

EMIGRATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN BACĂU COUNTY, ROMANIA: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE AN INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TWO PHENOMENA?

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Abstract

This study analyses the population of Bacău County focusing on two phenomena, unemployment and emigration, trying to find to what extent there is an interaction between it. Failure to find employment results into a social pressure and discouragement, and, sometimes, leads to emigration of those who hope for a better future there where they can find a job and make a better living, for them and their families. Thus, emigration is often seen as a solution against unemployment, both phenomena being part of the situation that these county is facing with. Neglecting the long-term effects, at the present moment emigration is seen as a solution for the high rate of unemployment. If emigration is seen like a salvation solution for unemployment on short and medium-term, it is hard to foresee the exactly long-term impact, but should not be neglected the risks of a highly negative long-term impact. To reduce the gaps of a descriptive analysis, were used statistical data provided by National Institute of Statistics, data that were processed and presented through cartographic method.

Key words: *Bacău County; emigration; interaction; unemployment, young workforce*

JEL Classification: *E24, F22, O15*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nationwide, percentage of Bacău county unemployment was 3.03%, in January 2015, a percentage that places Bacău County as the 13th county in Romania, considering the numbers of unemployment from the largest to the smallest one. According to statistical data provided by National Institute of Statistics, Bacău County registered 14 978 unemployed, in January 2015, while the highest number was 27 498 in Dolj and the smallest was 2 700 registered in Ilfov. The situation is even worrying if we consider that a significant percentage of unemployed inhabitants of Bacău County are over 50 years old. According to Bacău County Agency for Employment, over 30% of unemployed are older than 50 years, and when those have only a few years until the retirement chances of finding a job decreases dramatically. However, the most disadvantaged are young people who graduated from university as available jobs are often for unskilled people. In the same time, according to International Organization for Migration study (2008) it seems that 67.78% of the total registered unemployment rate was associated to primary, secondary or vocational school education, while 25.22% were people with high school and post-high school education and only 6.98% had graduated from an university.

Given the enormous pressure exerted on the individual, he search and find emergency solutions that offers far greater material rewards in relation to effort. Confronting with change and seeing that the only one solution could be the abandonment of a society where he cannot find a place he would like, he look for new cities, regions and even foreign countries. As the place of origin starts to be seen only as a limit, people look for other areas imagined as a salvation, a imagined salvation that not always become real, because the unknown is not necessarily better and adaptation is often difficult. In modern times, this migration occurs invariably from underdeveloped or developing regions to regions that have an attractive economic development or at least seemingly attractive, but this leads to great economic disparities. In the case of Bacău County, lack of employment leads also to emigration, people choosing foreign countries that apparently give them better opportunities; thus emigration increased. Unemployment in Bacău county favors emigration, when unemployed people choose to emigrate, thus emigration contribute to a reduction of unemployment, but the long-term impact could show a negative side of it, side that often is not taken in count. Most often remittances represent the main interest of specialists when analyzing the impact of emigration in the origin regions but, if remittances are a positive side of emigration, loss of specialized workforce leads to pressure due to appearance of an imbalance between number of dependents and number of the active population.

II. RAPPORTS BETWEEN UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMIGRATION IN THE LITERATURE

When talking about migration and unemployment, opinions are multiple; some state that emigration is positive while others talk about a long-term negative impact in the origin areas. Migration is a means of improving the allocation of human resources. People living in areas where there is unemployment is expected to move to destinations with more optimistic perspectives (DaVanzo, 1978). In a more detailed way, we may say that people who search for a good job are more likely to move from high-unemployment areas, where it is hard or even impossible to find a job, to regions, countries where the chances of finding a good job are more favorable (Greenwood, 1975; Mohlo, 1986). Thus, an unemployed person move to another area, another country, if does perceive chance of finding a job there more than in the origin country, area (DaVanzo, 1978; Boehm et al., 1998). Many relevant studies states that unemployed persons doesn't necessary want to migrate (Antolin and Bover, 1997; Tervo, 2000) while others assume that unemployed are more disposed to migrate with the strong hope of finding a job elsewhere, migration for them being like the best solution for a better living (Herzog et al., 1993; Boehm, Herzog et al., 1998). In any case, unemployment is a negative phenomenon in human society as it adversely affect in different dimensions and directions, as Al-Habees and Ruman (2012) state.

