YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY GRADUATES[1] IN A DEPRESSED AREA IN PORTUGAL

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment stands out as a major concern of policy makers, particularly in the case of youth unemployment. We intend to depict the reality of youth unemployment among university graduates in the Guar Municipality, as well as ascertain the possible causes and consequences of the phenomenon. We also aim to give some recommendations for decisions makers, so that these young people would take up residence in this region, which suffers from aging and depopulation issues. The main respondents of a questionnaire reported that it is not easy to get a job in a depressed area, i.e., the Guar Municipality, because labour supply has been reduced due to the closure of industries and companies in traditional sectors and to the lack of incentives for people and companies to take up residence in the area.

KEYWORDS: *youth unemployment, unemployment, depressed areas.*

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Introduction

Unemployment has currently become one of the greatest social problems. In the context of the present Portuguese crisis, the unemployment phenomenon, and particularly youth unemployment, has received special attention. In recent years, Portugal has seen a very sharp increase in the youth unemployment rate. At the end of 2015 it was quite close to 33% (INE, 2016). It is therefore a very disturbing reality, and especially so in recent times it has affected not only unskilled individuals, but also thousands of higher education graduates, thus constituting a serious economic, political and social problem (Sá, 2014).

In 2014, the Portuguese rate of unemployed higher education graduates was 10%. Besides, youth unemployment is more sensitive to the economic cycle than other age groups, since young people: develop economic activities of a more cyclic nature; are disproportionately present among those working part-time and/or have fixed-term employment contracts; face greater challenges in entering labour market, given their lack of experience and the possible mismatch between the skills they have to offer and the ones that employers seek. Also, during recession periods, not only young people are at the forefront of those who lose their jobs, since their employment contracts are not renewed, but also their job prospects, when entering the labour market, decrease because they have to compete with others, who have more work experience and also seek for em-

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ployment in a market that has few jobs to offer. In the Guar Municipality, where employment opportunities are scarce, this reality is even more acute.

The aim of this research is to understand the problem of employability of higher education graduates in a depressed area, the Guar Municipality. In particular, we hope to understand the causes that lead young people to moving away from this region. Another purpose of this investigation is to make some recommendations for decision-makers to help attract these people to the region with an aging population that suffers from the noticeable depopulation process.

1. Literature review

The current economic and financial crisis that most of the European countries is going through caused a deterioration in the macroeconomic performance of many economies. For example, Pedroso *et al.* (2005) reported that "within a macroeconomic framework characterized by increasing globalization and liberalization of trade and an aging population, Europe has been struggling with the problem of stagnation of the growth of its main economies". We are facing increasingly competitive economies on a global scale, where only the most powerful survive. However, problems, such as increased unemployment, occur within the less competitive economies. Mateus (2010) also shares the same opinion, stating that "the development of a new competitive geography in the world economy is no longer an embryonic trend. Portugal is one of the most affected countries by this phenomenon of unemployment, the result of a weak uncompetitive and exposed economy. As a result, several companies saw their production go down, leading them to bankruptcy and increased unemployment".

Explanations about the increased rate of unemployment will be many, including population growth, increased productivity rates, technological developments and competitiveness that comes from globalization, which leads companies to reducing costs, making room for unemployment growth and new forms of employment, such as temporary and subcontracted work (Campos, 2009). According to Eurofound (2012) "The immediate future of Europe depends on 94 million Europeans aged between 15 and 29 years-old. In addition to the challenges that young people have faced for generations in the process of passage to adulthood, this generation will live in a time when globalization is complete and will have to handle the responsibility of an aging population".

In Portugal, although the number of unemployed young people has slightly decreased between the years 2012 and 2014, it has, however, more than tripled between 2000 and 2014 (353.28%) (INE, 2015).

