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THE BELGIANS: WAFFLE EATING, BEER
DRINKING AND FINE CHOCOLATES TASTING
PEOPLE?

ON HOW BELGIANS SPEND THEIR TIME

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On how Belgians spend their time

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Since the late 1980s, a taskforce initiated by EUROSTAT (the statistical office of the European Union) has worked on directives aimed at harmonising the European research on time use. The aim of this is to ensure that the time use studies carried out in the different federated states (and possibly in other countries) use the same methodology and follow a number of guidelines, so that the results can be compared at an international level. At the end of 1996 and beginning of 1997, a pilot study was carried out in nine European member states and nine Central East European states to test the methodology that had been worked out and improve upon it (Rydenstam & Wadeskog, 1998). This project resulted in an elaborate body of detailed directives which were transmitted to the National Institutes of Statistics of the federated states as recommendations (EUROSTAT, 2000). In the context of the European Union, these statistics institutes do not have any obligation to carry out studies on time use. However, EUROSTAT has asked them to do so as far as possible, and if possible, to adopt the EUROSTAT guidelines which were drawn up. Belgium and Portugal were the first member states to carry out a time use study in 1999, in accordance with the EUROSTAT framework.¹ This was followed by Estonia 1999-2000, Finland 1999-2000, Hungary 1999-2000, Romania 2000, Slovenia 2000-2001, United Kingdom 2000, Norway 2000, and Sweden 2000. In 2001, studies started in Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and Latvia (Niemi, 2000).

¹ France started a time use study in 1998-1999, before the guidelines were in their final fase. So the French design differs a bit from the one from EUROSTAT.

The Belgian time use survey of Statistics Belgium (NIS) was linked to the ongoing household budget survey which has been conducted since 1995. Households, which completed the household budgets, were also asked to cooperate with the time use survey. Every member of a household in the sample, aged 12 or older was asked to keep a detailed record of their time use (Dynoodt, 2000). The EUROSTAT recommendations were largely followed for the design of the research instruments and the methodology that was used.²

The data for the Belgian time use survey were collected by the NIS from 3 December 1998 to 6 February 2000. Complete data were collected from 8,382 respondents, aged 12 to 95 years, living in 4,275 household units. These data were collected by means of a diary and an individual questionnaire. The participants wrote down their time use in the diary for one whole weekday and one whole weekend day. The days on which they kept the record of time use were determined in advance by the researchers. The respondents noted their main activity every 10 minutes, as well as any subsidiary activities and any people who were present when this activity was carried out. Any travel and modes of transportation were also indicated. The participants noted their activities in their own words, and the activities that were recorded were subsequently coded in accordance with the EUROSTAT guidelines. In order to give the respondents an idea of the detail required to write the diaries, they were presented with an example of a completed diary. The individual questionnaire contains a number of socio-demographic questions and questions on work, health, time pressure, and leisure activities. Information about typical family characteristics, (e.g., type of household, number of children in the family, social status of the reference person, place of residence, etc.) was available from the household budget survey.

In order to examine the extent to which the realised sample is representative, it was compared with the Belgian population as a whole on a number of characteristics. Although the sample provided a relatively good reflection of the Belgian population (at least for the characteristics which allowed for comparison), it is also clear that, as in the case of any survey, certain population categories are underrepresented, while others are overrepresented. In order to correct for this, the data were weighted (poststratification) by region³, sex, age and level of education. As data were collected for more than one year, and some months therefore have a greater effect in the period of the survey, corrections were also made for the code months. The weighting coefficients which are used in this way vary from

² For further details on the data collection, see: Glorieux, I. & J. Vandeweyer. *België in uren en minuten. Resultaten van het Tijdsbestedingsonderzoek 1999 – reeks Tijds- en vrijetijdsbesteding*, NIS (to be published).

³ Belgium consists of three regions with a relatively large degree of administrative autonomy: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels.

0.08 (women from Brussels aged 70-74, with a certificate of non-university higher education, who completed their diary in December), to 7.38 (Flemish women over the age of 75, with at most a certificate of primary education, who filled in the diary in July).⁴ We used the weighted data in all our analyses.

The respondents were free to choose the description of the activity concerned. Even after coding these descriptions, this resulted in a large number (= 272) of different activities recorded. In order to be at all workable, these were grouped in 31 outlined categories of activities which could then be classified into 9 main categories (see table 1). This classification largely corresponds to that also used in the TOR time use studies (cf. Glorieux, Koelet & Moens, 2000).⁵

⁴ For more details, see Glorieux, I., Vandeweyer, J. & C. Vanderhoeft, Weighting the Belgian Time Use Survey (to be published) .

⁵ The NIS study used 9 main categories rather than the 11 used in the TOR studies. The categories “waiting” and “other activities” are not included in the NIS study. Waiting was only reported in connection with education and training, and was therefore listed under this category. The category ‘other activities’ in the TOR time use studies contains the activities “caring for other members of the family”, “unpaid help for family living in”, and “keeping the time use diary”. The NIS study only includes activities related to ‘caring for and helping others’ in the rest category. Therefore these were classified under the heading “social participation”.

TABLE 1: DIVISION OF ACTIVITIES IN 9 MAIN CATEGORIES

	Examples (not exhaustive)
1. Paid work	Formal work, overtime, breaks, ...
2. Domestic work	Dish washing, cooking, cleaning, pet care, repairs, gardening, shopping, ...
3. Childcare and educating children	Physical care, reading, playing, talking, supervision, ... of and with children
4. Personal care	Eating and drinking, wash and dress, visiting doctor, visiting hairdresser, ...
5. Sleeping and resting	Sleeping, relaxing, sun bathing, ...
6. Education and training	School, homework, courses, professional training courses, breaks and waiting concerning education, ...
7. Social participation	Volunteer work, meetings, parties, care for adults, ...
8. Leisure	Hobbies, games, sports, recreation, outdoors, entertainment and cultural events, media, ...
9. Travelling	All sorts of travelling

In this contribution we give a general overview of the time use of Belgians. In section 1 we start with a description of an average weekday, a Saturday and a Sunday in Belgium. We describe when Belgians go to sleep, get up, eat, watch TV together, etc., and in this way try to provide a picture of the collective character of time use. In section 2, the attention shifts from the “timing” of activities to their duration and we examine how long Belgian men and women spend engaged in various activities, such as sleeping, working, leisure time, travelling, etc., and in section 3, we examine whether there are distinct male and female patterns of time use. Section 4 analyses time use at the level of the family. For this, the workload of different types of family has a central place. Finally, section 5 briefly summarises the most important results and tries to formulate a number of conclusions.

1 A weekday, a Saturday and a Sunday in Belgium

We start our overview with a general picture of the course of activities during weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays in Belgium. In order to provide some clarity, we use the classification of activities into nine main categories.

1.1 The course of an average weekday...

Figures 1A and 1B contain graphs representing the course of an average weekday. Figure 1A shows the percentage of respondents that participate in each of the nine distinct groups of activities for periods of 10 minutes. Figure 1B represents the same percentages, but not in a cumulative way. In figure 1A, all the curves are accumulated together, while figure 1B shows more clearly which are the dominant activities during the different parts of the day and what percentage of the respondents participate in these activities at those times.

