

Scientific support plan to a sustainable development policy  
« **Sustainable mobility** » Program

**The Prime Minister's Services**  
**Federal Services for Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs**

**NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY ON MOBILITY**  
**Realization and results**  
*Summary of final report*  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The first national household survey on mobility took place from December 1998 to November 1999. The carrying out of the survey, the presentation of the results and the exploitation of the data for the research on the Belgian mobility are the purpose of this report.

Regarding the carrying out of the survey, the retained protocol was composite. It has combined a questionnaire, sent by the post, to be filled by the surveyed and some telephone contacts to heighten the surveyed, to help him to fill the questionnaire and to validate the answers once the questionnaire was sent back. The persons who did not answered the first invoice were contacted once more by telephone, this method allowed to raise the answer rate from 32 % to 45 %. The results of the survey were then balanced by the INS to take into account the initial stratification of a sample by province on one hand and, on the other hand, the slightly changes into the demographic and temporal distributions of the sample induced during conducting the survey.

The section regarding the results of the survey shows a range of insights on mobility in the kingdom. The analysis were grouped according to their authors but their subjects crossed. Except the last one, they are essentially descriptive analyses dealing with :

- the vehicles owned by the Belgian households and their use;
- the use of public transportation and their use easiness for people;
- the association of mobility behaviours with socio-demographic modes and characteristics of the population and especially in the case of travels linked to work and school;
- the description of the daily travels, analysed according to the used transportation mode and their scheduling within the day or the week;
- the travels of more than 200 km, which were surveyed in addition to the daily travels.

The last study dealing with the analysis of activity chains, aims at making a first link between the approaches focused on people and their social determinants and those on travels and their space-time constraints.

## 2. MÉTHODOLOGY

The first national survey on households mobility took place from December 1998 to November 1999. It was financed by the Federal Services of Scientific, Technical et Cultural Affairs (OSTC) in the framework of the Sustainable Mobility program, by the Brussels-Capitale Region and by the Walloon Region. Dimarso, a weel-known consultant based in Brussels, was responsible for the carrying out of contacts. A pilot-survey has been achieved in October and November 1997 in order to prepare this survey.

Because of the available budgets and the unit cost of contacts for our subcontractor, we fixed the number of contacts to achieve in each area the following way :

	Number of households to contact
Flemish region	2.134
Brussel-Capital region	3.810
Walloon region	3.515
Total	9.459

Figure 1: Starting sample

Summary of the final SSTC report, national survey on the households mobility.

The applied survey method is summarised in figure 2. It was a composite method, mail and telephone (which we will name “main survey”), requiring to know the telephone numbers of the selected households.

For the households for which we could not have the phone number, a mail survey was carried out., with a postal reminder if necessary.

Validation phone surveys were also carried out among the households having answered the survey upon receipt of the filled questionnaires. Finally we organised phone surveys with the non-respondents. All these secondary surveys (with the households for which we had no telephone number, no validation and non-response) allowed us to collect quality data.

