

ENGLISH ONLY

**STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE**

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN
STATISTICIANS**

UNECE Work Session on Gender Statistics
Organized in cooperation with UNDP-UNFPA-WHO
(Geneva, 18-20 October 2004)

Session 2 – Supporting paper

**Poverty Risk, Time Use and Social Participation from a Gender Perspective.
Research Possibilities and the Results of the German Time Use Survey
2001/02**

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I. Structure and composition of families at risk of poverty in Germany and Europe

1. According to the 1998 results of the Survey of Income and Expenditure, which is taken every five years by the Federal Statistical Office, and using the criteria chosen here (under 60 % of the median disposable income of households in Germany, weighting the household members according to the new OECD scale) roughly 5.2 million households in Germany live in poverty or are subject to a poverty risk. This is 14 % of all households (roughly 36.8 million) in Germany. Of the poor households in Germany in the year 1998, 20 %, or roughly one million, were families.¹ More than every third (35.4 %) family of a single mother or a single father in 1998 is threatened with poverty or lives in poverty. Of the couple families with both parents living in one household, 10 % are assessed as poor using the criteria chosen here.²

2. In a European comparison the findings are similar, for example based on the experiences of 42 national Caritas organizations from their daily work: “There is considerable heterogeneity of the countries under study – ranging from those with a high Human Development Index (HDI) such as Norway (ranked 1st in the world) Iceland (2), and Sweden (3) to those such as Albania (ranked 95), Turkey (96) and Moldova (108). Despite this, there is remarkable convergence concerning those families most in need. Lone Parents, especially single mothers, emerge as one of the greatest concerns”.³ Poverty is encouraged by a large number of children, ill or disabled

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¹ The family and household delimitations upon which the 1998 Income and Expenditure Survey (“Einkommens- und Verbrauchsstichprobe”, EVS) is based differ from those chosen for this article. In the 1998 Income and Expenditure Survey, only those households – of single parents or couples – in which all children are under 18 year of age are counted as families, cf. Statistisches Bundesamt (2001, p. 9).

² See Statistisches Bundesamt (2001, Table 6.5, p. 84 ff.), and author’s calculations based on it.

³ Caritas Europe (2004, p. 9).

family members, migration or refugee status as well as low wages or unemployment.⁴ The results from EUROSTAT also point in this direction in a country comparison.⁵ In the 15 states⁶ of the European Union in the year 2001 according to the person-related calculations of EUROSTAT – based on the Laeken indicators – 15 % of the population are at risk of poverty. 19 % of the children and younger teens up to 15 years of age suffer from this risk.⁷

II. Research objective

3. There is by no means one uniform and final definition of who is poor and who is not.⁸ In most cases, a broad, multidimensional definition of poverty is used,⁹ such as that in the “Joint report by the Commission and the Council on social inclusion” in the European Union:

“**Poverty:** People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantage through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted.”¹⁰

4. A important objective of this article is to show examples of how the data from the Time Use Survey serve to portray the effects of poverty on selected aspects of daily life, in particular with regard to social participation, of the affected families and childless households on the basis of the Laeken indicators (in the form of primary indicators), as they are used in the Federal Government’s “National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005”¹¹ as part of the European-wide action plans.¹² These are embedded in a European Union policy of fighting and reducing poverty, which are intended to make decisive progress by 2010.¹³ “National Action Plans for social inclusion (NAPs/inclusion for short) play a key role in the EU process, to the extent that they translate the common objectives into national policies, while taking into account their individual national circumstances and the particular nature of national social protection

⁴ See Caritas Europe (2004, p. 9), see also Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 5, 101).

⁵ See, for example, Europaeische Kommission und EUROSTAT (2004, p. 64 ff.), Europaeische Kommission (2003, p. 151 ff. and Table 6, p. 188 f.).

⁶ In 2001, the European Union (EU15) includes Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁷ See Commission of the European Communities (2003).

⁸ Cf. in the First Report on Poverty and Wealth of the Federal Government (Erster Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung):

“In spite of the many years of research into issues pertaining to insufficient means and social exclusion, there are still various deficiencies in knowledge, which the first Poverty and Wealth Report of the Federal Government is also unable to process. The term ‘poverty’, due to its complexity, eludes any generally applicable definition. Depending on one’s perspective and research interests, poverty can be described, for example, in conjunction with relatively low income, with social hotspots in big cities, with homelessness or emergency situations due to over indebtedness. The task of measuring poverty or making it measurable appears impossible in a strictly scientific sense. In view of the vagueness of poverty terminology, we waiver a final definition”, Bundesministerium fuer Arbeit und Sozialordnung (2001, p. 6 f.).

See also the spectrum of articles and debates at the First Academic Colloquium in October 2002 held at the Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn on further development of reporting on poverty and wealth, Bundesministerium fuer Gesundheit und soziale Sicherheit (2002) or the viewpoint of “practitioners” in the second Europe wide Poverty Report of Caritas Europe, Caritas Europe (2004, p. 17 ff.).

⁹ Cf. for the First Report on Poverty and Wealth of the Federal Government, Bundesministerium fuer Arbeit und Sozialordnung (2001, p. 7).

¹⁰ Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 10).

¹¹ See Deutscher Bundestag (2003).

¹² An initial round of National Action Plans covered the period 2001 to 2003.