Msigwa and Kipesha (2013) talk about the problem of unemployment that unfortunately become a commination to the political, social and economic stability in most of the developing countries. Unemployment result in economic, social and environmental problems (Mjema 1997, Bagachwa 1991). The reasons are very clear if we think that failure to find employment results into demoralization and deterioration in their employment perspectives which at the end leads to social exclusion (Clark and Summers 1982).

Studies reveal that youth unemployment results in loss of self-confidence, resulting in discouragement, depression. It is also associated with high stress and heart attack as Sum and Fogg et al (2002) states. Youth unemployment contribute also to the increases in international legal and illegal migration with a notion that it will enable them to get decent employment as well as better life. Thus unemployment leads to emigration especially between young people as "young population under 25 years old represents the most affected group of population" (Condratov, 2014, p. 124), concerning unemployment. That explains somehow the fact that most Romanians who emigrate are young people who are part of the active age (Teodorescu, 1996; Andria and Souche, 2007), the age groups with high rates of fertility which automatically leads to dramatic changes in the distribution by age of population and the long term has a negative impact on young workforce. Emigration by gender also should be mentioned here while, for renewal of a population, emigration by gender has its own importance. At the beginning, until 2001, Romanian emigration was highly selective, with a predominance of men migrants (Sandu, 2006). Since 2001 the tendency has changed by reducing the selectivity of gender migration, men and women having close percentages in the new Romanian Diaspora established since 1990, according to the 2009 study conducted by the Presidential Commission for Social and Demographic Risk analysis (2009). This is more worrying as it becomes permanent emigration for many young people who originally migrated with the idea of returning to the country. The percentage of young people between 18-40 years in 2005 was 36% in the whole population of the country (INS, 2005) and the population emigrated after 1991 the same category represent 55% of the population, according to the survey conducted in 2007 by Ghețău. All these data anticipates a future of Romania where young workforce could become a real problem. Even thus, with the mistake of neglecting the long-term effects, at the present moment emigration is seen as a solution for the high rate of unemployment.

III. METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the goal of this approach, the first method was bibliographic documentation, based on relevant studies, to deepen the concepts of emigration and unemployment and to identify the interactions between the two phenomena. For an exhaustive analysis of a phenomenon requires a rigorous documentation to allow updating the existing information on the phenomenon. Interpretive description was used in the interpretation and criticism of existing documents dealing more or less this problem. Another method used is the comparative one, common to all sciences, useful for highlighting different cases depending on the unemployment and emigration intensity repartition in the county.

For data interpretation were used mapping method and methods for processing statistical data, data from the website of the National Institute of Statistics. Unemployment percentages are calculated from the total persons over 15 years old for each administrative area, the reason being that these are the available data on the website of the National Institute of Statistics. In order to solve our problems, methods of statistical analysis are necessary, given that we are dealing with a large amount of statistical data. For data processing was used Microsoft Excel in order to obtain the relevant indicators for our research. After preparing the database, needed to highlight emigration and unemployment in the administrative areas of Bacău County, we used Philcarto 5.05 to realize the maps in order to give a visual image over the situation this county is facing with.

IV. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

From the territorial distribution of the unemployment registered in 2010 and 2014 (Fig. 1) it can be noticed a significant decrease of unemployment in some of the administrative areas such as cities like Bacău, Onești, Moinești, Comănești and rural areas like Colonești, Lipova and Secuieni. Bacău town registered the highest decrease from 3 743 unemployed, in 2010, to 1 588, in 2014. Onești city also registered a decrease in 2014 having with 1 028 less unemployed in comparison with 2010, while the number of employees increased with more than 2 000, in the same period of time. On the other side there are numerous administrative areas that registered more unemployed persons in 2014, compared with 2010, and here are to be mentioned rural areas such as: Valea Seacă, Stănișești, Sănduleni, Răchitoasa, Podu Turcului, Pârjol, Coțofănești, Blăgești, etc.

In order to understand this situation, mentioned above, is important to mention that Bacău County was one of the industrial poles from Romanian Moldavia Region with petroleum exploitation, textile factories, wood processing units, bakeries, etc. One by one, factories like Letea, paper manufacturer, or brewery from Mărgineni ended up being even sold to scrap even waiting for capital in order to be upgraded. The petroleum industry and coal mining are gone. Comănești developed industry, based on the exploitation of petroleum and coal but also on wood processing, became history, nowadays this town being in a situation where the city's economy depends to a large extent on the Austrian Holzindustrie Schweighofer factory (Bostan, 2014). Thus, Bacău County has become, from an industrial pole of Moldova, more engaged in the trade, industry still exceeding trade in actual number of employees, according to statistical data provided by National Institute of Statistics. All these changes were translated by fluctuations in unemployment from reaching an unemployment rate of 3.4 in the year 1991 to a rate of 6.2 in 2011 and 7.2 in 2013. The highest rate of unemployment was reached in 1999 when exceeded 13%, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics.