Quintini and Martin (2006) remind us that the person's track record in labour market will influence the probability of getting a job. Scarpeta *et al.* (2010) complete this idea, arguing that those who experience long periods of unemployment will have negative consequences in the future, not only in terms of employability, but also in regard to wages. As stated by Gonçalves (2005), it is important to point out the enormous disparities between countries with youth unemployment, which greatly end up reflecting different educational systems of each country and the respective employment system.

According to Eichhorst (2013), the low youth unemployment rates in such countries as Germany, Austria and the Netherlands are due to professional qualifications in force, namely, the case of dual education in those countries. Corredera (2005) states that unemployment is a reflection of the failed economic system where young people are the most affected by it. Hashem (2011) agrees that young people are the most affected, but in the case of Tunisia he highlights the difficulties that young people experience when seeking their first jobs, especially women, who have greater difficulties because in they have less rights in this country and so are the most discriminated ones in the labour market.

In their research, Gonçalves (2005), Corredera (2005) and Dietmar (2010) warned about the unfavourable situation of young people in Portugal. Hashem (2011) and Gonçalves (2005) indicate that unemployment data are less favourable for women, which is confirmed by a situation in Portugal. If in stable times young people are more vulnerable to unemployment, in times of crisis, this vulnerability is even further aggravated due to young people's high participation in temporary work and especially in industries which are sensitive

to economic cycles (Scarpetta *et al*., 2010). Moreover, to make the picture even worse, the effect is faster during economic recession (increase in unemployment rate) than in periods of economic recovery (decrease in the unemployment rate) (Quintini, 2011).

Some authors, Quintini and Martin (2006), as a reason emphasize school dropouts, the labour market conditions and the lack of correspondence between young people skills and the labour market needs. Entrepreneurship among young people is often seen as a good measure to combat youth unemployment (Privat, 2010). However, Hashem (2011) found that in Tunisia SMEs have a very low success rate, because young people having a higher education degree, have little experience in labour market for to undertake alone the responsibility for their own business, therefore it is only a short-term solution.

Some argue that in the fight against unemployment, investing in education is very important, since the likelihood of unemployment decreases when the individual has a higher level of education; this also has a beneficial effect on the duration of unemployment, especially if together with education there is also job experience, which has a higher impact (Marks and Fleming, 1998). The authors add that education has greater influence on young males rather than females. Thus, the difficulty in entering labour market has been gaining importance, particularly with regard to the transition from education to the labour market for highly qualified people (Alves, 2005). Therefore, one way to overcome this problem and to adapt labour to the market needs is the education system used in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, where students go to school and work simultaneously, achieving a balance between theory and practice. This is a good way to enter labour market, and perhaps this is why these countries have low youth unemployment rates (Quintini and Martin, 2006). However, naturally these young people feel disappointed. They postpone their professional career, marriage and children plans (Marques, 2003), in order to be rewarded in the future. When faced with unemployment, they encounter: financial hardship; deprivation of certain psychological experiences, which usually happen in the workplace; decreased contact with people outside the family sphere and increased difficulty to structure their time (Paulino *et al*., 2010).

Likewise, Caetano *et al*. (2005) pointed out that young people do not have adequate training to meet the demands of labour market that is in constant evolution and transformation. In the same vein, Lawrence (2012) goes a step further, stating that this inadequacy lies in the multitude of existing degrees, and most of them do not have great functionality and are not in demand by the economy. Faced with this problem, the same author raises the question whether "it would not be worth doing a study to examine the relationship between the percentage of unemployed young people and the degrees they attended" (Lawrence, 2012), in order to understand which education degrees do not lead to creation of jobs and thus are on the verge of extinction. In addition, more than a fifth of employees have fixed-term employment contracts and they are mainly young people (Centeno and Novo, 2012).

According to the International Labour Conference Report (2012), youth unemployment is seen as wastage of potential talent, considered vital for the economy and rejuvenation of labour. It can be argued that individuals emigrate, not by choice, but due to labour market that cannot absorb them or remunerate them properly, which forces to seek for employment in other countries with more attractive offers (Eichhorst, 2013).

