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HOUSEHOLD TIME: SOLIDARY OR SOLITARY TIME

A TIME USE SURVEY OF THE TIME FAMILIES SPEND
TOGETHER

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Household time: solidary or solitary time?

A time use survey of the time families spend together.

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1 Time Use Surveys : introduction

Time use research is a means to show how people use their time. Each day consists of 24 hours, each person however fills it differently.

Several methods can be used to find out what people are doing with their time, e.g. retrospective questioning on activity frequency and duration (how long have you been watching television yesterday?) or direct observation (Pentland e.a., 1994 :4). Both methods have disadvantages. It is difficult to use direct observation on a large scale. Activity frequency and duration surveys suffer from remembrance-related problems because questions often refer to a past period. Also social desirability and the over- or underestimation of certain activities are a frequently encountered problem. The time diary method provides a better way to collect data about time use. Information is gathered on what activities people were doing at which moment. The diary can also contain information on where people are, who they are with or how they experience the activity they are doing. The time diary method is considered as very accurate for registering activities since distortion effects are minimised by simultaneous registration by the respondent (Kalfs, 1993 ; Sullivan, 1996)

2 Research design¹

This paper is based on the data (time diaries) collected by Statistics Belgium from December 3rd 1998 till February 6th 2000. Statistics Belgium has been surveying the household budget yearly since 1995. In 1999 the people who participated at the household budget survey were also asked to participate at the time use survey (TUS). This Belgian TUS follows the EUROSTAT-guidelines. Eurostat aims at harmonising time use surveys in and around Europe (EUROSTAT, 2000).

8382 Belgians aged 12 to 95 from 4275 families held a diary for two days, one weekday and one weekend day, in which they noted down per 10 minutes interval what they were doing (main activity), what else they were doing (secondary activity) and the presence of others. Also travelling and the means of transportation were kept in the diary. The TUS-participants filled in the activities in the diary in their own words. These activities were later recoded following the Eurostat-guidelines. The Eurostat-design has the advantage of collecting data from all individuals (above 12 years) in a household. This gives the unique opportunity not only to study individual time-use, but also time-use as structured within families.

To obtain a representative sample of the Belgian population two weighing coefficients² were used, one on the individual level and one on the household level. In this paper we mostly use the household weighing coefficient, which gives a correction for the following variables : a composed variable for socio-professional status and the age of the reference person in the household (wage-earner, independent, non-active aged < 60, non-active aged between 60 and 69 , non-active aged ≥ 70), and a variable for household characteristics (combination of size of the household and number of active persons in the household). These background variables were compared with the population for each of the three Belgian regions (Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia) and for each trimester (post-stratification). In fact, this is the way the household budget survey from Statistics Belgium is weighed. The second weighing coefficient is on the individual level. The TUS sample is representative of the Belgian population for each region by weighing the variables : sex, age and educational level (post-stratification). Since the data collection runs over a period of more than one year, some months are overrepresented in the sample. A correction for this was made.

¹ This research has been financed by DWTC in as part of the AGORA-project 'Valorisatie van de databank Tijdsbudgetenquête' (research agreement nr. AG/03/034)

² More information on the weighing procedure will soon be published in : GLORIEUX, I, VANDERHOEFT, C. & J., VANDEWEYER, Weighing the Belgian Time Use Survey, Statistics Belgium.

We will continue by giving a clearer picture of how families spend time together. Herefore we are making a distinction between the time partners spend together (with or without children) and the time all family members spend together. Normally this sort of analysis is carried out by using the variable 'who was present during the activity' in the diary, because information of other household members is lacking. But since we have information on household level, we can compare the time use of the different family members. We wish to point out that the following analyses are explorative and should be considered as a first attempt to analyse our time budget data on both levels. Apart from the general question on what the shared household time looks like, this paper does not start from a broader framework or theoretical paradigm. The results will therefore be very general and descriptive.

3 Partner time

To start we examine the time use of partners (cohabiting or married) living in different household types (families with one child younger than 17, families with two children younger than 17, families with more than two children younger than 17, partners older than 65 without children and partners younger than 65 without children³). We wish to get a clearer picture of how much time partners spend together and which activities are shared at which moment of the day. Only partners who kept a diary are taken into account. When considering the time partners spend together, children may or may not be present. The time that is spent by all family members together will be discussed in §4. An activity is defined as 'solidary' or as 'shared together with the partner' when partners perform the same activity, in the same time interval, on the same location. These are simultaneous activities. Of course, this is only a approximation of the notion 'doing an activity together with the partner', but there is no further information available on the degree in which this activity is really enjoyed or the intensity of this experience. Furthermore the activities sleeping, working and going to school were not considered in the analysis. Only 'waking time' is considered. Working and school time were not used because these activities don't usually occur in presence of the partner and we want to concentrate on the household.

³ Children still living with the parents in the same house

3.1 Duration of the time partners spend together

On an average weekday partners from an average household spend 3h19' together. More time is spent together in the weekend, 5h14' on Saturday and 5h37' on Sunday.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH PARTNER

	Average time together**
Weekday (n= 1967)	3:19
Saturday (n= 920)	5:14
Sunday (n= 1045)	5:37

Statistical significance of the difference between days: ** p<0,01.

In table 2 the solidary partner time for each household type is represented. It seems that partners from families without children have more time to share an activity with their partner than partners from households with children (on weekdays as well as in the weekend). Moreover on weekdays, the time partners with children spend together, reduces with the rising number of children in the household.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE TIME SPENT WITH PARTNER BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Average time together **				
	couple ≥ 65 years, no children	couple < 65 years, no children	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Weekday	5:34 (n=311)	3:49 (n=711)	2:20 (n=345)	2:10 (n=375)	2:04 (n=225)
Saturday	6:14 (n=141)	5:50 (n=329)	4:37 (n=159)	4:14 (n=198)	4:46 (n=93)
Sunday	6:55 (n=170)	6:03 (n=380)	4:53 (n=186)	4:49 (n=176)	4:47 (n=132)

Statistical significance of the difference between days and household types: ** p<0,01.

A couple older than 65 years without children spends the most time together, 5h34'. They spend 3h30' more together than couples from a household with more than two children younger than 17, who spend the least time together. Each couple from the different family types is able to spend more time together on a Saturday than on a weekday. The difference between a weekday and a Saturday however is less pronounced for older couples without children, who only spend 40' more together, than for the couples from other family types who spend at least two hours more together on a Saturday than on a weekday. Couples with more than two children younger than 17 show the biggest difference (2h42') in time spend together on a weekday and a Saturday. Sunday is the day couples spend the most time together. This is quite logic since most obligatory activities (working, household work) take place on other days and most leisure activities occur on Sunday.⁴ The difference between a Saturday and a Sunday however is

⁴ See research report: GLORIEUX, I. & J. VANDEWEYER, 24 uur ... Belgische tijd: een onderzoek naar de tijdsbesteding van de Belgen, Statistics Belgium.

not so big, except for older couples without children who spend 41' more and couples with two children younger than 17 who spend 35' more doing the same activity on a Sunday compared to a Saturday. The difference in time spent together on a weekday and a Sunday increases with the number of children in the household.

3.2 Nature of the time couples spend together.

Now we know how much time couples spend together doing the same activity, we wonder which activities are done together. This will be treated in the next paragraph.

3.2.1 Which activities are most frequently done together ?

In table 3 the distribution of the solidary time over different activities is represented. On an average day almost one third of the solidary partner time (30,8%) is spent before the television. More than one fifth of the time partners are together (23,3%) is passed at the dinner table. Especially relaxing activities are mostly done by couples. Household tasks (shopping, doing the dishes, preparing meals) tend to be more solitary activities.

