

A photograph of a busy street in Moldova. In the foreground, a woman in a brown coat pushes a stroller with a child inside, while another woman in a light-colored coat walks alongside her, holding the hand of a small child in a brown jacket. The background shows a wide street with many other pedestrians, trees with some autumn-colored leaves, and a building with a sign that says "HOTEL".

ANALYTIC NOTE

How Much Time Do Moldovans Spend Travelling?

The importance of travelling inside and outside the country is critical since it ensures the mobility of the population and labour force. Basically, the connection of population from nearby villages and not only, as well as other regional economic centres is an important precondition for the facilitation of economic and social integration of people all over the country.

This is even more relevant for the Republic of Moldova, where, due to severe fragmentation of localities, a significant share of population has to travel forth and back within the settlement, or to another town or village, for work or shopping.

Moreover, the high demand for travelling is also explained by the number of our co-citizens working in other countries. In this analytical note, we will study:

- How much time do Moldovans allocate to travelling¹ and for what purposes they practice it, compared to other countries?

- What are the differences between men and women in terms of time allocated to travelling?
- What means of transport do men and women prefer?
- How much time do people in villages and towns allocate to travelling?

In order to find answers to these questions, we will use the results of the Time Use Survey, carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics.

How much and with what purpose do Moldovans travel as compared to other countries?

About one third of the population allocates on the average 1.1 hours a day to commute to/from the place of work. At the same time, over one quarter of Moldovans spend about 50 minutes a day for travelling to work and shopping. Relatively a long period of time, 1.1 hours a day are allocated for travelling to/from the place of studies, but this is relevant for only to 9% of the population.

¹ Travelling of people with certain purposes, with or without any means of transport.

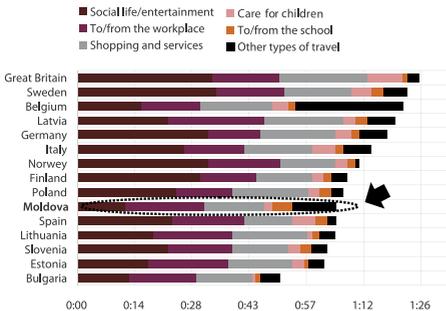
However, if we take into account the proportion of population that does not travel or travels very little, we find that on the average Moldovans allocate about 1 hour and 5 minutes a day for travelling (all types of transport), being at more or less the same level with many OECD countries.

In Figure 1 we see that compared to other European countries, in the Republic of Moldova, on the average, quite much time is spent on commuting to/from the place of work (20 minutes a day) and a similar amount of time is spent for shopping and services (15 minutes a day). More time is spent for commuting to/from place of education compared to other European countries.

Nevertheless, relatively little time is spent for travels related to social life and entertainment (12 minutes a day), as opposite to many other countries from our region, where this is the main destination for travel².

Consequently, the specific of Moldovans' travelling reveals to a large extent the lower standards of living and smaller financial possibilities, compare to other European countries. Thus, most travels have basic daily purposes (work, studies, shopping), very little time being allocated with entertainment purposes.

Figure 1. Time allocated for travelling on different purposes, by European countries, minutes a day



Source: NBS and HETUS Database

² Countries from Central and Eastern Europe, where the Time Use Survey was carried out and where social life and entertainment represent the main destination of traveling: Poland - 25 minutes, Latvia - 23 minutes, Lithuania - 19 minutes, Slovenia - 23 minutes. Source: HETUS Database.

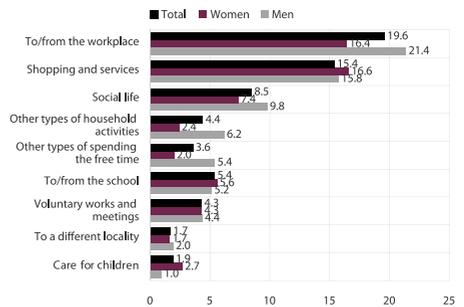
³ Including: traveling for nutrition, home maintenance, handicraft and garments, gardening and taking care of poultry and livestock, construction and repairs.