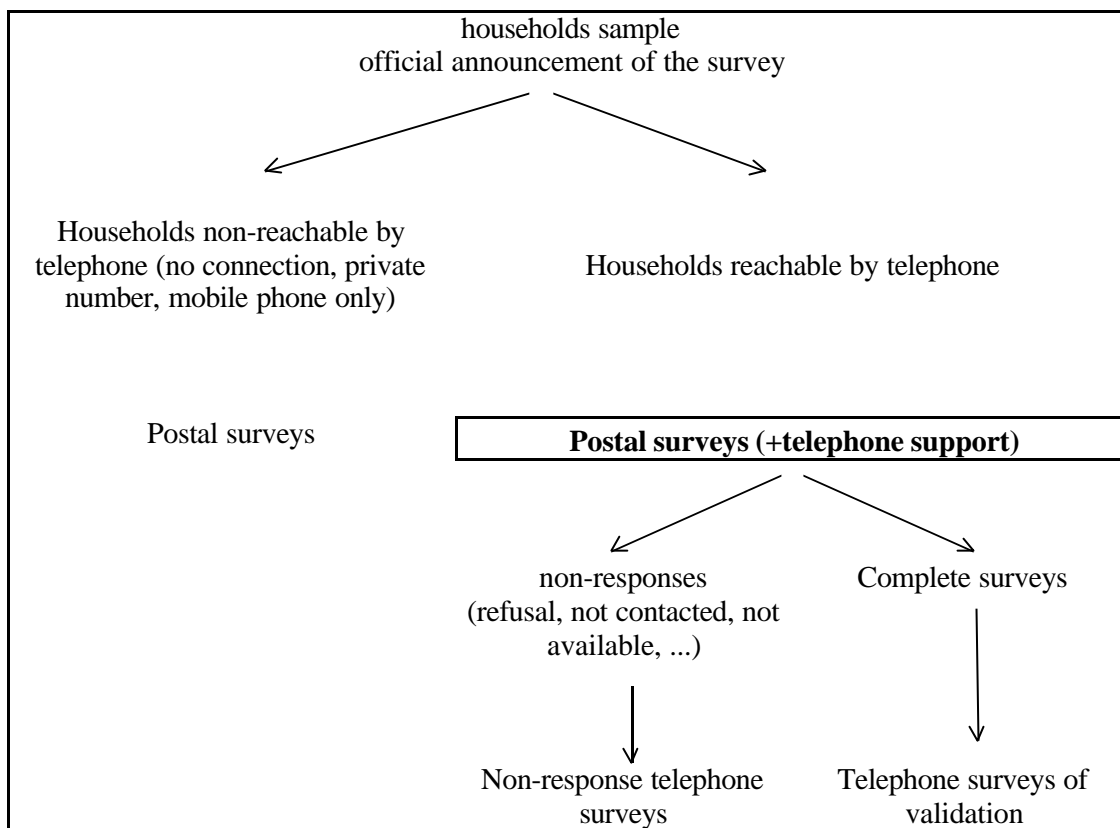


Figure 2: Survey methodology

The National Statistics Institute (INS) has set up the households sample. The sampling source was the national register. The sample was stratified according to the regions as shown in figure 1. It was also stratified by province, the number of households in each province being taken out proportionally to the square root of households living in each province, in order to have enough households in the less inhabited provinces. This assured a compromise between the accuracy of estimation by province and for the whole. The sample was also stratified according to the size of the households (isolated, 2 or more people households).

The answer rates of the main survey could seem to be rather low : 32 % on average for all the Belgium, 44 % in Flanders, 24 % in Brussel et 34 % in Wallonie. The structure of the sample (related to the regions and to the size of the households) has probably contributed to this fact. It must also be specified that the proportion of households for which a telephone number was found is low : about 70 %. But thanks to the non-response survey, we can collect data on 45 % of all the households. The answer rate of the validation surveys is upper to 80 %. While considering the contribution of the validation surveys in the self-administrated questionnaires, we remark that the brought modifications and clarifications are often considerable.

On the field, the work of the surveyors was supervised by UIA. After a first briefing of the interviewers, several sessions were organised were the “control organ” followed the realised

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interviews. We also organised a meeting to give more accurate indications to the interviewers about the questions to ask during the contact taken with the non-respondents to determine the reasons of non-responses. Several debriefings took place in view of improving, among other things, the used CATI program. Finally, we mention that DIMARSO provided monthly answers rates.

The used sampling plan requires a balance of the results as the inclusion probabilities are not equal for all the statistics units. On the other hand, the balance also allows to correct the non-response.

It was decided in the balance to take three levels into account: geographic, temporal and demographic.

- At the geographic level, the sample was stratified by province, thus with the same repartition as used for the balance.
- On a temporal point of view, the sample was uniformly distributed in the time throughout the 4 quarters. The balance was achieved by quarter, except in the Flemish region for which the three first quarters were grouped.
- Finally, the demographic aspect consisted of taking the household size, the age and the sex into account. As for the survey, the size of the household was subdivided into 2 categories: the isolated and the households with more than one people. The age was subdivided into 4 categories: 0-34, 35-44, 45-64, 65 and more.

The balance was achieved using a calibration method called *margin normalisation (calage sur marges)*.