¹³ On the development and course of the policy on fighting poverty in the European Union and in Europe, cf. Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 10 ff.). This also contains a critical assessment (first edition) of the different National Action Plans 2003-2005 with regard to their multidimensionality of the affected areas of life and thus policy and with regard to their priorities, objectives and measures for reducing poverty (p. 43 ff.).

systems and social policies”.¹⁴ The 2003/2005 Action Plans should place more stress than before on a gender-specific perspective of poverty and social exclusion.¹⁵ Therefore, in this article, as in the German National Action Plan, households and people are considered poor according to the Laeken indicators, if they have less than 60% of the median disposable income of the households in Germany at their disposal. This includes all types of social transfers.¹⁶ The equivalence weight used here is the “New OECD scale”.¹⁷ The Joint report by the Commission and the Council on social inclusion states on this definition:

“There is a primary focus on indicators of relative (income) poverty, defined in relation to the average level of prosperity in a given country and point in time. An absolute notion is less relevant for the EU for two basic reasons. First, the key challenge for Europe is to make the whole population share the benefits of high average prosperity, and not to reach basic standards of living, as in less developed parts of the world. Secondly, what is regarded as minimal acceptable living standards depends largely on the general level of social and economic development, which tends to vary considerably across Member States.

The proportion of individuals living in households where equivalised income is below the threshold of 60% of the national equivalised median income is taken as an indicator of relative poverty. Given the conventional nature of the retained threshold, and the fact that having an income below this threshold is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of being in a state of poverty, this indicator is referred to as a measure of poverty risk.”¹⁸

5. According to the National Action Plan for 2001 the equivalised poverty risk threshold, calculated from data of the SOEP (Socio-Economic Panel), is determined at 716 Euro per month as 60% of the median net equivalised household income.¹⁹ The poverty risk threshold was calculated for all household constellations in the most recent German Time Use Survey, carried out by the Federal Statistical Office in 2001 and 2002 by order of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium fuer Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ), with the assistance of the statistical offices of the Laender in a representative sample all over Germany. In this article, the terms “poverty risk”, “poverty” and “poor” are used synonymously.

6. This article looks at single mothers²⁰ as well as married and unmarried parent couples collectively. At least one of their children is under the age of 18, and if several daughters and sons are living in the household the oldest child is under the age of 25. All children are unmarried. There are no other relatives or persons living in the household. Households without children – persons living alone and couples – are also taken into consideration to achieve an overall picture. One research question is given major emphasis: Are inequalities between men and women in daily life and with regard to their social participation greater in poor households than in non-poor households?²¹ Four study fields are treated here: 1) daily time used for relaxation and recreation, housekeeping, childcare as well as social participation in an overview as a time frame, 2) more detailed analyses on voluntary, civic involvement and private assistance as forms/informal help of social participation and social capital, 3) social life within and outside

¹⁴ Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 11).

¹⁵ See Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 12).

¹⁶ On calculating the Laeken indicators see EUROSTAT (2003).

¹⁷ According to the New OECD scale the required household income is determined by assigning a weight of 1.0 to the head of the household, 0.5 to household members aged 15 or more and 0.3 to household members aged under 15.

¹⁸ Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 16 f.).

¹⁹ See Deutscher Bundestag (2003, table 1, p. 28).

²⁰ In all evaluations single fathers at risk of poverty are not taken into account due to a too small number of cases.

²¹ Like the exposé to the Poverty and Wealth Reporting and the Second Report on Poverty and Wealth by Ketschou / Hufnagel / Holz (2004, forthcoming) this article is also intended to contribute to the research situation with regard to poverty and resource access of women and men. As early as its conceptual phase, the Time Use Survey was aligned by the Federal Ministry for Families and the Federal Statistical Office to the aims of gender mainstreaming.

the family and 4) (dis-)satisfaction with daily time use as well as the time desired and time requirement.

III. The time frame : Daily time use of families at risk of poverty and without risk of poverty

7. A risk of poverty increases the differences between fathers and mothers in couple households in Germany with regard to the daily basic figures. Less or none working hours of men as a result of the abolition or reduction of the traditional division of gender roles, i.e. no longer only men are mainly engaged in gainful employment, are not counterbalanced by spending more time on activities related to housekeeping, except for a slight increase in the time devoted to child care, but mean more time for men for rest and leisure (approx. 17 hours per day compared with approx. 15 ½ hours on average). The latter is true not only when compared with their wives/female partners but also when compared with the other fathers. On a rough estimate, men on average do about 2 hours per day, 14 hours per week, 56 hours per month and 730 hours per year – this is roughly 30 ½ days – less housework than their female partners. Surprisingly, the travel times connected with shopping²² do not differ between poor and non-poor families. We would have expected instead that poor parents need to invest more time and take longer routes, for instance to reach less expensive shops. Here, as well, only gender-specific differences occur in the parent couples. The fathers in poor families spend notably more daily time at sport or outdoors. They do sport three quarters of an hour per day, compared to non-poor fathers who do sport for about one half hour. Furthermore, poor fathers spend more of their leisure time at the computer; not including computer games, they spend almost one half hour at the computer while non-poor fathers only spend a quarter hour doing so. With regard to times spent reading, by contrast, poor and non-poor fathers do not deviate from one another (both 25 minutes per day). The same applies to watching television and videos (approx. 2 hours per day). Mothers in families at poverty risk however devote significantly more time per day to the care of children living in the household (more than 2 hours) than mothers in families not at risk of poverty do (approx. 1 hour and 20 minutes per day); almost irrespective of whether they are single mothers or living together with a partner in a common household. Single mothers in families not at risk of poverty on the other hand devote significantly less time to housekeeping activities than other mothers (approx. 3 ½ hours compared with approx. 4 ½ hours).

8. Time spent on social participation (activities related to training and continuing education, giving informal help to other households and voluntary work, participation in social, religious and political events and meetings)²³ is relatively evenly divided between parents at risk of poverty and parents not at risk of poverty as well as between men and women. However with the exception, that mothers in poor couple households devote less time to these activities (15 minutes per day compared with approx. 30 minutes), both from a gender specific point of view, as

²² However, the travel time here is not only connected with shopping, but also with the use of external services. Hence, more in-depth analyses of daily routines that are limited solely to shopping would be prudent.