TABLE 3: DIVISION OF TIME TOGETHER WITH PARTNER FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES⁵

Activity	Proportion of the time together			
	Average day	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Watching television	30,8	35,7	26,9	28,6
Eating (main meals)	23,3	23,1	24,1	22,9
Talking, deliberating	6,4	5,2	6,2	7,8
Drinking coffee, tea, beer (not with meals)	4,4	3,5	4,9	5
Purchasing for current use	3,6	3,6	6,4	1,2
Relaxing, doing nothing	3,5	3,5	3	3,9
Walking	2,2	1,2	1,9	3,7
Reading	2,2	2,7	1,5	2,1
Doing the dishes	1,8	2,1	1,5	1,7
Talking to children	1,6	1,2	2	1,5
Preparing meals, cooking	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,3
Other activities	18,9	16,9	20,2	20,3
Total	100	100	100	100

This pattern changes from day to day. On weekdays a larger amount of the solidary partner time is passed in front of the television set than in the

⁵ Only activities taking more than 1% of the solidary partner time are taken into account. Other activities are regrouped under 'other activities'.

weekend.⁶ But even in the weekend watching television is the solitary activity most likely to occur with couples. Eating together takes about 23% of the solitary partner time, irrespective of the day of the week. On Saturday partners proportionally spend more time together going shopping, compared to other days. Also considering the duration of this activity it is clear that Saturday is a typical shopping day. On Sunday a larger part of the solitary partner time is spent talking, deliberating and walking together than on other days.

When we consider the type of household couples fit in, the top three activities (watching tv, eating and speaking, deliberating) remain unchanged (table 4). Couples without children however watch more television together than couples with children. Eating on the contrary takes a larger amount of the solitary partner time for couples with children. In all family types 6 to 7% of the solitary partner time is spent at talking and deliberating. Relaxing, doing nothing on the other hand is much more likely to occur within older couples without children (6,3%) than in other couples.

TABLE 4: DIVISION OF TIME TOGETHER WITH PARTNER FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE ON AN AVERAGE DAY⁷

Activity	Proportion of time together on an average day				
	couple ≥ 65 years, no children	couple < 65 years, no children	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Watching television	36,9	32,2	27,2	27,6	21,1
Eating (main meals)	21,7	21,5	25,6	26,8	25,7
Talking, deliberating	6,5	5,9	7,3	6,7	6,6
Drinking coffee, tea, beer (not with meals)	3,9	4,7	4,5	4,2	4,2
Purchasing for current use	2,4	3,4	4,6	4,4	4,1
Relaxing, doing nothing	6,3	3,3	2	2,1	1,6
Walking	1,8	2	2,7	2,1	3,6
Reading	2,6	2,3	1,6	1,6	2,4
Doing the dishes	2	1,9	1,9	1,4	1,3
Talking to children	1,2	2,2	1,6	0,6	1,3
Playing and reading with children	0,1	0,2	1,4	1	0,7
Washing, clothing, bringing children to bed	-	0,1	0,9	1,9	1,6
Serving meals, cleaning the table	0,4	0,4	0,7	0,8	1,1
Preparing meals, cooking	1,2	1,4	1,1	1,4	1,6
Painting, wall papering	-	0,4	-	-	1,3
Family parties	0,8	0,8	1,3	0,7	1,8
Parties with friends or colleagues	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,9	1,2
Cinema	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,3	1,1
Trips, tourist excursions	0,4	0,1	0,2	0,2	1,6
Other activities	11,4	16,5	14,6	15,3	16,1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

⁶ This is independent of the average time that is spent watching television. In Glorieux, I & J ; Vandeweyer (2001) is shown that in the weekend, especially on Sunday, people watch more television than in the week.

⁷ Only activities that take at least one of the household types more than 1% of the solitary partner time are taken into account. Other activities are regrouped under 'other activities'.

Because watching television and eating takes about half of the time couples spend together, we will only concentrate on these two activities in the rest of this paper.

TABLE 5: PROPORTION OF SHARED PARTNER TIME SPENT WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Activity	Proportion of the time together				
	couple \geq 65 years, no children	couple < 65 years, no children	couple, 1 child \leq 16 years	couple, 2 children \leq 16 years	couple, > 2 children \leq 16 years
Weekday					
Watching television	39,1	36,7	33,4	32,1	25,9
Eating	19,9	22,3	26,9	26,8	28,0
Other activities	41,0	41,0	39,7	41,1	46,1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Saturday					
Watching television	33,5	29,1	22,5	23,8	17,4
Eating	25,4	21,6	25,3	26,2	26,3
Other activities	41,1	49,3	52,2	50	56,3
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Sunday					
Watching television	36,0	29,5	25,5	27,1	18,6
Eating	21,6	20,6	24,7	27,3	25,2
Other activities	42,4	49,9	49,8	45,6	56,2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

On a weekday, as the number of children in the household increases, less time is spent on solidary television watching between partners. Eating together on the contrary, takes a larger part of the solidary partner time in households with children compared to households without children. This however does not apply for Saturday and Sunday.

The percentage of solidary partner time spent watching television and eating says nothing about its duration. This will be discussed in the following paragraph.

3.2.2 Duration of solidary television watching and eating

TABLE 6: AVERAGE TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH PARTNER WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Average time together											
	Watching television						Eating					
	aver. hh.	part \geq 65, no ch	part < 65, no ch	part, 1 ch \leq 16	part, 2 ch \leq 16	part, > 2ch \leq 16	aver. hh.	part \geq 65, no ch	part < 65, no ch	part, 1 ch \leq 16	part, 2 ch \leq 16	part, > 2ch \leq 16
Weekday** (n= 1967)	1:11	2:10	1:24	0:46	0:41	0:34	0:46	1:06	0:51	0:37	0:35	0:32
Saturday* (n= 920)	1:24	2:05	1:41	1:02	1:00	0:49	1:15	1:34	1:15	1:10	1:06	1:15
Sunday* (n=1045)	1:36	2:29	1:47	1:14	1:18	0:53	1:17	1:29	1:14	1:12	1:19	1:12

Statistical significance of the difference between the household types on a weekday, Saturday and Sunday: * p<0,05, ** p<0,01.

Although partners spend a larger amount of their time together watching television on a weekday compared to the weekend, table 6 shows that in an average household partners watch less television together on a weekday (1h11'), than on Saturday (1h24') and on Sunday (1h36'). Older couples without children watch the most time television together. Whereas couples from other household types spend more time watching tv together on Saturday than on a weekday, and more on Sunday than on Saturday, this is not the case for the older couples without children. For them Saturday does not differ much from a weekday, whereas Sunday they watch television together most. Couples younger than 65 without children are the next in row considering the hours they spend watching television at the same moment. Followed by the couples with children, where the pattern applies that the more children there are in the household the less time is spent on solidary television watching by partners. Sunday is a small exception, because that day couples with two children watch more tv together than couples with only one child. But in general the difference between couples with one or two children in watching television is very small on any day. Especially the presence of more than two children in the household considerably reduces the time partners spend together watching television.

Considering the time both partners spend at the table at the same moment, we see little difference between a Saturday and a Sunday. Partners from an average household spend around 1h15' at the table in the weekend. On a weekday this is reduced to about half an hour. Older couples without children eat about 15' longer together with their partner than younger couples without children on each day. Partners with children have about half an hour to eat together on a weekday, in the weekend this time is doubled, about 1h10'.

3.2.3 Proportion of shared activities in total time spent at an activity

The time partners spent together on the same activity is quite interesting, but becomes even more so when we compare this time to the total time an individual spends at this activity. Whereas before we studied the household level, we now briefly return to the individual level. In table 7 and 8 the total time that an individual spends watching tv (or eating) is placed next to the amount of time this same individual spends watching tv (or eating) with his partner. This gives the opportunity to calculate the percentage of time that is spent with the partner on that particular activity compared to the total time spent at that activity. This is done for the variables sex (table 7) and household type (table 8).

TABLE 7: COMPARISON TOTAL TIME AND TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH PARTNER WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING FOR **TOTAL POPULATION**, *MEN*, *WOMEN*.