FIGURE 1A: THE COURSE OF AN AVERAGE WEEKDAY

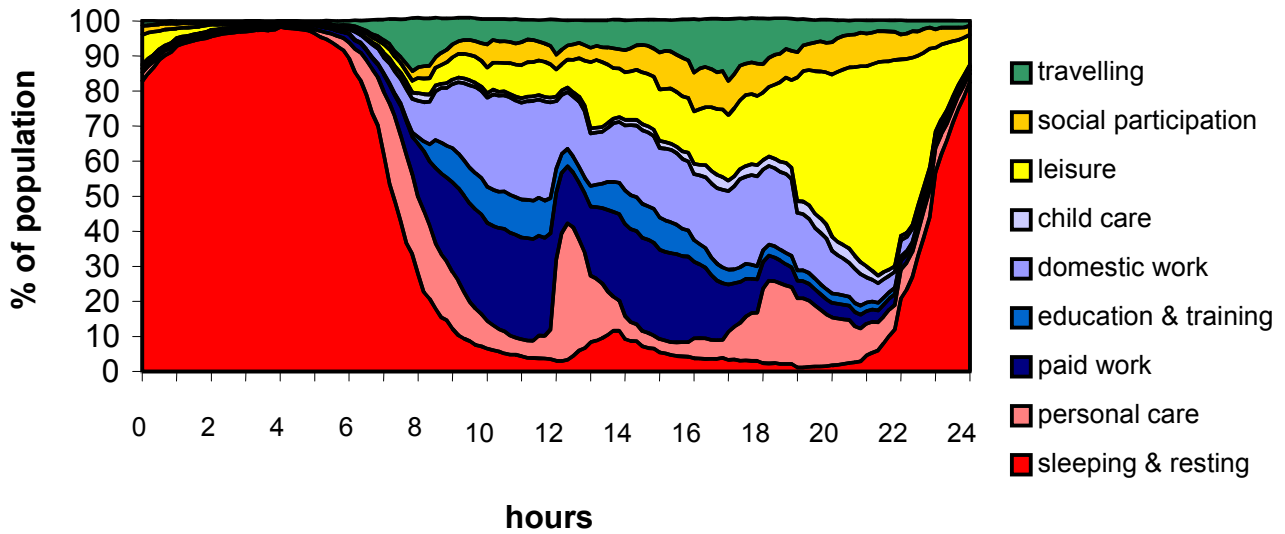
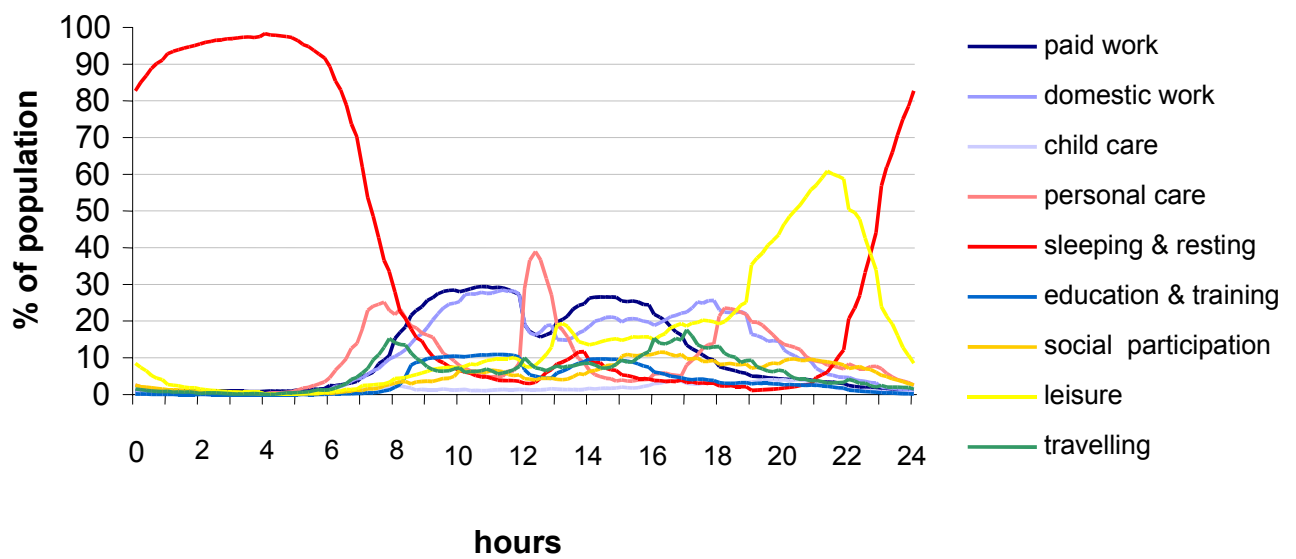


FIGURE 1B: DIVISION OF ACTIVITIES ON AN AVERAGE WEEKDAY



From midnight to 7 a.m.: Belgium is asleep

On weekdays, 82.7% of Belgians are asleep at midnight. The rest of the population are relaxing and enjoying leisure time (8.5%), mainly watching television. 2.6% are still involved in social activities at midnight, and 2.5% are getting ready to go to sleep. However, the proportion of people sleeping increases quickly and at 4 o' clock 98.3% of Belgians are fast asleep. At 6 o' clock, a small percentage is already up and getting ready for the day. One hour later, the number of Belgians who are asleep declines from 89.3% at 6 a.m. to 62% at 7 a.m.

From 7 a.m. till noon: Belgium wakes up and gets ready for the working day, school day or household tasks

During the week, more than half of the population has got out of bed by 7:20 and 24% are having breakfast or in the bathroom. 6% are already (or still) at work and 6.4% have already started on a number of household tasks. At the same time, 9.3% of Belgians are already on their way to work. The peak of the morning rush hour is at about 8 a.m. (15.2%). At this hour, three quarters of the population is awake. Paid work, domestic work and education mainly take up the rest of the time in the morning during the week. On average, 7% of the population have some leisure time in the morning.

From noon to 2 p.m.: lunch time

From noon on the number of people at work falls significantly, as it is lunchtime. School also comes to an end. In the space of 10 minutes, the number of participants engaging in personal care (mainly eating) increases by 20% (up to 28.9%). At noon, 19% are still at work, and 19.3% are busy with household tasks. There is again another small peak in travelling (10%) at lunchtime. Belgians eat at the same time on a huge scale. During the week, lunchtime is concentrated between 12 and 1 p.m. with a peak at about 12:20 (37.4%). This is followed by a decline in the number of people eating. This decline coincides with an increase in the proportion of Belgians who are asleep. A small percentage of Belgians – 8 to 10% – have a nap, which extends into the afternoon. There is also an increase in leisure activities during the lunch hour. Social contacts, voluntary work and meetings tend to decline around noon. The time spent on childcare does not increase significantly during this period.

From 2 to 6 p.m. : more activity, though to a lesser extent

After lunch, the Belgians become active again. However, there are fewer people at work in the afternoon than in the morning. Less attention is also devoted to household activities. Instead, there is an increase in leisure time

activities and social participation. At 2 p.m., 26.3% are at work and 18.6% are engaged in household tasks. 19.8% are engaged in non-work related activities, such as hobbies, sport, recreation, going out, the media or social contacts. The number of people at work or at school gradually decreases after 4 p.m.. At 5 p.m., the percentage of people at work has fallen to 13.4%, and the percentage engaged in household tasks increases to 22.4%. Children are back from school, which is reflected in more childcare. The peak in the evening rush hour is at about 5 p.m.. At that time, 17.7% of Belgians are on their way.

From 6 p.m. to 21:30 : family time and leisure time

This is the time of day, which is generally spent as a family. At 6 p.m. , time is spent mainly on preparing meals and other domestic tasks (23%), eating and drinking and physical care (21.3%), and leisure activities (19.2%). However, the evening meal is not concentrated in time to the same extent as lunch, and is spread over a number of hours, peaking at 18:20. At that time, 20.7% of Belgians are having their evening meal. After the evening meal, leisure time increases to a great extent. Children are put to bed. Part of the population attends classes or spends time studying at home. Up to 21:30, there is a noticeable increase in the percentage of Belgians with leisure time, which is mainly spent watching television. The percentage of viewers is highest at 21:20 (48.5%), and then the numbers start to decline.

From 21:30 to midnight: Belgians are tired

At 21:30, almost half of the Belgian population (48.1%) are still watching television, 10% are engaged in other leisure activities, and 8.6% are enjoying social contact. However, this gradually declines as the evening progresses. 8% of Belgians are in bed by 21:30, and their example is followed increasingly as the hours pass.

1.2 The course of an average Saturday...

Saturdays reveal a very different pattern of activities (see figures 2A and 2B). Obviously the most important reason for this is the fact that on Saturdays most Belgians do not engage in paid work. They can sleep for longer, and more Belgians are involved in sports, going out, visiting friends, etc., or in other leisure and social activities. However, on Saturdays a great deal of time is also spent on domestic tasks.

