THE JOB EXCHANGES FOR GRADUATES IN ROMANIA – THE ASSESSMENT OF THE TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES

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Abstract: The job exchanges for graduates represent the major offer-and-demand framework organised by the majority of territorial structures of the National Employment Agency, which have a pyramidal/hierarchic structure. The paper focuses on supply and demand territorial aspects on the labour market for graduates; how employer demand is conveyed to graduates and how well the skills that young people gain are utilized on the job. The present study represents a quantitative assessment of the job supply and demand for graduates and a qualitative territorial assessment of the results recorded by the job-exchange for this category of young labour force. This latter approach is based on a series of 7 indicators, in order to point out the main territorial characteristics of the job exchange for graduates. The general assessment index (calculated like the arithmetical average of the standardized values of the indicators selected) varies between 0 and 0.762, the agencies for employment being divided in four categories: 1 - "No activity and no results", 2 - "Very low activity and very few results" and "Low activity and very few result", 3 - "Low activity and few results" and 4 - "Moderate activity and good results".

Key Words: *job exchanges for graduates, supply and demand territorial aspects, Romania.*

Introduction

The analysis of the aspects linked with the job exchanges for graduates, including the territorial disparities of the job supply and demand, requires a theoretical approach of various issues, such as: the particular nature of "goods" that has the work/labour (McConnell, Brue, MacPherson 2003), the role of the political, economic, institutional and educational systems for the success of the active labour market policy (De Günter, O'Reilly, Schöman 1996), the complex relationships (quantitative, structural, geographical position) between the job supply and demand, between the different types of organization of labour market (Holm, Lorenz, Lundvall, Valeyre 2008), the importance of employability, with many economic, social and psychological benefits attached to it (Cherry, Rodgers 2000, McConnell, Brue, MacPherson 2003), etc.

The job exchanges for graduates represent a way for the increasing the employability, a concept defined as the relative capacity of an individual to achieve meaningful employment, given the interaction between personal characteristics and the labour market, because this type of job-exchange intends to build successful model for the transition of the graduates into employment, which implies bringing together, in a coherent framework, all of the elements affecting employability: education, training, counselling, prior learning and skill assessment, labour market information, hiring and separation practice, work organization, equity, human resources planning and employer-employee relations. In the exchange process between supply

and demand, it is critical to examine these components of the labour market and the characteristics of the matching process itself because the creation of jobs in a modern society are almost independent processes (Ranney, Betancur 1992, Kalleberg, Sørensen 1979). Job exchange aims to facilitate the job/worker mismatches, through which are lead to reduced input flows in unemployment, negative job attitude, and low job satisfaction. Potential discrepancies exist in this exchange. The first is a discrepancy between the skills possessed and the skills required, the second failure is the immobility of workers among occupations and places and the third, there are problems in information flows and possibly even in comprehending that information (De Ron, Deller, Marcouiller, 2004); information on the location of jobs and the skills, required must be widely available to members of the labour force (Ranney, Betancur 1992, Schaeffer 1985, 1987). It is necessary to consider not only factors that affect the supply side of the labour market (such as access to education and training opportunities), but also the demand side (what employers have to offer) and the interplay between supply and demand that is mediated in part by the exchange of labour market information (Brisbois, Orton, Saunders 2008). The results of a job-exchange for graduates should be a measure of the effectiveness of the national, county and local agencies for employment, in fact a measures of the institutional effectiveness in labour market field. Political economy variables, such as left party power (Korpi 1983, 1991, Shalev 1983), unemployment rates, labour force participation rates and other variables may have a strong impact on the effectiveness of active labour market policy. In same time, those variables should be controlled to measure the impact of institutional context (Janoski 1990, 1994).

Recent work on systems of innovation (Amable 2003, Hall, Soskice 2001, Lorenz, Lundvall 2006, Whitley 2006, quoted by Holm, J., Lorenz, Lundvall, Valeyre 2008) has argued that there are systematic relations between the structure of labour markets and systems of social protection on the one hand, and the dynamics of knowledge accumulation and learning at the work place on the other. Active labour market policies, including expenditures on continuous vocational education and other forms of lifelong- learning, contribute to the flexibility of labour markets by supporting the continuous reconfiguration of the workforce's skills and competences (Holm, Lorenz, Lundvall, Valeyre 2008). Based on the analyses and set of variables used in the research (European Working Conditions Survey – EWCS, 2005, Eurostat's Labour Force Survey, from Romans, Hardarson 2007), four main types of work organization were identified: the discretionary learning¹⁾, lean production²⁾, Taylorist³⁾ and traditional or simple structure⁴⁾ forms of work organization (Working conditions in the European Union: Work organization, 2008). The study shows that the lean forms are most present in the new EU member nations (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania), in the UK and Portugal amongst the EU-15; Taylorist forms are relatively developed in all of the southern nations amongst the EU-15 and in a number of the new member nations including the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania (Fig. 1).