	Watching television			Eating		
	Total	together	% time together	Total	together	% time together
Weekday (n= 3591) <i>(n=1799)</i> <i>(n= 1792)</i>	(*) 2:14 2:18 2:10	1:18 1:16 1:20	58,2 55,1 61,5	1:22 1:22 1:22	0:46 0:45 0:47	56,1 54,9 57,3
Saturday (n=1673) <i>(n= 843)</i> <i>(n= 830)</i>	(*) 2:18 2:25 2:11	1:27 1:24 1:31	63,0 57,9 69,5	1:45 1:45 1:45	1:15 1:14 1:16	71,4 70,5 72,4
Sunday (n= 1916) <i>(n= 955)</i> <i>(n= 961)</i>	(**) 2:35 2:52 2:18	1:38 1:36 1:40	63,2 55,8 72,5	1:39 1:39 1:38	1:15 1:15 1:15	75,8 75,8 76,5

Statistical significance of the difference by sex on a weekday, Saturday en Sunday: * p<0,05, ** p<0,01.

Women watch less television than men and when they do this happens more often in company of their partner (table 7). Watching tv is an activity more shared in the weekend (about 63% of the total television time spent by an individual is spent with the partner) than throughout the week (only 58,2%). Also meals are shared in about three quarters of the time in the weekend, whereas in the week this is only the case for just a bit more than half of the time.

With an increase of the number of children in the household, the solidary television time tends to shrink on Saturday and Sunday (table 8). On a weekday there is almost no difference between couples with one or two children. On these days older couples without children spend the most of their tv time together (67,8%), couples with more than two children on the contrary watch more often alone than with their partner (42%). Individuals living in households with children spend a higher percentage of their total television time together with the partner than on a weekday, and also more on a Sunday than on a Saturday. However, this can not be said of individuals living in households without children. Older couples in this family type spend a lot of their tv time together, especially on Sunday (73,5%). Young couples without children prefer Saturdays to sit together in front of the television.

TABLE 8: COMPARISON TOTAL TIME AND TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH PARTNER WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Watching television			Eating		
	Total	together	% time together	Total	together	% time together
Weekday (n= 3591)	(**)	(**)		(**)	(**)	
partn ≥ 65, no kids	3:19	2:15	67,8	1:30	1:03	70,0
partn < 65, no kids	2:23	1:27	60,8	1:24	0:51	60,7
partn, 1 child ≤ 16	1:52	0:53	47,3	1:14	0:36	48,6
partn, 2 child. ≤ 16	1:34	0:45	47,9	1:17	0:33	42,9
partn, > 2 child. ≤16	1:28	0:37	42,0	1:20	0:33	41,3
Saturday (n=1673)	(**)	(**)		(**)	(**)	
partn ≥ 65, no kids	3:12	2:10	67,7	1:57	1:34	80,3
partn < 65, no kids	2:27	1:42	69,4	1:41	1:15	74,3
partn, 1 child ≤ 16	2:00	1:05	54,2	1:36	1:06	68,8
partn, 2 child. ≤ 16	1:49	0:57	52,3	1:46	1:08	64,2
partn, > 2 child. ≤16	1:43	0:48	46,6	1:35	1:07	70,5
Sunday (n= 1916)	(**)	(**)		(**)	(**)	
partn ≥ 65, no kids	3:20	2:27	73,5	1:49	1:28	80,7
partn < 65, no kids	2:38	1:43	65,2	1:37	1:13	75,3
partn, 1 child ≤ 16	2:12	1:13	55,3	1:34	1:11	75,5
partn, 2 child. ≤ 16	2:27	1:20	54,4	1:39	1:14	74,7
partn, > 2 child. ≤16	1:53	0:57	50,4	1:35	1:07	70,5

Statistical significance of the difference between household types on a weekday, Saturday and Sunday:

** p<0,01.

On weekdays eating together is done as often as watching television together. Whereas in the weekend a larger part of the total eating time is passed together with the partner than watching tv together. During the week we can see a big difference between households with and households without children in the amount of time spent eating together (respectively 40% and 70 à 80%), in the weekend however these differences become smaller. Saturday, but especially Sunday, time is made to eat together. Irrespective of the household type, in about 75% of the cases the meals are shared with the partner.

3.3 Location of time spent together with partner

Now we know that watching television and eating are the activities that are most likely to occur together by partners, we can assume that most of the solidary partner time is spent at home. Indeed, 70,3% of the solidary partner time is spent at home (63,4% in the own house and 6,9% at somebody else's house), 5,6% is spent at a restaurant or a bar and 22,5% takes place somewhere else. There also is a difference between a weekday and weekends. On weekdays 80% of the solidary partner time is spent at home. In the weekend people do more jointly outside the house. Especially visiting restaurants, bars and other people's houses take a larger share during the weekend (table 9).

TABLE 9: LOCATION OF SHARED PARTNER ACTIVITIES

Location	Total	Proportion of time together		
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Home	63,4	79,7	64,1	68,9
Elsewhere	22,5	12,7	19,9	15,5
At someone else's home	6,9	4,1	8,7	9,1
Restaurant, bar	5,6	2,4	6,8	5,3
Unknown place	1,4	0,1	0,1	0,7
Workplace, school, university	0,3	0,7	0,0	0,0
Second residence, weekend house	0	0,2	0,5	0,5
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 10 represents the location of solidary activities for different household types. Irrespective of the household type, three quarters of the solidary partner time is spent at home. The stressful week rhythm does not afford people to do many outdoor activities.

TABLE 10: LOCATION OF SHARED PARTNER ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE ON A WEEKDAY

Location	Proportion of time together				
	couple \geq 65 years, no children	couple < 65 years, no children	couple, 1 child \leq 16 years	couple, 2 children \leq 16 years	couple, > 2 children \leq 16 years
Home	87,8	76,6	77,3	77,8	75,1
Elsewhere	9,2	14,0	12,3	13,8	17,8
At someone else's home	2,4	5,6	3,8	3,3	3,8
Restaurant, bar	0,2	3,0	4,5	3,2	2,5
Unknown place	0,1	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,0
Workplace, school, university	0,0	0,7	1,5	1,7	0,9
Second residence, weekend house	0,3	0,2	0,0	0,1	0,0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Saturday is clearly different in this respect (table 11). Only the older couples without children spend more than 70% of their solidary partner time at home. The other couples spend much less time at home than on weekdays. Couples with more than two children even spend 45% of their time outside the house. Also much more time is spent together at somebody else's house, which could mean that a lot of family and friends are visited on Saturday.

TABLE 11: LOCATION OF SHARED PARTNER ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOULD TYPE ON SATURDAY

Location	Proportion of time together				
	couple \geq 65 years, no children	couple < 65 years, no children	couple, 1 child \leq 16 years	couple, 2 children \leq 16 years	couple, > 2 children \leq 16 years
Home	74,2	65,6	57,0	60,8	55,0
Elsewhere	15,2	18,8	21,2	23,2	25,2
At someone else's home	5,4	8,9	9,7	9,0	11,8
Restaurant, bar	4,4	6,5	9,6	7,1	8,0
Unknown place	0,0	0,0	0,4	0,0	0,0
Workplace, school, university	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0
Second residence, weekend house	0,8	0,2	1,9	0,0	0,0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

On Sunday a bit more solidary partner time is spent at home again, but still less than on a weekday (table 12). Partners also spend more time at somebody else's house than on a weekday. Couples with two or more children however tend to reserve the family and friends visits for Saturday whereas couples with one child tend to do this on Sunday.

