

## INTERREGIONAL DISPROPORTIONS OF THE COASTAL REGIONS IN POLAND

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**Abstract:** The present publication focuses on spatial effects of Polish transformation in social and demographic aspects in the coastal regions of Poland. The research included changes of population's number, density of population and transformations of selected populations' structures. The paper also presents tendencies of changes in natural movements and migration movements. The paper describes unemployment and the present situation on labor markets in the coastal regions including the number and quality of labor resources.

**Key words:** the coastal regions of Poland, demographic structures, natural movement, migrations, unemployment

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Social and economic transformations introduced in Poland after 1989 are considered the source of territorial differentiation. Transformations and their results have remained subjects of various researches that confirmed increasing of differences between the regions. According to G. Gorzelak (1994) only selected regions and towns will benefit from new economic mechanisms and open access to foreign markets. According to J. Szlachta (1994) economic structures are influenced by four paralleled processes: changes of labor markets, changes of proprietary structure of economy, foreign investments and creating of business environment. After 1989 dynamics of the mentioned processes was considerably intense and caused interregional differences in Poland.

The present paper will focus on territorial effects of Polish transformation in social and demographic aspects in of the coastal regions. The subject of the present paper was influenced by two interesting issues: differences between urban centers and rural areas in relation to the mentioned above spheres and features that in regional aspects define social and economic options of development.

The paper will present tendencies concerning the number of population, density of population, transformations of population's structure in relation to demographic conditions. A crucial problem discussed in the present paper concerns territorial

differentiation in aspects of natural movements of population. The author will analyze its particular elements such as: marriages, births, deaths and birth rate. The paper also focuses on issues of territorial mobility of population. Typology of the coastal regions and reasons of migration will sum up the results of the presented research (L. Kosiński, 1967). Another part of the paper will relate to the situation on labor markets in the coastal regions with regard to demand for work, the number and quality of labor resources and unemployment.

The analysis concerns the coastal regions. According to prior research of E. Rydz (2001) the analyzed area includes two coastal provinces: Zachodniopomorskie and Pomorskie province. Detailed research concerns a period of 1998 – 2003 and is based on data referring to territorial differentiation of particular communities.

## **2. TERRITORIAL DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATION OF THE COASTAL REGIONS**

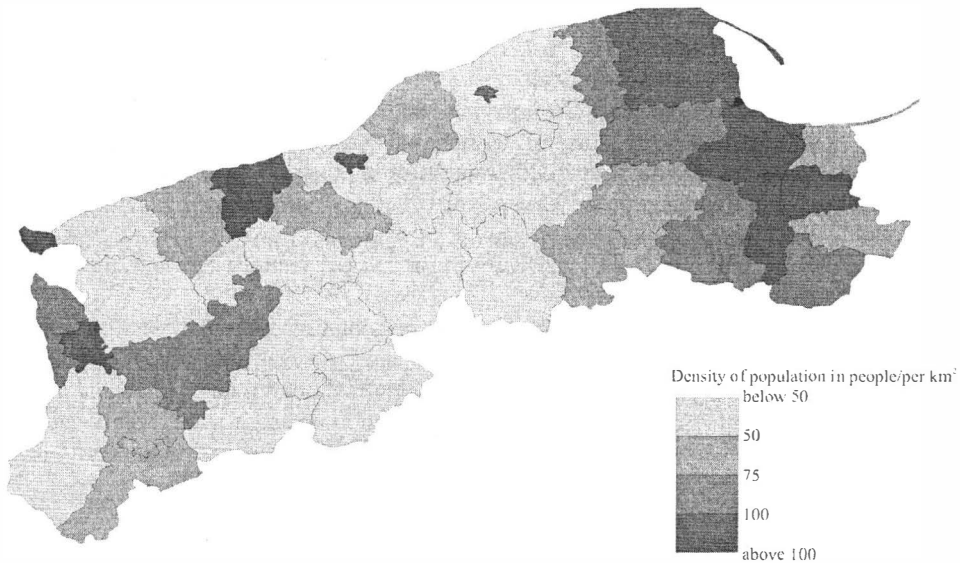
The coastal regions cover an area of 41,189 km<sup>2</sup> (13.2 % of Poland's area). In 2003 its population was 3,900,000 people (10.2 % of Poland's population) including 2,200,000 people in Pomorskie province and 1,700,000 people in Zachodniopomorskie province. Considering the number of population Pomorskie province was placed 7 and Zachodniopomorskie 9 in Poland.