FIGURE 2A: THE COURSE OF AN AVERAGE SATURDAY

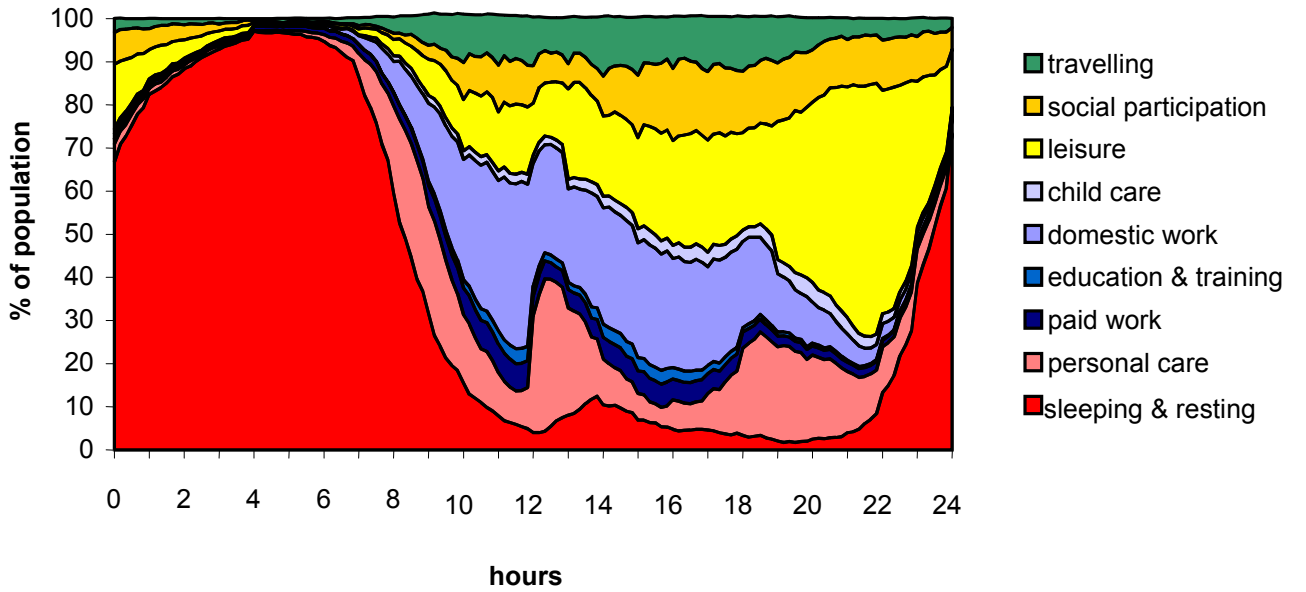
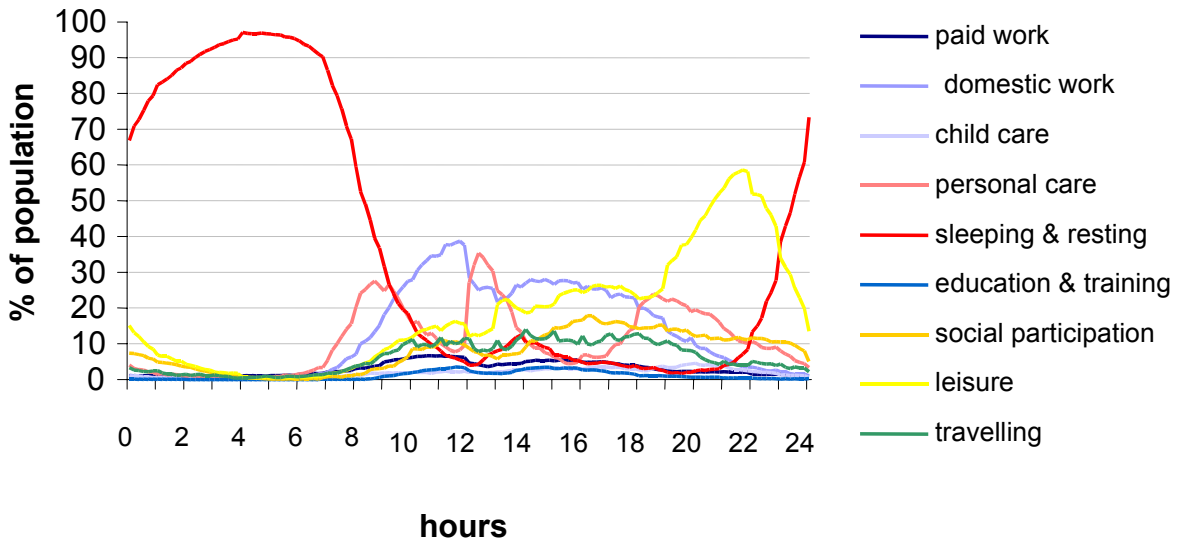


FIGURE 2B: THE COURSE OF ACTIVITIES ON AN AVERAGE SATURDAY



From midnight to 8 a.m.: Belgians are asleep, except for a small proportion that is still relaxing and partying

Friday evening: it is the weekend, and Belgians go to bed later. At midnight, only 66.8% of Belgians have gone to bed. The others engage in leisure activities (15.1%) or socialise (7.4%). 4% spend time on personal care and 3.2% are travelling at that time. A few hours later, almost everyone is in bed. Belgians sleep longer on Saturdays. The greatest decrease in the number of people asleep is between 7 and 8 a.m.. At 6:50 on Saturday morning, 90.2% of Belgians are still in bed, compared with 59.5% at 8 a.m..

From 8 a.m. to 12 a.m.: slowly waking up and putting the house in order

On Saturday, half of the population is awake at 8:20, one hour later than on a working day. The morning is mainly spent on household tasks for which there was no time during the week, and on personal care and leisure activities. At 8:40, the number of people involved in personal care is highest (27.5%). It is safe to assume that most people are having breakfast at about this time. Travelling about increases during the course of the morning and continues to increase through the day, until it declines again in the evening. Time is also spent by some in social activities and a small percentage has to work or take courses on Saturday.

From noon till 2 p.m.: lunch time

Noon is also a turning point on Saturday, and Belgians have their meal then. However, meal times are spread over a longer period than on a weekday. Most people are having lunch at 12:20 (32.9%) and the lunch period lasts till 13:30. Household tasks are put away during this time and taken up again in the afternoon, but to a lesser extent.

From 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.: more household tasks, leisure activities and increasing social participation

By 2 p.m., only 7.5% are still having lunch and 10.4% are having an afternoon nap. In addition, time is spent on leisure activities (18.6%) and on travelling about (13.9%). The majority of Belgians spend the afternoon engaged in household tasks and leisure activities. In addition, Saturday afternoon is the perfect time for social participation (parties, contact with friends and family, etc.). There is also more time available for childcare and education.

From 6 p.m. to 21:30 : meal times followed by leisure activities and social activities

At about 6 p.m., people have another meal. Belgians have their evening meal at different times on Saturday, spread mainly between 6 and 8 p.m.. After the meal, the evening is almost entirely taken up with leisure activities and social participation.

From 21:30 to midnight: half of Belgians go to sleep, the other half continue to party

The highest percentage of people is engaged in leisure activities at 21:40 (58.6%). Approximately three quarters of these (i.e., 45.8%) watch television. 11.3% are at a party or with friends at that time (social participation), and 10.5% are in the bathroom for personal care or having a quick bite before going to sleep. Only 7% have already gone to bed. This percentage gradually increases, although it is not until 23:30 that 50% of the population has gone to sleep. After all, Sunday is another day off.

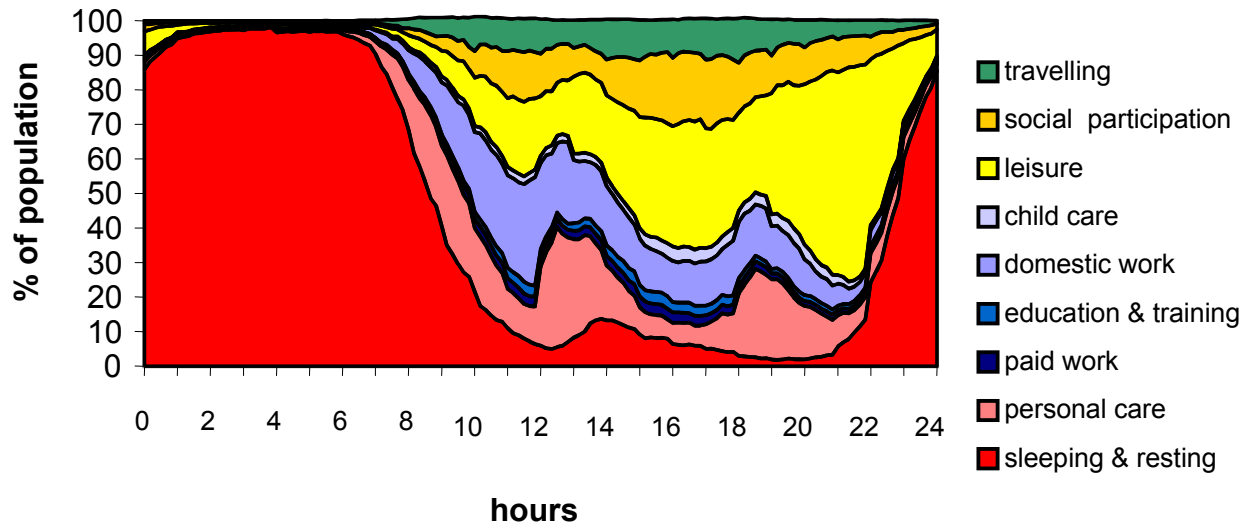
1.3 The course of an average Sunday...