TABLE 12: LOCATION OF SHARED PARTNER ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOULD TYPE ON SUNDAY

Location	Proportion of time together				
	couple \geq 65 years, no children	couple < 65 years, no children	couple, 1 child \leq 16 years	couple, 2 children \leq 16 years	couple, > 2 children \leq 16 years
Home	80,3	66,0	62,9	73,3	60,8
Elsewhere	8,2	17,6	15,0	14,0	24,0
At someone else's home	5,7	10,1	14,4	7,8	5,7
Restaurant, bar	5,1	5,2	6,3	4,3	6,2
Unknown place	0,0	0,4	1,4	0,0	3,4
Workplace, school, university	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Second residence, weekend house	0,7	0,8	0,0	0,5	0,0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

3.4 Timing of solidary partner time ⁸

We now have an idea of the duration and the nature of the activities that partners engage in together at the same moment in the same place. In this paragraph we want to situate this solidary partner time in the course of a day. The rhythms of solidary television watching and eating will be represented in the following graphs for a weekday, Saturday and Sunday. The thick line shows the percentage of the population (on individual level) that engage in any activity together. The dotted line represents the proportion of the population that spends time on an single activity (television watching or eating) as an individual. The continuous line shows

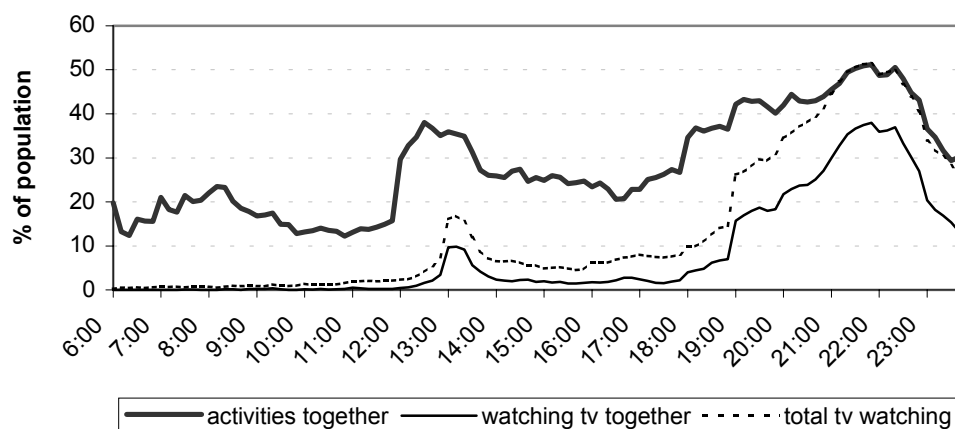
⁸ For technical reasons we use unweighed data for this paragraph

the percentage of the population that performs an activity (television watching or eating) together. We are not differentiating between household types, the graphs represent the whole population (with partner).

3.4.1 Watching television

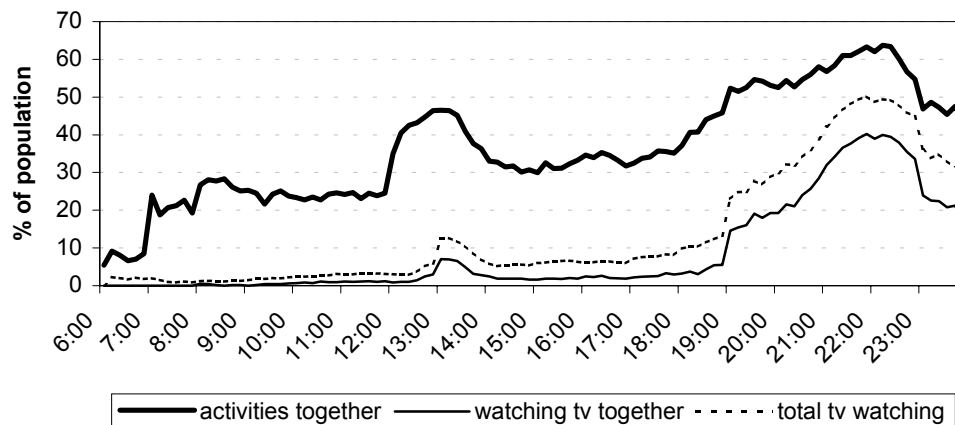
When we consider the totality of activities done together by partners on weekdays (thick line in figure 1), it appears that these show a peak around the lunchtime, which reduces a bit afterwards but climbs again after 6 p.m. Most solitary activities take place in the evening and watching television is the most important one. At 10 p.m. 48,7% of the population is engaged in an activity with his/her partner, of whom 35,9% watches television together. At this same moment 48,9% of the population is watching tv (with or without the partner). So, most of the people watching television at that moment, do it together with their partner.

FIGURE 1: THE COURSE OF TOTAL TELEVISION TIME, TELEVISION TIME WITH THE PARTNER AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER ON A WEEKDAY



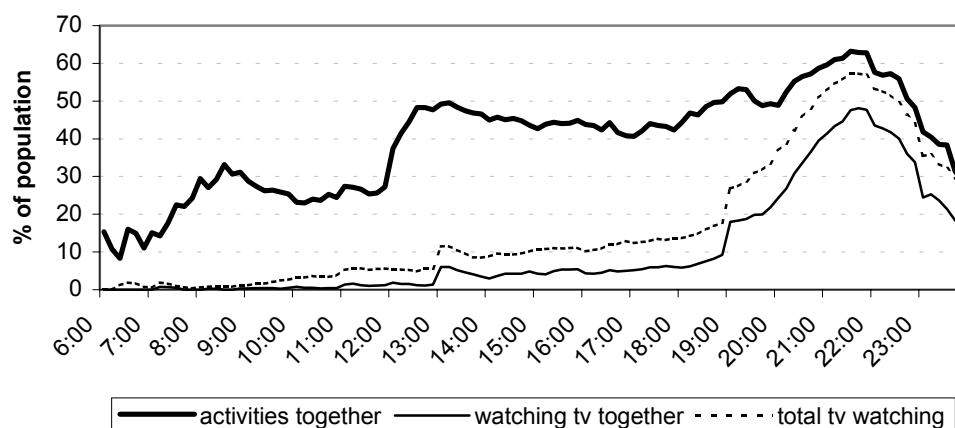
On Saturday (figure 2) more people spend time together with their partner, whatever the time of day. Different activities are done together on a Saturday and television watching does not have the same importance than on a weekday. Nevertheless in the evening, television is more watched with the partner than alone. At 10 p.m. 62% of the population is engaged in an activity with the partner, of which 38,9% sits in front of the television set. In total 48,7% of the population is watching the tv at that moment (either alone or with partner).

FIGURE 2: THE COURSE OF TOTAL TELEVISION TIME, TELEVISION TIME WITH THE PARTNER AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER ON SATURDAY



On Sunday afternoon and evening, constantly more than 40% of the population is engaged in an activity together (figure 3). In the afternoon this time together most often is not spent watching television, in the evening however watching television takes an important part of the solidary partner time. Most often tv is also watched with the partner instead of alone.

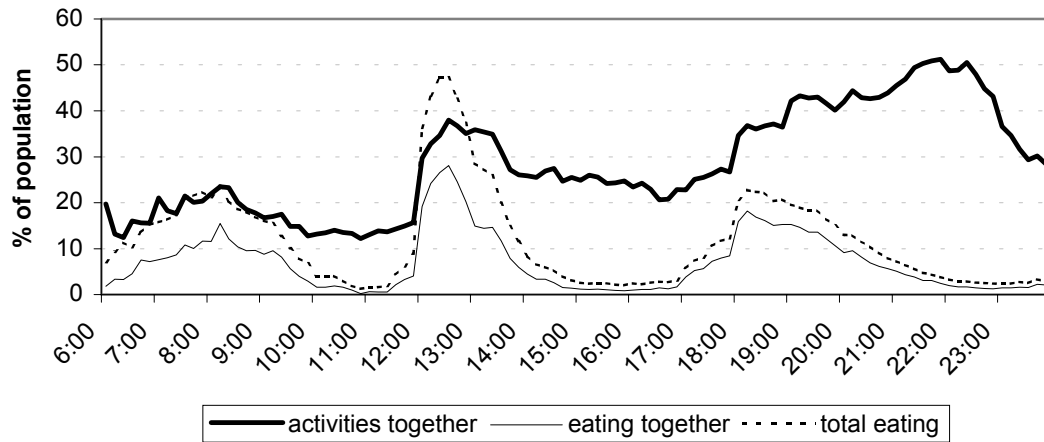
FIGURE 3: THE COURSE OF TOTAL TELEVISION TIME, TELEVISION TIME WITH THE PARTNER AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER ON SUNDAY