²³ Access to and use of new information technologies – the computer and Internet – can also be counted as social participation. See relevant analyses of poor and non-poor families in Holz (2004 b). The first Report on Poverty and Wealth by the Federal Government states: “In times of rapid technological change and the electronic networking of many areas of social life, the Federal Government is concerned with preventing a ‘digital division’ of society into ‘included’ and ‘excluded’”, Bundesministerium fuer Arbeit und Sozialordnung (2001, Summary p. XXVII). The Commission of Enquiry on “Culture in Germany” of the German Bundestag (Enquete-Kommission “Kultur in Deutschland” des Deutschen Bundestages) stresses: “The rapid development of information and communication technologies changes familiar practices of life and manners of perception and communication and therefore has a considerable influence on social and cultural co-existence. Mastered and skilled use of the (new) media, i.e. the ability to use media critically, to employ them creatively and independently and to productively deal with the large amount of information involved, has become an essential key competence, a new cultural technique, which does not replace what already exists, but must be seen as an expansion on the demands on those growing up”, Fuchs (2004, p. 10). Corresponding media education programmes are needed, cf. Fuchs (2004, p. 11). “Growing up” begins in the family, hence the parents’ example has outstanding significance.

compared to their partners as well as compared to mothers living in couple households that are not poor. Possibly it is above all the mothers in poor couple households that in a sense suffer from “double poverty“, i.e. both from income- and from time poverty. It is true that they have the same amount of time for rest and leisure as the other mothers but not as their husbands/partners.²⁴

IV. Voluntary/civic involvement and informal assistance/help as forms of social capital

9. In addition to the diary entries, the German Time Use Survey 2001/02 also contains information on time use from the household questionnaire and from the personal questionnaires for people surveyed over 10 years, which also cover the activity field of social participation. This provides further information on voluntary and civic involvement as well as on informal assistance provided as well as – other than in the diaries – informal assistance received. The persons taking the survey were asked to take corresponding activities into account for the period of the past four weeks and cite the weekly average on this basis.²⁵ The 4-week period, as a supplement to the diaries, improves the portrayal of rather rare activities that are not done every day.

10. Voluntary activities, informal assistance and social life within and outside of the family and the corresponding contacts can (in addition to their actual functions) be defined as forms of “social capital”²⁶ – as characteristics of functional cooperation (with mutual values and existing trust), which can also have a favourable influence in other areas (such as in the job or the search for employment, on health).²⁷ In the case of voluntary tasks in particular, this involves not only opportunities to expand social capital for oneself, but also the willingness to employ one’s own social capital for other people and for society: “Others are measuring outcomes of social capital. For instance, voluntary work is an important indicator of people’s willingness to undertake activity that benefits others and the wider community”²⁸. Such networks can be described as “savings banks for social capital” (Caritas Association for the city of Duesseldorf / Caritasverband fuer die Stadt Duesseldorf): “Through this involvement, social skills, life and job experience can be invested ‘profitably’ for oneself and for the community. Social skills do not lie fallow, but are (re-)entered into the community”²⁹.

4.1 Voluntary and civic involvement

11. In the personal questionnaire of the 2001/02 German Time Use Survey, 18 fields of activity were surveyed for voluntary and civic involvement, which as understood here encompass both shouldering tasks and carrying out functions and posts. These include, for example, working in women’s groups and initiatives, in schools and kindergartens (e.g. on the parent board or student representation), in social and charity areas, in extracurricular youth work, in politics,

²⁴ For more details and analyses see Holz (2004 a, forthcoming, 2004 b).

²⁵ The following results on volunteer work and assistance refer only to persons for whom the daily time use also exists in the diaries. Fundamentally – to adequately reconstruct the overall picture of a household – there are also personal questionnaires of people who could not or would not write diaries.

²⁶ See Harper/Kelly (2003, Table 1 “UK Social Capital Measurement Framework”, p. 7), who illustrate the importance of these indicators for measuring social capital.

²⁷ See OECD (2001, p. 52 ff.). Urwin, Strugis and Di Pietro, who work with the 2000 time use data of the United Kingdom and point out: “Accepting that individuals do attempt to foster various social ties in an attempt to raise their level of social capital, one can consider the fostering of social networks as a mechanism for overcoming information asymmetries. In this instance, an individual attempts to gain a greater range of information and advice on job opportunities through channels other than the official ones”, Urwin/Sturgis/Di Pietro (2002, p. 4 f.).

²⁸ Harper/Kelly (2003, p. 8), see also Commission of Enquiry of the German Bundestag on the “Future of Civic Commitment”, Deutscher Bundestag (2002, p. 2, p. 40).

²⁹ Caritas Verband fuer die Stadt Duesseldorf (2004, p. 18).

environmental protection, vocational interest representation (including unemployment initiatives), in the church or religious areas, in ambulance services or fire brigades as well as in leisure time (e.g. in a bowling club).³⁰ Asking about a 4-week period allows better statements than the diary entries about whether there is participation in activities on principle – or not. There are distinct differences in the voluntary involvement of families in poverty and non-poor families. Less than one third of poor single mothers are active as volunteers, opposed to half of single mothers who are not poor. This ratio applies as well in a lesser way for parent couples and for fathers and mothers. The existence of a poverty risk, therefore, has a greater influence on whether a person takes up voluntary work or positions than the family forms of single-parent or couple-parent families (see Table 1). It is interesting that mothers in poor couple families nevertheless show a higher (by approx. 5 percentage points) degree of involvement than fathers. In view of the lower daily total times of mothers living together with partners in the scope of general time for social participation and their lesser daily participation, this was not anticipated (see above). On principle, with regard to all citizens over age 10 in Germany, 43% of all persons are active as volunteers; 45 % of the men and 41 % of the women

Table 1: Degree of participation in percent – practicing voluntary work/exercising a volunteer post, German Time Use Survey 2001/02

	At poverty risk	Not at poverty risk
Single mothers	30.4 %	49.7 %
Parent couples:		
Mothers	36.1 %	48.0 %
Fathers	31.3 %	47.4 %

12. The picture is entirely different if we look only at those parents who actually do volunteer work, meaning they actually take up tasks or exercise an office (the previous data was generally related to all mothers and fathers). Single mothers in households both at risk and not at risk of poverty are active roughly 3 ½ hours a week; just as long as the mothers in couple households not at risk of poverty. However, their male partners' weekly times are roughly 4 ½ hours. Active volunteer fathers and mothers in poor couple families probably³¹ reach even higher figures of 5 hours and more per week, whereby here, as well, the "more" is especially notable among the fathers.