In contrast with Saturday, Sunday is a real day of rest: it is not only paid work that comes to an end, but much less unpaid work (housework) is done on Sunday as well. Of course, a great deal of time is spent asleep. Belgians sleep in longest on Sunday, but also go to bed earlier in the evening than on Saturday (see figures 3A and 3B).

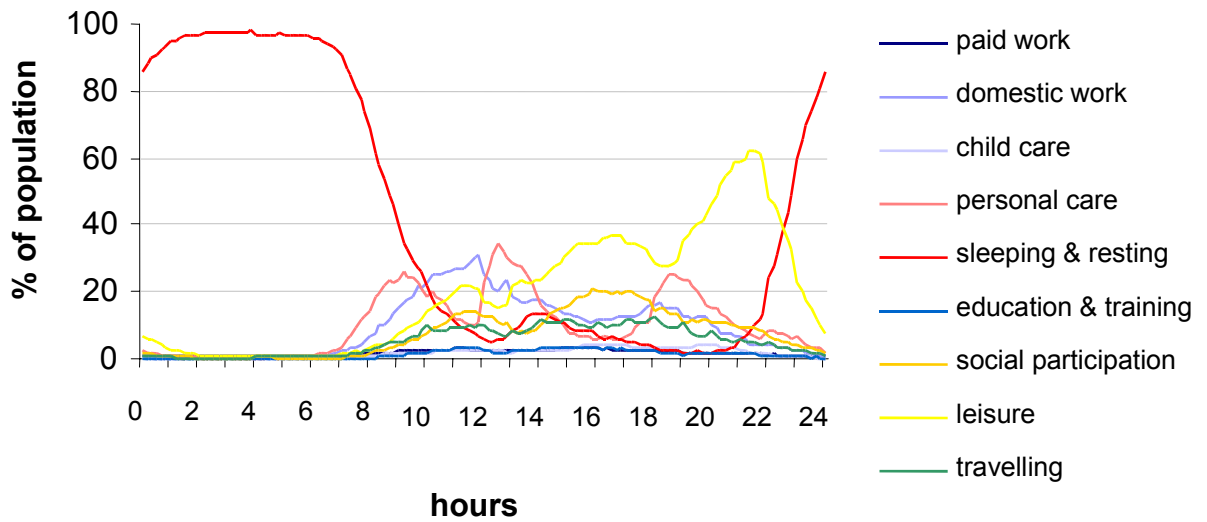
From midnight to 8 a.m.: sleeping

Belgians have a lie-in on Sundays: at 7:30, 80.8% are still in bed, while on Saturday this is only 75.7%. At that time, 9.4% of the population are in the bathroom or having breakfast.

FIGURE 3A: THE COURSE OF AN AVERAGE SUNDAY



FIGUUR 3B: DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVITIES ON AN AVERAGE SUNDAY



From 8 a.m. till noon: lying in, followed by housework and leisure activities

At 8 a.m. in the morning, 31.5% of Belgians are awake. Almost half of them are engaging in personal care. 6.8% starts the day with household tasks, chores, shopping or use services. 3.4% engage in leisure activities, and 2.7% are on the road. It is not until 8:40 that half of Belgians are awake (20 minutes later than on Saturday). At 10 a.m., one quarter of the population is still in bed. The morning is mainly spent on household tasks, followed by leisure activities, social participation and personal care. On average, 9% of the population is travelling about between 10 and 12 p.m..

From 12 to 2 p.m.: lunch

On Sunday, lunchtime is even more extended than on Saturday, lasting from 12 to 2 p.m. At noon, the number of people having lunch increases from 5.2% to 19.1%. At 12.30, approximately one third of the population (35.1%) are having lunch, which is actually the highest number. But even at 13.30, 22.8% are still having lunch.

From 2 to 6 p.m. : time mainly spent on leisure activities and social contacts

Sunday afternoon is mainly used for leisure activities and social participation. For example, at 16:30, 36.7% are involved in leisure activities, 19.6% are engaged in social contacts, and 12.1% are performing household tasks. Yet less housework is done on Sunday than on Saturday. About 10% are travelling about, and this holds true for the whole afternoon. Approximately 6% are engaged in personal care, and another 6% are asleep or resting. On Sunday afternoon, most time is also spent with children. Between 5 and 6 p.m., the leisure and participatory activities decline, and personal care and housework slowly increase: the evening meal is prepared.

From 6 hours to 9 hours: evening meal, followed by many leisure activities

While the time spent on personal needs on Saturday evening (eating and personal care) is fairly spread out over the early evening, on Sunday it is more concentrated, with a peak at about 18:30 (25.6%, of whom 23.4% are eating). At 8 p.m., this percentage has gone down to 15.4%. After 18:30, there is a big increase in leisure activities, while social participation starts to decline after 20:30. Sunday is a real TV day, not only in the afternoon, but also in the evening when there is more television viewing than on other days. In fact, most of the leisure time is taken up by watching television. The peak in the viewing figures is at about 21:20, when 52.1% of Belgians are watching television.

From 21:30 hours to midnight: leisure activities decline, and more and more Belgians are getting ready to go to bed

From 10 p.m., there is a big increase in the number of people asleep, from 13.4% at 21:50 to 24.3% at 10 p.m.. At the same time, within 10 minutes, the number of people engaged in leisure activities declines by 11%, when only half of Belgians spend free time (40.2% watching television). For the rest of the evening, more and more Belgians go to sleep, and at 11 p.m. the number of people who are asleep increases from 48.5% to 60%. The pattern for the weekday starts again.

This summary of the course of an average weekday, Saturday and Sunday clearly shows the collective character of time use. There are many activities that reveal a collective pattern: at 4 a.m. in the morning on an ordinary weekday, more than 98% of Belgians are asleep. At 12:20, almost 40% are having lunch, and at 21:30, almost half of the Belgians are watching television. The patterns of activities reveal a fairly common pattern for the day and the week. There is time to sleep (between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.) and to work (usually between 9 and 12 a.m., and 1 and 4 p.m. in the week). Lunches are largely eaten at the same time, leisure activities are clearly pursued at particular times (7 to 11 p.m. and on Sunday afternoon), and there are even peaks in household activities (particularly on Saturday morning). It does not look as though Saturdays and Sundays are turning into ordinary workdays, or that Belgium is evolving towards a 24-hour society.

2 Time use of Belgian men and women

Below, we will examine the average time which Belgian men and women spend per week on the 9 main activities. As the respondents only completed the diary for one weekday and one weekend day, we calculate the average duration of activities for a week that is drawn up in a fictional way. By multiplying the average time spent on a particular activity on a weekday by 5, and the average time spent on a main activity on a weekend day by 2, then adding these together, we come up with the total time spent on a particular activity in a fictitious week for every respondent. Nevertheless, at the level of a respondent, this does not really produce a reliable picture, particularly because Saturdays and Sundays are very different days (see supra). However, to the extent that different relevant categories of the population are represented in a representative way on every day of the week, a reliable picture of time use on a weekly basis is produced at a composite level. The tests we carried out reveal that our sample for each day of the

week individually is representative of the Belgian population (at least for the background variables for which the weighting was carried out)⁶. Thus the figures for the week (5 weekdays, a Saturday and a Sunday) should produce a reliable picture of the time use of different categories of the population distinguished in our analyses.

Table 2 indicates the average time spent on the 9 distinct main activities, always making a distinction between men and women. The subdivision into sex is the only division we are making. This means that the averages we give apply to a group of respondents aged between 12 and 95, with different levels of education, working situations, family compositions, etc.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON 9 MAIN ACTIVITIES BY MEN AND WOMEN (DURATION PER RESPONDENT PER WEEK)

	Men (N ⁷ =4077)	% of total week time	Women (N=4309)	% of total week time
Paid work**	18:29	11%	10:19	6%
Domestic work**	14:36	9%	23:58	14%
Childcare and educating children**	1:57	1%	3:18	2%
Personal care**	16:01	9%	17:06	10%
Sleeping and resting**	62:22	37%	64:29	38%
Education and training	5:19	3%	4:55	3%
Social participation**	9:18	6%	9:59	6%
Leisure**	29:58	18%	25:26	15%
Travelling**	10:38	6%	8:59	5%

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women: * p<0,05; **p<0,01.