3.4.2 Eating

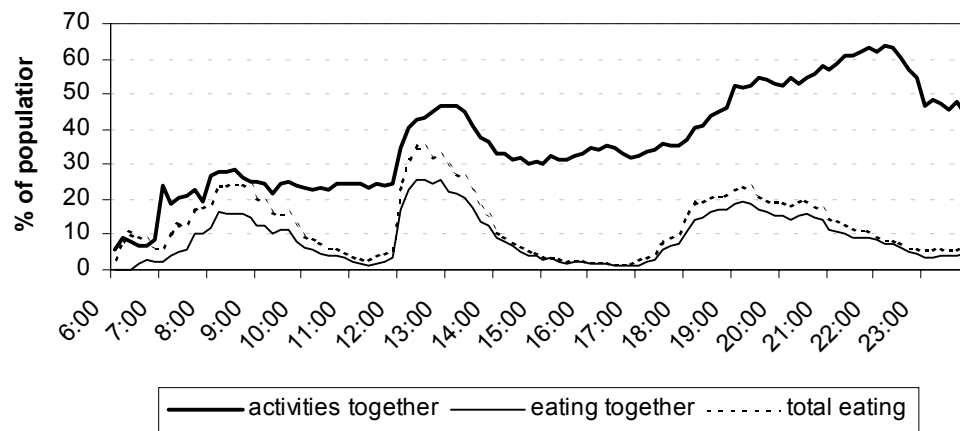
Eating on weekdays is, quite logically, the most important solidary activity at lunch and dinner times (figure 4). The evening dinner is most often enjoyed together with the partner. At 6 p.m. 20,6% of the respondents are eating, 15,9% of them together with the partner. At noon eating with the partner is more difficult on weekdays.

FIGURE 4: THE COURSE OF TOTAL EATING TIME, EATING TIME WITH THE PARTNER AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER ON A WEEKDAY



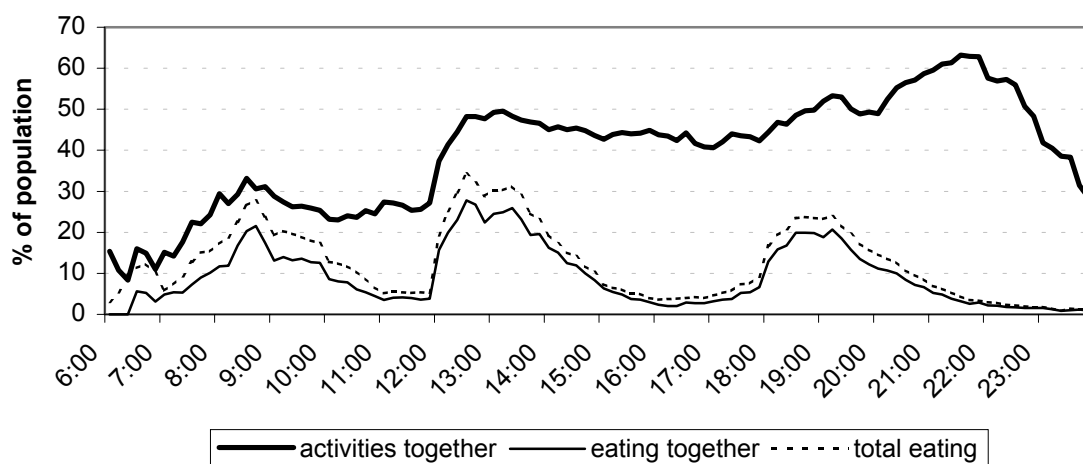
On Saturday eating together instead of alone is more frequent at noon as well as in the evening, than on weekdays (figure 5)

FIGURE 5: THE COURSE OF TOTAL EATING TIME, EATING TIME WITH THE PARTNER AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER ON SATURDAY



This is also true for Sunday. Meals are almost always enjoyed with the partner.

FIGURE 6: THE COURSE OF TOTAL EATING TIME, EATING TIME WITH THE PARTNER AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH PARTNER ON SUNDAY



3.5 Summary solitary partner time

Especially Sunday is the day for solitary time with the partner. Throughout the week the agenda is too much filled with other activities for partners to have time for each other. The amount of solitary partner time however is also linked to the number of children in the household. Partners without children can spend more time together than partners with children. Moreover, on a busy weekday the solitary partner time decreases with the rising number of children in the household. Having children means having less solitary partner time.

One third of the solitary partner time is spent watching television, one fifth of that time is spent eating. On weekdays, especially in front of the television, partners find time for each other, although on Saturday and Sunday television is watched longer. Here as well more children in the household imply less solitary television time for partners. Finding time to eat together is easier in the weekend (about 1h15') than during the week (only 45'). Especially in the weekend this activity is the most important solitary activity. About three quarters of the eating time is spent with the partner. Watching television will also be more likely to happen with the partner in the weekend than during the week. For in the week individuals in households with children watch tv alone half of the time. We can therefore clearly speak of a week and weekend rhythm for the solitary partner time. This is also shown by the fact that on weekdays three quarters of the solitary partner time takes place at home, while this is much less so on

Saturday and Sunday (with the exception of older couples without children). The graphs show us that solitary partner time in the week occurs mainly in the evening. Sunday stays the solitary partner day par excellence. In the afternoon, more than 40% of the population is engaged in an activity together with the partner and in the evening this even rises to 60%. Eating on the contrary is the most typical solitary activity. In the week this is only the case for the evening dinner, on Saturday and Sunday however the meals are genuine solitary moments.

4 Family time

In this paragraph we do not restrict ourselves to the time partners spend together, but we consider how much all family members spend together, i.e. including the children. Before we start, we would like to draw attention to some methodological difficulties. Only household members aged 12 and older filled in diaries. Information on younger household members is therefore not available.⁹ For this reason we selected the households with one, two or three children aged 12 to 16 of which each family member kept a diary. The number of cases has therefore considerably decreased and carefulness with the interpretation of the results is required. Another difficulty is that our definition of 'spending time together with the whole family' i.e. doing the same activity at the same moment in the same location, might be too narrow to catch the degree of 'togetherness' of household members. A household where at one point in time the mother is cooking, the father is doing the dishes and the child is preparing the table will, in our definition, not be labelled as time interval in which an activity is done with the whole family. Although all these activities take place in the kitchen, the activities itself are different. The chance to find 'solitary' family time may therefore be considerably reduced.

4.1 Duration of the time families spend together

Table 13 shows that on weekdays all household members spend 51' together. On Saturday this increases to 1h55'. Sunday is not the day on which most solitary family activities appear, contrary to the solitary partner time. In fact there is only a very small difference with a Saturday.

⁹ Also households of one person, couples without children and one parent families are taken from the original 4275 households

TABLE 13: AVERAGE TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH FAMILY

	Average time together**
Weekday (n= 284)	0:51
Saturday (n= 127)	1:55
Sunday (n= 157)	1:51

Statistical significance of the difference between days: ** p<0,01.

The more children in the household, the less time is spent together (table 14). This goes for weekdays and weekends. This is not very surprising. The bigger the family, the more difficult it becomes to settle the agendas of the different family members and to do the same activity together. On Saturday each household type has more time to spend with the family than on weekdays. On Sunday only households with only one child spend more time with the whole family than on a Saturday.

TABLE 14: AVERAGE TIME SPENT WITH FAMILY BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Average time together **		
	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Weekday	1:21 (n= 61)	0:49 (n= 118)	0:37 (n= 106)
Saturday	2:20 (n= 27)	1:54 (n= 56)	1:41 (n= 44)
Sunday	2:54 (n= 34)	1:43 (n= 62)	1:25 (n= 62)

Statistical significance of the difference between days and household types: ** p<0,01.

4.2 Nature of the time families spend together

The weekend allows families to spend more time together than the week. Which activities are done in the family circle will be discussed in the following paragraph.