In Portugal, the measures implemented to combat unemployment have only short-term impact (IEFP, 2013). Quintini (2011) believes that a good way to tackle youth unemployment is by adopting policies that promote the continuation of studies for young people. Apparently, this idea could even be a viable solution, because as we have seen, there are studies that indicate that the unemployment rate among young people decreases when they reach a higher educational level (Scarpetta *et al*., 2010). Moreover, according to Alves (2005), although the situation is getting worse, there are relatively few (3%) higher education graduates who are in unemployment over 3 to 5 years after the completion of the course.

In disadvantaged regions, such as Guar, job offers are scarce, due to the closure of companies caused by the economic crisis. Consequently higher education graduates are forced to look for other jobs within the country or abroad, contributing to the depopulation and impoverishment of the region. The prevailing question, that needs an urgent answer, concerns the conditions to be created to entice these higher education graduates to settle in this region.

2. Methodology

In our research, we decided to perform a case study, randomly selecting a sample of young people, higher education graduates, having a connection with the Guar Municipality. The aim of the study was to get answers to the following questions.

Generic research question: we want to understand the employment issues of young people, higher education graduates, which have a connection with the Guar Municipality, and to find out what measures should be implemented to help them settle in this region.

In order to answer this generic question in detail, the following questions were considered:

Specific questions:

- What is a profile of unemployed young person, under 40 years old, which is a higher education graduate and has a connection with the Guar Municipality?
- Are there any significant differences between gender, age, marital status, residence, academic degree, current employment status and the main reason that encouraged those young people to enter higher education? What is their perception about finding a job in the nearest future and their vision how to encourage young people to take up residence in this region?

A questionnaire was chosen as an observation tool for data collection in this area. The questionnaire was based on theoretical research, grounded on the hypothesis, followed by subsequent computer and statistical treatment of the obtained data.

In order to ensure validity of the questionnaire, a pre-test was prepared for a group of 10 people, who provided feedback about coherence and general understanding, so that necessary adjustments could be made. This test intended to verify that the questions would be interpreted the same way by all respondents, all aspects of the issues would be well addressed. Consequently, this helped to identify questions that needed to be re-written or even to be deleted from the final version.

Therefore, we developed a non-probabilistic, random, accidental and universal sample for the study – young people with a Bachelor's degree, as minimum academic qualification, and aged between 20 and 40 years of age. The survey aimed to know the opinion of young people with higher education about unemployment in the Guar Municipality, namely, to find out the main causes of this problem and to highlight measures that need to be taken to lower the unemployment rate and to raise the employment expectations. So, between November and December of 2014, the questionnaire surveys were delivered in various locations of the Guar Municipality, personally and directly, i.e., face to face to 200 people, who were guaranteed anonymity. They were left on their own to complete the survey and then the surveys were collected. There was a 75% response rate of the surveys applied, corresponding to 150 valid questionnaires, which are further on analysed in our study.

When preparing questions for the questionnaire we took into account the conducted literature review. Therefore, closed questions were used in the questionnaire to obtain comparable data.

The questionnaire was structured in two parts. In the first part, there was collected data on the respondents, i.e. characterization of the sample, namely, age, gender, marital status, residence, academic degree, date of graduation, current situation, spouse situation and the last time the respondent sought for a job.

In the second part, the data on the respondents' perceptions were collected namely on the employment issue in the Guar Municipality. The respondents were asked to suggest solutions, based on their assumptions, about the best way to get a job, as well as to point out the main obstacles in finding a job, the measures to be adopted for keeping young people in Guar and, finally, their expectations of getting a job in the Guar Municipality.

All the statistical data was processed by IBM SPSS software (v22 – SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL) and Excel (Microsoft Office 2013, Microsoft Corporation). For testing the defined research questions an error probability Type I (α) of 0.05 was used.