13. Conclusion: The chief impediment to voluntary activities and civic involvement as forms of social participation may be entry and access for families at risk of poverty (or continuation in case of poverty). By contrast, poor parents that are active (or remain active), have comparable or even longer times than non-poor parents. Gender-specific differences in favour of fathers in couple households remain noticeable.³²

4.2 Informal assistance/Informal help

14. Social participation in the sense understood here also includes private, informal assistance/help provided for persons outside of the own household (e.g. relatives not living in the

³⁰ On the breadth of civic and voluntary involvement, see also the Commission of Enquiry on the "Future of Civic Commitment" (Enquete -Kommission zur "Zukunft des Buergerschaftlichen Engagements"), Deutscher Bundestag (2002, p. 1, 6, 32).

³¹ A more precise statement is problematic due to the case figures.

³² Nevertheless, the Commission of Enquiry on the Future of Civic Commitment emphasizes that civic involvement cannot replace the loss of a job, a situation that occurs in poor families often, but not solely: "Integration in paid work continues to be of central importance for personal identity, for participation in social prosperity and for access to civic involvement. However, experiences in the east and west reveal as well that civic involvement can very well build bridges to the working world and contribute to the social integration of unemployed persons", Deutscher Bundestag (2002, p. 6 f.). The Commission also reports, however, that unemployed people in particular tend to give up their involvement, see Deutscher Bundestag (2002, p. 205).

household, neighbours, friends). A number of possible types of assistance are listed in the personal questionnaire. These include childcare and care of the elderly, shopping and errands, household and technical support, but also taking care of official business or meetings as well as financial help. By contrast to the diary, the household questionnaire also records the paid and unpaid private assistance that the household receives. With regard to their type, they reflect the support activities asked about in the personal questionnaire and also related to a period of the last four weeks prior to the survey.

4.2.1 Exchanging assistance /help

15. The exchange of private assistance/help – receiving and performing acts of assistance reciprocally – is particularly interesting for social participation and for measuring social capital as a form of social inclusion in the close area of family, neighbourhood, friends and co-workers. This takes only the unpaid support received by the household into consideration, since they better suit the character of mutual “give and take”, mutual obligations and burdens, but also mutual creation of “breathing space” and relief, than assistance received by the household for pay and therefore occurring on a more “business-like” basis.³³ Financial support received and given is also not included as forms of exchange since we cannot rule out the possibility that it may involve account and money transfers of maintenance character.

16. More than half (55 %) of the single mothers at risk of poverty, but only 43 % of the mothers not at risk of poverty support other households and also receive (non-material) support in return in Germany. The percentage of those who neither provide nor receive assistance is almost the same in the two groups of single mothers (about 21 %). It is very common among non-poor single mothers that a one-sided, nonreciprocal situation occurs; 30 % help relatives or other persons outside of the household without receiving help themselves. This applies to only 20 % of the poor mothers. The opposite is the case for mothers raising their children without a partner in a household not at risk of poverty: only 8 % of them receive private support without helping others themselves.³⁴ Among the parent couples the differences between families at risk and not at risk of poverty are lesser. The percentage of those fathers and mothers who reciprocally receive and give private support is about 31 %, hence below the percentage of single mothers (especially in comparison to those at risk of poverty). By contrast to the latter, there are more fathers and mothers who neither provide nor receive assistance among the non-poor (26 %) and even more so among the poor parent couples (31 %). Unlike single parents, for couples, the risk of poverty is also insignificant in cases that their family does not receive unpaid private assistance, but they support persons outside of their own household. This constellation applies to 29 % of both the poor and non-poor fathers and mothers in couple families. Conversely, 14 % of the non-poor parent couples receive support, yet do not give assistance themselves. Here, gender-specific inequalities in the exchange relationships are quite distinct, for 18 % of the non-poor fathers live within a family that receives unpaid, external, private assistance, yet they do not provide assistance to others. Among the non-poor mothers this is only the case for 10 % (see Table 2).³⁵

**Table 2: Exchange of assistance /help in percent (Person provides assistance /household receives assistance ,only unpaid assistance and not including financial assistance)
German Time Use Survey2001/02**

	At poverty risk		Not at poverty risk	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
Single parents:				
Assistance performed and assistance received	55.4 %	-*	42.7 %	-
Only assistance performed, no assistance received	19.6 %	-*	30.1 %	-

³³ But “paid” does not mean institutional services such as kindergartens or day care. These are still private forms of support, such as babysitting.

³⁴ The case figures for single, poor mothers are too few.

³⁵ The case figures on this for parent couples at risk of poverty are too few.

No assistance performed, only assistance received	-*	-*	7.7 %	-
No assistance performed and no assistance received	23.2 %	-*	19.6 %	-
Parent couples:				
Assistance performed and assistance received	33.9 %	(27.0 %) **	35.0 %	28.5 %
Only assistance performed, no assistance received	29.0 %	28.6 %	30.6 %	26.4 %
No assistance performed, only assistance received	-*	(14.3 %) **	10.3 %	17.6 %
No assistance performed and no assistance received	30.2 %	32.3 %	24.0 %	27.5 %

* Statement is too ambiguous since case figures are too few. ** Value of statement limited since case figures are relatively few.