4.2.1 Which activities are most frequently done together?

Not only partners spend most of their time together watching television and eating, this is the case for the other household members as well. On an average day 26,8% of the solidary family time is spent watching television and 39,2% eating. Contrary with the partners, eating has become the most popular activity all family members are engaged in together instead of watching television. Consequently, when we consider more households members the chance to find them sitting at the table instead of before the television set, increases. Other family activities such as parties, tourist excursions and going to the movies only take a little part of the solidary

family time, which can partly be explained by their occasional character. Eating, on the contrary and often also watching television, are daily activities.

TABLE 15: DIVISION OF TIME TOGETHER WITH FAMILY FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES¹⁰

Activity	Proportion of shared family time			
	Average day	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Watching television	26,8	27,3	27,4	25,8
Eating (main meals)	39,2	44,3	37,7	36,2
Talking, deliberating	6,2	2,6	6,8	8,7
Purchasing for current uses	3,5	3,1	7,4	0,6
Drinking coffee, tea, beer(not with meals)	3,0	2,4	2,7	3,8
Walking	2,4	2,5	1,0	3,5
Partying with friends or colleagues	1,8	1,2	2,8	1,5
Relaxing, doing nothing	1,4	0,7	0,3	2,9
Trips, tourist excursions	1,3	0,9	-	2,8
Cinema	1,1	2,8	-	0,6
Family parties	1,1	0,8	2,8	-
Other activities	12,2	11,4	11,1	13,6
Total	100	100	100	100

We will now concentrate again on watching television and eating with all family members. These activities take up at least 60% of the solidary family time.

TABLE 16: PROPORTION OF SHARED FAMILY TIME SPENT AT WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Activity	Proportion of shared family time		
	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Weekday			
Watching television	36,6	26,1	17,2
Eating (main meals)	40,0	41,4	54,0
Other activities	23,4	32,5	28,8
Total	100	100	100
Saturday			
Watching television	33,1	23,2	28,7
Eating (main meals)	32,7	41,1	37,1
Other activities	34,2	35,7	34,2
Total	100	100	100
Sunday			
Watching television	28,3	33,9	13,1
Eating (main meals)	32,5	37,9	38,4
Other activities	39,2	28,2	48,5
Total	100	100	100

On weekdays, eating with the whole family happens more frequently than watching television together (table 16). When the number of children in the household rises, the part of solidary eating in the total solidary family time also increases. Watching television together on the contrary decreases with

¹⁰ Only activities more than 1% of the solidary family time is spent at are taken into account. Other activities are regrouped under 'other activities'.

family size. This tendency is not confirmed in the weekend. Watching television takes more importance (33,1%) than eating together (32,7%) on a Saturday in households with one child, although the difference is very small. So they spend almost the same amount of their solidary family time at eating and watching television. In other family types eating together remains the dominant solidary activity. Households with two children spend 41,1% of their solidary family time eating on Saturday, which is the highest percentage of all family types. On Sunday households with more than two children spend the smallest share of the family time watching television and the largest share eating compared to other family types.

4.2.2 Duration of solidary television watching and eating

A view on the duration of solidary television watching and eating in table 17 confirms that Sunday is not the day on which the solidary family time is the highest for all household types. However, an important difference between weekdays and the weekend still remains. §4.2.1 showed that a larger part of the solidary household time was taken by eating than by watching television. In general also more time is spent at eating together with all the family members than watching television.

TABLE 17 : AVERAGE TIME SPENT WITH FAMILY WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Watching television				Average time together Eating			
	aver. hh.	part, 1 ch ≤ 16	part, 2 ch ≤ 16	part, > 2ch ≤16	aver. hh.	part, 1 ch ≤ 16	part, 2 ch ≤ 16	part, > 2ch ≤16
Weekday* (n= 284)	0:14	0:29	0:12	0:06	0:22	0:32	0:20	0:20
Saturday (n= 127)	0:31	0:46	0:26	0:29	0:43	0:45	0:46	0:37
Sunday* (n=157)	0:28	0:49	0:34	0:11	0:40	0:56	0:39	0:32

Statistical significance of the difference between householdtypes on a weekday, Saturday en Sunday:

* p<0,05.

More time is spent with all household members in the weekend than on a weekday. Couples with more than two children most often watch television together on Saturday (29). Other households build up the television time gradually and watch it most at the end of the week, on Sunday. They even watch tv more on Sunday than the maximum time households with more than two children spend watching television together.

In spite of the fact that eating together takes more time in the weekend than in the week, it never takes more than an hour. This is quite different from the solidary partner time.

4.2.3 Proportion of shared activities in total time spent at this activity

Are eating and watching tv done more alone than in company with the other household members or is it the other way round? Table 18 shows the proportion of the solidary family time compared to the total time spent at that activity on an individual level.

TABLE 18: COMPARISON TOTAL TIME AND TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH FAMILY WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING FOR **TOTAL POPULATION**, *MEN*, *WOMEN*.

	Watching television			Eating		
	Total	together	% time together	Total	together	% time together
Weekday (n= 487)	1:45	0:15	14,29	1:24	0:24	28,57
(n= 238)	1:47	0:15	14,02	1:21	0:23	28,40
(n= 249)	1:44	0:14	13,46	1:26	0:25	29,07
Saturday (n= 215)	1:55	0:31	29,96	1:47	0:39	36,45
(n= 109)	1:58	0:29	24,58	1:51	0:39	35,14
(n= 106)	1:52	0:33	29,46	1:43	0:40	38,83
Sunday (n= 272)	2:21	0:28	19,86	1:34	0:41	43,62
(n= 129)	2:45	0:30	18,18	1:36	0:42	43,75
(n= 143)	1:59	0:27	22,69	1:32	0:39	42,39

Statistical significance of the difference by sex on a weekday, Saturday en Sunday:

* p<0,05, ** p<0,01.

Watching television as well as eating happen more frequently solitary than with the other family members. Watching television together with the other family members is most often done on Saturday (almost 30% of the time). In most cases there is no significant difference between men and women, for eating as well as for watching television. Eating together is done more with the whole family than watching television. On weekdays the chance to find all members at the table is the weakest (28,6%), Saturday this chance increases (36,4%) and on Sunday it even runs up to 43,6%.

TABLE 19: COMPARISON TOTAL TIME AND TIME SPENT TOGETHER WITH FAMILY WATCHING TELEVISION AND EATING BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE.

	Watching television			Eating		
	Total	together	% time together	Total	together	% time together
Weekday (n= 487)	(**)	(**)			(*)	
kop, 1 k ≤ 16 j	2:08	0:28	21,88	1:23	0:33	39,76
kop, 2 k ≤ 16 j	1:37	0:13	13,40	1:23	0:19	22,89
kop, > 2k ≤ 16 j	1:39	0:07	7,07	1:24	0:24	28,57
Saturday (n= 215)				(**)		
kop, 1 k ≤ 16 j	2:20	0:43	30,71	1:25	0:34	40,00
kop, 2 k ≤ 16 j	1:45	0:28	26,67	2:06	0:46	36,51
kop, > 2k ≤ 16 j	1:50	0:27	24,55	1:39	0:34	34,34
Sunday (n= 272)		(**)			(**)	
kop, 1 k ≤ 16 j	2:35	0:42	27,10	1:41	0:58	57,43
kop, 2 k ≤ 16 j	2:30	0:35	23,33	1:31	0:38	41,76
kop, > 2k ≤ 16 j	2:01	0:13	10,74	1:33	0:32	34,41

Statistical significance of the difference between household types on a weekday, Saturday en Sunday:

** p<0,01.

Table 17 showed that especially on Saturday television is watched together. Table 18 and 19 show that on this day also the highest proportion of shared tv time within the total tv time takes place. When the household size increases however, this proportion decreases. The same goes for eating. This activity is mostly done together on Sunday, but when the number of children in household increases, this activity happens more alone than together with all household members.

4.3 Location of time spent together with the family members

On weekdays and also on Sunday more than 60% of the solidary family time is spent at home. Saturday more outdoor activities take place. Especially the visits to restaurants and bars are more frequent on this day of the week (table 20) than on other days.

