	15.01	64.28	20.71	–0.30	–1.87	2.17
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	11.87	66.40	22.18	12.56	62.34	25.10	0.69	–3.61	2.92
Veneto	13.80	67.62	18.98	13.99	64.36	21.65	0.19	–2.86	2.67
Emilia-Romagna	12.28	65.29	22.77	13.50	63.05	23.45	1.22	–1.90	0.68
Toscana	12.04	65.19	23.14	12.83	62.41	24.76	0.80	–2.41	1.62
Umbria	12.38	64.55	23.35	12.99	62.42	24.59	0.61	–1.85	1.24
Marche	13.04	64.81	22.42	13.21	63.05	23.74	0.17	–1.48	1.31
Lazio	13.84	67.47	18.96	13.80	65.52	20.68	–0.04	–1.68	1.72

Name of Italian regions	2004			2014			Change 2004-2014, in points. percent.		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Abruzzo	13.53	65.50	21.12	12.84	64.55	22.61	–0.69	–0.80	1.49
Molise	13.57	64.63	21.80	11.92	64.73	23.36	–1.65	0.10	1.56
Campania	17.77	67.23	15.00	15.48	66.96	17.56	–2.29	–0.26	2.56
Basilicata	14.80	65.53	19.67	12.69	65.60	21.62	–2.10	0.15	1.95
Puglia	16.02	66.98	17.00	14.04	65.47	20.49	–1.98	–1.51	3.49
Calabria	15.58	66.42	18.00	13.77	66.01	20.22	–1.81	–0.41	2.22
Sicilia	16.42	65.90	17.69	14.46	65.65	19.89	–1.96	–0.24	2.20
Sardegna	13.12	69.63	17.25	11.94	66.47	21.58	–1.18	–3.16	4.33

1 – pre-working age, 2 – working age, 3 – post-productive age

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Population on 1 January by age group, sex and NUTS 2 region: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_r_pjangroup&lang=en (access date: 27.04.2017).

Unlike Italy, Poland observed a decline in the number of people aged under 15 years and 15–64 years, by 10.4% (–662,500 persons) and 1.3% respectively, while the elderly population increased by 16.7% (841,400). As a consequence of these changes the share of people in pre-working age in the entire population in the country decreased by 1.67% and people of working age by 0.60%, while the share of the population in retirement age increased by 2.27%. The largest change in the share of people in pre-production age (more than 2.66%) was observed in the regions of Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie and Świętokrzyskie; however, in 2014 the lowest share of people in this age group (less than 14%) was observed in the regions of Opolskie, Świętokrzyskie, Łódzkie, with a slightly higher share in Dolnośląskie and Śląskie. The share of the post-productive population grew the fastest in Śląskie and Opolskie, followed by Zachodnipomorskie, Lubuskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie. The highest share of this age group (over 16%) was in the Łódzkie region, as well as in Świętokrzyskie, Opolskie, Śląskie, Podlaskie and Lubelskie (see Table 3 below). However, it is still significantly lower than in the Italian regions. The reported changes in the population structure will have a negative impact on the regions' economic and social development because the decreasing participation of young and better-educated people reduces economic activity, territorial mobility and economic efficiency. The allocation of labour resources is hindered, innovation and technical progress are weakened, while the economic burden increases because of the increasing number of elderly people.

Table 3. Population of Polish regions according to economic age groups in 2004 and 2014 (%)

Name of Polish regions	2004			2014			Change 2004-2014, in points. percent.		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Polska	16.71	70.15	13.15	15.04	69.55	15.42	–1.67	–0.60	2.27
Dolnośląskie	15.27	71.39	13.34	14.06	70.23	15.71	–1.21	–1.17	2.37
Kujawsko-pomorskie	17.39	70.41	12.20	15.17	70.00	14.84	–2.22	–0.41	2.63

Name of Polish regions	2004			2014			Change 2004-2014, in points. percent.		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Lubelskie	17.49	68.34	14.16	14.83	69.16	16.01	–2.66	0.82	1.85
Lubuskie	17.05	71.39	11.56	15.21	70.56	14.23	–1.84	–0.83	2.67
Łódzkie	15.28	69.90	14.82	13.99	68.84	17.17	–1.29	–1.06	2.36
Małopolskie	17.85	68.95	13.21	15.84	69.13	15.03	–2.01	0.19	1.82
Mazowieckie	16.04	69.48	14.47	15.64	68.50	15.86	–0.40	–0.98	1.39
Opolskie	15.70	70.99	13.30	13.59	70.05	16.36	–2.11	–0.94	3.05
Podkarpackie	18.76	68.51	12.73	15.45	69.84	14.71	–3.31	1.33	1.98
Podlaskie	17.49	68.18	14.33	14.57	69.41	16.02	–2.92	1.23	1.68
Pomorskie	17.73	70.52	11.75	16.35	69.40	14.24	–1.38	–1.12	2.50
Śląskie	15.16	71.96	12.87	14.08	69.74	16.18	–1.08	–2.22	3.31
Świętokrzyskie	16.65	68.61	14.74	13.93	69.31	16.76	–2.72	0.69	2.03
Warmińsko-mazurskie	18.29	70.30	11.41	15.53	70.82	13.65	–2.76	0.52	2.23
Wielkopolskie	17.54	70.64	11.82	16.05	69.76	14.18	–1.48	–0.88	2.36
Zachodniopomorskie	16.63	71.44	11.93	14.51	70.63	14.86	–2.12	–0.81	2.93

