

Peer Review

Review of: "The Mediterranean Islands: Demographic Convergences and Divergences, 1995–2021"

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The paper examines demographic trends in Mediterranean islands from 1995 to 2021, with a particular focus on patterns of convergence and divergence. Its originality lies in its comparative approach across multiple islands and its long-term perspective, which enables a deeper understanding of demographic changes over time. However, there are different areas where the study could be strengthened, as outlined below.

1. Motivation and Contribution

The topic is relevant, yet the paper would benefit from a more explicit justification of its significance and a clearer positioning within the existing literature. The introduction should be expanded to include a discussion on how this study aligns with and contributes to the broader research on island demographics and convergence theories. Additionally, the paper should explicitly identify the specific gaps in the literature it aims to address and articulate its unique contributions, for example, by elaborating a theoretical framework.

Moreover, the discussion should clarify why demographic convergence or divergence in Mediterranean islands is a matter of economic and policy relevance. For instance, linking the study to broader demographic shifts in Europe and the Mediterranean – driven by factors such as migration, economic development, and environmental challenges – would help contextualize its importance and enhance its impact.

2. Data and Methodology

The selection of demographic indicators should be more thoroughly justified in relation to both theoretical and empirical considerations. Given the regional context, additional factors such as tourism

dependency, remoteness, and climate change effects may be relevant to the discussion of demographic patterns and should be addressed where applicable.

A more detailed discussion of data sources is necessary, including their reliability, potential biases, and any adjustments made to ensure comparability across islands. For example, the impact of excluding certain areas (e.g., Croatia) on the overall results should be explicitly discussed.

With regard to methodology, the paper should provide a clearer explanation of the methods used and their application to demographic variables. Robustness checks should also be conducted to validate the results. Furthermore, discussing whether geographic proximity influences demographic patterns would add further depth to the analysis.

3. Clarity and Structure of Results

The results section is dense and contains numerous tables and figures. While this is not inherently problematic, it does affect clarity and readability. A more structured narrative flow would help guide the reader through the findings more effectively. Additionally, incorporating brief summaries or key takeaways at the end of each subsection would enhance comprehension.

Finally, the language used to present the findings should avoid implying causality, as the study does not explicitly examine causal relationships. Ensuring that interpretations remain within the scope of the employed analytical framework will strengthen the rigor and credibility of the discussion.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.