The Belgian population spends most time “*sleeping and resting*”. More than one third of the available time per week (approximately 38%) is spent in this way. On average, more than 60 hours per week, or about 8 hours per day, are spent in bed. Women sleep 2 hours and 7 minutes more per week than men.

After sleeping, most of the week is taken up by “*free time*”. Women have 4 hours and 32 minutes less free time than men, spending only 25 hours and 26 minutes per week on leisure activities (approximately 15% of the total time) compared with 29 hours and 58 minutes for men (approximately 18% of the total time). Looking at the various leisure activities (see table 3) also reveals that men spend more time on each individual activity than women do.

⁶ See Glorieux, I., Vandeweyer, J. & C. Vanderhoeft, Weighting the Belgian Time Use Survey (to be published) .

⁷ The ‘N’ in this and the following tables represents the weighted sample size.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON LEISURE ACTIVITIES BY MEN AND WOMEN (DURATION PER RESPONDENT PER WEEK).

	Men (N=4077)	% of leisure time	Women (N=4309)	% of leisure time
Hobbies and games**	2:45	9%	2:17	9%
Sports**	1:25	5%	0:39	3%
Recreation**	2:12	7%	1:55	8%
Outdoors**	0:32	2%	0:15	1%
Entertainment and cultural events**	1:05	4%	0:50	3%
TV/Video**	16:48	56%	15:30	61%
Listening to music**	0:49	3%	0:35	2%
Reading**	3:35	12%	3:12	13%
New media**	0:46	3%	0:14	1%

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women: ** p<0.01.

Leisure time is dominated by watching television. This is the case for both men and women. On average, people watch 16 hours per week, or approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes per day. Although men watch 1 hour and 18 minutes more television per week, women spend a slightly larger proportion of their total available free time watching television (61% of their free time compared with 56% for men). After watching television, reading is the next most common leisure activity. Men read 23 minutes longer per week than women, but for both men and for women, it accounts for 12 to 13% of the total free time. A great deal of time is also spent on hobbies and games. Men spend 2 hours and 45 minutes on these, women slightly less, viz., 2 hours and 17 minutes. The same applies for recreation, which keeps Belgians occupied for about two hours per week. In addition, Belgians also spend on average one hour per week participating in cultural activity. Listening to music and going out are clearly less popular. It is striking that men spend almost three times more of their free time on sport and the new media than women do.

If we take “*paid work, domestic work, and childcare and education*” together as total work, the importance of leisure time is much smaller, and it is clear that after sleeping, the majority of time (21% for men, and 22% for women) is spent working. The total amount of work for men amounts to an average of 35 hours and 2 minutes, for women, 37 hours and 35 minutes (2 hours and 33 minutes per week more than men). In addition, the composition of the work is very unevenly divided between men and women. Men spend on average 18 hours and 29 minutes per week on paid work, which is 8 hours and 10 minutes longer than women. On the other hand, women spend considerably more time on housework (approximately 24 hours per week, or 9 hours and 22 minutes more than men), and on bringing up and looking after children (3 hours and 18 minutes per week or 1 hours and 21 minutes more than men). Thus, for the time being, there is no real reversal of traditional roles in Belgium (see below).

On average, the Belgian population between the ages of 12 and 95 spends approximately 5 hours per week on “*education and training*”. There is no significant difference between men and women in the number of hours or in the waiting times connected with this.

Women not only work and sleep longer than men; they spend more than one hour more on “*personal care*”. Men spend approximately 16 hours, and women 17 hours on this activity. In addition, as table 4 shows, this applies not only to the time which women spend in the bathroom (32 minutes more than men), but also to the time spent on meals (15 minutes more than men) and professional care (18 minutes more than men). Therefore women most certainly do spend more time on their bodies than men do.

TABLE 4: AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES CONCERNING PERSONAL CARE BY MEN AND WOMEN (DURATION PER RESPONDENT PER WEEK).

	Men (N=4309)	% of pers. care	Women (N=4077)	% of pers. care
Eating and drinking**	10:21	65%	10:36	62%
Dressing, toilet**	5:11	32%	5:43	33%
Receiving professional care**	0:29	3%	0:47	5%

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women: **p<0,01.

A traditional cliché about men and women is also confirmed when we look at the time they spend on “*social participation*”. Women spend 41 minutes more per week on this activity than do men. It is striking that men spend more time on voluntary work (participation) while women spend more time, talking, partying and on the telephone (social contacts). As regards the time spent caring for and helping others, there is no significance difference between men and women.

TABLE 5: AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES CONCERNING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION BY MEN AND WOMEN (DURATION PER RESPONDENT PER WEEK).

	Men (N=4309)	% of soc. part.	Women (N=4077)	% of soc. part.
Participation, civic duties, organisations, ... **	1:17	14%	0:56	9%
Social contacts**	7:31	81%	8:26	84%
Caring for and help to others	0:31	6%	0:37	6%

Statistical significance of the difference between men and women: **p<0,01.

On average, men spend 10 hours and 38 minutes per week travelling (commuting from home to work, travelling in connection with household tasks and leisure activities,...), which is 1 hour and 39 minutes longer than women, who spend approximately 9 hours per week travelling.

Although the literature often refers to the slow disappearance of traditional role patterns and the emergence of the “new man”, the time use data reveal that time use is thoroughly different for men and women. For 8 of the 9 distinct categories of activities, there are significant differences between the sexes. Women have a higher total workload, do more housework and more childcare, and spend more time on personal care and social participation. On the other hand, men spend more time on paid work, have more leisure time, and spend more time travelling. It is only for education and training that there is no significant difference between the sexes. We examine these differences between the sexes below in more detail.

3 On the difference between Belgian men and women

3.1 The traditional role pattern is maintained

Despite the increasing number of women in the employment market, our general analyses show that men and women still have very distinct patterns of time use. There are still tasks that are mainly performed by women in the family, while others firmly remain the man’s responsibility. In the previous section we saw that women still do the majority of domestic work and childcare, and that men do most paid work. Below, we examine these sex-related differences in more detail. This is done using a discriminant analysis. With a discriminant analysis we can calculate how accurately the sex of a respondent can be predicted on the basis of his or her time use, and what differences in the pattern of time use have the strongest influence on this prediction.

With no background information, we have one chance in two of correctly guessing someone’s sex. This is the chance of a correct prediction if we are simply taking a guess. The prediction may be more accurate if we have extra information about the respondent. If the prediction is more accurate with information about the time use of the respondent, this indicates that patterns of time use differ significantly between sexes. If it is shown that a prior knowledge of the time use does not give a better than 50% chance of a correct prediction or barely better than 50%, the differences between the sexes cannot really be characterised on the basis of the pattern of time use. After all, the prediction would be no better than a random guess. For the discriminant analysis, we use the time spent on the 31 detailed categories of activities. As there is a big difference between the working week and the weekend, we perform the discriminant analysis separately for activities carried out during the week and for activities carried out during the weekend.

If the sex of the respondents is predicted on the basis of their time use during the working week, 74.6% of the respondents are classified correctly, which is a great deal better than 50%. For men, 81.7% are classified correctly, for women this is 67.9%. Consequently, there certainly are different patterns of activities by sex. Table 6 shows the four most important activities which discriminate between men and women.

