

SUMMARY

Daily routine.

Studying temporal structures and the organization of everyday life

Daily routine: a paradox

A traumatic event might turn someone's life up side down. Their sleep rhythm gets disturbed and meal occasions are skipped. The signifying rhythm of paid work disappears due to (temporal) disablement. The more unstable and unpredictable daily life gets, the greater the chance to find oneself in social isolation. Given these consequences, a part of treatments of patients during this post-traumatic period consists of re-establishing the rhythm of everyday life. By re-creating daily routines, daily life will become stable and predictable again, which facilitates reintegration in society.

Such a therapy is in sharp contrast with the general perception of daily routines. Daily routine is perceived as being stuck in a rut, as doing everyday the same, and as limiting the freedom of action. In the worst case, the working week starts on a 'Blue Monday' and 'thank goodness' always ends on Friday (*TGIF: Thank God It's Friday*). The weekend provides some room to breath, but it's the holidays that really break the routine.

Daily routine: a study

This PhD thesis takes a closer look at the apparent paradox of daily routine. The degree of daily routine during the workweek is calculated using time-use survey data from 1999, 2004 and 2013, in which respondents registered their daily activities in time-diaries for seven consecutive days. On the one hand, this research confirms the association between less daily routine and higher psychological distress and social-emotional dysfunction. A certain threshold of daily routines (read: a certain amount of stability and predictability of everyday life) seems needed to live together and come to social interaction. On the other hand, this research reveals that the busier one's daily life in terms of obligations (e.g. resulting from a working role), responsibilities (e.g. resulting from a parent role), and necessities (e.g. resulting from natural or (techno)logical needs like sleep, eating, and travelling time), the larger share of the working day will exist as a routine. This might feed the perception of daily routine as being stuck in a rut.

Intriguingly, a busy daily life does *not* affect routine sleep. Routine meals, though, are. The busier daily schedules become, the greater the chance to skip an (evening) meal, despite the fact the regular meal patterns decrease the change of overweight.

Daily routine: a love-hate relationship

Daily routine is at once a necessity and a rut. On the one hand, daily routine provides a certain stability and predictability to daily life that not only facilitates social interaction, but is also beneficial for one's (mental) health. Daily routines, then, are mainly a solution to meet the daily obligations, responsibilities, and necessities. On the other hand, daily routine takes the form of a 'necessary evil'. Those with the largest share of daily routine also experience the highest amount of time-pressure. This adds to the complexity of the paradox of daily routine. Sometimes daily routines are strategies to live through the day because one can count on them. Sometimes the unpredictable aspects of daily life (e.g. traffic jams) make daily routines rather a burden because one counts on them.