

Name, E-Mail: Vanita Matta; matta@soziologie.uzh.ch

Institution: University of Zurich, Switzerland

Titel: Mapping overemployment in the European Labour Market

Abstract: The aim of this study is to map the extent and distribution of overemployment in Europe with the EU-LFS 2008. Overemployment is defined in the framework of general working time mismatch; i.e. as an individually lower desired working time than the actual and / or contractual working time. In the 2008-LFS a lot more countries than before (see table below) provide the possibility to diagnose this phenomenon, because the desired working time is now surveyed from every respondent, irrespective of her or his employment status (part-time vs. full-time).

Descriptively diagnosing the phenomenon shall encourage more research in explaining it, because scientists will then have insights about its extent and the differential occurrence across Europe. Secondly the results may show that we need to ask this question in every round and in every participating country regularly. Until now most of the countries only provide data that allows analyzing underemployment, because the desired working time is mostly surveyed for part-time employees only. But this practice ignores the other side of the coin: while a lot of workers are underemployed and suffer from – amongst others – income shortage and all its consequences, others are – in parts highly – overemployed. This is not to say that governments could easily redistribute working time, but here are some *exemplary* reasons why overemployment and overwork are highly relevant fields of research: First of all there has been ample attention for the so called “work-life-balance” and all its causes and consequences, where working as much as one wants (or at least not being completely overworked) is a prominent issue. The consequences of “too many hours” for fertility are for example discussed in this context. The part-time debate, which is naturally overlapping with the overemployment debate, diagnoses a ‘hidden-brain-drain’: Women, who still have the main responsibility in families, often prioritise a good match in working time over a good match in qualification (Connolly und Gregory 2008 with British Household Panel). Time-mismatch next concerns a rediscovered dimension of inequality and wealth: inequality in free-time and time-wealth (e.g. Rinderspacher 2009). The political aim of getting away from the full-time-paradigm is e.g. announced on EU-level in the Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work. This directive is not only an attempt to support the rights of part-time-workers, but has stated the aim to facilitate the development of part-time work on a voluntary basis. A general interest in time mismatch on the labour market also evolves from the common assumption of flexible labour supply in mainstream economics and its obvious violation.

Whereas numerous other studies on the reasons and consequences for mismatch and overemployment as well as country-specific government initiatives could be listed up here, one main reason for this specific study shall instead be highlighted again: Overemployment has not yet been thoroughly mapped with the data that suggest themselves for it: the European Labor Force Survey.

For the EU-LFS 2008 (bold type countries in table below), I intend to look
- at country-differentials in overall extent of time mismatch, with special attention to overemployment

- at country-differentials of overemployment in certain branches
- at differences between branches within countries that might differ across countries
- at the demographic profile of the overemployed and if there are differences between countries in Europe
- at the demographic profile of the overemployed compared to the underemployed

Table: Countries of the EU-LFS 2007-2009
(those that allow analysis of overemployment are highlighted in bold)

2007	2008	2009
BE	BE	BE
BG	BG	BG
CZ	CZ	CZ
DK	DK	<i>unknown</i>
DE	DE	DE
EE	EE	EE
-	IE	-
EL	EL	EL
ES	ES	ES
FR	FR	<i>unknown</i>
IT	IT	IT*
CY	CY	CY
LV	LV	LV
LT	LT	LT
-	LU	LU
-	HU	HU
MT	MT	<i>unknown</i>
NL	NL	<i>unknown</i>
AT	AT	AT
PL	PL	PL
PT	PT	PT
RO	RO	RO
SI	SI	SI
SK	SK	SK
FI	FI	FI
SE	SE	SE
UK	UK	UK²
-	HR	-
MK	MK	MK
-	TR	<i>unknown</i>
-	IS	-
-	NO	NO
CH	CH	CH
19 countries	24 countries	20-27 countries

Source: Quality report of the European Union labour force survey 2007, 2008; and for 2009: documentation of national questionnaires on

http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/

*related to the reference week; ² very different wording;

unknown, because no questionnaire in English or German available