TABLE 6: CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE TIME SPENT ON ACTIVITIES DURING THE WORKING WEEK AND THE 'DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION' (N=8386)

Men (spend more time on)	Power of discrimination	Women (spend more time on)
	0.740	Housework
Formal work (paid labour)	0.314	
Odd jobs	0.270	
	0.241	Childcare

Table 6 shows that the strength of discrimination is greatest for housework. In other words, it is easiest to determine the sex of the respondent on the basis of the number of hours devoted to housework on weekdays. It is striking to see how traditional the time use of men and women remains. Women do more housework and spend more time looking after children. Men are not entirely inactive with regard to housework, but mainly carry out the typically male tasks, viz., chores in and around the house. They also still perform more paid work than women. In fact, it is striking that the most discriminating activities between men and women are related to work, which shows that work is still strictly divided between the sexes in Belgium. If the discriminant analysis is repeated, but only making use of the time spent on the four most discriminating activities (housework, paid work, odd jobs and childcare), we still correctly predict the sex of 71.2% of respondents. For men this is 81.7%, for women the predictive accuracy is slightly less, viz., 61.3%. Even on the basis of only the amount of time, which someone (between the ages of 12 and 95) spends, on housework on an arbitrary weekday, it is still possible to correctly predict the sex of 70% of the respondents. 80.8% of men are correctly classified in this way, but for women this is much fewer, viz. 59.8%. This shows that men are characterised particularly by the small amount of housework they perform. On the other hand, the fact that only 60% of women are correctly classified on the basis of the amount of housework which they perform in the period of registration indicates that women are much more difficult to distinguish solely on the basis of these activities. Thus, in themselves, women are more differentiated as a population group than men. For women, the work and family situation has a great impact on the amount of housework that is done. However, it remains a fact that women do more housework than men. Most Belgian men do very little housework, so that this activity emerges as a major discriminatory factor.

When we try to predict the sex of respondents on the basis of their weekend activities, 69.9% of the respondents are correctly classified.⁸ Of the men, 72.3% are correctly classified, and 67.6% of the women. Consequently, it appears to be more difficult to make a distinction between men and women on the basis of time use during the weekend⁹. For men in particular, the prediction is less accurate. The fact that paid work is an important discriminatory factor during the working week, and that this activity hardly appears during the weekend is an important explanation for this.

Paid work no longer appears in the top five most discriminating activities in the weekend. However, housework continues to be the activity for which men and women differ most markedly and most systematically (discrimination power: 0.760). Men spend more time doing odd jobs (0.351) during the weekend, and also engage more in sport (0.247) than women. Women spend more time on childcare (0.239) and personal care (0.231). It is still a very typically gender-related pattern of time use, women focusing on the household and children, men on typically male household activities and leisure activities.

The analyses clearly show that traditional role patterns still characterise the time use of men and women. Both during the working week and during the weekend, housework is the most important discriminating factor between the sexes. The increased participation of women in the employment market has apparently not changed this in any significant way. It is therefore not surprising that the combination of work and family tasks is often a source of stress and pressure for women. For men, this combination certainly produces fewer problems. As our data show, they continue to focus primarily on paid work and their share in the housework is quite limited. The following section examines the total workload of men and women in more detail.

3.2 A double responsibility, but no double workload for women

The fact that working women also perform paid work in addition to their responsibility for the household is often referred to in the literature as a “double workload” or a “second shift” (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999; Hochschild & Machung, 1990). In order to get a better insight into what this could mean for Belgians, we analyse the total workload of men and

⁸ Wilks' Lambda = 0.82 – Canonic correlation = 0.43. The canonic correlation is significantly different from 0 ($p < 0.01$).

⁹ On Saturday, 70.2% of the respondents were classified correctly (71.4% of men, 69.1% of women). On Sunday, the sex is correctly predicted for 70% of the respondents (74.4% of men and 65.8% of women).

women. The total workload is defined as the time spent on paid work, housework and childcare & education (including “travelling for children”)¹⁰.

The time spent on commuting from home to work and “travelling about” for household purposes is not a separate category in the list of activities.

TABLE 7: TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK, DOMESTIC WORK AND CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION PER WEEK

	Paid work	Domestic work	Childcare and education ¹¹	Total
men (N= 4077)	18:29	14:36	2:02	35:07
women (N=4309)	10:19	23:58	3:27	37:44

On average, men perform more than 8 hours more paid work per week than women. Women spend more than 9 hours per week longer on household tasks than men. Consequently, the division of work remains neatly divided in accordance with the traditional role patterns. This also means that in terms of total workload, there is not a very big difference between men and women. Even though the workload of the average Belgian woman is more than 2 hours and 30 minutes longer than that of the average man, it can hardly be called a *double* workload for women, when all men and women are compared. However, the table shown above does not take the working situation of women into account. This is done in table 8, which shows that the workload of men varies greatly depending on their working situation, while this is much less the case for women.

TABLE 8: TIME SPENT ON PAID WORK, DOMESTIC WORK AND CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION PER WEEK

	N	Paid work	Domestic work	Childcare & education	Total
Full time working man	1789	34:04	13:39	2:31	50:14
Full time working woman	884	29:45	19:55	3:21	53:02
Part time working man	108	26:08	12:13	2:06	40:28
Part time working woman	600	21:31	25:08	5:26	52:06
Not working man	1977	1:14	16:07	1:32	18:54
Not working woman	2708	0:41	24:55	2:58	28:35

It is striking that the time which men spend on family work (housework and children) varies only a little by employment situation. Men who work part time spend the least time on family work (14 hours 19 minutes), not working men spend most (17 hours 39 minutes), but the difference is only 3 hours per week. Therefore the total workload of men is almost wholly determined by the time spent on paid work. For women, this is clearly

¹⁰ The time spent on commuting from home to work and travelling for household purposes is not a separate category in the list of activities.

¹¹ The data in this table are different from the ones in table 2. ‘Travelling for children’ has been added to the category ‘childcare & education’.

different. The time, which is released for women when they work part time, is spent wholly on family work, with the result that the total workload for women working part time is barely one hour lower than for women working full time. Nevertheless, the total workload of not working women is on average lower than that of women in employment. Even if not working women spend more time on housework than women in full-time employment, the fact that they perform hardly any paid work considerably reduces their total workload. These results hardly change when they are controlled for the number of children.

It is clear that irrespective of the working situation, women always spend more time on household tasks and childcare and education than do men. Furthermore, it is clear that for women, their participation in the employment market is related to the time that they spend on family work. Full-time work for women is at the expense of family work. A heavy family workload therefore often means that women work part time. In this way the total workload is kept within limits. Another mechanism for limiting the workload of women applies to paid work. Irrespective of the working situation, women always spend less time on paid work than do men. Women in full-time work spend more than 4 hours less than men in full time work while women working part time spend 3 ½ hours less on paid work than men who work part time. These mechanisms were analysed in detail elsewhere (cf. Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994a and 1994b), where these differences in working hours are explained above all as a strategy used by women to allow them to combine paid work with family responsibilities. Women opt for jobs and positions in which the working hours are shorter, where they have to do less or no overtime, where working hours are predictable, the distance from home to work is shorter, etc. The result is that the average working hours of women are systematically lower than those of men.

In general, we find that the women's situation on the employment market and the time they spend on paid work depends on their workload in the family. For men, this does not apply at all. Their commitment to the household is virtually constant. In any working situation, women have a larger workload than men. Nevertheless, the difference in workload between working women and the dominant group of men working full time remains within certain limits. Therefore this cannot be described as a double workload for working women, though there is a double responsibility. It is precisely this double responsibility that explains women's strategies for adapting. Men have only one dominant role, the working role, and this determines the total workload of men. As we can assume that women's strategies for adapting depend to a large extent on the composition of the family, we will see in the next section to what extent the total workload is divided, depending on different types of family.

4 Equality in the family: not for the immediate future

The NIS time use data were collected in 4,275 families who participated in the household budget survey. As all the family members between the ages of 12 and 95 were asked to participate in the survey, time use can also be analysed at the family level. This makes it possible, amongst other things, to examine how the workload of the respondents is influenced by the type of family of which they are part, and how large the total workload is in every type of family. To do this we selected all the reference persons (head of family) and their partners from our data.¹²

In the first instance, we look at the total workload for every respondent, depending on the type of family they live in. Table 9 shows the workload of the respondent (man or women), taking into account their working situation (working, not working) and the working situation of the partner (no partner, not working partner or working partner). In order to make the comparisons easier, the average workload of men and women from the same type of family are shown below each other in table 9. Families consisting of at least two people are indicated in the table. The other types of families consist of people without cohabiting partner.¹³

¹² In these analyses we do not take into account the possible paid work and family work of children and other adults (e.g., grandparents) in the household.

¹³ The numbers (N) of men and women from the same type of family are not always the same in the table. This is the result of the fact that the data are weighted at the level of individuals. In the unweighted sample, we have, of course, the same number of men and women from the same type of family (e.g., the same number of working men with an not working wife and not working women with a working man).