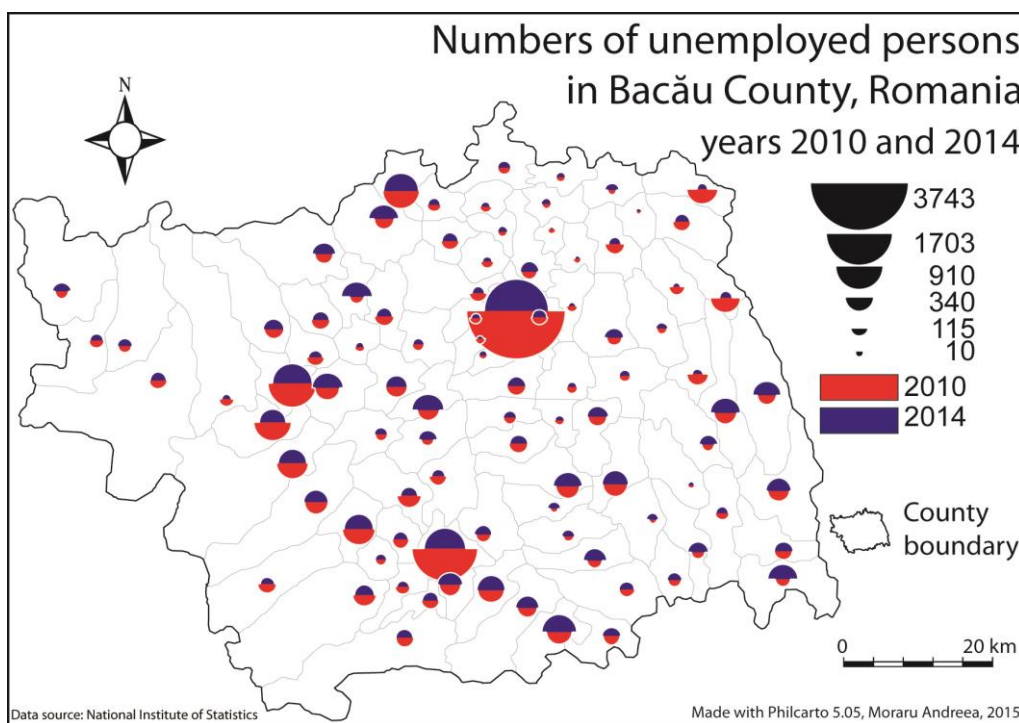


Figure 1 – Numbers of unemployed persons in Bacău County, Romania (years 2010 and 2014)

Analyzing the percentages of unemployment from the total population over 15 years old per each unit, situation is really different, percentages for each administrative area changing the order mentioned above when it was about effective number of unemployed persons. Thus, cities like Bacău and Onești which previously appeared with the most worrying situation in terms of numbers, in percentage terms the new position offers a more optimistic view compared to other administrative units such as Coțofănești, with a rate of unemployment over 14%, meaning 381 unemployed from 2 637 people aged over 15 years and 927 under 15, Stănișești, Huruișești, Pincești, Răchitoasa, which have the highest percentage of unemployment at the county level administrative units. On the opposite, rural areas like Sărata, Corbasca, Găiceana, Negri, Părgărești, Traian, Berzunți, have the smallest percentages of unemployment in the county. Thus it can be observed that the East area of the county has the highest percentages of unemployment per administrative area, while the West it offers a less pessimistic view. In a situation like that we should not be surprised when is about the increased

emigration, as people try to find the best solution for them and, if the place of origin does not provide them perspectives for a better future, they are likely to leave and find new places where, in their conception, future could be better. Unemployment and low wages determine Bacău population to emigrate, and these should be taken into account when we try to find solutions to reduce emigration, as the specialized workforce emigration bring with it negative long-term effects.