1 – pre-working age, 2 – working age, 3 – post-productive age

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Population on 1 January by age group, sex and NUTS 2 region: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_r_pjan group&lang=en (access date: 27.04.2017)

8. The oldest and the youngest regions

The demographic aging index is used to measure the adverse changes in the age structure of the population and the increasing number and proportion of the elderly population.[9] This index describes the relationship between the proportion of people aged 65 and over and children and adolescents under the age of 14. Index values above 100 indicate a higher proportion of the elderly in comparison to children and young people. The comparison of the values of the demographic aging index in 2014 and 2004 shows the changes which took place in the Italian and Polish regions in terms of population aging.

In Italy, for each 100 people at pre-working age at the end of 2014 there were 157.7 people in the retirement age, while in 2004 the number was 138.1. In all regions there were more persons aged 65 and older than children and adolescents under 15 years. The worst demographic structure (for each 100 people under the age 15 there were more than 190 people aged at least 65) could be observed in Liguria, Friuli-Venezia Gi-

[9] According to the UN (2005), an 'old population' refers to a population in which people aged 65 and more constitute more than 7%.

ulia, Molise, and Tuscany. The high proportion of older people compared to the young is also characteristic of Piedmont, Umbria and Sardinia. The least advanced aging, based on the aging indicator, was in Campania, Trentino Alto Adige and Sicily.

In Poland, the situation in this respect is much more favourable. The demographic aging index in 2014 was 102.5 persons on average. It should be noted, however, that the pace of change in Poland is twice as fast as in Italy (Table 4). The highest aging index (over 120 persons) was recorded in the Łódzkie, Świętokrzyskie and Opolskie voivodships, as well as in Silesia, Lower Silesia and Podlaskie (over 110). Currently, the demographic situation of Polish regions is comparable to the "youngest" Italian regions. However, the high growth rate of people over the age of 65, according to the data provided by the Central Statistical Office (2014, pp. 112–113), indicates that the rate of aging in Poland and the voivodships will reach a state similar to that in Italy in the foreseeable future. The most favourable demographic situation in this regard is observed in the Pomorskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie and Wielkopolskie regions. The aging of the population has numerous consequences for the labour market (Ciura, Szymańczyk 2012). Firstly, fewer people of working age simply mean less "manpower". Secondly, employees will be older, which means that often they will not be able to perform work requiring a high degree of physical fitness. Thirdly, there will be changes in the need for certain professions. The so-called "white" jobs, directly related to the provision of nursing and physiotherapy services, will become more popular. There will be less demand for professions related to the care and upbringing of children and education.

Table 4. The ratio of people of retirement age per 100 people of pre-productive age in Italian and Polish regions in 2004 and 2014

Name of Italian regions	2004	2014	Change 2004–2014 %	Name of Polish regions	2004	2014	Change 2004–2014 %
Italy	138.1	157.7	14.1	Poland	78.7	102.5	30.3
Valle d'Aosta	151.1	161.7	7.0	Dolnośląskie	87.3	111.7	27.9
Piemonte	180.4	189.6	5.1	Kujawsko-pomorskie	70.2	97.8	39.4
Liguria	241.2	242.7	0.6	Lubelskie	81.0	107.9	33.3
Lombardia	142.1	152.6	7.4	Lubuskie	67.8	93.6	38.0
Provincia autonoma di Bolzano/Bozen	96.2	117.9	22.6	Łódzkie	96.9	122.8	26.6
Provincia autonoma di Trento	121.1	138.0	13.9	Małopolskie	74.0	94.9	28.2
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	186.8	199.8	7.0	Mazowieckie	90.2	101.4	12.4
Veneto	137.5	154.8	12.6	Opolskie	84.7	120.3	42.0

Name of Italian regions	2004	2014	Change 2004–2014 %	Name of Polish regions	2004	2014	Change 2004–2014 %
Emilia-Romagna	185.4	173.6	–6.3	Podkarpackie	67.8	95.2	40.3
Toscana	192.2	192.9	0.4	Podlaskie	82.0	110.0	34.1
Umbria	188.5	189.3	0.4	Pomorskie	66.3	87.1	31.5
Marche	172.0	179.7	4.5	Śląskie	84.9	114.9	35.3
Lazio	137.0	149.8	9.4	Świętokrzyskie	88.5	120.4	36.0
Abruzzo	156.1	176.1	12.8	Warmińsko-mazurskie	62.4	87.9	40.8
Molise	160.7	196.0	22.0	Wielkopolskie	67.4	88.3	31.1
Campania	84.4	113.4	34.4	Zachodniopomorskie	71.7	102.4	42.7
Basilicata	132.9	170.3	28.1				
Puglia	106.1	145.9	37.5				
Calabria	115.5	146.9	27.2				
Sicilia	107.7	137.6	27.7				
Sardegna	131.5	180.7	37.5				