4.2.2 Amount of assistance/help received and provided

17. If we add up all types of informal assistance that a household receives from private individuals (i.e. unpaid or paid work support and financial assistance), two-thirds of the single mothers at risk of poverty receive support by relatives, friends, acquaintances, neighbours and other persons not living in the household. The figures for single mothers not at risk of poverty are only slightly lower (61 %). Among parent couples, only 54 % of fathers and mothers not at risk of poverty receive support. Yet, private support is the least among poor parent couples. Not even half of them receive these types of assistance (48 %).

18. A look from the opposite perspective shows that – as for assistance received by the household – the single women, regardless whether at risk of poverty or not, have the highest figures with regard to assistance provided to external persons including financial support. 74 % of them are active in this way, help their friends with childcare, help their parents with shopping, help neighbours with official business or help out a cousin now and again with money – to name only a few possibilities. The same applies to parent couples (almost) without the influence of the poverty risk, yet at distinctly lower percentages. Roughly 60 % of parents living with a partner support other households. There are distinct differences between the sexes, in particular in partnerships not at risk of poverty: 66 % of the mothers, but only 55 % of the fathers help relatives, acquaintances and other individuals outside of their households – in whatever way. In the poor couple households, by contrast, the difference is miniscule. Basically: couple- and single-parent families provide private assistance more often – primarily on the part of the mothers – than they receive it.

4.2.3 Assistance/help provided and its target groups

19. Who receives the most support from the families, relatives or non-relatives outside of the household? What role does a poverty risk play? If we look only at the “working level”, i.e. active support in work, and ignore financial assistance – which is also advantageous to social capital with regard to the analysis – there are distinct differences between the single mothers, depending on whether they are at risk of poverty or not. 61 % of single women at risk of poverty help out relatives that do not live in their households with work. No other group has a comparably high percentage of helpers who take care of relatives. Only 46 % of non-poor single mothers do the same. But, not only the single mothers not at risk of poverty, but the parent couples as well provide family-oriented assistance less frequently. In the latter, the poverty risk is noticeable through gender-specific differences. Both 40 % of poor fathers and mothers in couple families support relatives outside of the household. This percentage also applies for fathers in non-poor

families, while their female partners provide somewhat more assistance to relatives (47 % of them). We may assume that this family assistance has a more obligatory character than assistance for non-related individuals. Assistance provided by non-poor single women, compared with that provided by poor single women, is aimed more at friends, acquaintances or co-workers, neighbours and other non-related individuals; 56 % of them supported non-related persons in work (compared to 51 % of poor single mothers). As we already saw with family-oriented assistance, there are differences between the men and women in couple families as well with regard to private assistance for non-related persons. Compared with assistance for relatives, these differences are more striking. About 37 % of the fathers in poor and 33 % in non-poor couple families supported and did work for non-related individuals compared to about 45 % of the mothers, whether poor or not.

20. Conclusion: Primarily single mothers and among these primarily those at risk of poverty have ties in their close social lives with related and non-related individuals. This applies both with regard to reciprocal (unpaid) assistance, and with regard to the percentages of helpers among them who provide private support in the form of work for other households. Single mothers at risk of poverty in particular assist relatives outside of the household far more frequently than other parents. These results are also interesting with regard to the current debate on “Social Capital”, for which these activities are important indicators.³⁶ Time Use Surveys are an important source of data for measuring social capital in many nations.³⁶

V. Social life within and outside of the family

21. Times spent with other people as well as locations are also seen here under the heading of social participation and social capital, since they are forms of social life within and outside of the family. Two fundamental tendencies are recognizable: firstly, poverty risk has only little influence on how much time of a day is spent alone or with other people.³⁷ The family form plays a more important role here. Secondly, whether families (are forced to) live in poverty or not is, nevertheless, important with regard to what persons one spends time with and with regard to how much time is spent at home. Yet here as well, the form of household is significant; whether the parents are single or live together as a couple.

22. The fathers in couple families are home less often than the mothers, which is also due to the fact that they more frequently have fulltime jobs than their partners. For this reason, non-poor fathers differ as well from poor fathers. The former spend roughly 15 hours of the day (incl. sleeping times) at home, the latter by contrast 17 hours. But poor and non-poor mothers from couple households differ from one another as well: mothers in couple families not at risk of poverty are at home 17 ¾ hours, but the poor mothers about 19 hours – the longest time at home of all groups. Single mothers, by contrast, spend less time at home than women living with a partner. Nevertheless, they also show poverty-specific characteristics. Single women not at risk of poverty are at home about 16 ¼ hours per day, single women at risk of poverty 18 ½ hours (see Table 10 and Illustration 5). Single mothers not at risk of poverty have the longest contact, about 4 hours daily, with individuals outside of their households; times spent with their children are shorter and they are at the same time those who spend the least time at home. The group that spends the least time and has the least contacts with persons outside of their own household are mothers in poor couple households: only 2 ½ hours per day. Hence, this is the group that spends the most time of the day at home and together with their children and spends the least time alone or has the least time to themselves.³⁸

VI. Time satisfaction and time demand in families at risk and not at risk of poverty: wishes vs. reality

23. In the 2001/02 German Time Use Survey, subjects were asked in the personal questionnaire about their personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way they use their time

³⁶ See OECD (no year, p. 3).

³⁷ The activity of “sleeping” is always assessed as being done alone.