TABLE 9: WEEKLY WORKLOAD BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Rank work- load	work situation respondent	+ work situation partner	N	Average # children living in hh ≤ 16 years	Average age	Total workload respond.	Total workload hh. type
2	not work. man	-	422	0	62	25:13	
3	not work. woman	-	744	0.15	65	30:39	
1	not work. man	+ not work. woman	683	0.13	65	24:57	
5	not work. woman	+ not work. man	766	0.14	63	34:51	59:48
4	not work. man	+ work. woman	99	0.43	49	30:55	
8	work. woman	+ not work. man	99	0.42	45	49:04	79:59
9	work. man	+ not work. woman	407	1.07	44	50:03	
6	not work. woman	+ work. man	420	1.06	43	43:06	93:09
11	work. man	+ work. woman	1115	1.17	39	51:59	
12	work. woman	+ work. man	1025	1.16	37	54:37	106:36
7	work. man	-	407	0	40	48:54	
10	work. woman	-	398	0.38	40	51:37	

The first column orders respondents by workload. It is fairly logical that not working individuals (1 to 6) always have a smaller workload than working individuals (7 to 12). The not working men who live with an not working partner (1) have the lowest total workload, viz., 24 hours 57 minutes per week, or 3 hours 34 minutes per day. The highest workload is for working women with a working partner (12), viz., 54 hours, 37 minutes per week or 7 hours 48 minutes per day. They work 29 hours 34 minutes more per week than the first group. Respondents in families with two earners (11 and 12) clearly have the largest workload (though the women work more than the men in these families), although a single working woman (10) has an almost equally large workload and a working man with a non-working partner (9) also has a workload of over 50 hours per week.

Table 9 gives a fairly clear picture of the workload of both partners in the family. The different types of families are described below. We start with people without cohabiting partner.

Not working people living without partner

Not working people living without partner have a low workload in comparison with respondents who are cohabiting. Single men work in total 25 hours and 13 minutes, single women 30 hours and 39 minutes. This difference of 5 hours and 26 minutes per week is almost entirely explained by the extra time which single not working women spend on housework (and to a lesser extent on childcare and education). The average number of children of these single people is low. The single not working woman falls in the higher age category (average 65 years old), 75.2% are already retired or nearly retired and 49.6% have at most finished primary education. The general health of 54.1% of these women is described as good or very good.

It is slightly surprising that 10.9% of single not working women feel overworked everyday, when they consider their daily tasks. This is probably explained by their age. Half of these who feel overworked every day are already over the age of 70. However, 54.8% never feel overworked. Up to 80.3% have the feeling that they have enough time in the weekend to do everything they would like to do.

For not working single men, “only” 64.4% have already retired or nearly retired. However, the average age is also fairly high, about 62 years old. Almost half (48%) have finished primary education. More than half of not working single men (59.4%) consider that they are in good or very good health, and 69.5% never feel overburdened by their daily tasks. However, almost 7% feel overworked everyday. Only one fifth of men feel that they have not enough time in the weekend.

Working people living without partner

Working people living without partner tend to have a high workload (48 hours 54 minutes for men and 51 hours 37 minutes for women), though for them the average number of children is not high either. The average age of women living without partner is 40. Half of these women are between the ages of 31 and 49. They usually work full time (74.4%) for an average of 36 hours per week. One quarter work part-time (on average 20 hours per week). For almost half (48.1%) of these women, this produces a net income¹⁴ of 40,000 to 59,999 BEF (992 - 1487 euro) per month. 31.7% of working women living without partner earn less than this amount. Their level of education is fairly high. Only 12.5% have no more than a certificate of primary education, 15.2% have a certificate of lower secondary education, 35.1% have a certificate of higher secondary education, and 37.1% have a certificate of higher education or university. Despite their high total workload, these women feel that they are in good to very good health (87.9%), and one third never feel overworked. A small minority (4.2%) feels overworked every day by the combination of daily tasks. Outside these extremes, 26.8% feel overworked less than once a month; 22.6% feel overworked approximately once a week and 13.2% feel overworked several times a week. The fact that working women living without partner feel some pressure on their time is clear from the fact that 59,5% say that during the weekend they often have the feeling that there is not enough time to do everything they would like to do.

Working men living without partner are men in their 40s, who are predominantly (90.6%) in full-time employment, and work on average 34 hours per week (25 hour per week for part-time workers, 38 hours per week

¹⁴ Income after taxes and social contributions.

for those who work full time). Slightly more than half (56.3%) of working men who live on their own also earn between 40,000 and 59,999 BEF (992 to 1487 euro) per month. Only 20.1% earn less than this, compared to almost half of working women who live without partner. However, women work part time more often. As regards the level of education of men living without partner, it is striking that they are also reasonably well educated, though to a lesser extent than working women living without partner. 27.7% have a certificate of higher or university education (compared with 37.1% for women), 38.9% have a certificate of higher secondary education, 21.4% have a certificate of lower secondary education, and 12% have at most a certificate of primary education. The great majority of working men who live on their own also describe their health as being good or very good (91%), and even more often than women, state that they are never overburdened by the daily tasks (46%). Only 6.1% feel overworked every day. On the other hand, they feel more pressure of time in the weekends. More than half (52.6%) have the feeling that there is not enough time to do everything they would like to do.

Not working woman + not working man

A couple who are both not working obviously have a low total workload. Nevertheless, the woman works much more than the man in this case as well (almost 10 hours more per week). Table 10 shows how exactly the workload in this type of family is composed.

TABLE 10: DIVISION OF WEEKLY WORKLOAD IN A NOT WORKING COUPLE

	Paid work	Domestic work	Childcare	Total workload
nt.work.man	0:37	22:13	2:06	24:57
nt.work.woman	0:21	31:33	2:55	34:51

Despite the fact that neither the man nor the woman has a job (any longer), the woman continues to perform more household tasks and childcare and education. This reveals a fairly traditional family situation. The average age of this couple (woman: 63, man: 65) is fairly high. Most men (81.8%) have already retired or have almost retired. The largest group for the women is formed by housewives (47%) and retired women (38.9%). This explains the traditional role pattern to a large extent. The level of education in this type of family is also considerably lower than in the previous types of families: 57.2% of the women and 44.8% of the men have at most a certificate of primary education. As the average age is relatively high, it is not surprising that the general health is not judged to be unanimously positive, as for the families with two earners (see below). Nevertheless, 63.3% of the women and 67.7% of the men still feel they are in good or very good health. For men who do not work, most (70.9%) never feel overworked. For the women, only 53.2% never feel overburdened by the daily tasks. In the weekend, approximately four fifths of these respondents have the feeling they have

enough time to do everything they would like to do. There is not really a question of time pressure.

Working woman + not working man

In three of the four types of couples, it is women who have a higher total workload than men. Working women with a non-working partner particularly have a much heavier workload than their partner. The difference amounts to 18 hours 9 minutes per week. However, this pattern is fairly rare.

TABLE 11: DIVISION OF WEEKLY WORKLOAD IN A COUPLE OF A NOT WORKING MAN AND A WORKING WOMAN

	Paid work	Domestic work	Childcare	Total workload
nt.work.man	2:29	25:52	2:32	30:55
work. woman	22:21	23:59	2:42	49:04

With regard to housework and caring for children (including travel arrangements), this type of family tends more toward equality. It is the only type of family in which the man performs slightly more family work than the woman. However, the woman still on average does more than 20 hours per week of paid work as well. The extra time, which the woman spends on paid work in this family, is not really compensated by the extra housework and childcare performed by the man, so that the total workload is distributed very unevenly. For this couple, the average age of the woman is about 45, and that of the man, about 49. Of the non-working men, 31.9% have retired (or almost retired), 23.6% are invalids, and 22% are unemployed. The average number of children in this type of family is low, viz., 0.42. The majority (55.8%) of the women work part time and earn between 20,000 and 39,999 BEF (496 and 992 euro) per month. This income applies for 56.4% of the working women in this type of family. Only 8.2% earn less than this sum. The average number of working hours for a woman working full time from this type of family is 36 hours per week, for a woman working part time it is 21 hours per week.¹⁵ As regards their level of education, the women are almost evenly divided over the four levels of education. For men, there is a higher percentage with a low level of education and there are fewer men with a high level of education. More women (85.2%) than men (69.9%) from this type of family feel in good or very good health. In view of their low total workload, it is fairly logical that 65.1% of the men who do not work never feel overworked. Only 35% of women feel like this. 14.3% feel overworked less than once a month, 24.1% feel overworked approximately once a week,

¹⁵ These hours are different from the hours for paid work, shown in the table. The first are based on the reported number of working hours per week in the individual questionnaire. The figures in the table are based on the number of hours-paid work shown in the diaries.