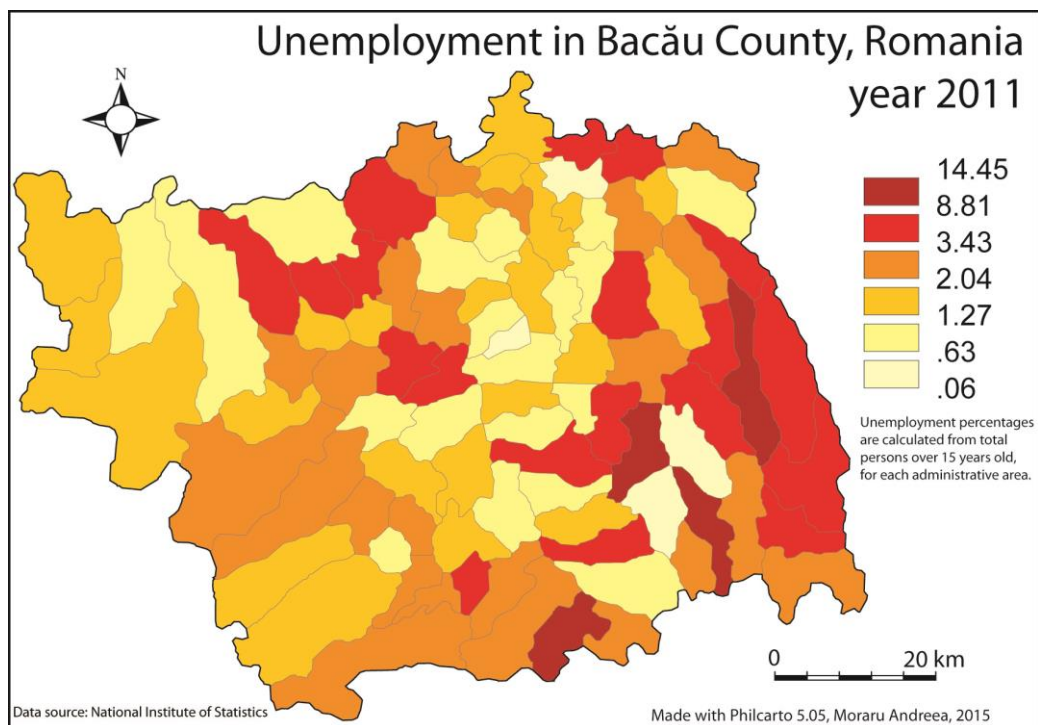


Figure 2 – Unemployment in Bacău County, Romania (2011)

Areas with high percentage of emigration doesn't necessary correspond to areas with high percentage of unemployment as it can be seen comparing the maps from figures 2 and 3. Maybe in our case, emigration is favored not as much by unemployment rate, even if this is also a factor that influence emigration, but more by the accessibility and links with people that already experienced emigration. Strong emigration from Bacău, produced early, due, among others, to Catholicism which has created strong links between individuals and communities, Catholics being the "pioneers of Moldovan migration" (Dimitriu, Muntele et al., 2013, p. 103).

From the territorial repartition of emigration it can be noticed the Eastern area of Bacău county in opposite with the center and the Western part of it, Eastern part registering low percentages of emigration but that is also because there are rural areas with reduced number of inhabitants and predominant elderly population and sometime maybe just because of weak links with emigrant population. Population on this county is not affected by emigration in the same proportion in all the administrative areas, but this manifests differently from an area to another.

Percentage of emigration from total population per unit changes the way we consider the problem of emigration for each administrative area, rural areas lost through emigration the most significant percentage of inhabitants. The rural areas that registered the most significant loses through emigration are: Luizi Călugăra, Făraoani, Nicolae Bălcescu, units that lost more than 20 percent of their population due to emigration. Even if the percentages of emigrants are smaller comparing with those mentioned above, there should be named also rural areas like Traian and Sănduleni with percentages above 16%. Luizi Călugăra, Făraoani and Nicolae Bălcescu, rural areas mentioned above, have predominant catholic inhabitants which can induce the idea of creating a connection, a link between emigrants which facilitate emigration and become easier to decide to emigrate when getting support from other emigrants.

Bacău town has the largest numbers of emigrants, cumulating a number of 17 368, number that position it on the 24th place in the county when is about percentages of emigrants from total inhabitants, percentage of emigrant population being 9.91%. Taking in count the number of emigrants, Onești is the next pioneer in emigration with a number of 3 507, corresponding a percentage of 7.18%. Găiceana, Huruiești and Strugari have no emigration registered, while Stănișești has only 4 emigrants. In the same time, Găiceana register also very low unemployment rate, as it can be noticed in the map from Figure 2. In Găiceana case the reality is very different as the one showed by the statistical data cumulated during the 2011 census. We should wonder why according to statistical data there is no long-period emigration from this rural area while the reality is otherwise,

a representative number of people from Găiceana working in another countries, but they are registered as persons temporarily absent abroad.

