

# LONG-TERM DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN ITALIAN INNER AREAS: A CROSS - CENSUS ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

Conventionally Inner areas are thought as being places having experienced, and continue experiencing, constant population decline, while it is true that not all of them fit this classic tale. Not only in recent years some of these trends have generally started to reverse hence undermining the direct association rural/decline and urban/agglomeration, but as it will be shown some territories did not experience it at all.

[...]

Having an in-depth appraisal of long-term demographic changes occurred in the last fifty years on the whole national territory is of fundamental importance when investigating possible future scenarios.

This paper provides an exploratory cross-census analysis at municipal level trying to explore the main factors influencing (disruptive) changes in demographic trends (switches) which move away from the very clear pattern of agglomeration, rural depopulation and north-south migration experienced by Italy in the last 50 years. In order to do so, the paper identifies different classes of “behaviour” – in terms of demographic trajectories – and offers a socio-economic description of the territory for the different groups we identified, also exploiting the classifications proposed by the National Strategy for Inner Areas (2014).

The results of the analysis will provide the basis for stimulating a discussion which could contribute to the understanding of how to analyse these peculiar areas. Policy-wise, they will also provide insights on how to promote place-specific strategies that might require a unique mix of interventions.

The study of long-term tendencies, zooming on particularly interesting cases in this respect, may help reflecting on potential future research avenues in the field of managing demographic changes and decline and on viable ways to promote a harmonious development by contrasting spatial imbalances.

**Keywords:** Inner areas; Urban-rural; Demographic change, Territorial inequalities.

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