17.5% feel overworked several times a week, and 9.1% feel overworked every day. In addition, only 40% of women find enough time in the weekend to do what they would like to do. For non-working men in this family, only 26.2% feel that they are short of time in the weekend. The high workload of women is clearly reflected in a greater pressure of time for women in this type of family.

Working woman + working man

A working woman with a working husband has an even greater total workload than women in the previous family types. However, the difference in workload between men and women is much smaller in this type of family, and amounts to only 2 hours and 38 minutes. The extra time which the man spends on paid work in this case is compensated by the extra time which the woman spends on housework (see table 12). In this type of double-income family, there is a fair division of the total workload, but the division of tasks remains very traditional. Double-income families also have the most children.

TABLE 12: DIVISION OF WEEKLY WORKLOAD IN A WORKING COUPLE

	Paid work	Domestic work	Childcare	Total workload
work.man	35:01	13:51	3:06	51:59
work.woman	25:38	23:40	5:18	54:37

The double-income category consists mainly of young families. The woman has an average age of 36, and the man an average age of 39. Only 36% of double-income families have no children. The men work almost exclusively full time (96.2%) for an average of 35 hours per week. On the other hand, women are divided almost evenly between part-time work (46.2) and full-time work (53.8%). Women who work part time, work on average 22 hours per week; women who work full time, work 35 hours per week. This also explains the extra hours, which men spend on paid work and women on housework and childcare. 52.4% of the men earn between 40,000 and 59,999 BEF (992 and 1487 euro) per month, 10.7% earn less than this sum. Of the working women, 41.4% earn between 20,000 and 39,999 BEF (496 and 992 euro) per month and 39.4% between 40,000 and 59,999 BEF (992 and 1487 euro) per month. 7.7% earn less than 20,000 BEF per month. As regards the level of education, there is also a larger proportion of women than men with higher education (respectively 37.2% and 31%). 36.1% of women have certificates of higher secondary education, compared with 34% of men. For the women, 10.6% have completed primary education, and 16.6% have completed lower secondary education. For men, these percentages are respectively 11.2% and 23.7%. Almost all double-income families (93.9% of the women and 94.5% of the men) feel in good or very good health. However, they are affected by the high workload. 76.4% of the

women and 64.4% of the men sometimes feel overburdened when they consider their daily tasks. In the weekend, 68.4% of the women and 66.3% of the men think that there is not enough time to do what they would like to do. This type of family experiences the greatest pressure of time.

Not working woman + working man

The only family situation in which a woman has a smaller total workload than men is in the “typical” family with a male breadwinner, viz., the combination of a working man and a non-working housewife (see table 13). In this type of family, men work approximately 7 hours per week longer than women.

TABLE 13: DIVISION OF WEEKLY WORKLOAD IN A COUPLE OF A WORKING MAN AND A NOT WORKING WOMAN

	Paid work	Domestic work	Childcare	Total workload
working man	34:19	13:22	2:20	50:03
nt.work. woman	0:29	35:50	6:46	43:06

In this traditional allocation of roles, women obviously perform the bulk of the housework and childcare. Older age does not explain the traditional division of roles, because women have an average age of 43, and men an average age of 44. In this type of family, housewives are most common (57%). On the other hand, the men work almost exclusively full time for an average of 34 hours per week. 11.2% of the men have an income of less than 40,000 BEF per month; 41.5% earn between 40,000 and 59,999 BEF (992 and 1487 euro) per month; 26.4% between 60,000 and 79,999 BEF (1487 and 1983 euro) per month, and 20.9% earn more than 80,000 BEF per month. They are amongst the highest earners. Men who are the breadwinners in the family have a higher level of education than their partners. 22% of women and 17.4% of men have at most a certificate of primary education, 32.3% of women and 25.6% of men have a certificate of lower secondary education; 31.1% of women and 34.6% of men have a certificate of higher secondary education, and respectively 14.7% and 22.4% have a certificate of higher education or university degree. It is striking that 15% fewer women than men feel in good or very good health. For men, this is 92%. The pressure of time in families with one breadwinner is not too bad; 46.4% of women never feel overburdened by the daily tasks and for men, 41.8% also feel this way. Only 37% of women and 49.6% of men feel that there is not enough time in the weekend to do everything they would like to do.

All in all, it should be noted that the division of tasks in families is fairly traditional in almost all types of families. Double-income families are the exception to this. The participation of the woman in the employment

market appears to be the first step towards a fairer division of roles in the family. However, this should not conceal the fact that the pressure of time is greatest for working women with a working partner. They not only have the highest total workload, but also say most often that they feel overburdened by the combination of daily tasks and form the largest group who believe that there is not enough time in the weekend to do everything they would like to do. Working men with a working partner also often have a large total workload and are the men who experience the greatest pressure of time even though it is slightly less than for their working partner. Therefore the greater equality in double-income families leads to a family under pressure, although it is striking that working men and women feel in better health than non-working men and women.

5 Conclusion

Between 3 December 1998 and 6 February 2000, 8,382 Belgians between the ages of 12 and 95 kept an detailed diary of their time use for one weekday and one weekend day. The first analysis of these data gives a general picture of the course of daily life in Belgium and the time use of Belgians in 1999.

The collective pattern of daily life is striking, though not surprising. Belgians sleep and get up at more or less the same time, eat together to a great extent, and watch television during the same time slots. There is a clear distinction between weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Many household tasks are performed on Saturdays, but the weekend is mainly devoted to sleeping longer and to many leisure activities. Apart from the things which we largely do together and which determine the social rhythm (the *Zeitgebers*: sleeping, getting up, evening meal and watching television), most Belgians work. The sort of work they do varies: men spend a great deal more time on paid work, women much more time on housework and tasks with and for children.

The distribution of work between men and women is the most striking distinction to emerge from our analysis. Purely on the basis of the time which someone between the ages of 12 and 95 spends during a random weekday on housework, paid work, odd jobs and childcare, we can determine with almost 75% certainty whether this is a man or a woman. Women spend on average almost 9 hours 30 minutes more on housework per week and 1 hour 20 minutes more on childcare and education than men. Men spend more than 8 hours more per week on paid work. The total workload – or the time spent on paid work, housework and childcare and education – is on average 2 hours 33 minutes per week higher for women than for men. The weekly workload for men amounts to 35 hours 2 minutes, while for women, this is 37 hours 35 minutes. Thus the

traditional sex roles clearly continue to dominate the way in which time is used.

Women also sleep slightly longer than men, on average approximately 2 hours more per week. Almost 40% of the available time is spent on sleeping and resting. For women, it is just under 64 hours 30 minutes, for men almost 62 hours 30 minutes. Adding personal care (including eating and drinking) Belgians spend almost 50% of their time on maintaining themselves. All the work activities, taken together, account for “only” just over 20% of the time.

Women pay for their higher workload and extra sleeping time with less leisure. Men have on average 30 free hours per week, women 4 hours 30 minutes less. When social participation is also included (such as social contacts and participation in associations), men have almost 40 hours of leisure time per week (or 24% of the time), while women have 35 hours 30 minutes per week (or 21% of their time).

The differences between men and women particularly concern the division of work rather than the total workload (although this is on average 2 hours and 30 minutes per week higher for women). The workload of men and women certainly varies enormously, depending on the type of family that they live in. In general, not working men have a small workload whether or not they have a partner and whether or not the partner works. Therefore the workload of men mainly depends on the amount of paid work they do. This is different for women. The total workload of women who work part time is hardly any less than that of women working full time. The highest workload is found in double-income families. In comparison with other men, men in a double-income family have the highest workload, and the same applies for women. The joint workload of men and women in a double-income family is more than 106 hours per week. In a family with a male breadwinner it is “only” 93 hours. As double-income families become more common – and they are already the dominant type of family in the working population – the pressure of time will undoubtedly continue to increase.

The Belgian time use survey of the NIS is the first time use study of a representative sample of the Belgian population since 1966. During the period 1999-2001, about 15 European countries initiated time use studies in accordance with EUROSTAT norms. We hope that the data of these surveys will soon become available for comparative analysis. This will help us see the most common patterns of behaviour for the Belgian population in a European perspective. Furthermore, several European countries intend to repeat the time use study on a regular basis. We hope that Belgium will follow suit. Repeated time use studies, e.g., every five years as in the Netherlands, is probably the only way of acquiring an accurate and detailed insight into changing patterns of behaviour.

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