1) *The discretionary learning* is characterized by high levels of autonomy at work, learning and problem solving, task complexity, self-assessment of quality of work and, to a lesser extent, autonomous teamwork.

2) *Lean production* is defined by a higher level of teamwork and job rotation, self-assessment of quality of work and quality norms, and the various factors constraining work pace.

3) *Taylorist* corresponds to low autonomy at work, particularly in methods of work, few learning dynamics, little complexity and an overrepresentation of the variables measuring constraints on the pace of work, repetitiveness and monotony of tasks, and quality norms.

4) *Traditional or simple structure* all of the variables of work organization are underrepresented and methods are largely informal and non-codified (Source: *Working conditions in the European Union: Work organization*, 2008).

Fig. 1 - Distinctions between countries in forms of work organisation (weighted percent of employees by organisational class) – 2005

(Source: processed information from Holm, J., Lorenz, E., Lundvall, B., Valeyre, A. (2008), *Work Organisation and Systems of Labour Market Regulation in Europe*, http://vbn.aau.dk/files/16278109/HolmLorenzLundvallValeyre_EAEPE08.pdf)

The aim of the different categories of job exchanges (general job exchanges, for youth, for graduates, for Roma, for persons with disabilities etc.) is to supply vacancies work places and to assure the employment. In same time, the job exchanges represent a type of preventive measure applied on the labour market, the target being obtaining the benefits both, the employer and the job seekers. The current economic-financial crisis has sharply reduced the chances for graduates to find a job and, at the same time, unemployment among this category rose in entire country. Therefore, job-exchanges for graduates represent an important labour supply-and-demand framework. The job-exchanges for graduates are organised in September, by all 41 county agencies (+ Agency for Employment of Bucharest Municipality) and by the majority of local agencies for employment and some of the profile working points. During the 2008, 2009 and 2010, the host agencies decreased number, the job supply for graduates and the potential employers were in decline (by 47.6% during the current crisis and by 32.9%, respectively); at the same interval, the job demand increased by 8.7%, and the job demand of the graduates was higher by 8.1% in 2010, compared with 2008 (Fig. 2).

In September 2010, job exchanges for graduates were being held in 86 localities, but only a number of 80 agencies out of the 86 studied had discharged a concrete activity and registered positive results, the others did not benefit by the participation of any economic agent, although about 25-30 had been contacted. Most of these job exchanges were organised by county and local Agencies for Employment (78.9%) rather than by profile working points (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2 – General features of the job exchanges for graduates (2008, 2009 and 2010)
(Source: information processed from National Agency for Employment)

Fig. 3 – The job exchanges for graduates on the map (2010)
(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

Materials and Methods

The data-base used is based on the reports on job-exchanges for graduates, published on-line by the National Agency for Employment, under the title *Sinteza datelor privind rezultatele obținute la Bursa locurilor de munca pentru absolvenți din data de 24.09.2010 - evaluare la o lună* – Summary data on the results of the Job exchanges for graduates dated September, 24, 2010 – one month evaluation, (www.anofm.ro). The job exchanges statistical-data are presented in terms of absolute values and the multitude of the type of information offers the possibility to realise some structural/qualitative assessments of the job supply and demand and of the results of the job-exchange for graduates at NUTS III and NUTS V levels.

The present study represents a quantitative assessment of the job supply and demand for graduates and a qualitative territorial assessment of the results recorded by the job exchanges for this category of young labour force. This latter approach is based on a series of 7 indicators, in order to point out the main territorial characteristics of the job exchange for graduates: *the percentage of economic agents participant per total contacted economic agents; the job supply; the job demand; the graduates' job demand; the job supply/job demand; the number of total employed under the job-exchange supply; the number of total graduates employed under the job-exchange supply*. The general/complex assessment of the job exchange for graduates is calculated like the arithmetical average of the standardized values of the indicators selected.

Results and Discussion

Job supply depends on the proportion of economic agents per contacted agents who actually participated in the job-exchange set up in each county. Percentages were under 57, highest

Fig. 4 - The economic agents participant
(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

participation (39%-57%) registered Iași, Vaslui, Sibiu and Argeș; medium participation registered Suceava and Bihor, a group of counties from the south-west of Romania (Gorj, Dolj, Olt), Dâmbovița and Constanța. In the other 31 counties few and very few contacts attended, so that the supply itself was reduced (under 10% and down to a minimum of 0.4% in Ilfov County) (Fig. 4).

