



Munich Personal RePEc Archive

Time Use and Work Arrangements in Romania

Istrate, Georgeta-Marinela and Caragea, Nicoleta

National Institute of Statistics, Ecological University of Bucharest

1 June 2008

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/45506/>

MPRA Paper No. 45506, posted 26 Mar 2013 16:27 UTC

Time Use and Work Arrangements in Romania

Ph.D. Student Georgeta-Marinela ISTRATE

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS

Ph.D. Student Nicoleta HREHORCIUC-CARAGEA

ECOLOGIC UNIVERSITY of BUCHAREST

Abstract

The globalization process has many implications in the national economies development, changing the every day life of people. If we take a look on the labour market of last decades it is easy to observe the changes of national time allocation patterns for individuals and also for the entire society.

There are many reasons why people are interested in alternative working arrangements. For workers, a flexible workplace will allow them to effectively allocate time between different activities. For employers, the benefits include alternative arrangements that will allow for better recruitment, which results in productivity increases. New policies should aim to facilitate equality of opportunity for men and women in the allocation of time between work and family responsibilities.

In this context, this paper will analyze the implications of working arrangements in the patterns of time use of Romanian population on the base of the results of two survey carried out by National Institute of Statistics (Time Use Survey and Labour Force Survey).

INTRODUCTION

Last decades have been characterized by an essential change in the national economies of countries around the world. Taking into account the context of globalization which reflects accelerated speed into people's life, extended length of working status of individuals, increased average level of education, it becomes critical for the national economies to embrace and prepare for these changes in order to keep up with the economical and social competitiveness set up by the era of globalization. The rapid development of technology and communication is been also having a tremendous impact over the changes recorded on the labour market which are leading to **new models of national use of time**. By taking a closer look over certain decades, it can be observed that without the effort of producing studies and economic analysis, there have been noted profound changes in the patterns of time use, both, at the individual and aggregate social level.

The evolution labour force and increase in competitiveness of the economy, along with modern standards of living and a new attitude in relation to employment are factors that have been leading to the erosion of traditional employment relationships and have been encouraging the development of **new forms of working time use**. Thus, there appear new forms of alternative employment like: flexible time, job sharing, part-time, and telecommuting. Thus job redesign becomes a critical characteristic of competitive business within competitive economies. Flexible must be driven by a business need and are determined locally in each country to take into account local practice, culture and law.

Currently, **in Romania**, even though the flexi-time employment are lower than in other European countries, there are flexible work arrangements which are being embraced by companies more so in need to cover the need of their overproduction and temporary service needs than being offered as an option to their employees taking in consideration their satisfaction within the work environment and their feelings that they are more respected when

employers take their personal needs into account. Moreover, it is hard for the business to realize that working time arrangements can have a significant bearing on the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of companies, not to mention the health, well-being and motivation of their employees. It takes a mind set before anything else that all workers should have the right, without giving up current labour protection on rights on rights achieved to collective bargain agreements, to greater control over their own work schedule. So that, in coordinance with the company business needs and interests they can meet their care giving responsibilities to their own families. Such policies should include, varying start and end times, advanced notice of schedule, the right to reuse mandatory overtime, as well as the right to request vacation time. Part-time workers should have the right parity in wages, benefits and government protection just as full working contract does.

Use the alternative work arrangements in Romania

Diversification of jobs, decentralisation and individualization of work time has led to the emergence of new patterns of contractual arrangements in the labour market. So far, as they are voluntarily chosen by employees, can offer them a positive flexibility and it can meet the interests and needs of individuals and families. These arrangements reflect in the same time the needs of employees, but also those of companies, the duration of time allotted for work and programs being adapted to their specific needs.

➡ *Many workers feel that they must choose between work and family*

Using flexible forms of work arrangements could be a good opportunity for them to establish a balance between work time and time outside of work.