The average density of population of the presented area is 97 people/km<sup>2</sup>. The country's average is 122 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Considering density of population of the coastal regions one should notice their considerable differentiation that is caused by social, economic and environmental factors (Figure 1). Subregions of Koszalin (57 people/km<sup>2</sup>) and Slupsk (58 people/km<sup>2</sup>) are poorly populated regions characterized by unfavorable environmental conditions. They are located in the section of moraine upland and vast outwash area. Density of population that relates to the country's average is registered in a subregion of Szczecin (88 people/km<sup>2</sup>). As for a subregion of Gdańsk a level of density of population is higher than the country's average (99 people/km<sup>2</sup>). In both cases it is a result of influence of two coastal agglomerations – Gdańsk and Szczecin. Those two agglomerations create an urban population network in the area of the coastal regions. In 2003 population of 103 cities located in the described area was 2,700,000 people that is 69.2 % of the region's population.

Considering sex and age structures of the presented population one can observe significant changes. The pyramid's basis has been constantly decreased. The situation is an effect of lower birth rate in a period of transformation. However one can notice an increasing number of people in a productive age. Consequently thanks to considerably high quality of life also a number of people in a post-productive age has been increasing.

There are some differences concerning urban and rural populations. People who live in rural areas are characterized by higher level of demographic youth than an urban population. In 2003 children at the age of 0 – 14 from rural areas constituted 21.9 % of population while children of urban districts constituted 15.5 % of population. The problem is confirmed by economic grouping of population that plays important role in a process of estimating labor resources. In the districts of the coastal regions global coefficients of basic load are lower (53.6) than the country's average (58.9). The lowest

global coefficients of basic load were recorded in the biggest cities of the described area in Szczecin 50.8, Gdańsk 51.9, Świnoujście 48.8, Gdynia 29.0, Koszalin 49.6 and Słupsk 51.4. The highest coefficients (more than 65 people per 100 people in a productive age) were recorded in a community of Koscierzyna (65.3) and Kartuzy (69.6).



**Figure 1** Density of population in coastal regions in Poland in 2003

In a balance aspect the number of population is influenced by the rate of births and migration balance. The present paper focuses on the mentioned above issues. The recent research proves that a period of transformations does not create favorable conditions to increase the rate of births. The research results show a rapid pace of decreasing the number of births in the coastal regions from 3.2 ‰ in 1995 to 1.3 ‰ in 2003 while the situation in Poland was even more alarming. The rate of births decreased from 1.2 ‰ in 1995 to -0.4 ‰ in 2003. As for Pomorskie province (2.0 ‰ in 2003) the records show higher level of births that those recorded in Zachodniopomorskie province (0.5 ‰ in 2003). The described situation is connected with decreasing number of births. Coefficients of deaths did not indicate any considerable changes and in the coastal regions their level was 8.0 ‰ in 2003.