3. Guar Municipality

Population. The Guar Municipality has 26 565 inhabitants in its urban area. It lost 3.75% of its resident population between 2011 and 2014 (PORDATA, 2015). In 2014, 58.9% of the population was over 40-year-old and 21.3% – over 65-year-old, showing an aging municipality, particularly in rural areas (PORDATA, 2015).

Education. The Guar Municipality has educational structures capable to correspond to young people's needs and requested quality.

Access to locality. The Guar Municipality has important access roads, however, from a logistic point of view, the territory presents barriers in terms of accessibility. Therefore, it hinders a better economic and social performance, due to the distances and associated mobility costs, which necessarily affect the dynamics of business attraction, retention of people and quality of life (PEDI, 2014). As far as railways are concerned, Guarda has good railway access.

Economy. From the economic point of view, the territory is marked by high unemployment, where the tertiary sector is the main creator of jobs and the one that creates value. In a more structural perspective, the territory has its advantages in the strategic positioning, including its neighbourhood to Spain and availability of facilities: tourism, catering, culture, education, science and technology and community, i.e. the diversity of resources as well as natural heritage and local products (PEDI, 2014). The poor job offer in the Guar Municipality makes young people look for work elsewhere, whereas many of them are left with the only option to emigrate.

4. Results and discussion

Overall, out of 150 respondents 53.3% were women, 55.3% were aged between 30 and 40 years old, 62% were single and 69.3% lived in the Guar Municipality. Moreover, 82% of those surveyed, had a Bachelor degree, 59.3% were employed and 55.3% stated that their main source of income was their job.

However, 60% of the respondents, as the main obstacle when looking for a job associated with reduced labour supply. The latter happened due to the current economic and social context, the closure of industries and companies in traditional sectors (52.7%) and the lack of incentives for the establishment of companies in the region (2.7%). Furthermore, 30.0% responded that, given an unemployment situation, the best option to get a job is to create your own business, or consider entrepreneurship as an opportunity to get a job, which to some extent reinforces the relevance of deepening these topics in the higher education curricula.

As for the measures that may be adopted for encouraging young people to settle in the Municipality, most of the respondents (22.7%) indicated the reduction of tolls on the A23 and A25 roads, which would decrease the region's isolation. Another measure would be the exemption of fees for construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or acquisition of property.

Regarding the expectations towards future employment in the Guar Municipality, the majority of respondents (42.2%) answered that it was not easy to find a job, and (41.3%) stated that it was due to the economic and social crisis, which they believed would eventually come to an end.

4.1 Research hypotheses

In order to validate the research questions, the following research hypotheses have been formulated:

H_{ij} – There is a significant relationship between the variable i *(i = Motive for Entering Higher Education, Current Income Source, Previous Jobs, Best option to get a job, Obstacles to getting a job, Employability Issue, Youth Settling in the Municipality, Expectations for the Future)* and the variable j *(j = Gender, Age, Marital Status, Residence, Academic Degree, Academic Degree Graduation Date, Current Professional Situation).*

As an example, the next null hypothesis is stated.

H – There is no relationship between *Obstacles to getting a job* and *Age*.

To test the general research issues we resorted to the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test, followed by the multiple comparison of mean scores as described by Maroco (2011).

In Table 1 the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test statistics are presented for the level of significance (α) of 5%.

