



## Reduction of future generations. Emigration and birth rate in Bacău and Vaslui counties

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## REDUCTION OF FUTURE GENERATIONS. EMIGRATION AND BIRTH RATE IN BACĂU AND VASLUI COUNTIES

Roxana Florina Munteanu<sup>1</sup>, Andreea Moraru<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** The approach of this article is to bring forward the long-term consequences visible in two counties from East Romania named Bacău and Vaslui, counties very different in terms of development, due to declining birth rate, a phenomenon triggered by over two decades, through the impact of emigration, but also as a mentality transformation of a society. Thereby, those two counties suffer a double loss of young population: from one side because of the young people that choose to emigrate and from the other side because of decreasing birth rate given that young people leave behind these counties, and mainly poor rural areas, choosing to live abroad. Analysing in a comparative way these two elements, migration and natality, with serious implications in increasing or decreasing the population of the administrative areas of our counties, we reduce the syncope of a descriptive analysis by using collected data outlined through cartographic method.

**Keywords:** population, emigration, birth rate, Bacău and Vaslui counties.

### 1. Introduction

Mobility, a feature of all beings, unites and separates at the same time, but, when expanded to all levels, consequences of this alternative has a serious impact on the population. The main challenge of Romanian population was, and still is, to look for a fair living and this need created synergies to identify those states that have found privilege in emigration. Causality of this workaround is explained by many authors through the intersection of economic with the social and political components, but the important factor to remember is the decision of each individual. No matter how we analyze this problem, destabilization of population structure is the anticipated event concerning the actual condition that Romania is facing.

Our purpose is to bring forward, through a comparative approach concerning Bacău and Vaslui counties, the double loss of young population: from one side because of the young people that choose to emigrate and from the other side because of decreasing birth rate given that young people leave behind these counties, and mainly poor rural areas, choosing to live abroad. Thereby, the dominant worrying feature of emigration consist in the dynamism of this process which decrease natality and the generation renewal capacity. However, numerous changes suffered by population led a fertility pattern reorganisation by declining the number of children per woman.

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## **2. Materials and methods**

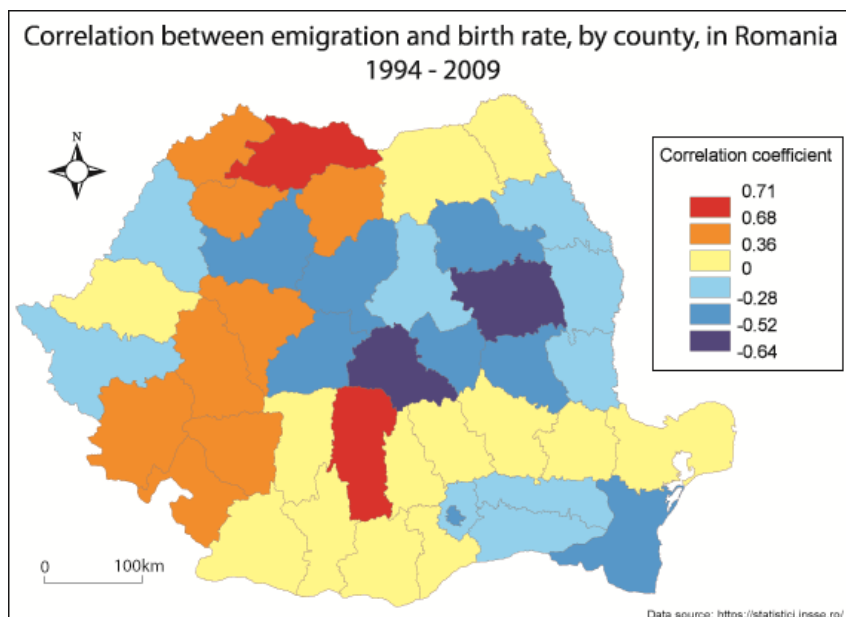
Methods used to develop the research are both common research methods and other sciences and geography specific methods. Thus to achieve the scientific, the first method was bibliographic documentation to deepen the concept of migration. For an exhaustive analysis of a phenomenon requires a rigorous documentation to allow updating of existing information on the phenomenon. Another method used is the comparative one, component of all sciences. This it was used to highlight different cases depending on the level of emigration. For interpretation of the specific data we used cartography and methods for transforming the data obtained from various public institutions, by using Excell, Philcarto and Adobe Illustrator. The study can be divided schematically into three steps: a preliminary documentation stage, research on the field, required to obtain relevant data, and a stage concentrated on analyzing, processing and mapping of information obtained.