The territorial distribution of the job supply shows that county agencies headed the table (București, Timișoara, Oradea, Iași, Cluj-Napoca, Brașov etc.), second in line coming the local agencies, some county agencies (Arad, Satu Mare, Drobeta-Turnu-Severin, Suceava, Galați etc.), local agencies and working points fell to the bottom of the hierarchy (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 - The job supply

(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

Job demand. As far as organising agencies are concerned, demand depended largely on the territorial position of the respective agency within the National Agency for Employment system. More than 1,000 applications registered each of the following county-seat agencies: Iași, Timișoara, Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Brașov, and the city of Bucharest; between 999 and 250 had the vast majority of the other county-seat agencies, with the exception of Deva and Călărași (only 51 and 76 applications, respectively); local agencies and working points received 4,441 applications (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6 - The job demand
(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

In 2010, there is by 3.9% fewer employment seekers than in the previous year, more applications having been registered in Romania's counties situated in the north-east and north (Iași and Suceava), east (Vaslui and Bacău), west and centre (Timiș, Bihor, Cluj and Brașov), south and south-east (Bucharest, Prahova and Vâlcea, Dolj, Argeș and Teleorman).

In the major university centres, the proportion of graduates who applied for a job was of 77.2%. Numerical disparities in the territory are due on the one hand, to the negative effects of the current crisis on the regional and local economies, and on the others, to the large number of students enrolled in the higher education system in particular. The flows of graduates originate from Bucharest and the other three big university centres (Cluj-Napoca, Iași and Timișoara), as well as from regional centres (Craiova, Constanța, Oradea, Brașov, Sibiu and Galați) set up within distinct historical regions, or in areas of regional interferences (*Research aimed at the involvement of Romanian universities in urban restructuring and regional development*, http://www.cicadit.ro/ro/projects_n2_2_1.html). In some areas at least, the latter category of graduates outnumbered market demand (Fig. 7).

The relationship between job supply and job demand. Results. In the majority of counties and more especially in Timiș, Bihor, Cluj, Iași and Prahova, the supply was by far lower than the demand, the same situation in other counties situated in the north and east (Suceava, Vaslui and Galați), south and south-west of Romania (Teleorman, Vâlcea and Dolj). In nine agencies for employment, situated in west and south parts of the country, the job supply topped

demand, the highest two values being registered in Hunedoara (3.7) and Deva (2.6). Alba-Iulia, Călărași, Zalău and Buftea towns had a balanced relationships between job supply and job

Fig. 7 – The graduates' job demand

(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

Fig. 8 - The job supply/job demand

(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

demand (1.5 - 1.2) and Bucharest, Roman and Târgu Jiu had the same value, respectively, 1.1 (Fig. 8).

Concerning the number of total employed under the job exchange supply, in 2010, the situation appeared to be far better than in 2009 (1.8% of employed persons per total participants), since 5.1% of the job-seekers could be employed through all types of job-exchange profiles (job-exchanges were instituted under Law 76, art. 59 and Law 116, art. 5, <http://www.anofm.ro/medierea-muncii-actualizat-la-28-03-2011>). However, in the case of job-exchange for graduates, the year 2010 was among the poorest compared to the other types of exchange) (Table 1).

Table 1

The results of the different types of job-exchange organised by the National Agency for Employment in 2010

Type of job-exchange	% of employed persons per total participants
General job-exchange	17 %
Job-exchanges for different jobs and economic branches	17 %
Job-exchanges for different target-groups and less-favourised persons	12.9 %
Job exchanges for graduates	12.1 %

Source: statistic information processing from *Sinteză privind stadiul realizării Programului de ocupare a forței de muncă al ANOFM, pentru anul 2010*.

The number of total employed under the job-exchange supply was 3,847 persons (only 11.4% per total job demand) and 41.3% from this total was concentrated in five important towns (Bucharest City, Timișoara, Constanța, Craiova and Iași). Two territorial agencies registered none persons employed (Buftea and Bârlad, each of them with significant job-demand: 170 applicants and, respectively, 275 applicants) and 26 county agencies, local agencies and working points had poor results: the number of employed persons was under 10 persons (Fig. 9). In those cases, the share of employed persons per total job-demand represents a low values: 3.03% (3,097 job demands and 94 persons employed). Those weak results were specific for some areas with important and long-term problems concerning employment and unemployment, for example, the mining towns and steel-towns from Hunedoara and Caraș-Severin counties. In those towns, the total job demand was 757 applicants and the percentage of employed persons was 3.30%, the most significant discrepancy being registered in Reșița town, where the job demand was 528 applicants and the number of persons employed was 5 – 0.002%).