TABLE 20: LOCATION OF SHARED FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Location	Proportion of shared family time			
	Total	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
Home	63,6	68,1	56,4	65,7
Elsewhere	18,4	20,1	20,4	15,4
At someone else's home	7,0	5,3	7,9	7,8
Restaurant, bar	8,5	3,9	13,9	7,9
Unknown place	1,6	1,7	-	3,0
Workplace, school, university	0,2	0,8	-	-
Second residence, weekend house	0,6	0,2	1,4	0,2
Total	100	100	100	100

The chance to find all household members at home on a weekday is highest in households with one child (table 21). Families with two children also spend most of their time at home, but they proportionally spend more time in a restaurant or a bar than other household types. Large families spend more time at other people's houses than other families on weekdays.

TABLE 21: LOCATION OF SHARED FAMILY ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOULD TYPE ON A WEEKDAY

Location	Proportion of shared family time		
	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Home	71,9	66,6	65,7
Elsewhere	15,0	22,8	22,5
At someone else's home	6,3	1,1	10,3
Restaurant, bar	1,9	7,7	0,8
Unknown place	5,0	-	-
Workplace, school, university	-	1,4	0,8
Second residence, weekend house	-	0,4	-
Total	100	100	100

Table 22 shows that the chance to find all family members at home on Saturday is much less likely than on a weekday. This holds for all the household types, although for big families with more than two children there is little difference with a weekday. These families spend 65,7% of the solidary household time at home on Saturday, while this is only about 50% in the other households. Also on Saturday households with two children spend a larger part of their solidary household time at a restaurant or a bar than the other households. In this case, closely followed by households with more than two children.

TABLE 22: LOCATION OF SHARED FAMILY ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOULD TYPE ON SATURDAY

Location	Proportion of shared family time		
	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Home	59,1	49,9	63,5
Elsewhere	23,9	21,5	15,6
At someone else's home	4,3	11,1	6,4
Restaurant, bar	7,2	17,4	14,5
Unknown place	-	-	-
Workplace, school, university	-	-	-
Second residence, weekend house	5,4	-	-
Total	100	100	100

On Sunday the households with only one child more frequently go to the restaurant or a bar with the whole family (table 23). Households stay more at home with the other family members compared to Saturday, with the exception of the big families. Sunday is, for these families, the day for trips. Almost half of the solidary family time is spent outside the house. Couples

with two children on the contrary spend almost 80% of their solidary family time at home.

TABLE 23: LOCATION OF SHARED FAMILY ACTIVITIES BY HOUSEHOULD TYPE ON SUNDAY

Location	Proportion of shared family time		
	couple, 1 child ≤ 16 years	couple, 2 children ≤ 16 years	couple, > 2 children ≤ 16 years
Home	63,2	78,0	53,7
Elsewhere	4,4	10,0	34,1
At someone else's home	5,6	11,1	6,3
Restaurant, bar	18,0	0,2	5,9
Unknown place	-	-	-
Workplace, school, university	-	-	-
Second residence, weekend house	-	0,6	-
Total	100	100	100

4.4 Timing of solidary family time¹¹

In the graphs bellow, the solidary family time at each moment of the day is represented. These graphs show a quite different pattern from those of §3.4.1. The solidary family time (thick line in figure 7 to 12) is situated much lower than the solidary partner time (thick line in figure 1 to 6) and this is the case for every day. On Saturday the most time is spent with other family members, especially at noon and in the evening. Hereafter we will discuss the solidary television watching and eating with the other family members on a weekday, Saturday and Sunday.

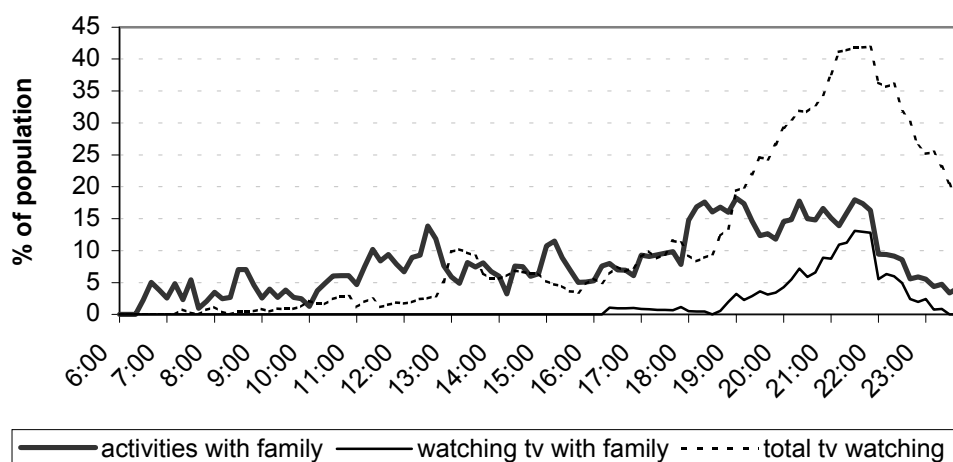
4.4.1 Watching television

Each family member has his own programme on weekdays. A collective family rhythm is hard to find. This changes a bit in the evening (thick line in figure 7). But even than only 15% of the population spends some time with the other family members at the same activity. In the early evening this applies for eating and later in the evening television becomes the most important solidary activity (figure 7). At 21h30' the solidary family time shows the highest peak (18% of the population does an activity with other family members at that moment), 13,1% is sitting in front of the television

¹¹ For technical reasons we use unweighed data in this paragraph

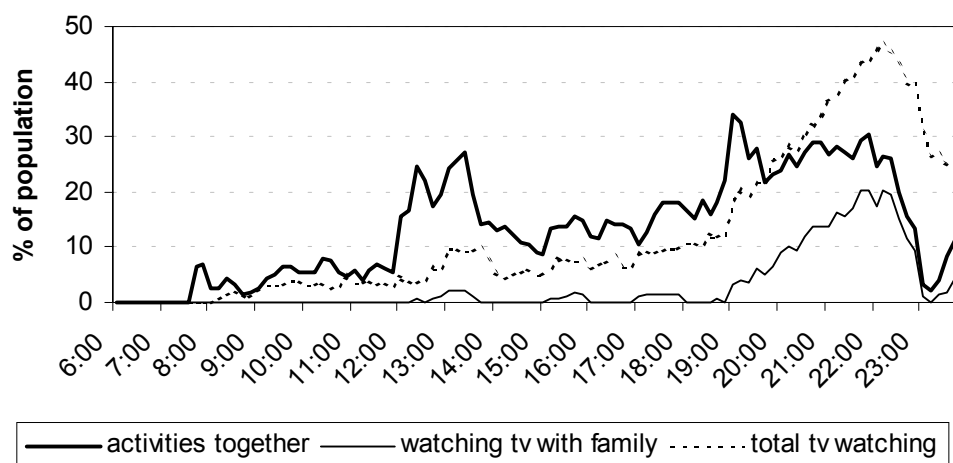
set with all family members. In total 41,8% people watch television at that moment (with or without other family members).