Table 1. Non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test

Variables	Gender		Age		Marital Status		Residence		Academic Degree		Graduation date		Professional Situation	
	χ^2	p	χ^2	p	χ^2	p	χ^2	p	χ^2	p	χ^2	p	χ^2	P
Current Professional Situation	5,890	**0,015**	17,062	**0,000**	8,544	**0,014**	0,474	0,491	4,811	0,186	6,065	0,048	_	_
Higher Education	2,055	0,152	2,917	0,233	0,572	0,751	0,244	0,621	0,606	0,895	4,313	0,116	1,512	0,680
Actual Income source	1,122	0,289	31,336	**0,00**	1,288	0,525	0,474	0,491	2,795	0,424	19,080	**0,000**	39,792	**0,000**
Previous Jobs	1,808	0,179	35,804	**0,000**	7,274	**0,026**	0,454	0,500	1,329	0,722	32,389	**0,000**	60,979	**0,000**
Best option to get a job	0,759	0,384	5,824	0.054	3,144	0,208	0,036	0,849	2,326	0,508	0,589	0,745	2,388	0,496
Obstacles to getting a job	1,000	0,317	3,941	0,139	2,363	0,307	3,811	0,051	3,090	0,378	1,860	0,395	2,307	0,511
Employability Issue	0,421	0,517	2,105	0,349	3,774	0,152	0,044	0,834	1,791	0,617	0,034	0,983	0,541	0,910
Youth Settling in the Municipality	1,321	0,250	0,638	0,727	1,921	0,383	1,892	0,169	2,663	0,447	1,314	0,518	3,026	0.388
Future Expectations	8,178	**0,004**	5,287	0,071	6,539	**0,038**	0,703	0,402	1,713	0,634	0,244	0,885	4,431	0,219

Gender, Age, Marital Status, and Academic Degree Graduation Date have a statistically significant effect ($p = 0.05$) on the *Current Professional Situation* – women are the ones who have a lower employment rate in relation to men, i.e., 70.1% and 50.6% respectively (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender Current Professional Situation

			Current Professional Situation				Total
			Employed	Have never had a Job	Student	Unemployed	
Gender	Male	% in Gender	70.1%	3.0%	13.4%	13.4%	100.0%
	Female	% in Gender	50.6%	10.8%	9.6%	28.9%	100.0%
Total		% in Gender	59.3%	7.3%	11.3%	22.0%	100.0%

In addition, 71.9% of the employed respondents are between 30–40 years old and 5.6% are 20–24 years of age. However, 15.2% of the unemployed are aged between 20–24 years and 57.6% are between 30–40 years of age (Table 3).

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Table 3. Age Current Professional Situation

			Current Professional Situation				Total
			Employed	Have never had a Job	Student	Unemployed	
Age	20–24	% Situation	5.6 %	63.6 %	70.6 %	15.2 %	19.3 %
	25–29	% Situation	22.5 %	36.4 %	29.4 %	27.3 %	25.3 %
	30–40	% Situation	71.9 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	57.6 %	55.4 %
Total		% Situation	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

Overall, 80.6% of the respondents, who graduated before 2004, are employed. There are 12.0% of the respondents who graduated between 2010 and 2014 and have never had a job, whereas 22.7% have kept on studying and 18.6% are still unemployed (Table 4).

Table 4. Academic Degree Graduation Date Current Professional Situation

			Current Professional Situation				Total
			Employed	Have never had a Job	Student	Unemployed	
Academic Degree	<2004	% Graduation	80.6%	0.0%	0.0%	19.4%	100.0%
	2005–2009	% Graduation	65.9%	4.6%	0.0%	29.5%	100.0%
	2010–2014	% Graduation	46.7%	12.0%	22.7%	18.60%	100.0%
Total		% Graduation	59.3%	7.30%	11.3%	22.0%	100.0%

There are 63.6% unemployed respondents who are single and 36.4% who are married or are in a civil partnership. Then, 50.6% of the employed respondents are single and 7.9% are divorced (Table 5).

Table 5. Marital Status Current Professional Situation

			Current Professional Situation				Total
			Employed	Have never had a Job	Student	Unemployed	
Marital Status	Single	% Situation	50.6%	90.9%	100%	63.6%	62%
	Married / partnership	% Situation	41.6%	0.0%	0.0%	36.4%	32.7%
	Divorced	% Situation	7.9%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%
Total		% Situation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Only the factors of *Age, Graduation Date* and *Current Professional Situation* have a statistically significant effect ($p \leq 0.05$) on the *Main Current Income Source*.