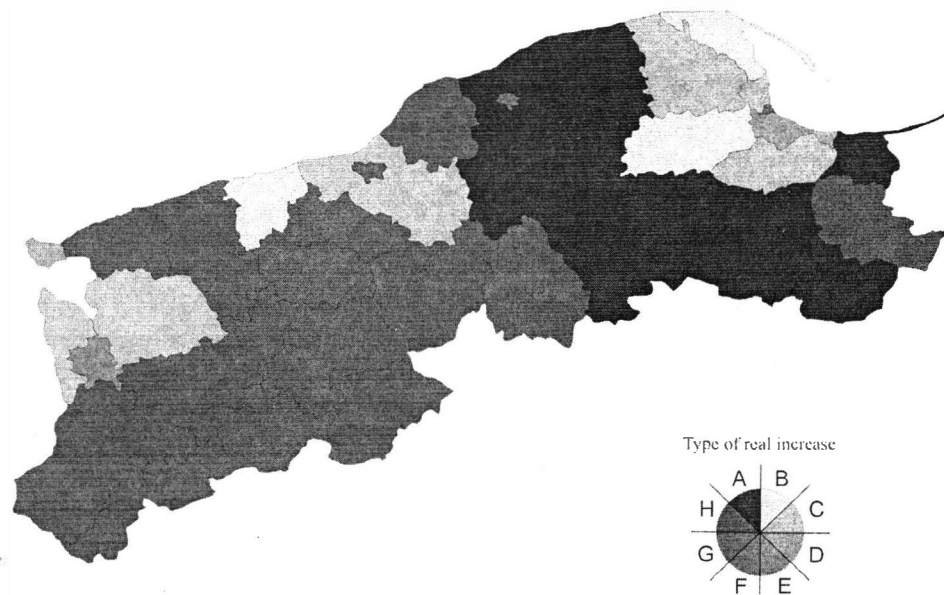
Decreasing number of births is determined by two factors. The first one concerns a number of women at the age of the highest fertility. Between 1998 and 2003 the number decreased with 2.8 %, including 2.3 % in the urban districts and 1.8 % in the rural areas. The second determinant concerns decreasing fertility of women in Pomorskie province from 41.4 in 1998 to 38.7 in 2003 and in Zachodniopomorskie province from 37.0 in 1998 to 34.8 in 2003. Decreasing number of women at progenitive age is an effect of demographic conditions. However decreasing fertility is influenced and connected with difficult situation on labor markets, high prices of real estate and finally transformations of a family model. Decreasing number of births might be a consequence of adapting European Union's model of a small family.

Alarming demographic situation in the coastal regions was confirmed by the fact that in 1995 only 3 communities including Szczecin (-0.9‰), Sopot (-4.5 ‰) and Gdynia (0.3 ‰) were characterized by natural decrease of population while in 2003 similar problem was recorded in 2 district communities of Słupsk (-0.4 ‰) and Świnoujście (-1.7 ‰). The highest rate of birth was recorded in the communities located in the region of kaszuby such as community of Kartuzy (7.5 ‰), Kościerzyna (5.0 ‰), Puck (4.6 ‰), Bytów (4.6 ‰) and Wejherowo (4.3 ‰). The situation in the region of Kaszuby is connected with traditional family model.

Interregional disproportions also concern migration patterns. During periods of economic transformations the pace of migrations decreased. It was connected with decreasing outflow of people from rural areas to urban districts. The main role in that process played difficult situation on labor markets and high prices of real estate in urban districts.

Typology by J. Webb (1963) perfectly illustrates connections between the rate of births and migration patterns.

In 2003 depopulation type H was most representative for the described region (43.9 % of total population). Type H is characterized by a real decrease of population caused by migrations and low level of urbanization, infrastructural negligence and a high rate of unemployment (Figure 2). Considerable migration decrease should be connected with the former state farms' communities, where the main factor of migration is high unemployment.



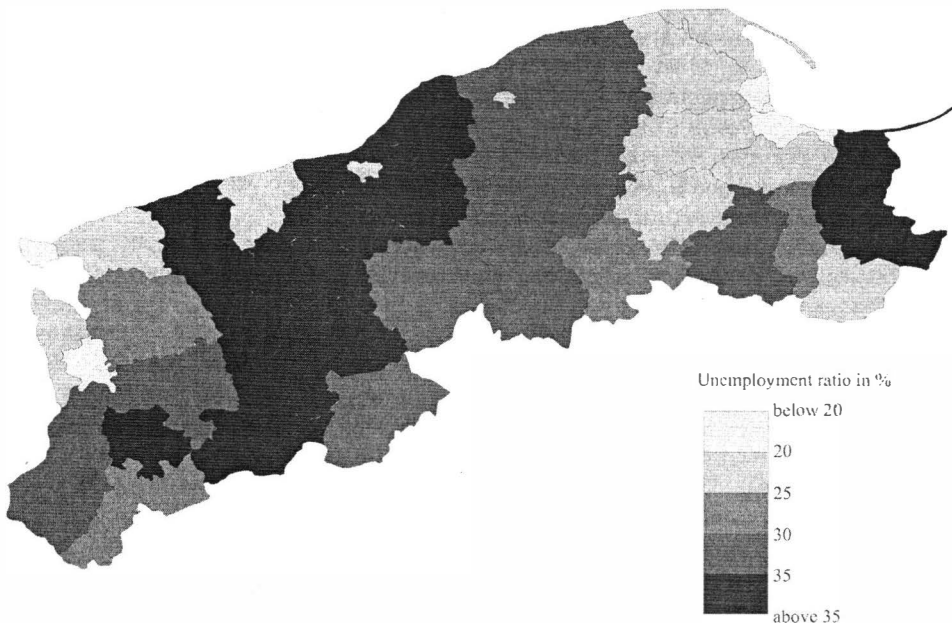
**Figure 2** Territorial differentiation of real increase of population in the coastal regions in Poland in 2003