## **3. Results and discussions**

The correlation coefficient between emigration and birth gives us an overall view over the situation of Romania counties. Counties consacred to emigration as Braşov, Constanţa, Timiş, Bacău, Iaşi recorded a steady increase in the number of emigrants correlated with a decrease in the birth rate, which is highlighted in a negative correlation, Bacău and Braşov registering a moderate to strong relationship. Concerning Bacău county the correlation coefficient is more negative than in Vaslui, the consequences of a more pronounced and visible emigration provided that emigration gradually increased while the birth rate decreased especially in the eastern part of the county. Vaslui appears, however, to be very close to the same situation as Bacău even if emigration started later, initially Vaslui residents have been oriented more to a national migration without taking into account cross over borders. Analysing this situation to a macro spatial level, can be distinguish those "emigration areas" which effectively divide Romania into two areas, one with positive data and the other with negative values including, as can be seen, Bacău and Vaslui counties experiencing severe demographic problems.

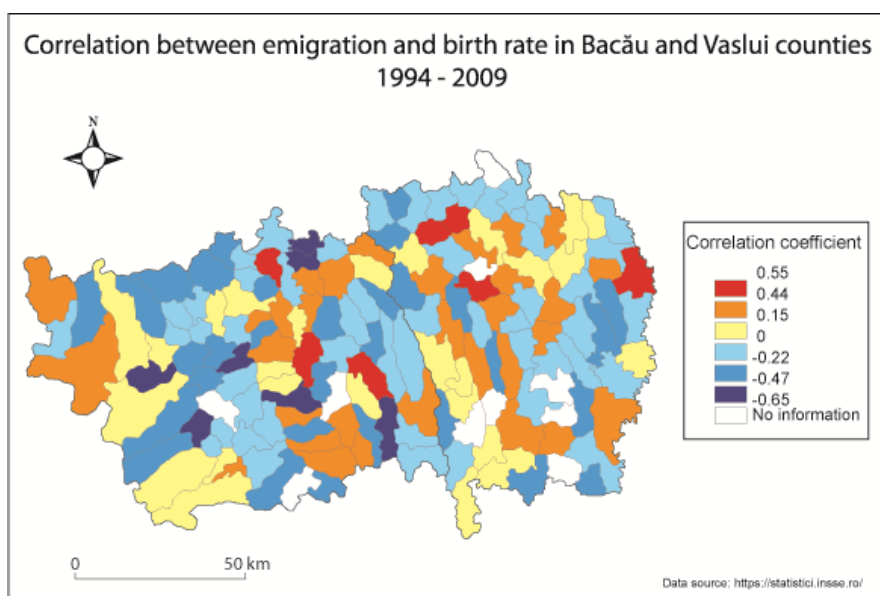
In the last 15 years, the population of Romania has suffered real "demographic shock" that, acknowledge it or not, have changed the demographic face of the country. These changes, visible in the map below, points the areas where legal or illegal emigrations, permanent or temporar were higher than the birth rate. Most people who emigrate are young: about 40% left in the period 1996-2006 and about 50% of those who left in the years 2002 to 2006. From those, 82% are unmarried among those aged 15-24 and 23% among those aged 25-39 years. Living abroad, many of them postpone their marriage and thus bringing up children. The greatest danger is that after they get abroad, some of those who left will not come back; they are doing everything possible to regularize their stay and to obtain unlimited residence documents (even resorting to convenience marriages). An analysis to counties level changes the vision concerning this problem, proof that is never enough a view only to a regional level, but an analysis to local level is required.

Cities like Comăneşti, Târgu Ocna but also some rural areas have a correlation coefficient moderate negative, in Vaslui county the situation being more equilibrate. All these are translated into losses of population, residents of these two counties registering lower numbers each year.



*Figure 1: Correlation between emigration and birth rate, by county, in Romania 1994-2009*

Because of the many factors leading to migration of Bacău population, emigration is here quite pronounced resulting in a negative migration balance and even more worrying in the North East. Although less dramatic, situation of Vaslui is not neglected given that migration balance register negative values lately, emigration exceeded immigration, understandably so given the poor attractiveness of this county with poor economy.



*Figure 2: Correlation between emigration and birth rate in Bacău and Vaslui counties 1994-2009*

If we analyze the demographic history of Vaslui county, this was characterized by relative stability due to maintaining a natalist behavior even after years 90' but slowly changes to political and socio-economically levels triggered this "epidemic" of emigration, initially in small numbers and legally, then increasingly harder to keep it under control.