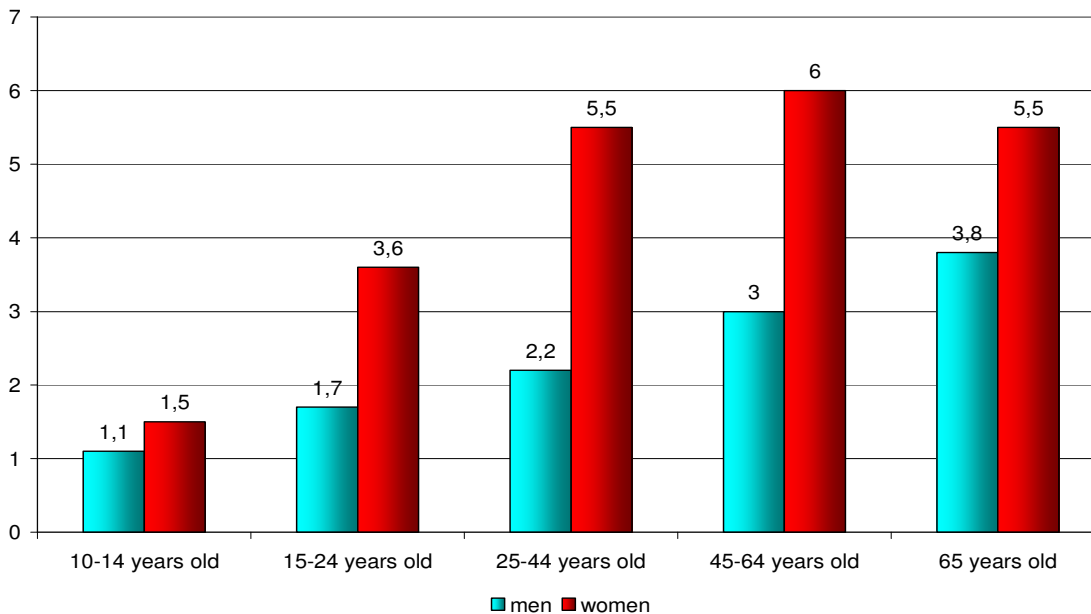
According to certain criteria relating to the duration of working time, duration of the contract or the flexibility of work schedule, in Romania there are several types of alternative work arrangements, namely:

- ❑ work arrangements for a fixed period (<24 months);
- ❑ part-time work arrangements;
- ❑ Work arrangements based on flexible schemes (flexi-time).
- ❑ The use of flexible work arrangements in Romanian organizations is relatively low (0, 18% of total work arrangement in 2006). This lack of work flexibility causes problems for employees with conflicting family demands since:
 - ❑ excessive work hours limit time with one's family;
 - ❑ the work day either starts too early or ends too late, restricting quality time with family;
 - ❑ And work schedules often do not match with childcare arrangements, eldercare, doctor's appointments, and other family activities.

Organizations that insist on regular work schedules have the same expectations of employees, regardless of family situation, and fail to recognize the impact of the work domain into the family domain. Sensitivity to family interests by employers has lagged behind the emergence of these concerns as an issue for employees.

Working mothers still bear the primary burden of balancing work and family responsibilities, and are more likely to require a flexible work arrangement. Men with young children are also bringing increased expectations for work flexibility to the workplace. If we take a look on the pattern of Romanian household it could say that women are involved almost two times more than men in household working activities, nevertheless of their age (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Daily average duration (in hours) of household activities and family care, by age group and sex - in working and rest days