³⁸ For more analyses of social life within and outside the family, see Holz (2004 a, forthcoming).

with regard to “work/education”, “housework”, “personal leisure time”, “volunteer work”, “spouse/partner”, “children” and “friends”, each using a seven-figure scale ranging from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied”.³⁹ The time desired in these areas could be answered using three categories (do not have enough time, takes up too much time, time use is just right).⁴⁰

24. With regard to their time satisfaction, poor and non-poor single mothers and parent couples differ surprisingly little – in spite of all the differences in their daily time use.⁴¹ Fathers in poor couple households tend to be somewhat more satisfied than other parents with regard to the time they have for personal leisure activities. This assessment matches both the actual time use, as analyzed above, and, at least partly, the subjective estimation of time demand.⁴² Single mothers, both those at risk and not at risk of poverty, express the most fervent demand for more personal leisure time (hence also for more time at their personal disposal). In each category, 72 % cite that they have too little free time, only 28 % consider the amount just right. The influence poverty risk has in connection with actual use of time is far more distinct with regard to time with the children. Single women living under the Damocles sword of poverty risk are nevertheless (or just for this reason) more satisfied with the time they have for their children; the single women not at risk by contrast more dissatisfied. If they are at risk of poverty, they reach a scale rate of 3.3, but 4.0 if not at risk. This also is reflected in the average times at disposal for caring for their children. Only 38 % of poor single mothers would like to have more time for their children, but more than every two non-poor mothers (58 %). In particular, fathers not at risk of poverty wish they had more time for their children. Only about every third (36 %) thinks the time he has at his disposal for his children is sufficient, but almost two-thirds (64 %) would like to have more time for their children. The exact opposite is the case for fathers at risk of poverty.

25. With regard to having more time for friends, solely the gender-specific difference between mothers (67 % want more time) and fathers (59 % want more time) in poor couple households is striking, not the case for the couples not at risk of poverty. The fact that mothers in poor couple households would like to have more time with their friends corresponds well with the results on daily social life within and outside of the family. Poor women living with a partner spend the least time of all with individuals living outside of the household, and are the longest time at home of all. Nevertheless, they do not complain more than mothers in couple households not at risk of poverty about having to spend too much time on household tasks. We anticipated that due to the favourable leisure time situation of their partners they would have stated more often that they need to do too much housework themselves. Perhaps this is a sign of the continued traditional gender role ideals of “housework is women’s work” (also as a manifestation of “double poverty”, i.e. lack of income as well as time). The relatively frequent dissatisfaction among gainfully employed working mothers in poor couple households with the time available for the job or education is also remarkable. On the scale of seven, they reach 4.8. Compared to them, employed mothers in non-poor couple households have a more median value of an average 3.5, i.e. tend to be more satisfied or “so-so”; are not really dissatisfied with the situation, but also not really satisfied.⁴³

VII. Time situation in households without children: Those living alone and couples

26. As a follow-up to the comparison of the time situation of poor and not poor families, persons living alone and couples without children are also viewed in general terms in order to

³⁹ Another category not considered here is “never”.

⁴⁰ Here, as well, there is a response category “never”.

⁴¹ Questions on time satisfaction and demand are also contained on principle for all persons from 10 years. However, as for volunteer work and informal assistance above, we only take the responses of those participating persons into consideration who also wrote a diary.

⁴² Due to the case figures, usually not all three categories for time demand can be analyzed. Therefore, in the following evaluations only the responses “just right” and “too little” are counted.

⁴³ For more details and analysis of time satisfaction and time demand of poor and non-poor families, see Holz (2004 a, forthcoming).

obtain an overall picture, and in a variety of age groups as to their base time.⁴⁴ These are above all the age groups of 18- to 64-year-olds and 65-year-olds and older. Whilst in the first age group (potential) work or participation in training is the focus, the second age group is more often linked with "retirement". Any profound age differentiation is also taken into account.⁴⁵

7.1 Daily recreation and leisure time in households without children

27. On principle, both men and women who live alone in their household or in a partnership without children have more time for recreation or for leisure activities in comparison to parents – apart from fathers in poor couple households, who as it is known also have considerable time. Gender-specific differences favouring men occur above all in households at risk from poverty, both in families, and among those living alone and in couples without children. Whilst in couple households not at risk from poverty the men have almost one and a half hours more for recreation and for leisure, among couples at risk from poverty this is almost one hour per day. What is even more noticeable is the situation among those living alone. With these, the difference between poor men and women is more than an hour, among those living alone without poverty risk, by contrast, it is women who have somewhat more recreation and leisure time than men – a rare observation. Less recreation and leisure time among the women and more time for men: This by contrast usual constellation is observed in poor households both among those living alone and with couples without children over both age groups. In households not at risk from poverty, these differences by contrast do not occur until the oldest age group – among those 65 and older, in other words with persons most of whom are no longer in working life. Between 18 to 64-year-old men and women not at risk from poverty there are by contrast no differences as to the time available for leisure activities or for recreation (cf. Table 3).

28. In a similar way to fathers in two-parent households, men living alone and with their partner without children in households at risk from poverty have more time for recreation and for leisure than men in households not at risk from poverty. This is particularly obvious among men living alone, among whom the difference is more than two hours per day. Among men in couple households, by contrast, it is an hour. When comparing the women with one another, the differences are not so large (roughly half an hour). In particular those living alone aged between 18 and 64 differ above all if one does not consider the middle age group of 25- to 44-year-olds. The time that poor men living alone have for regeneration and leisure reaches 19 hours at this age. This accounts for 79% of the time allocation of an average day. Without poverty risk, it is by contrast roughly 3¼ hours less (at roughly 15¾ hours), in other words only 67% of a day. Also women living alone differ most in this age group, even if not to the same degree as men. 25- to 44-year-old women not at risk from poverty have approx. 15¼ hours per day for recreation and for leisure activities (63% of the day), and those at risk from poverty roughly 17 hours (70% of the day).

⁴⁴ "Living alone" means here that no other person lives in the household (one-person household). Couples without children include couples who have never had children, in addition to parents whose children no longer live in the joint household.