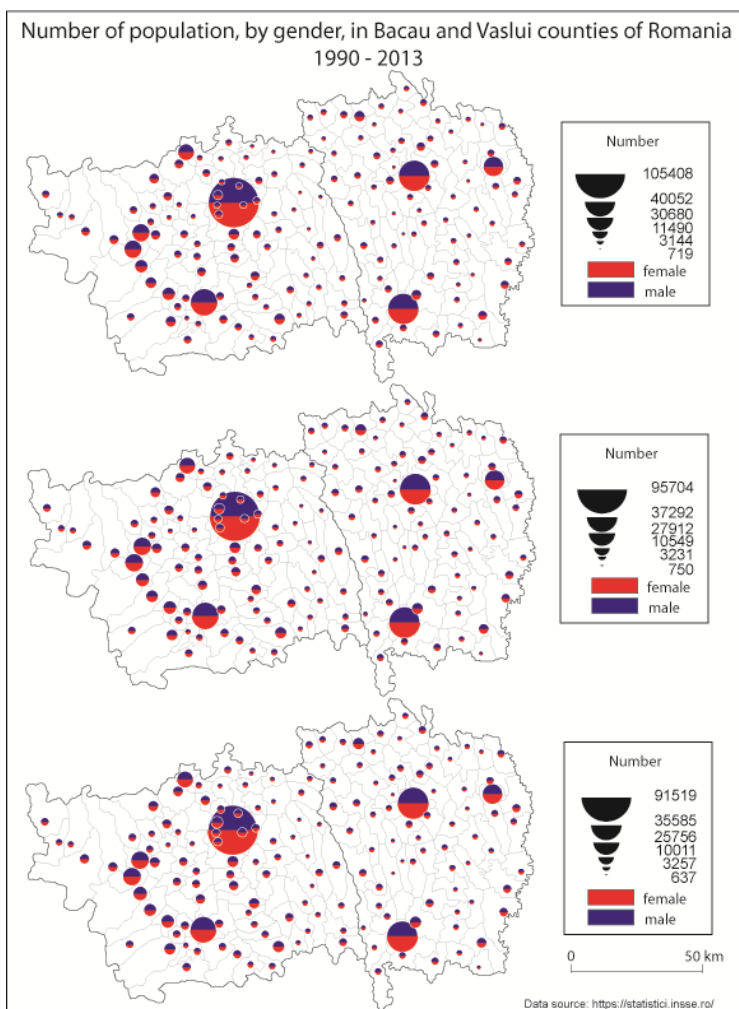


Figure 3 Number of population, by gender, in Bacău and Vaslui counties of Romania 1990-2013

Given that the predominant people that emigrate are young, the future of these two counties is somewhat worrying, beyond the issue of reducing the number of population is actually a double loss of young people: once, because of the young population emigration and second because of the reducing birth rates while the youth population considered fertile leaves these counties choosing to live abroad. The strong emigration of population will therefore dramatically affect, in long term, the population structure, as the young population gone means zero children born in the origin country. Along with this comes another one that brings into question the true situation in the population of these counties, especially when it is difficult to quantify the number of emigrate people.

Looking at the distribution of population by gender, in the two counties, it can be seen a "spiraling growth" in the first decade of both counties justified by maintaining a stable birth

rate then decreasing slowly after 2001 in both urban and rural areas. This decrease is because of the massive migration (especially external and internal one) from less developed areas (rural areas, small towns, etc) that caused imbalances and even depopulation when birth was not compensating factor.

It conveys a number of about 2 million people, from practically all regions of the country, which leads us to talk about a national phenomenon, taking in count the size, implications and geography of origin flow (Cartea Verde a Populației -Comisia Națională pentru Populație și Dezvoltare). All these migrations out of Bacău and Vaslui counties contributed together with birth and mortality to a significant decrease in population, decline more accentuated on the first post-communist phase. Beyond the pragmatic aspects drawn from the effects of migration, both internal and external population of the two counties is declining, though minor it allows for a number of consequences involving young and adult human flows.

If, at the level of Bacău county, emigration was driven by religious bond, in Vaslui county the community was the main factor. The traditional was put "in face of change and abandonment of a society that cannot find the desired place" (Voicu, 2004, p.2) and, at the census of October 2011, the extent of this phenomenon in Vaslui was evident when were reviewed 415 694 inhabitants, of which 20 195 were away for a long period, with an additional 5724 temporary left. The results of the 2011 census reveals, unexpectedly, a large size of external migration. Given these data it can be noticed that the temptation of migration expanded and the leave of young people contribute to the destabilization of demographic factors that a country depends of (Horvath, 2008).