FIGURE 7: THE COURSE OF TOTAL TELEVISION TIME, TELEVISION TIME WITH THE FAMILY AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY ON A WEEKDAY



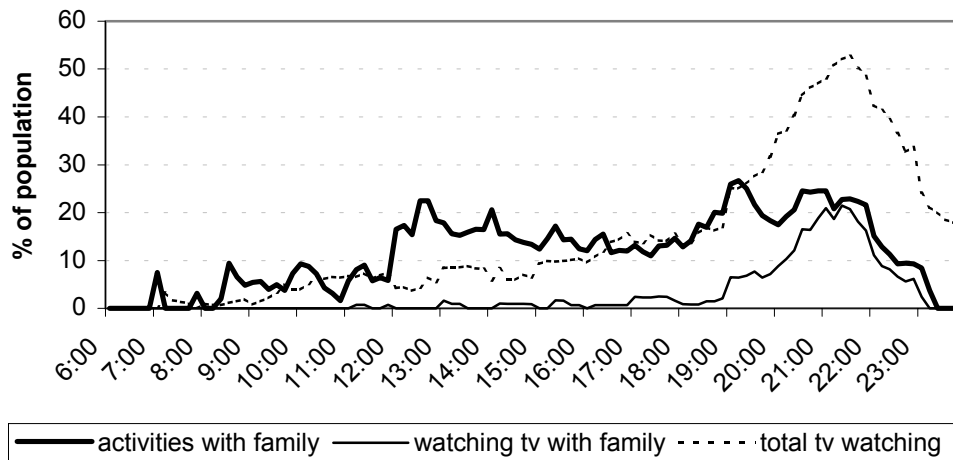
Watching television together occurs only in the evening on Saturday. Between 21 and 23 hours this activity takes the largest part of the solidary family time (figure 8).

FIGURE 8: THE COURSE OF TOTAL TELEVISION TIME, TELEVISION TIME WITH THE FAMILY AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY ON SATURDAY



Also on Sunday evening the solidary household time is spent watching television (figure 9). At 21h30' 22,8% of the population spends time with the family, 20,7% in front of the television.

FIGURE 9: THE COURSE OF TOTAL TELEVISION TIME, TELEVISION TIME WITH THE FAMILY AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY ON SUNDAY



4.4.2 Eating

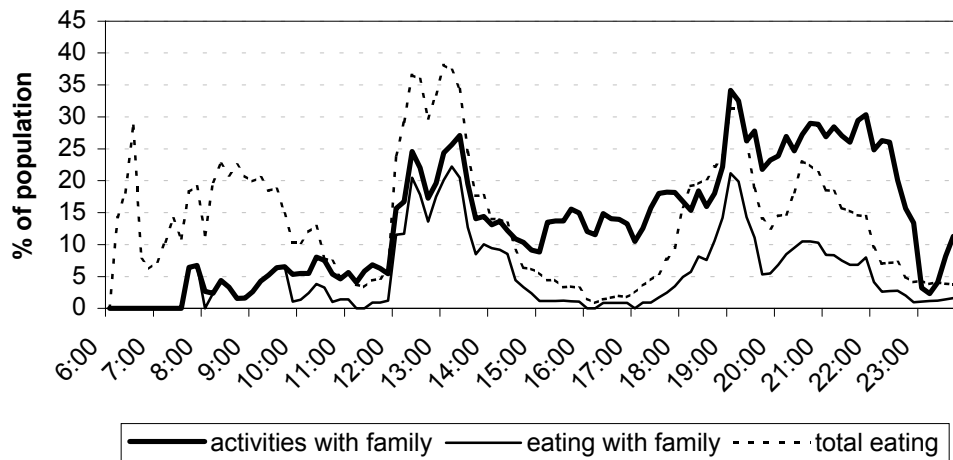
Eating together with the family members is clearly the most important solidary activity on weekdays. The continuous line (eating with family) lies very close to the thick line (activities with the family) in figure 10. The evening is an exception to this rule because then watching television takes the place of eating. The evening dinner will be eaten with other family members in half of the cases. The other half eats alone.

FIGURE 10: THE COURSE OF TOTAL EATING TIME, EATING TIME WITH THE FAMILY AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY ON A WEEKDAY



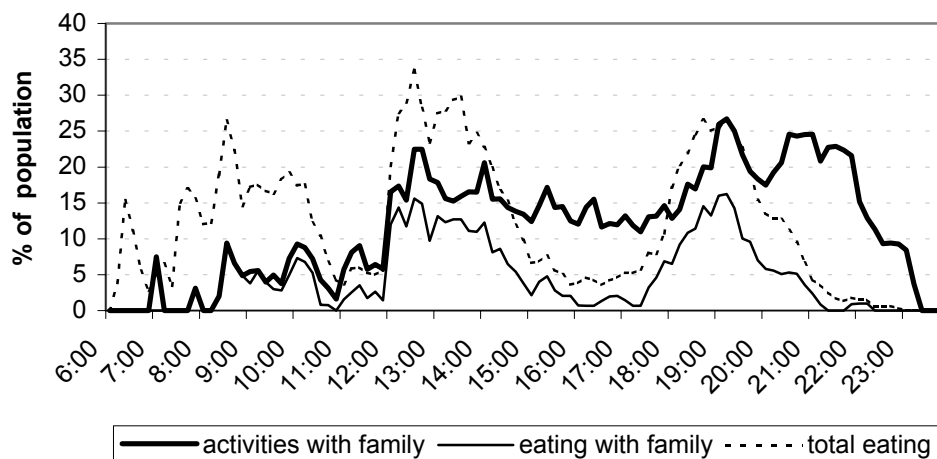
Figure 11 shows that on a Saturday around the eating times, eating is the most important solidary household activity. At noon 30 to 40% of the population is eating, from which 15 to 20% together with the family. In the evening, at 7 p.m., 31,4% of the population is sitting at the dinner table, 21,2% is in company of the other household members.

FIGURE 11: THE COURSE OF TOTAL EATING TIME, EATING TIME WITH THE FAMILY AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY ON SATURDAY



Also on Sunday solidary family time around the eating times is quite logically spent eating. But on Sunday generally less solidary household time is spent throughout the day, this also goes for eating (figure 12).

FIGURE 12: THE COURSE OF TOTAL EATING TIME, EATING TIME WITH THE FAMILY AND THE TOTAL OF SOLIDARY ACTIVITIES WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY ON SUNDAY



4.5 Summary family time

Also with families we recognise a clear week and weekend rhythm. More time is available for solidary family activities in the weekend than in the week. When the family size increases it becomes more difficult to tune the separate agendas of all family members and therefore less family time is spent together. This rule applies for all days of the week. The little time family members spend together (0h51' on a weekday, 1h55' on Saturday and 1h51' on Sunday) is mainly spent eating together (39,2%) and watching

television together (26,8%). Households also spend more time together eating than watching television. On weekdays, a larger proportion of the solidary family time will go to eating when the number of children in the household increases. For watching television, it is the other way round: when the family size increases, a smaller part of the solidary family time is spent before the television. However, in the weekend this is not the case. Although eating and watching television are the most popular solidary household activities, they are more often done alone in stead of in company of the household members. This also becomes clear in the graphs. Eating with the other family members compared to eating alone is done more than watching television. The bigger the family, the smaller the part of solidary television watching and eating in the total individual time spent at these activities. On Saturday a larger part of the total time spent at watching television is spent at solidary television watching than on other days. On Sunday the largest part of solidary eating compared to eating alone takes place. Saturday is the day on which most solidary family activities happen outdoors. Households with more than two children are more absent on weekdays and Sundays than other family types. On Saturday families with two children spend the most solidary time away from home and spend half of the solidary family time outdoors.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we tried to combine the information on individual and household level that was present in the Belgian Time Use Survey. This first attempt gave us a lot of information on the duration, the nature and location of the time that is spent with the partner or the whole household. The most important findings are the clear difference between the week and the weekend rhythm. Partners spend the most time together on Sunday, for families this is the case the whole weekend. Partners have less time for each other when they have children and the larger the family size, the less time is left to do the same activity at the same moment. For households it is more difficult to spend solidary time with all the family members, for each member has his/her own programme and therefore very little solidary family time is spent. The more children in the household, the more difficult it becomes to find solidary moments. Watching television and eating are the most solidary activities. Partners spend more time at these activities in the weekend compared to the week. Especially eating takes place with the partner: 75% of the time. In households this is not the case. Eating and watching television are rather solitary moments and are more often done alone than in company of all the other family members.

Of course these first analyses are quite general and descriptive. Further research is needed. For example the age and work position of the different

household members should be taken into account. Methodologically it would be interesting to compare these results with an analysis on individual level (with the use of the information in the diaries about the presence of others when doing an activity). Also a more theoretical outline is desirable.

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