Respondents in the group of 25–29 and 30–40 years of age, ,as the main source of income mentioned their jobs, in contrast to the 20–24 years old group, where they mentioned family as the main source of income (Table 6).

Table 6. Age Income source

			Income source						Total
			Unemployment Benefits	Wages / salary	Rents	Savings	Family	Others	
Age	20–24	% Age	0.0 %	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%	75.9%	10.3%	100%
	25–29	% Age	18.4 %	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.6%	0%	100%
	30–40	% Age	10.8 %	67.5%	2.4%	2.5%	6.0%	10.8%	100%
Total		% Age	10.7 %	52.7%	1.3%	1.3%	26.0%	8.0%	100%

The respondents who had acquired their Academic Degree before 2010 reported their jobs as the main income source, while those who have completed their Academic Degree after 2010, reported family support as their main source of income , because they faced a labour market where unemployment rate is high (Table 7).

Table 7. Graduation date Income source

			Income source						Total
			Unemployment Benefits	Wages / salary	Rents	Savings	Family	Others	
Graduation date	<2004	% Graduation date	6.5%	74.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	9.7%	100%
	2005–2009	% Graduation date	22.7%	56.8%	2.3%	2.3%	9.1%	6.8%	100%
	2010–2014	% Graduation date	5.3%	41.3%	0.0%	0.0%	45.3%	8.1%	100%
Total		% Graduation date	10.7%	52.7%	1.3%	1.3%	26.0%	8.0%	100%

The employed respondents reported their job as the main income source. However, the unemployed reported unemployment benefits as the main income source, whereas students and the ones who had never had a job reported family support as their main source of income (Table 8).

Table 8. Professional Situation Income source

			Income source						Total
			Unemployment Benefits	Wages / salary	Rents	Savings	Family	Others	
Professional Situation	Employed	% Situation	2.2%	88.8%	1.1%	0.%	2.2%	5.7%	100%
	Have never had a Job	% Situation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	81.8%	18.2%	100%
	Student	% Situation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	94.1%	5.9%	100%
	Unemployed	% Situation	42.4%	0.0%	3.0%	6.1%	36.4%	12.1%	100%
Total		% Situation	10.7%	52.7%	1.3%	1.3%	26.0%	8.0%	100%

Only the variables of *Age, Marital Status, Graduation Date* and *Current Situation* have a statistically significant interaction effect ($p = 0.05$) with *Previous Jobs*.

In the the age groups of 25–29 years and 30–40 years there were the ones who indicated that they had already had more than one job since the completion of the Academic Degree study program, in contrast to the 20–24 years old group where 58.6 % indicated they had never had a job since they finished their Academic Degree program (Table 9).

Table 9. Graduation Date Jobs

			Jobs				Total
			None	1–2	3–5	+5	
Age	20–24	% Age	58.6%	31.0%	6.9%	3.4%	100%
	25–29	% Age	15.8%	57.9%	26.3%	0.0%	100%
	30–40	% Age	1.3%	53.0%	34.9%	10.8%	100%
Total		% Age	16.0%	50.0%	27.3%	6.7%	100%

In comparison, 24.7% single respondents had never worked and 100% of married respondents had already had one or more jobs (Table 10).

Table 10. Marital Status Jobs

			Jobs				Total
			None	1–2	3–5	+5	
Marital Status	Single	% Status	24.7%	46.2%	23.7%	5.4%	100%
	Married /partnership	% Status	0.0%	55.1%	38.8%	6.1%	100%
	Divorced	% Status	12.5%	62.5%	0.0%	25.0%	100%
Total		% Status	16.0%	50.0%	27.3%	6.7%	100%

Still 35.5% of the respondents who had been awarded their Academic Degree before 2004, reported having 3 to 5 jobs and 13.3% of those who had been awarded the Academic Degree after 2010 reported having 3 to 5 jobs. It should be noted that job stability has declined in recent years as a result of updating of the labour law (Table 11).