⁴⁵ An across-the-board more profound differentiation by age groups would naturally be desirable. On the basis of the case numbers, however, restrictions are needed. For this reason, no statement could be made concerning men living alone of the oldest age group from 65 years at risk from poverty.

Table 3: Average time for personal activities and leisure time, information in hours : minutes per day, German Time Use Survey 2001/02

	At poverty risk		Not at poverty risk	
	women	men	women	men
Living alone:	17:55	19:05	17:22	16:48
including aged from				
18 to 64	17:21	18:58	16:20	16:13
65 years and older	18:49	-*	18:21	19:08
Persons in couple households without children:	17:53	18:48	17:20	17:47
including aged from				
18 to 64	18:08	18:41	16:49	16:55
65 years and older	17:34	19:00	18:16	19:21

* Statement is too ambiguous since case figures are too few.

7.2 Household-related activities in households without children

29. As mothers, women living alone and women in partnerships without children spend more time daily on household-related activities than men. However, the gap between the genders is not as wide as in families. Men living with their partner without children spend much more time on household activities than fathers in couple households. This difference also persists tendentially if one adds fathers' childcare time.⁴⁶ In contradistinction to fathers, men living alone, and above all men in partnerships without children in households at risk from poverty, are more active than those not at risk. On principle, the time to do housework among couples without children in the household is higher than with those living alone. This particularly applies to households with a poverty risk. Among women living alone, it is even irrelevant – in contrast to men – whether or not a poverty risk exists when determining the time they spend in the household. Among couples without children, by contrast, both male and female partners spend more time if poverty is threatened or present (cf. Table 4).

30. The time in which household-related jobs are carried out increases from the age of 65 for both men and for women, irrespective of whether alone or living together with a partner, whether poor or not poor. Women from 65 in couple households at risk from poverty spend more than 5½ hours per day on the household and its organisation – longer than all others among those living alone or couples without children. Conversely, however, only in the age group of 65-year-olds and elderly women living alone does the situation occur of poor women spending less time on the household than not poor.

⁴⁶ The time for care and looking after adult members of the household is on principle not noticeable. Because of the case numbers, they cannot be studied in greater detail.

Table 4: Average time for housework (not incl. childcare), information in hours : minutes per day, German Time Use Survey 2001/02

	At poverty risk		Not at poverty risk	
	women	men	women	men
Living alone:	3:47	2:43	3:52	2:29
including aged from				
18 to 64	3:32	2:43	3:07	2:14
65 years and older	4:12	-*	4:36	3:30
Persons in couple households without children:	4:58	3:41	4:24	3:07
including aged from				
18 to 64	4:25	3:21	4:03	2:51
65 years and older	5:38	4:13	5:03	3:38

* Statement is too ambiguous since case figures are too few.

7.3 Social participation in households without children

31. At first sight, the time per day that is/can be used for social participation is noticeable – in other words as known for activities such as basic and further training, assistance given, voluntary work and attendance at certain events. This is much longer among couples without children, but in particular among those living alone who are exposed to a poverty risk, than in the corresponding households which are not at risk. Both poor men living alone (1 hour per day) and women (roughly 1 ½ hours) do corresponding activities (almost) twice as long as those who are not poor (cf. Table 5). The time spent by men living in poor couple households without children (on average almost one hour per day) and women (at three-quarters of an hour) is also much longer than among not poor marriages and non-marriage partnerships (with 37 minutes among men and 26 minutes among women). In particular also in comparison with families exposed to a poverty risk, major differences are shown here favouring those living alone and couples living together without children. Even when trainees, school pupils and students – in other words population groups with as a rule more training time which may have a corresponding impact on social participation – are not accounted for with those living alone and couples without children, these differences are weakened, but nevertheless remain. The remaining women living alone who are at risk from poverty spend an average of roughly one hour per day, whilst with men it is 49 minutes.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The removal of those in training, as well as school pupils and students, effects among poor couples without children a lesser fall in their time (women: to 39 minutes per day, with men unchanged at 57 minutes per day). The same happens to households not at risk from.

Table 5: Average time for social participation, information in hours : minutes per day, German Time Use Survey 2001/02

	At poverty risk		Not at poverty risk	
	women	men	women	men
Living alone:	1:32	1:00	0:42	0:35
including aged from				
18 to 64	2:05	1:01	0:44	0:32
65 years and older	0:37	-*	0:41	0:45
Persons in couple households without children:	0:44	0:57	0:26	0:37
including aged from				
18 to 64	0:55	1:11	0:29	0:37
65 years and older	-*	-*	0:22	0:36

* Statement is too ambiguous since case figures are too few.

32. Above all with women aged between 18 and 64 living alone who are at risk from poverty, the time counted towards social participation is considerable. It runs up to roughly two hours per day. Not including those in training, school pupils and students, the participation time of poor women living alone in this age group is 1 ¼ hours per day in Germany; it is hence still more than the time spent by the other women and (most) men. Poor men of the same age who live in partnerships without children and have just as much time are not counted here.

VIII. Resume and conclusions

33. A important objective of this article is to show examples of how the data from the German Time Use Survey 2001/02 serve to portray the effects of poverty on selected aspects of daily life, in particular with regard to social participation from a gender perspective, of the affected families and childless households on the basis of the Laeken indicators, as they are used in the Federal Government's "National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005" as part of the European-wide action plans. Households and people are considered poor according to the Laeken indicators, if they have less than 60% of the median disposable income of the households at their disposal. The equivalence weight used here is the "New OECD scale".