### 3. RESULTS

#### a. Vehicles owned by household

	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonie	Total
Number of adults bicycles	4 202 531	269 725	1 330 628	5 802 884
Number of mopeds / motorcycles	267 252	17 274	132 764	417 290
Number of cars*	2 650 960	377 512	1 428 772	4 457 244
Number of vans	86 129	7 914	34 269	128 312

\*(including people carriers and jeep)

Figure 3: Number of vehicles owned by household

The penetration rate of bicycles and cars strongly change according to regions. So, if each Flemish household owes 1.8 bicycles in average, the people living in Brussels only owe 0.6. In Flanders and in Wallonie, the penetration rate of the cars is upper 1 while it is “only” 0.8 in Brussels (1.09 in average for Belgium). The penetration rates for mopeds/motorcycles are much more modest: they are respectively, for Belgium, of 0.1 and 0.03. The majority of Belgian households (57 %) owe a car, 21 % owe 2 cars while 19 % have no car. Brussels is strongly distinguishable from the two other regions with an average of household without car much more important (32 %) but also proportionally less households owing 2 cars (13 %).

The differences between regions are few meaningful for the households owing a car. While 54 % of cars owed by the households were bought new, 39 % were second-hand bought. If 16 % of the cars owed by the households are less than 2 years old, 25 % are more than 10 years.

These figures are notably to compare with the European rules on the atmospheric emissions such as the obligation, since January the 1<sup>st</sup> 1993 to possess a catalytic converter. It means for instance that at present at least one car on four still does not possess a catalytic converter. The majority of cars owed by the households drive with unleaded gas et 11 % drive with regular gas. We remind here that since January the 1<sup>st</sup> 2000, the regular gas was suppressed from the sale. Diesel represents 38 % and LPG is

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extremely marginal as it only represents 1 % of the cars owned by the households. In average the cars owned by the Belgian households drive annually 18 154 km. The diesel cars typically travel more important mileage's than gas cars, between 23 000 and 26 000 km per year for diesel and between 14 000 and 18 000 km for gas. Likewise the bigger capacities cars travel more kilometres. This trend is more marked for gas than for diesel. In average the diesel cars consume 7,15 L per 100 Km while the gas cars consume 8,6 L. This consumption varies very few according to the age of the vehicles even if the trend is dropping. On the other hand, and as we could expect, it strongly varies according to the capacity. This is much more true for the gas cars than for the diesel cars.

#### **b. Use of public transportation**

65 % of the households have their home at less than 500 meters of a bus stop. 7 % of the households live close to a railway station (less than 500 meters) against 70 % of the households who live at more than one kilometre from public transport. To use the train, a majority of people must first use another transportation mode to the station. 39.6 % of the people who answered the survey have a reduction of the prices on public transportation. In spite of the high proportion of people who have a reduction and who do not use it, the reduction rises the frequency of use of the public transportation. Amongst the people who use very occasionally or never the public transportation, having a reduction has no influence.

21 % of people possess at least one season ticket for public transportation in the region of Brussels against respectively 8% in Flanders and 9% in Wallonie. In Flanders the proportion of persons owing a train or bus season ticket are equivalent, about 4 %. The proportion of persons taking the bus is larger in Wallonie. Amongst people owing a season ticket, 69% use the public transportation at least 5 days per week. Thus having a season ticket means using the public transportation almost daily.

On the other hand, it is amazing to note that 29 % of the persons who use the public transportation at least 5 days a week have no season ticket.

#### **c. Physical difficulties for travelling**

Up to 70, only 10 % of the people declare to have difficulties to get on and off the cars or different public transportation but also to reach the trains, bus stops... Beyond this age, public transportation seem leading to more difficulties than the car. After 80, the majority of people do not use the car. It is interesting to underline that bicycle and walking remains mostly used transportation modes for people under 70.

#### **d. Long distance travel**

35 % of the surveyed people have travelled more than 200 km in the month before the survey (total round-trip travel). Amongst these people, the half travelled only once, a small third two or three times and the remaining more than 4 times. Regarding the last travel, it was mainly achieved in Belgium, then in the neighbouring countries 33 % and in the rest of Europe (including Maghreb) 13 %. Only 3% of the respondents travelled outside Europe. The transportation mode used by 75 % of the people is the car followed by the train (11 %) and the plane (10 %). Regarding the duration of this travel, 47 % of the people travel within a day and 32 % stayed for one to three overnights. 12 % stayed more than 6 overnights. For travels in the neighbouring countries, the car is the most used (more than 80 %) and for 75 % the stay is under 5 days. The distances encourage the use of the car up to an acceptable distance (to reach the neighbouring countries). Over this distance, people rather take the plane for their long distance travels. The reasons for travel regarding this last travel are :

41% for holidays, 25% for visiting the family or friends, 16% for professional reasons and 12% for sports and leisure. People who travelled in Europe did it for the holidays for 62 %. 60 à 65 % of long distance travels in Belgium or to neighbouring countries are achieved for holidays or visiting the family of friends. The longer distance travels are mainly undertaken going to holidays, 12 % for professional reasons. To summarise, the further the travel is, the most important the travel for

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“holidays” cited as the main reason. For shorter distances, an average of 23 % is the work purpose and 17 % private visits.