Table 11. Graduation date Jobs

			Jobs				Total
			None	1–2	3–5	+5	
Graduation date	<2004	% Graduation date	0.0%	51.6%	35.5%	12.9%	100%
	2005–2009	% Graduation date	4.5%	43.2%	45.5%	6.8%	100%
	2010–2014	% Graduation date	29.3%	53.3%	13.3%	4.1%	100%
Total		% Graduation date	16.0%	50.0%	27.3%	6.7%	100%

The employed and unemployed respondents reported that they had more jobs after their graduation than students and the ones who had never had a job (Table 12).

Table 12. Professional Situation Jobs

			Jobs				Total
			None	1–2	3–5	+5	
Professional Situation	Employed	% Situation	0.0%	58.4%	33.7%	7.9%	100.0%
	Have never had a Job	% Situation	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Student	% Situation	70.6%	23.5%	5.9%	0.0%	100 %
	Unemployed	% Situation	3.0%	57.6%	30.3%	9.1%	100.0%
Total		% Situation	59.3%	7.3%	11.4%	22.0%	100%

None of the *Gender*, *Age, Marital Status, Residence, Academic Degree, Graduation date* and *Current Situation* factors had a statistically significant effect ($p > 0.05$) over the following measures: *Best option to get a job, Obstacles to getting a job, Employability Issues, and Youth Settling in the Municipality*.

Only the factors of *Gender* and *Marital Status* show a statistically significant interaction effect ($p \leq 0.05$) with the *Future Expectations of getting a job*.

Even though, more women (54.3%) than men (44.4%) believe that the country is passing over a negative phase due to the crisis, however, men are the ones who believe that it will be surpassed, and they will easier find a job in the Guar Municipality (Table 13).

Table 13. Gender Expectations to find a job in the nearest Future

			Expectations to find a Job				Total
			Impossible	Not Easy	Easy	Negative Phase	
Gender	Male	% Gender	19.1%	20.6%	15.9%	44.4%	100%
	Female	% Gender	3.7%	32.1%	9.9%	54.3%	10 %
Total		% Gender	10.4%	27.1%	12.5%	50.0%	100%

Although most of the married or in a civil partnership, single and divorced people feel that the country is passing over a negative phase which will eventually end, the divorced are the most sceptical about the future, because 50% fear they will not get jobs, against 8.9% of single and 6.5% of married people. Perhaps their personal divorced situation contributes to this more pessimistic personal view (Table 14).

Table 14. Marital Status Expectations to find a in the near Future

			Expectations to find a Job				Total
			Impossible	Not Easy	Easy	Negative Phase	
Marital Status	Single	% Marital status	8.9%	28.9%	13.3%	48.9%	100%
	Married	% Marital status	6.5%	28.3%	13.0%	52.2%	100%
	Divorced	% Marital status	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50%	100%
Total		% Marital status	10.4%	27.1%	12.5%	50%	100%

4.2. Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the survey results, we present some recommendations in order to find solutions to a problem of the graduated youth unemployment so that they could settle in the Guar Municipality:

- Access to locality. The Municipality presents barriers that condition better economic and social performance, due to the distances and associated mobility costs, which inevitably will affect the dynamics of attracting companies and people. It has been reported that the Guar Municipality has, in general, good infrastructure and quality of life, so it would benefit from the reduction of tolls on major roads (A23 and A25 roads) in order to attract business and people to the Municipality.
- Encouraging the establishment of companies. It is essential to create dynamic conditions for the local economy, either through internationalization of business, or through productive investment attraction, since the region has a short supply of companies. However, only attracting of investment can create wealth and jobs that would allow us to break the vicious cycle of depopulation and encourage boost of the Municipality.