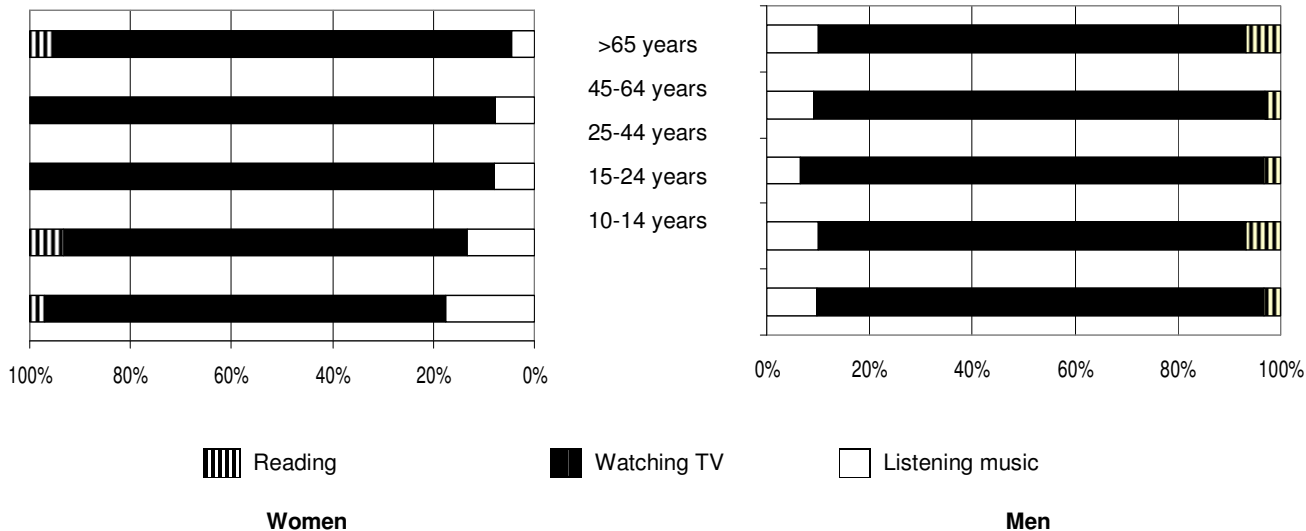


Source: Romanian Time Use Survey, 2000

Of the total of 3.6 hours per day spent on average by one person to work in household, the biggest budget of time is registered for the activities of preparing meals (1.2 hours), including all cooking-related activities, putting meals, washing vessels, preparing food for preservation or refrigeration.

Generally, in Romania both women and men assign the same time in leisure activities, as social life and cultural activities (approximately one hour per day). The absence of a life partner and children causes a minor participation in the activities of the group. Watching TV is the main activity for the leisure time in Romania (fig.2).

Fig. 2. Leisure time activities, by age group and sex - in working and rest days



Source: Romanian Time Use Survey, 2000

➤ **Organizations have recently become interested in alternative ways to schedule work**

Job related literature mentions nine factors that have played an instrumental role in this development:

- ❑ an increase in the number of women participating in the workforce;
- ❑ interest in and adoption of new lifestyles;
- ❑ an increase in the number of single-parent and dual-provider households;
- ❑ new relationships between work and education;
- ❑ the aging of the workforce;
- ❑ the growth of the service sector;
- ❑ the pressures of unemployment and inflation;
- ❑ a change in the way people perceive both work and leisure time;
- ❑ and technological conditions that have created a favorable climate for computer-based work to be done at home.

Many of the temporary working contracts are accepted involuntarily. Despite, of these factors which play a critical roll within the business and social environment addressing the needs of changes on labor market, in many cases there are ignored by the supportive players of Romania’s national economy. Thus, many of the temporary working contracts are accepted involuntarily. These offers are accepted by workers who did not have the option to choose between a full-time contract and part-time contract because there were not offered to choose of full time contract , but a final solution of take or leave part-time contract, most of the time managed in manipulative way. In 2005, the statistics recorded that 7,5% of female working population and respectively 6,7% of male working population were employed under temporary working contracts. Those contract need to be mentioned that they were all involuntarily chosen. Furthermore, the structure of temporary jobs segment of labor market, targeting the major activities of national economy of Romania shows that the majority of individuals employed under predetermined working contracts were those part of the service segment of the market in proportion of 60% with a length of job contract under one year.