What are the differences between men and women in terms of time allocated to travelling and preferred means of transport?

In the Republic of Moldova, men allocate more time for travelling than women (1 hour and 11 minutes compared to 59 minutes a day). Given the traditional division of roles of women and men in most Moldovan families, men spend more time travelling to work than women, while women spend more on travelling for shopping.

At the same time, men spend more time than women do on travelling related to social life, other types of household work³ and other ways of spending the free time⁴, while women spend more time than men do on commuting to/from school and for taking care of a child (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Time used for travelling for different purposes, by the sex of respondents, minutes a day



Source: NBS

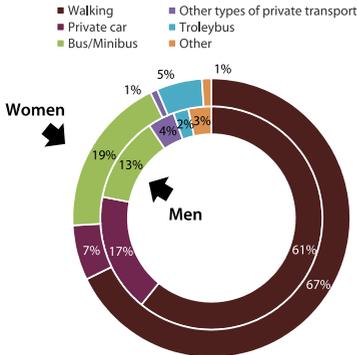
Women use much more seldom cars or other private means of transport⁵ compared to men: the share of women driving a car is about 3 times lower than the share of men (6% versus 17%). Consequently, women walk more or travel more by public transport (Figure 3). This phenomenon is also noticed in other European countries, men using the personal car more often than women do.⁶

⁴ Including: traveling related to entertainment and culture, leisure - breaks, sports and outdoor activities, hobbies and computer use, mass media, driving for pleasure, driving without a specific purpose.

⁵ Private transport category also includes hitchhiking or occasional transport. However we stick to the hypothesis that use own transport is the dominant category, depending on the time allocated by population.

⁶ How Europeans spend their time, everyday life of women and men', European communities, 2004.

Figure 3. Distribution of time spent travelling, by the respondents' sex and means of transport⁷, % of total



Source: NBS

Figure 3 reveals that both women and men travel rarely by train or airplane, revealing the limited access to these means of transport. In case of air transport of passengers, the issue relates to limited financial possibilities of the population, taking into account the high ticket fares⁸. In case of railway transport, the cause relates to the unsatisfactory technical condition of the infrastructure, which makes this type of transport not attractive for population.

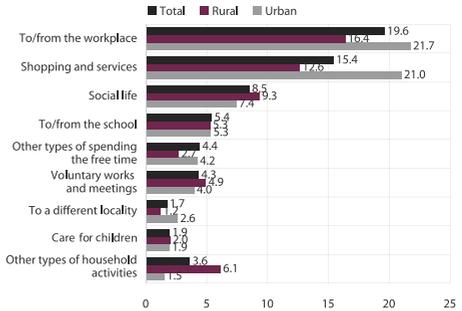
How much time do people in villages and towns allocate to travelling?

Generally, the urban population is somewhat more mobile than the rural population. Thus, population in cities spend about 10 minutes a day more than rural population for travelling for various reasons (1 hour versus 1 hour and 10 minutes). The Chisinau inhabitants spend a similar amount of time for travelling compared to the rest of urban population.

Figure 4 reveals that the largest difference by area of residence is noticed in the time spent commute to/from the workplace (an average of 21.7 minutes a day in towns versus 16.4 minutes in villages), as

well as in the time spent travelling for shopping and services (an average of 21 minutes a day versus 12.6 minutes a day in villages).

Figure 4. Time allocated for travelling, by area of residence, minutes a day



Source: NBS

These differences may be explained by the higher access of urban population to paid works, as compared with the rural population. Thus, 36.2% of the population in towns and only 24.8% of population in villages commute to/from the place of work. At the same time, the higher level of income of urban population⁹ allows them shopping more: 43.7% of population in towns travelled for shopping and various services, compared to only 23.4% of the population in villages.