#### **e. People and transportation modes**

Without surprise, the car is the most frequently used transportation mode : 40 % use it daily (52 % if we add the passengers). Active people, those with a higher schooling and those with more important incomes use more the car. Regarding the use of public transportation, the distance between the home and the closer stop plays a certain role. In the region of Brussels the distance between the home and the closer stops especially plays a role. The train has a certain popularity amongst the young adults. Regarding the bicycle it is mainly used by young going to school. Flanders is mainly the land of bicycle, although there is a slight drop compared to 1994. An analysis by clusters showed that daily travels schemes are present amongst certain groups : 40 % of the Belgian intensively and almost only used the car, it is still more evident in Wallonie (48 % against 34 % in Flanders). Amongst the working people, it is even 60 % of the people who use almost only the car. Considering this mobility, accidents must necessarily happen. The risk is specially important for the 15-25 years. There is also relatively more accidents in the Flemish Brabant, the Walloon Brabant and the province of Liege. The car, the bicycle and mainly the mopeds are the most dangerous transportation modes. The cyclists and motorcyclists risk corporal damages.

#### **f. Travels linked to work**

The home-work based travel are achieved for 60 % with own car (as driver). This number grows up to 70% if we include the company cars and the use of the car as passenger. The average driven distance is significantly more important (28 km) for those who use a company car to go at work, compared with those using their private car (17 km). The train is mainly the transportation more for commuters on longer distances.

Flemish people go at work more with the bicycle than the Walloon people and than the people from Brussels. The reimbursement for travelling expenses by the employer and the availability of parking have an important influence on the modal choice. The presence of a station close to the working place has the most important role for the workers in the region of Brussel : a station at less than one kilometre incite them to prefer the train rather than the car. The proximity of a bus stop is the less mentioned but has an important secondary effect : he promotes (as preliminary or terminal transportation) the use of the train. The professional travels are more frequent among the self-employed and the liberal professions, in a smaller extent for the employees and public agents.

The car (private or company car) is also the most used transportation mode for that type of travels.

#### **g. Capita selecta**

The purpose of this section is to show how the data base built from the national survey can be used as scientific base for various types of studies. We will only give three examples.

We can be interested in a particular group of people, for instance the young schoolchildren. This group (20 % of the surveyed people) is responsible for 44 % of all the bicycle travels and for 50 % of the bus travels. Regarding the travel home-school, not less than one on three is driven by car. A quarter of the 19-25 years goes himself to school. Important differences in the modal choice appear from region to region : a young Flemish on three use the bicycle for his home-school travel against only 1.5 % of the young Walloons who are more than the half to be driven by car. The young people from Brussels use more the public transportation. If a public transport stop (bus, tram, metro) is situated less than 500 m. from the home or the school, it leads to a significant growing of the use of public transport mode for the home-school travels. The train also benefit from the proximity of a public transportation stop.

Another approach consists of studying more particularly a transportation mode. Let's test this for bicycle. 8 % of the travels are done by bicycle, 69 % by car. The half of the travels by car are done on less than 5 km, distance which can easily be travelled by bicycle. When interesting in the bicycle users, we find the young, the Flemish and the in a smaller extent the workers.

The bicycle travels are mainly achieved to go to school and for leisure. For the more “functional” travels (work, shopping, ...) bicycle is more marginal. The possible explanations are the need for

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flexibility (for travel chains) and the lack of cycle path. Bicycle has also a function (even if rather modest) of “driving down” transportation to the public transportation : 6.2 % of travels by train are preceded or followed by a bicycle travel.

Finally, we can be concerned by explicative models of different phenomena, for instance the frequency of car use (as driver). A linear regression shows us that two explicative elements logically stand out: the possession of a driving license and having one (or more) cars.