Real increase of population was recorded in 18 communities, including 9 A type communities, 3 B type communities and 6 C type communities. Communities indicating increase or the lowest decrease of migration were concentrated in the neighborhood of agglomerations of Gdańsk and Szczecin. Big cities and their relatively good situation on

labor markets attracts newcomers however suburbanization processes cause a shift of population to suburban districts.

### 3. UNEMPLOYMENT

The most difficult social problem in the coastal regions is unemployment. A level of unemployment in the described regions is one of the highest in Poland and has been progressing in the recent years. Between 1998 and 2004 a number of the unemployed in the coastal regions was doubled from 194,300 people in 1999 to 362,300 in 2004 while a rate of unemployment was higher than the country's average (Figure 3).



**Figure 3** Territorial differentiation of unemployment ratio in the coastal regions in Poland (recorded by the end of April 2005)

Zachodniopomorskie province is placed on a second position and Pomorskie province on sixth in relation to discussed issues. The differences between regions are more noticeable while one considers a rate of unemployment in mezoregional conditions, because the coastal regions include communities with one of the highest levels of unemployment in Poland. The communities characterized by the highest rate of unemployment are communities of Lobeż (40.7 %), Świdwin (39.8 %), Nowy Dwór (39.9 %), Sztum (38,6 %), Białogard (37.9 %) and Gryfice (36.6 %).

According to numerous works by E. Rydz (1999, 2001) dramatic situation on labor markets is an effect of changes on rural labor markets. Failure of state farm system left thousands of people without a source of income. At present time the most serious

situation on local labor markets is recorded in the communities connected with former state farms. The problem concerns the communities located in the central Pomerania in the neighborhood of Lobeż, Szczecinek, Świdwin, Białogard and Sławno. Over 60 % of arable land located in the mentioned districts used to belong to the state farms. It seems that solving of growing problems of unemployment is a difficult task, because workers of the former state farms are considered a very specific social group. Their professional qualifications are very low, they have low motivation to find a job and usually live in secluded districts.

The lowest rate of unemployment is recorded in agglomerations of Gdańsk and Szczecin. In 2003 unemployment ratio in Gdynia was 9.5 %, in Sopot 8.3 %, Gdańsk 12.3 % and Szczecin 15.3 %. According to G. Gorzelak (1994) the mentioned regions activate and animate economic revival of Poland. They stimulate technical progress, economic effectiveness and cultural progress and provide well educated labor resources able to work in various professions.

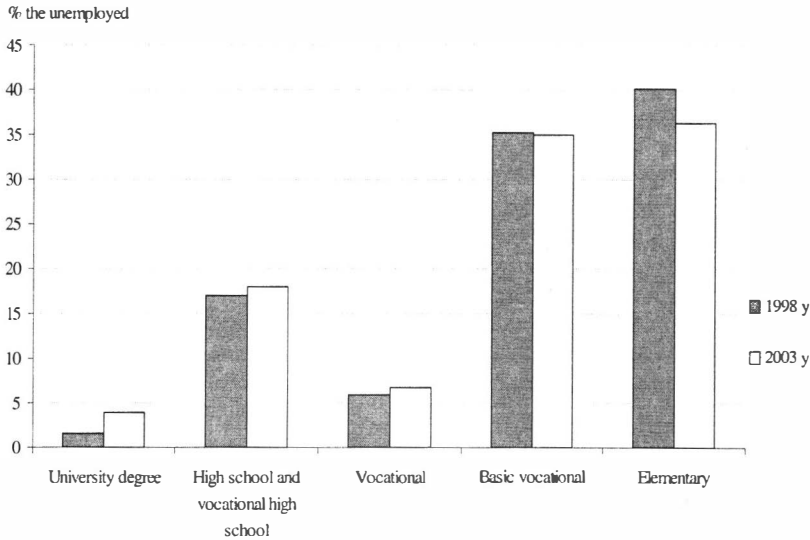
Analyzing features of unemployment in the coastal regions one should notice considerably low percentage of the unemployed entitled to unemployment benefits. In 2003 it was 83.1 % while 18 communities that is 43.9 % of the total number of communities were characterized by higher percentage of the unemployed who were not entitled to unemployment benefits. One might ask a question what are sources of income and social support of the unemployed not entitled to unemployment benefits. In order to help the unemployed and fight unemployment and its effects one must get to know social and demographic features of this social group.