Figure 3. Working arrangements in Romania. 1st Quarter 2007 based on age groups



Data source: Case study over working force based on LFS, 1st Quarter, 2007

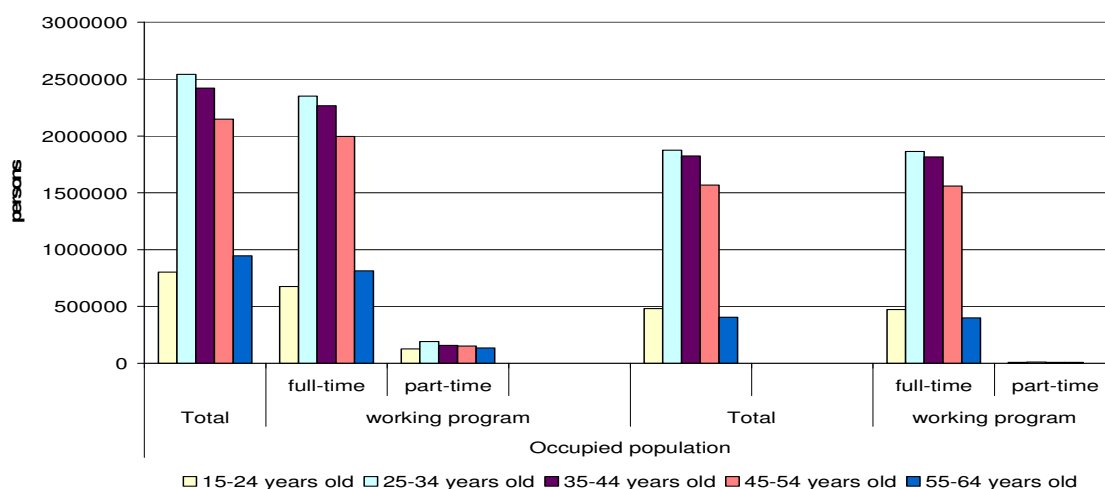
Temporary job position and/or part-time positions may constitute a fist step in entering the job market. But, more likely the flexibility offered by working arrangement and ultimately impacts a broader range of population. At first, it touches the segments of the population situated at the extremes ages the ones between 15-24 years of age and those over 64 years of age, but also individuals with greater family responsibilities. For example, young individuals who are offered part time jobs can embrace the opportunity in continuing their education,

which is critical since skills and knowledge are becoming obsolete faster than ever in today's rapid changing environment. Jumping to the other mentioned category of age, research studies shows that older workers would choose to continue working beyond age 65 for various reasons: some enjoy and find meaning in their work; others do not have a private pension plan; many others do not have enough pensionable years accumulated to replace their earning income. But regardless of their personal reasoning there is always a greater reasoning that at this age with the experience accumulated over the years that they can constitute important assets for their companies than ever before. They are an easy transfer tool of knowledge and corporate memory; an excellent source of trainers/mentors for younger workers. Overall, this new concept of gradual retirement can smooth the transition for both categories of competitors in the job market. On one hand, it provides the older workers with a smooth transition towards retirement while embracing positive effects financially as long as socially and implicitly physiologically, phenomenon recognized in its literature of specialty under the name of "active aging". On the other hand, it provides companies with their own smooth process in training new employees at the expense of knowledge and skills of the retiring ones, while continuing to achieve increasing productivity and efficiency within their given business means. Continuing to cover, the middle segment of the population between these two extremes, it should be mentioned that even individuals situated within the full-time active category of working status, in the need of increasing their financial meaning would embrace these many of these part-time positions of this category can also be counted those with increased responsibilities over their families. Who would need to make time to attend to their children, they must also take time to meet the needs of aging relatives, parent-teacher meetings and other responsibilities.

➡ ***In Romania, part-time labor force covers a small dimension of labor market.***

According to LFS statistical report of 2006, only 9.6% of the working Romania's working population were employed under part-time contract, the rest of 90.4% of the working population were contracted under full-time bases. From the 897,000 individuals covering part-time working force, 88% of them were living in the countryside, and 53.5% of them were men. Self-employed workers and family-based workers who were not receiving any working incentives were recorded in the proportion of 95% from this category of population.

Figure 4. Working population by age groups and length of working time



Source: LFS, 2006-2007

➡ ***The numbers of working individuals who are employed under part time contracts are not significantly different considering groups of age criteria.***

The discrepancies are only recorded in regard to the criteria if part time and full time employment. The smallest values are of this report are registered for the extreme age groups targeting individuals between a 15-24 years of age and those between 55-64 years of age. Thus the report concludes that individuals included under the active working age (25-54) are being preoccupied in searching for full time jobs.

From the government prospective, part time jobs are representing an important tool which would help achieve the objective in reducing unemployment rates.

Even though, not long time ago, the part time contracts were representing a controversial topic at the governmental meetings, lately ,because the European Union hands been adopting a lot more the ideas of part time working and temporary job contracts, political actors have started to embrace those ideas and include them into their agenda.