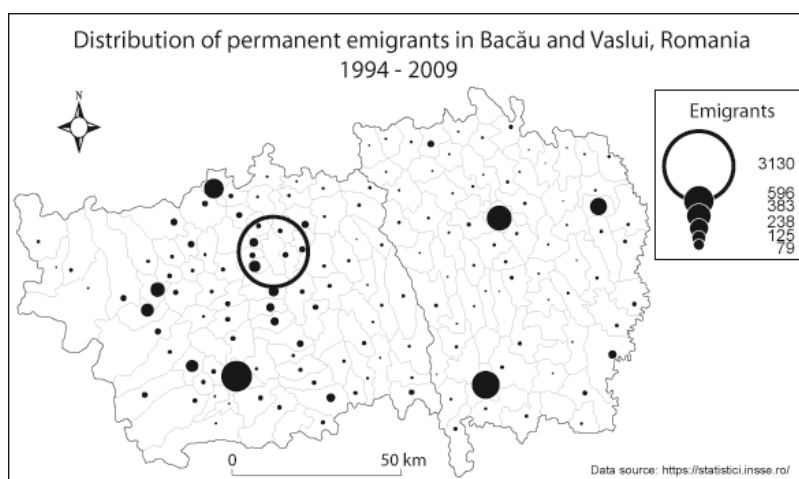


Figure 4: Distribution of permanent emigrants in Bacău and Vaslui 1994-2009

At the first glance, an analysis over the values of the two counties municipalities birth denounce a decrease in most of these administrative areas. In statistical terms this decrease takes into account values that dropped from 12 291 for Bacău and from 8 320 for Vaslui, values registered in 1990, to 6 423 and 4 737 births in 2013. This is translated in a reduction with 5 868 for Bacău and 3 583 for Vaslui, which shows important changes in mentality and in terms of fertile population, both leading to a decrease of birth rate.

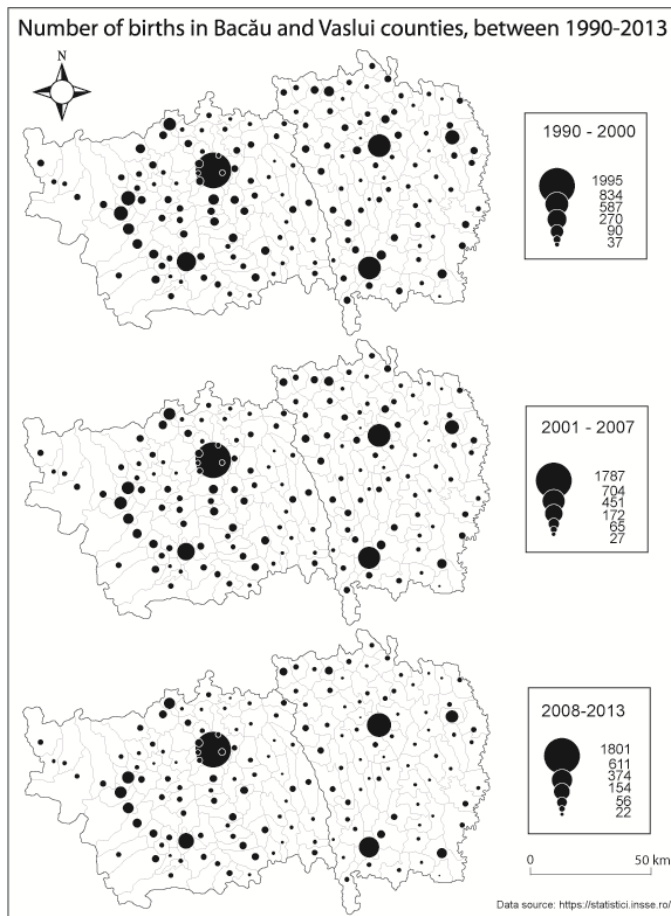


Figure 5: Number of births in Bacău and Vaslui counties 1990-2013

## Conclusions

The intent of this paper was to add the spatial support to a demographic analysis which helped us to see how the individual behavior evolved in the last decade. This study revealed the situation that Romania and implicitly Bacău and Vaslui counties are facing with, taking in count that, year by year, the number of population decreases significantly. The continuous decrease of the inhabitants of the two counties has a twofold cause: once they lose population due to emigration and on the other hand the population decrease due to increasingly low birth rate, which is influenced by this emigration once young people chose to leave abroad.

Comparing these two counties it can be noticed the much worse situation of Bacău, Vaslui county being with only one step behind, but when we say one step behind it means it follows the other one very close, even if this process started a little bit later in Vaslui than in Bacău. Determinants of emigration in Bacău county led to a sharp early emigration, resulting in a negative migration balance and also a negative total population balance, situation that, even if less negative, it can be noticed also in Vaslui county, which past can be characterized by a relative balance thanks to a pro-natalist behavior even in the year of '90's, reality that does not correspond to present.

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