The research results show that the problem of unemployment in the coastal regions concerns the young. The percentage of the unemployed up to 24 years old ranges from 13.5 % in the district community of Sopot to 35.9 % in the community of Kartuzy. It is one of the most serious problems of labor markets of the described regions. According to E. Rydz and A. Wilma (2003) work teaches responsibility, independence and regularity however the young unemployed have no opportunity to face responsibilities and experience connected with new duties at work. A great number of families consider unemployment a 'normal' component of life. The young people have no respect for their unemployed parents. This kind of situation generates conflicts inside the family and conflicts with law. Unemployment gives rise to frustration, aggression, indifference to the others and problems of everyday life. It also influences in a negative way educational and professional aspirations. Finally it generates insecurity.

A chance to find a job depends not only on age but also on a level of education (Figure 4). People with high and universal qualifications are more open to learn new professions, they are more flexible and they can easily find jobs. In 2003 only 3.9 % of the unemployed in the coastal regions had a university degree while 71,3 % was poorly educated.

The records show that local labor markets in the coastal regions have been suffering from a progressing long-term unemployment. It concerns those unemployed who stay without work for over 12 months. In 2003 the highest number of the long-term unemployed was recorded in the community of Lębork (65.2 % of total number of the unemployed), Nowy Dwór (60.4 %), Pyrzyce (56.4 %) and Łobez (55.9 %). The lowest number of the long-term unemployed was recorded in the district communities of Gdynia (41.6 %), Świnoujście (42.2 %), and Sopot (43.5 %).

According to the research results a dominating type of unemployment in the coastal regions is long-term unemployment that remains a stable source of labor. According to W. Retkiewicz (1998) a long term of being unemployed generates a great number of negative economic, social and moral consequences.



**Figure 4** Structure of the unemployed according to education level in the coastal regions in Poland

Losing a stable source of income influences a quality of life of the unemployed. It happens that social support becomes the only source of income in the families of the unemployed.

Difficult situation of people who live in the coastal regions is confirmed by a pauperization coefficient<sup>1</sup>. The regions of severe poverty and strongly pauperized include districts that used to be connected with the former state enterprises located in the area of the central Pomerania (Figure 5).

The research confirms a thesis that the coastal regions of Poland differ in social and demographic aspects. However the described area is characterized by higher than average population dynamics. Relatively rapid development of population structure before 1988 was an effect of high number of births. At the present moment only the region of Kaszuby is characterized by high number of births. Decreasing number of births has been recorded in the urbanized agglomerations of Gdańsk and Szczecin and in the majority of towns. The present situation is a result of changes of a family model (nucleation of family) and declining of some functions within a family structure. Some forms of life activities connected with family and household have been dramatically limited. However people expand their activities connected with spheres of life connected with improving social, educational and professional status.

The results of the research show that the pace of migration processes has been decreased. In the rural areas it concerns emigration and in urban districts immigration. The districts under urbanization processes and the neighborhood of Gdańsk and Szczecin agglomerations became very attractive places of residence. Also communities located in the vicinity of the sea and neighborhood of middle and big size cities are considered interesting by the new residents.

<sup>1</sup> According to J. Grotowska-Leder (2001) a pauperization coefficient is a number of people in the families on social support per 100 inhabitants.