For having a better picture of the employment of graduates, the analysis of the territorial distribution of the graduates employed per applicant graduates is very useful. So, the employment of graduates varied widely (0% - 78%) compared to the national mean (12.1%); only 27 job-exchange organising agencies held a better record (Piatra Neamț – 78%, Nehoiu – 63%, Hațeg – 53%, Târgu Jiu – 49%, Bucharest Municipality – 20%, Timișoara – 19% etc.), 49 units standing below average, among which some agencies located in major university centres, e.g. Cluj Napoca – 3%, Iași – 10%.

Despite this situation, in terms of absolute values of the graduates employed under the job exchange supply, outstanding employment results had the county agencies located in big

university centres, such as Bucharest (572 graduates), Constanța (287 graduates), Timișoara (238 graduates), Craiova (216 graduates) and Iași (184 graduates). None of the 150 job

Fig. 9 - The total number of employed persons under the job exchange supply
(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

Fig. 10 - The number of total graduates employed under the job exchange supply
(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

seekers from Bufta (Ilfov County) and 100 from Bârlad (Vaslui County) got a work-place through the respective agencies (Fig. 10).

Conclusions

The general assessment of the job exchange for graduates is calculated like the arithmetical average of the standardized values of the seven indicators selected. The main ideas resulted from the qualitative territorial assessment of the results recorded by this type of job-exchange are the followings:

- two agencies (Insurăței and Făurei, Brăila County) represent the category „*No activity and no results*”, because these did not achieve tangible results, despite the potential economic agents suppliers of jobs and job demand, initially contacted and registered;

- the agencies from the categories “*Very low activity and very few results*” and “*Low activity and very few result*” represent the majority - 83.7%. The low efficiency of their activity is motivated by the very low levels of the standardized values of the following secondary indicators: the job supply (0.001, Lupeni, Hunedoara County), the graduates’ job demand (0.002, Simeria, Hunedoara County), the number of total employed under the job-exchange supply and the number of total graduates employed under the job-exchange supply (for both indicators - 0.002, Ilia, Hunedoara County). Basically, the overwhelming majority of agencies in these two categories are organised job exchanges for graduates because it was one of their duties under the law for the organisation of county and local agencies for employment, the total number of the persons employed being only 351 (of which 297 graduates), ie 9.1% of total employed persons after the performance of job exchange;

- 8 county agencies represent the category “*Low activity and few results*” because of the average and high levels of the standardized values of the secondary indicators concerning the percentage of economic agents participant per total contacted economic agents (Sibiu – 0.853, Iași – 0.790, Râmnicu Vâlcea – 0.682 și Craiova – 0.564), the job demand (Iași – 0.790, Timișoara – 0.645, Cluj-Napoca – 0.600 și Oradea – 0.540) and the graduates’ job demand (Iași – 0.683). In these eight agencies were employed 3,847 persons (34.4% of total persons employed during this type of job exchange), of which 81.9% were graduates employed;

- “*Moderate activity and good results*” is the category represented by one agency, namely Municipal Agency of Bucharest. The percentage of economic agents participant per total contacted economic agents was low but the others standardized values of the secondary indicators were the highest. In this agency, the job supply registered the maximum value but it was overwhelmed by the job demand and the percentage of those employed was only 14.8% (in absolute values, the number of the persons employed was maximum at national level – 572 persons).

At national level, job exchange results were pretty low, only 12.1% of the applicant graduates got a work-place. This is the result of the educational offer in Romania being far higher than actual market needs (Source: *Adaptarea activă a educației universitare la cerințele pieței muncii - Real adjustment of academic education to labour-market demands*, 2009). The findings of this project have shown that only one-fifth of the graduates are actually needed in the job-market and that the structure of the educational offer is not adjusted to real needs.

Higher education graduates occupied only 334 jobs as against a six-time higher employment among pre-university leavers. This situation also comes from a deficient interaction between

the labour-market and the universities supplying potential employees. The authors of the volume *Educație de calitate pentru piața muncii - Quality education for the labour-market* (published under the *Real adjustment of academic education to labour-market demands* project) affirm that: the majority of graduates are dissatisfied with the curriculum preparing them for the job-market, practical training sessions being useless, nor had they got the skills and competences required by a job. The project also highlights significant differences between various study-areas. Best employment chances have the graduates from the departments of Computer and Information Technology and from Communication Sciences (74% in the former case with only 7% being jobless in the first post-graduation year; in the latter case the proportion is 62% and 4%, respectively). Differences in findings a job have the graduates from the Faculty of Law and from Mechanical Engineering (a situation affecting 55% of them;

Fig. 11 - The general assessment index of the job-exchange for graduates
(Source: mapped information from National Agency for Employment)

unemployment in the first graduation year stands at 11% and 10%, respectively) (Source: *Quality education for the labour-market, 2009*).