If we neglect these two variables, we can still explain 35 % of variation in the use of the car with other variables. Being a man, being active or travel more are most explicative factors. The income and the status at work also play a role in the explicative model. More “geographic” variables such as “living in Wallonie”, living further from a public transportation stop” or “living in periphery or semiperiphery” also have an impact, even if less significant, on the reasons for using the car. A linear regression shows that each of these variable has a certain effect on the car use.

## h. Travels

	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonie	Belgium
Walking	13.5%	27.6%	15.9%	15.6%
Two-wheeler	12.9%	1.7%	2.9%	8.6%
Public transport	4.7%	13.4%	5.2%	5.7%
Car	67.9%	56.6%	74.5%	68.9%
Other	1.0%	0.7%	1.5%	1.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 4 : distribution of the travels during an average day according to the main transportation mode

	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonie	Belgium
Walking	12.4%	28.3%	16.7%	15.4%
Two-wheeler	13.9%	1.6%	3.0%	9.3%
Public transport	5.1%	14.8%	5.9%	6.3%
Car	67.4%	54.5%	72.3%	67.7%
Other	1.2%	0.7%	2.0%	1.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 5 : distribution of the travels during a working day according to the main transportation mode

	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonie	Belgium
Walking	8.7%	20.0%	12.2%	11.1%
Two-wheeler	16.6%	1.5%	2.0%	10.2%
Public transport	8.7%	20.1%	8.9%	9.9%
Car	65.0%	57.4%	73.9%	67.2%
Other	0.9%	0.9%	2.9%	1.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 6 : distribution of the travels during the morning peak of a working day according to the main transportation mode

	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonie	Belgium
Walking	10.9%	27.2%	13.5%	13.5%
Two-wheeler	11.8%	1.2%	3.8%	8.1%
Public transport	5.2%	14.6%	5.9%	6.4%
Car	71.0%	56.3%	75.5%	71.0%
Other	1.1%	0.6%	1.4%	1.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 7 : distribution of the travels during the evening peak of a working day according to the main transportation mode

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Absolute numbers	Flanders	Brussels	Wallonie	Belgium
Number of travels by person on a working day	3,17	3,20	3,00	3,12
Number of travels by person on a middle day	3,04	2,96	2,86	2,97
Number of travels by person at the morning peak jour on a working day	0,53	0,58	0,55	0,54
Number of travels by person at the evening peak jour on a working day	0,96	1,01	0,99	0,97

Figure 8 : average number of travels according to the period

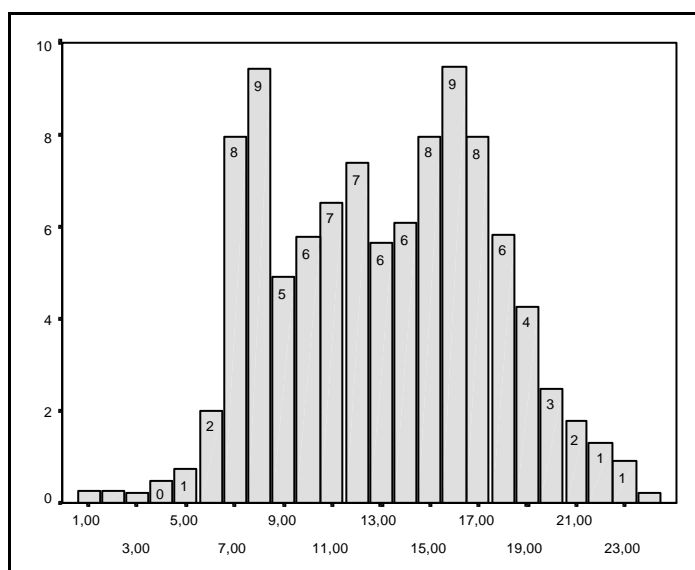
Main transportation mode	average day	working day	morning peak of a working day	evening peak of a working day
Walking	15,6%	15,4%	11,1%	13,5%
Two-wheels	8,6%	9,3%	10,2%	8,1%
Public transport	5,7%	6,3%	9,9%	6,4%
Car	68,9%	67,7%	67,2%	71%
Other	1,2%	1,4%	1,6%	1,1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 9 : distribution of travels for the Belgian according to the main transportation mode and to the period

During an average day, 9 % of the Belgian travel to drop off or pick someone up, 18 % to go at work or to school, 18 % for shopping or private reasons, 20 % for leisure and 33 % for going home.