Aside from the advantages of part time jobs there also disadvantages to be mentioned as follows:

- ❑ reduced level of remuneration
- ❑ reduced opportunities of career enhancement.

Benefits of flextime work arrangements

Flextime work arrangements are having many benefits. They are listed below with more details about each benefit.

- ❑ *Increased productivity*: working productivity of employees increases when they are allowed to work according to their own preferred time
- ❑ *Higher employee morale and enthusiasm*: as employees have control over their working time, they have fewer reasons to resign. They can allocate more time to traveling and leisure time. Hence they would record reduced level of stress. They feel they have more input and control into their personal and work life. All this translates into a less solitude and hostility towards their work place while increases enthusiasm in the working environment.
- ❑ *Better balance between work-life & family-life*: Flextime is a very good option for working parents who can coordinate their time with each other while providing a better care to their children.

General Conclusions regarding the main characteristics of working arrangements:

- ❑ The main reason for which working arrangements should be embraced is to provide balance between working time and family time
- ❑ May assure a good correlation between time allocated to working schedule and the necessary adjustments of these working schedules in helping functional needs of companies and organizations
- ❑ Helps to increase the satisfaction and enthusiasm within the working environment, while striving for increased efficiency regarding the time allocated to work
- ❑ On the detrimental side of these conclusions, it offers a reduced social and financial security, reflected within reduced salaries, and other social indemnities like: unemployment benefits, retirement contributions, and disability benefits.
- ❑ Fails to create opportunities of career development and professional formation
- ❑ Creates communication difficulties between personnel level or hierarchical approached

- Can constitute an impressive impact within big corporations which would have the opportunity of customizing their needs by combining both modalities of employment; traditional and non traditional. Based on their seasonal, regional or structural need they would be provided with more opportunities filling in the gaps according to their human resources needs.

References

- Aliaga, C., Winqvist, K. - *How women and men spend their time. Results from 13 European countries* in Statistics in Focus Theme 3 - 12/2003, European Communities, 2003
- Becker, G., - *Human Capital. A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*, University of Chicago Press, 1964, 1975, 1993
- Fisher, K. – *An initial exploration of the employment conditions of full-time and parttime workers* in A researchers Guide to the National Statistics socio-economic Classifications, 2002
- Ilahi, Nadeem, “*Children’s Work and Schooling: Does Gender Matter? Evidence from the Peru LSMS Panel Data*” The World Bank, mimeograph, 1999
- Istrate, G.M. - *How women and men spend their time in Romania*, paper presented at the 2002 Annual Conference of International Association of Time Use Research (IATUR)
- Istrate, G.M. - *Gender differences in time use by life cycle stages*, paper presented at the 2003 Annual Conference of International Association of Time Use Research (IATUR)
- Istrate, G.M. - *Differences between young and aged people in time use*, paper presented at the 2004 Annual Conference of International Association of Time Use Research (IATUR)
- Istrate, G.M., Ungureanu, C., Caragea, N. – *A link between education and paid work*, paper presented at the 2005 Annual Conference of International Association of Time Use Research (IATUR)
- Istrate, G.M., Caragea, N. – *Time-Constraint and Socio-Demographic Characteristics of population in Romania*, paper presented at the 2006 Annual Conference of International Association of Time Use Research (IATUR)
- Istrate, G.M., Caragea, N. – *Time spent for education - a key resource in the social and economic development*, paper presented at the 2007 Annual Conference of International Association of Time Use Research (IATUR)
- Niemi, I – *Time Use Changes in Finland Through the 1990s*, Statistics Finland, Helsinki, 2002
- Panduru, F., Istrate, G.M. and others - *Time Use in Romania*, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, 2001
- Schultz, P., “*The Role of Education and Human Capital in Economic Development: An Empirical Assessment*”, paper presented at the conference on Economic Growth in the World Economy, Institut für Weltwirtschaft, Kiel, 1992.
- *** *Guidelines on Harmonized European Time Use Surveys*, Eurostat, May 2000;
- *** *Romanian Statistical Yearbook*, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007;
- *** Romanian official statistics website: www.insse.ro