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data. Population on 1 January by age group, sex and NUTS 2 http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_r_pjangroup&lang=en (access date: 27.04.2017)

9. Conclusions

The analysis facilitated evaluation of the demographic potential of Italian and Polish regions, as well as identification of trends related to this potential. They can be described as follows:

1. In Italy, at the end of 2014 a generally favourable demographic situation could be observed in the northern regions, with a high degree of concentration of the population, modern industry and business services. The most favourable situation occurred in the most economically developed region of Trentino Alto Adige, and in highly urbanized Lombardy and Lazio. In these regions, immigration compensates to the greatest extent for the negative or low birth rate. It lowers the average age of residents and improves the economic structure of the population. Liguria – the "oldest" region of Italy demographically – is an exception among the northern regions of Italy. The worst demographic situation occurs in the Mezzogiorno regions, especially in the least urbanized ones, characterized by the lowest level of development, namely Basilicata, Calabria and Molise. A small positive net migration rate cannot compensate for the declining population due to the negative natural growth. An unfavourable situation can also be observed in Sardinia, due to one of the highest rates of demographic burden.

The long term outflows of population from these regions is both the result and the cause of their lower level of development. This has been the case throughout the entire Mezzogiorno macro-region since the reunification of the country, and thus it remains an area of labour reserves for northern and central Italy.

2. In Poland, the best demographic situation can be observed in those regions with the highest population growth and positive net migration: Pomorskie, Małopolskie and Wielkopolskie, as well as in Mazowieckie with its highest net migration and positive population growth rate. The capitals of these regions quickly joined the network of European cities and developed modern services offering attractive jobs and career prospects for young and more educated people. The worst demographic situation can be observed in the Opolskie, Świętokrzyskie and Łódzkie regions, where the lowest birth rates in the country are accompanied by high negative net migration. However, the biggest outflow of population in absolute numbers could be observed in the Śląskie and Łódzkie regions. These regions are therefore not attractive enough for those seeking better working and living conditions, because they are still dominated by their traditional, declining industries (e.g. mining, metallurgy, light industry) (Runge 2010, pp. 33–82). In the least economically developed regions of Eastern Poland the demographic situation is varied (Celińska-Janowicz, Miszczuk, Płoszaj, Smętkowski 2020). Particularly unfavourable demographic changes took place in Świętokrzyskie, Lubelskie and Podlaskie. This is evidenced by negative natural growth rate and high negative net migration rate. In contrast, the Warmia-Mazury and Podkarpackie regions are characterized by high population growth and a favourable dependency ratio. At the same time there are areas of high emigration, and in Podkarpackie the highest rate of the decrease in the pre-working age group was recorded.
3. A low level of economic development is accompanied by unfavourable demographic processes more often in the Italian regions than in the Polish voivodships. In Italy, this situation is typical of most of the less developed regions of the Mezzogiorno macro-region. In Poland, the worst demographic situation can be found in the Opolskie, Świętokrzyskie and Łódzkie regions, i.e. in regions situated in different parts of the country. An unfavourable trend is observed also in the relatively well-developed Silesia. Thus, the demographic situation in Poland, unlike in Italy, is not directly related to the level of development of regions and their geographical location. This is probably the result of the polycentric development of Poland and polar development in Italy. A certain similarity of demographic changes, albeit of different levels of advancement, connected with the number of persons, the level of fertility, and net migration occurs in the macro-regions of the Mezzogiorno and Eastern Poland. Perhaps Mezzogiorno is presently experiencing a demographic situation which Eastern Poland may experience in the future, if the policy-making authorities consider the introduction of polar development.

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Streszczenie

REGIONALNE ZRÓŻNICOWANIE POTENCJAŁU DEMOGRAFICZNEGO WE WŁOSZECH I W POLSCE

Celem artykułu jest porównanie potencjału demograficznego włoskich i polskich regionów oraz wskazanie tendencji zmian jakim ten potencjał podlega.

Analiza wykazała, że niskiemu poziomowi rozwoju gospodarczego częściej towarzyszą niekorzystne procesy demograficzne w regionach włoskich niż polskich. We Włoszech taka sytuacja jest charakterystyczna dla większości słabiej rozwiniętych regionów Me-

zzogiorno, w Polsce zaś nie ma bezpośredniego związku z poziomem rozwoju regionów i ich usytuowaniem geograficznym. Prawdopodobnie jest to rezultat policentrycznego, dotychczasowego rozwoju Polski i biegunowego rozwoju Włoch. Pewne podobieństwo, jednak o różnym poziomie zaawansowania, występuje w sytuacji gospodarczej i demograficznej ogółu regionów Mezzogiorno i województw wschodniej Polski. Być może regiony Mezzogiorno znajdują się w takiej sytuacji, w jakiej województwa Polski Wschodniej mogą znaleźć się w przyszłości, jeżeli władze kreujące politykę uznają rozwój biegunowy za uzasadniony.

Słowa kluczowe: *potencjał demograficzny, regiony włoskie, polskie województwa, rozwój regionalny*