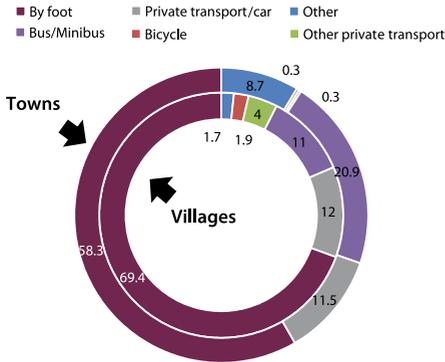
Still, though a smaller share of rural population travels for shopping or commutes to/from the place of work, the ones that do travel for these purposes, allocate more time for these activities than the urban population (an average of 1.1 hours versus 1 hour a day). A logical explanation would be the insufficiency or even lack of public transport in rural area. As a result, the population from villages is often forced to walk to/from the place of work or for shopping, or to travel by cart or motorcycle/bike, which takes more time compared to buses, minibuses or other means of transport available in towns (Figure 5).

⁷ The category "others" includes mainly air and railway transport.

⁸ Litra L. (2011): "Does Moldova Need Low-Cost Airline Companies?", IDIS Viitorul.

⁹ In 2012, the extreme poverty rate accounted for 22.8% in rural area and for 4.3% in urban area.

Figure 5. **Distribution of the time spent travelling, by area of residence and means of transport¹⁰, % of total**



Source: NBS

These differences in travel time and means of transport used by rural and urban population reveals the existing development gaps between villages and towns. Particularly, this relates to the basic physical infrastructure, which is deficient in most villages.

The rural population's issue of limited access to public transport is even more severe, taking into account the high fragmentation of settlements, which generates the need of more intense communication among them.

Conclusions:

- On the average, the total time spent for daily travelling in Moldova is similar with other European countries;
- While in economically advanced countries, populations spends a significant share of time for travelling related to social live and entertainment, in Moldova most of time for travelling relates to trips to/from workplace;
- On average, men travel more than women do. Men spend most of the time for travel to/from the

workplace, while women travel more for shopping and services;

- In terms of means of transport, men use mostly private cars for travelling, while women use more the public transport;
- The population from villages spends more time travelling than the urban population. This is caused by the need to travel for work or benefit of public utilities, services and shopping in nearby localities and/or rayon capitals, which takes relatively more time. At the same time, weaker coverage of public transport in rural area makes people use slower means of transport (bike/motorcycle, cart, or walking);
- Differences between the time used for travelling by the urban and rural population reveal development challenges, especially in rural areas, which relate mainly to the limited access to the basic physical infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- The high level of territorial fragmentation of Moldovan settlements determines the need of a road infrastructure and of a public transport system, which would facilitate, not constrain, the communication and connection between localities. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the penetration of public transport in rural settlements and ensure a more efficient connection among them and nearby settlements and rayon capitals;
- Differences in the time used for travelling by men and women, as well as in the means of transport they use reveal once more the persistence of gender stereotypes in our society. Hence, it is necessary to run information and awareness raising campaigns on the importance of gender equality regarding the use of private transport. Particularly, it is necessary to dismount stereotypes on the use of personal cars by women and to ensure favorable conditions to allow women to use more often this means of transport. Besides information campaigns, authorities should upgrade the transport infrastructure, which, besides

¹⁰ The category "others" includes mainly air and railway transport.

road improvement, must cover a proper marking of driving lanes and installing of traffic signs all over the country;

- The fact that Moldovans allocate for daily travelling (to/from work, shopping and services) similar time compared to other countries, despite the travelled distances are quite short, reveals the deficiencies of the transport infrastructure of the country. This involves both quality of roads, which is one of the poorest in the world¹⁰, and the low diversity of

available means of transport. So, it is necessary to streamline the distribution of resources from the Road Fund, in order to ensure their better use. At the same time, the issue of poor diversity of types of transport can be solved by liberalizing this market. This involves upgrading of railway infrastructure and attraction of low-cost air companies, which implies ensuring a fair competition and increasing the private capital in these sectors.



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¹⁰ 2013 Global Competitiveness Report.