Thus, a number of measures should be implemented, including:

- Reducing the cost of business facilities, installation, and licensing.
- Reducing the tax burden (Municipal Property Tax (IMI), Collective Income Tax (IRC) and Individual Income Tax (IRS).
- Increasing business diversity.
- Strengthening and streamlining existing resources, such as tourism and handicrafts.
- Raise of awareness among higher education institutions. In other words, they should tailor their curricula of subjects related to entrepreneurship, thus enabling their young graduates to develop own business. It also seems crucial to increase the interaction between these educational institutions and the business sector. Special importance should be given to the 10 largest companies (having million euros of sales) of the Municipality.

Conclusions

Unemployment is not just a current problem, or an exclusively Portuguese problem. In Portugal, the situation deteriorated further with the economic crisis, especially in regard to young people. The current reality in the labour market means that many respondents refer to low expectations about the possibility of finding a job in the Guar Municipality, women being the most sceptical about it. Respondents also reported that one of employability issues in the Guar Municipality was the closure of industries and companies in traditional sectors. Therefore, it is crucial to arrange solutions to attract and retain businesses in the Municipality. Reducing the cost of business facilities, installation, and licensing, along with the reduction of IMI, IRC and IRS may be enhancing measures.

After all, the respondents also distinguished such a measure as the reduction of tolls on highways that they believe it would keep young people in the Municipality. Higher Education Institutions, located in the region, are financially and socially very important, because beyond their traditional role of teaching, they also promote research activities, knowledge transfer, business training, community development, thus con-

tributing to regional and local development. The Polytechnic Institute of Guarda, the only Higher Education Institution in the Municipality, has to play a key role in this unemployment issue.

However, it was difficult to obtain the answers to the questionnaire surveys, reflected in the sample size, thus limiting the conclusions drawn from the statistical analysis.

Summarising, we would like to leave some suggestions for future research, though the pointed issues were not the main purpose of this project:

- To extend the research on the Guar District so that to see if it shows the same trends.
- To study the impact of lower tolls on this Municipality. Would this policy prove itself, bring benefits and contribute to the increasing number of young people living there?

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UNIVERSITETŲ ABSOLVENTŲ JAUNIMO NEDARBAS PORTUGALIJOS DEPRESINĖSE ZONOSE

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Santrauka

Nedarbas išlieka viena didžiausių problemų įstatymų leidėjams, ypač jaunimo nedarbas. Straipsnyje aptariamos universitetą baigusio jaunimo nedarbo problemos Guar savivaldybėje, nurodomos galimos šio reiškinio priežastys ir pasekmės. Pateikiamos rekomendacijas tiems, kurie priiminėja sprendimus dėl jaunimo apgyvendinimo šiame regione, kur aktualios senėjimo ir jaunų žmonių išvykimo iš šio regiono problemos.

Respondentai pildydami pateiktą klausimyną teigė, kad gauti darbą Guar savivaldybėje nelengva. Darbo pasiūla šiame regione mažėja dėl tradicinės pramonės mažėjimo ir įmonių bei žmonių iniciatyvos apsigyventi regione nebuvimo. Be to, respondentai nurodė, kad problemą padėtų spręsti greitkelių mokesčių mažinimas.

Aukštojo išsilavinimo institucijos yra finansiškai ir socialiai svarbios regionams, kuriuose veikia, nes be įprasto švietimo vaidmens, jos skatina tyrimus, rengia mokymus verslo organizacijų darbuotojams, telkia bendruomenę, taip prisidėdamos prie regioninės ir vietinės plėtros. Guarda politechnikos institutas, vienintelė aukštojo išsilavinimo institucija šioje savivaldybėje, vaidina svarbų vaidmenį sprendžiant nedarbo problemą.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *jaunimo nedarbas, nedarbas, depresinė aplinka.*

JEL KLASIFIKACIJA: J640, J620, R580