The main problem is to imply more the universities in the process of attenuating territorial unbalances (Ianoș et al. 2010). Involvement potential of a Romanian university in solving local and regional problems, in ensuring the conditions for accelerated development at these levels is extremely varied, taking account of its direct (observed due to its research capacity for a correct individualization of the needs, and for a better solution to cover) and indirect relationships (which implies training of the specialists, local or regional community can having great benefits, using their skills). The partnerships between universities and main actors of the socio-economic, cultural, and politico-administrative life could support universities in constant adaptation of the programs of initial and life-long formation to the specific needs, on the one hand, and could convince local and regional communities to resort, in a usual way, to the expertise, consultancy, and surveys provided by the universities, on the other (Ianoș 2008).

Annex 1

Rank	Agency/working point for employment	The arithmetical average of the standardized values of the indicators selected	Rank	Agency/working point for employment	The arithmetical average of the standardized values of the indicators selected
1	BUCUREȘTI	0.762	32	PETROȘANI	0.138
2	IAȘI	0.493	33	REȘIȚA	0.132
3	TIMIȘOARA	0.355	34	VULCAN	0.131
4	CONSTANȚA	0.350	35	CÂMPULUNG	0.121
5	CRAIOVA	0.308	36	TÂRGU MUREȘ	0.118
6	SIBIU	0.291	37	SATU MARE	0.118
7	ORADEA	0.276	38	FOCȘANI	0.116
8	CLUJ-NAPOCA	0.270	39	TULCEA	0.114
9	RÂMNICU VÂLCEA	0.259	40	ROMAN	0.112
10	TÂRGU JIU	0.238	41	FĂLTICENI	0.109
11	HUNEDOARA	0.217	42	SLATINA	0.109
12	TÂRGOVIȘTE	0.204	43	DROBETA-TURNU SEVERIN	0.105
13	BACĂU	0.200	44	RĂDĂUȚI	0.104
14	BRAȘOV	0.190	45	BRĂILA	0.104
15	CÂMPULUNG MOLDOVENESC	0.185	46	CARANSEBEȘ	0.102
16	DEVA	0.182	47	MIERCUREA CIUC	0.095
17	CURTEA DE ARGEȘ	0.176	48	ALEXANDRIA	0.093
18	PLOIEȘTI	0.174	49	TÂRNĂVENI	0.090
19	BAIA MARE	0.167	50	BISTRIȚA	0.089
20	PITEȘTI	0.165	51	BOTOȘANI	0.087
21	SUCEAVA	0.159	52	SIGHIȘOARA	0.085
22	BUZĂU	0.156	53	CĂLAN	0.085
23	ZALĂU	0.156	54	CĂLĂRAȘI	0.080
24	CÂMPINA	0.153	55	COVASNA	0.077
25	PAȘCANI	0.153	56	RÂMNICU SĂRAT	0.076
26	ALBA IULIA	0.150	57	VĂLENII DE MUNTE	0.071
27	GIURGIU	0.144	58	TURNU MĂGURELE	0.071
28	ARAD	0.144	59	BUFTEA	0.070
29	PIATRA NEAMȚ	0.143	60	SIGHETU MARMAȚIEI	0.068
30	CARACAL	0.139	61	BRAD	0.065
31	GALAȚI	0.139	62	VASLUI	0.060

Rank	Agency/working point for employment	The arithmetical average of the standardized values of the indicators selected	Rank	Agency/working point for employment	The arithmetical average of the standardized values of the indicators selected
63	ILIA	0.059	72	OLTENIȚA	0.042
64	HUȘI	0.056	73	PETRILA	0.040
65	GHEORGHENI	0.055	74	ROȘIORI DE VEDE	0.037
66	ODORHEIU SECUIESC	0.055	75	POGOANELE	0.032
67	HAȚEG	0.051	76	BĂRLAD	0.031
68	TÂRGU NEAMȚ	0.050	77	ORĂȘTIE	0.020
69	NEHOIU	0.048	78	SIMERIA	0.001
70	SLOBOZIA	0.046	79	FĂUREI	0
71	LUPENI	0.044	80	ÎNSURĂȚEI	0

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