Considering that emigration is selective and young people are more probably to emigrate than older people, we can prefigure the long term effect over the situation of this county, materialized in a deepening of economic problem. In Bacău County, most emigrants are between 18 and 40 years, followed in most areas by the group 41-60 years, the population over 61 years having the smallest percentage. Looking from the perspective of unemployment one can say this has a positive impact as there are young people unable to find a job which is why they emigrate and find better life abroad. The long-term consequences will show that emigration in this form contribute to reduction of specialized young workforce affecting also the future economy.

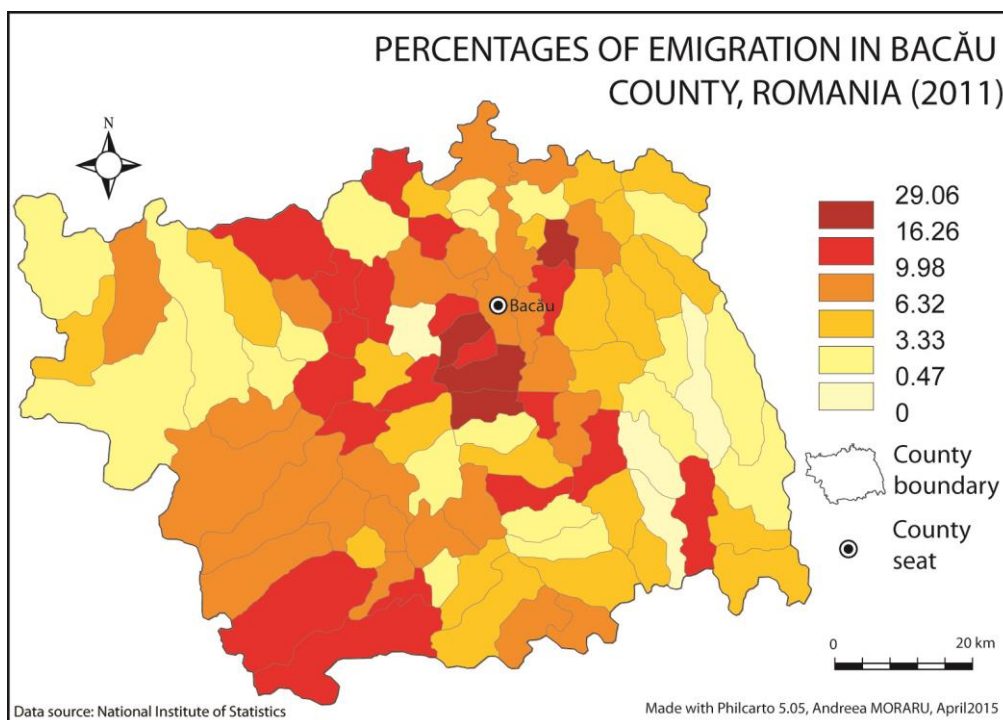


Figure 3 – Percentages of emigration in Bacău County, Romania (2011)

V. CONCLUSIONS

The interaction between emigration and unemployment have many facets, this interaction being exercised to a different level from an area to another, as we have already seen. Emigration of low skilled workers might result in a so called relaxation of the Bacău County labor market, in a reducing number of unemployed persons, which induce the idea of a positive interaction between the two phenomena. On the other side, the emigration of skilled workers results in brain drain, a subject often approached by researchers, brain drain that unfortunately exists and have serious consequences on the delivery of education, health care, economic productivity and the list continue; this is a proof that interaction between emigration and unemployment has a real negative side. If Western countries will continue to attract labor from Bacău county, economic growth will be affected significantly by reducing specialized young workforce, which tend to be the most active in this concern.

Due to emigration and decreasing natality, an important number of administrative areas of Bacău County will register a constant population ageing which might result in a pressure between numbers of dependents and of the active population and this is the real problem. On a long-term, decreasing of available work force, owe to emigration and internal migration, leads to a decreased of unemployment rate but as, after working and being paid abroad, fewer people are interested in returning back home to do the same job knowing they will be paid significantly less, on long term the pressure will make its presence and that is why it should not be neglected as the risk has so significant meaning for the economy of the county. In this situation we should think less about the short-term positive effect and start wonder how we can reduce the long term negative impact, how we should avoid a possible future pressure between numbers of dependents and of the active population. If the situation continue in this direction, Bacău County will need replacement workers in some areas that have become less attractive or even unattractive for its workers. To grasp the variety and complexity of these relationships, more data must be collected and taken in consideration to detect and analyze the reality.

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