**Figure 5** Pauperization ratio of people in the coastal regions in Poland

Unfortunately unemployment remains the most severe problem of the coastal regions. Unemployment in the described area has got various interregional character however it is the most serious social problem. The communities of former state farms districts located in the area of Białogard Plain, Sławieńska Plain, Polanowska Upland and Szczecinek lake area are characterized by a very unfavorable situation on labor markets.

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## **Dysproporcje międzyregionalne regionów przybrzeżnych w Polsce**

### **Resume**

Zapoczątkowane po 1989 r. zmiany społeczno-gospodarcze w Polsce doprowadziły do przestrzennego zróżnicowania skutków transformacji. W niniejszej publikacji zaprezentowano przestrzenne efekty polskiej transformacji w aspekcie społeczno-demograficznym na przykładzie regionów nadmorskich Polski. O wyborze takiej płaszczyzny badań zdecydowały dwa względy: z jednej strony – zróżnicowanie pomiędzy ośrodkami miejskimi i obszarami wiejskimi w odniesieniu do wymienionych dziedzin, z drugiej, są to cechy, które w układach regionalnych w znacznym stopniu określają możliwości ich społeczno-ekonomicznego rozwoju.

W odniesieniu do problemów demograficznych przedstawiono tendencje zmian w liczbie ludności, gęstość zaludnienia oraz przeobrażenia w strukturze ludności, a także ruchu naturalnym i migracyjnym. W dalszej części opracowania nawiązano do sytuacji na rynku pracy z uwzględnieniem stanu ilościowego i jakościowego zasobów pracy, popytu na prace oraz zjawiska bezrobocia.

Przeprowadzone badania potwierdziły tezę, że regiony nadmorskie Polski są dość zróżnicowane regionalnie w aspekcie społeczno-demograficznym. W odniesieniu do potencjału demograficznego zasadniczo są to jeszcze tereny o wyższej niż przeciętna w kraju dynamice ludności. Relatywnie silny rozwój ludnościowy przed 1988 r. w regionach nadmorskich związany był na ogół z wysoką stopą przyrostu naturalnego. Obecnie tylko obszar Kaszubszczyzny posiada podwyższoną rodność, co jak wspomniano wcześniej jest konsekwencją uwarunkowań kulturowych. Zdecydowanie malejąca tendencja w liczbie urodzeń występuje w strefie węzłowej i zurbanizowanej aglomeracji szczecińskiej i gdańskiej, a także w większości miast. należy sądzić, iż jest to efekt zmiany modelu rodziny (dążenie do nuklearyzacji rodziny) i zaniku pewnych funkcji wewnątrzrodzinnych. Drastycznemu skurczeniu ulega zakres form aktywności życiowej, jakie realizowane są w rodzinie i gospodarstwie domowym, a rozszerza się pole aktywności pozarodzinnej. Jest to dążenie do poprawy pozycji społecznej, uzyskania lepszego wykształcenia i zwiększenia jednostkowego dobrobytu.

W trakcie badań stwierdzono również, że zdecydowanemu zmniejszeniu uległa ruchliwość migracyjna ludności. Na obszarach wiejskich dotyczyło to głównie emigracji, zaś w miastach imigracji. Należy w tym miejscu podkreślić, iż głównie obszar strefy urbanizującej się i tereny otwarte położone w zasięgu oddziaływania aglomeracji szczecińskiej i gdańskiej stały się atrakcyjnym miejscem zamieszkania, podobnie jak miasta i gminy nadmorskie oraz gminy położone w sąsiedztwie przede wszystkim miast średnich i dużych.

Największym jednak problemem regionów nadmorskich, jak wykazały wyniki prowadzonych badań, pozostaje bezrobocie. Jest ono co prawda zróżnicowane wewnątrzregionalnie, ale w dalszym ciągu pozostaje najważniejszym problemem społecznym na omawianym obszarze. Szczególnie jednak gminy popegeerowskie położone na Równinie Białogardzkiej, Równinie Sławieńskiej, Wysoczyźnie Polanowskiej czy Pojezierzu Szczecińskim posiadają bardzo niekorzystną sytuację na rynku pracy.