34. A risk of poverty increases the differences between fathers and mothers in couple households in Germany with regard to the daily time use as a time frame. Less or none working hours of men as a result of the abolition or reduction of the traditional division of gender roles, i.e. no longer only men are mainly engaged in gainful employment, are not counterbalanced by spending more time on activities related to housekeeping, except for a slight increase in the time devoted to child care, but mean more time for men for rest and leisure. Single mothers in families not at risk of poverty on the other hand devote significantly less time to housekeeping activities than other mothers. Mothers in families at poverty risk devote significantly more time per day to the care of their children. Time spent on social participation (activities related to training and continuing education, giving informal help to other households and voluntary work, participation in social, religious and political events and meetings) is relatively evenly divided between parents at risk of poverty and parents not at risk of poverty. However mothers in poor couple households devote less time to these activities. Unlike fathers, childless single men and in particular childless men in partnerships and at risk of poverty are more active in the household than those not at risk. The time used for social participation in the households of poor childless singles and couples is considerably higher than those in the corresponding non-poor households, in particular compared

with families. Above all with women aged between 18 and 64 living alone who are at risk from poverty, the time counted towards social participation is considerable in Germany.

35. Voluntary activities, informal assistance/help and social life within and outside of the family and the corresponding contacts can (in addition to their actual functions) be defined as forms of “social capital” – as characteristics of functional cooperation (with mutual values and existing trust). There are distinct differences in the voluntary involvement of families in poverty and non-poor families in Germany. Less than one third of poor single mothers are active as volunteers, opposed to half of single mothers who are not poor. This ratio applies as well in a lesser way for parent couples and for fathers and mothers. It is interesting that mothers in poor couple families nevertheless show a higher degree of involvement than fathers. The chief impediment to voluntary activities and civic involvement as forms of social participation may be entry and access for families at risk of poverty (or continuation in case of poverty). By contrast, poor parents that are active (or remain active), have comparable or even longer times than non-poor parents.

36. Primarily single mothers and among these primarily those at risk of poverty have ties in their close social lives with related and non-related individuals. This applies both with regard to reciprocal informal (unpaid) assistance/help, and with regard to the percentages of helpers among them who provide private support in the form of work for other households. Single mothers at risk of poverty in particular assist relatives outside of the household far more frequently than other parents. These results are also interesting with regard to the current debate on “Social Capital”, for which these activities are important indicators. Time Use Surveys are an important source of data for measuring social capital in many nations.

37. Times spent with other people as well as locations are also seen here under the heading of social participation and social capital, since they are forms of social life within and outside of the family. Two fundamental tendencies are recognizable: firstly, poverty risk has only little influence on how much time of a day is spent alone or with other people. The family form plays a more important role here. Secondly, whether families (are forced to) live in poverty or not is, nevertheless, important with regard to what persons one spends time with and with regard to how much time is spent at home. Yet here as well, the form of household is significant; whether the parents are single or live together as a couple. Single mothers not at risk of poverty have the longest contact with individuals outside of their households; times spent with their children are shorter and they are at the same time those who spend the least time at home. The group that spends the least time and has the least contacts with persons outside of their own household are mothers in poor couple households. Hence, this is the group that spends the most time of the day at home and together with their children and spends the least time alone or has the least time to themselves.

38. Single mothers, both those at risk and not at risk of poverty, express the most fervent demand for more personal leisure time (hence also for more time at their personal disposal). The influence poverty risk has in connection with actual use of time is far more distinct with regard to time with the children. Single women living under the Damocles sword of poverty risk are nevertheless (or just for this reason) more satisfied with the time they have for their children; the single women not at risk by contrast more dissatisfied. In particular, fathers not at risk of poverty wish they had more time for their children. The exact opposite is the case for fathers at risk of poverty. The fact that mothers in poor couple households would like to have more time with their friends corresponds well with the results on daily social life within and outside of the family. Poor women living with a partner spend the least time of all with individuals living outside of the household, and are the longest time at home of all. Nevertheless, they do not complain more than mothers in couple households not at risk of poverty about having to spend too much time on household tasks. We anticipated that due to the favourable leisure time situation of their partners they would have stated more often that they need to do too much housework themselves. Perhaps this is a sign of the continued traditional gender role ideals of “housework is women’s work” (also as a manifestation of “double poverty”, i.e. lack of income as well as time). The relatively frequent dissatisfaction among gainfully employed working mothers in poor couple households with the time available for the job or education is also remarkable.

39. This analysis shows clearly how important the investigation of time use is for a comparison of the everyday life of poor households with the everyday life of households that are

not poor.⁴⁸ It allows a look behind the monetary figures that are used to define poverty. Further studies and analyses are planned or in progress, e.g. on the daily time use of children and adolescents in families at risk of poverty and in families not at risk of poverty, their means of transport⁴⁹, time stress and time crunch in poor and non-poor households,⁵⁰ etc. Comparative analyses on an international or European level are necessary and should be also considered. Because of the harmonisation of the European Time Use Surveys these analyses are made easier.⁵¹ A separate time use survey for poverty (and wealth) research would be really the appropriate and most accurate form for the representation of daily time use and the consequences of politics in future (e.g. consequences of the German social policy programme "Hartz IV" which will start on 1st January 2005). It would be a possible solution to conduct smaller, specialized, modular time use surveys, allowing for a more comprehensive and targeted consideration of the particular requirements of this subject matter.

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⁴⁸ See also Ketschau / Hufnagel / Holz (2004 forthcoming) and the special section "Private Haushaltsproduktion, Haushaltsfuehrungskompetenzen und Armutspraevention" chaired by Merz (papers by Ketschau and Piorkowsky) at the second scientific conference on poverty and wealth reporting in Ruedesheim/Rhein, October 2003, Bundesministerium fuer Gesundheit und Soziale Sicherung (2004).

⁴⁹ See also Rat der Europaeischen Kommission (2004, p. 90 f.).

⁵⁰ For suitable variables and procedures (discriminant analyses), see Holz (2001, p. 8 ff.).

⁵¹ See EUROSTAT (2000).

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