Purpose at destination	Average day	working day	morning peak of a working day	evening peak of a working day
Drop off/pick up someone	9,0%	10,0%	18,9%	12,2%
Work/school	17,6%	22,2%	63,1%	4,9%
Shopping/private reasons	18,1%	17,3%	7,0%	15,5%
Leisure	19,6%	15,1%	4,2%	14,7%
Going home	35,4%	35,2%	6,6%	52,5%
Other	0,3%	0,2%	0,2%	0,2%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Figure 10 : distribution of travels of the Belgian according to the purpose at destination and to the period



Graph 1 : Distribution of the travels made by the Belgian during a working day



The working days, the morning peak spreads over two hours, from 7 to 9 am (17 % of the travels) and the evening one over four hours, from 3 to 7 pm (31 % of the travels). A considerable part of the travels happen between the morning and the evening peak hour (36 % of the travels). We can moreover distinguish a midday peak jour, from 12 am to 1 pm, representing almost 7 % of the travels. 11 % of these travels happen during the evening, from 7 to 12 pm.

#### **4. AN ACTIVITY BASED APPROACH TRAVEL**

The analysis based on activities tempts to relocate the mobility behaviours in the use of time and resources, as well as the participation in activity located in time and space. They aim at explaining the complex interaction between the behaviour as regards the travel, leading to a more realistic representation of the mobility demand. The basic hypothesis of this approach is that the need and the wish to take part to activities are more fundamental than the travels that some of these participation can involve. The unit studies in this approach are the sequences or schemes of behaviour as regards activities, during a complete or on longer periods. The national survey showed the very large variety of days organisation regarding the travels : on about 7000 surveyed peoples, we count more than 1400 different organisations. Our main objective is to propose a simplified typology (and then likely to lead to a model) of the travels organisation over a day, which is based on the activities of the characters.

Let's first consider the workers as people who, on the survey reference day, go to their working place and then come back. The morning and evening trips of these travel schemes are group in only one travel scheme linked to work, since the travel mode for these two steps will often be the same : they are referenced as morning trip and evening trip. All the activities made before the morning trip as named "morning activities" and the associated travels will be grouped in one or more morning trips, grouped in a morning travel scheme. In the same way, all activities happening after the return from work to home (evening trip) are referenced as evening activities and the associated travels are grouped in one or more evening trips grouped in the evening travels scheme. Moreover, all the activities happening outside the working place will be referenced as midday activity and the relative travels, which origin and destination are the working place, will be grouped in one or more trips, which constitute the midday travels scheme. In each of the morning, midday and evening trips, there might be several stops (or activities). A main activity is moreover identified (as the one of maximum duration) for the morning, midday or evening schemes, other activities counting as stops. For the non-workers, we replace work by the main activity of the day, which is the longer duration activity. Other activities and travels can then be organised in relation with this main activity such as those of the workers which are organised around their work activity.

We first remark that the average trips number is slightly higher in the non-workers activity program than for the one of the workers : 1.55 for the non-workers against 1.53 for the workers. This confirms the intuition that the models only based on the behaviour of the workers can significantly underestimate the traffic. Another significant observation is that the workers do not perform many activities outside their home before leaving their home to go to work (only 3.3 %) compared to 23.6 % for the non-workers who perform an average of 0.31 trip before starting the trips scheme containing their main activity. During the midday trips, there is only 9.9 % of the workers who leave their working place. This is in contrast with the number obtained by Bhat (2000) which shows values from 26 to 35 % in the American context. On the other hand, we note that 20.8 % of the workers have activities outside the home after their return at home. This is closer with the values of 20 to 32 % related by Bhat. Moreover, the proportion of workers which perform non activities before their work relative trips (96.7 %) is almost similar to the one related by Bhat (96.9 %). Almost all the workers who have morning, midday and evening activities, perform it within one or two hours, which is again coherent with the Bhat observations.

The non-workers activities involve less evening trips than for the workers (14.7 % with an average of 0.19 trip for each) perhaps because they are financially constrained or because they can spread their activities more freely all day long. The number of trips for non-workers does not differs much from the one of the workers since less than 2.0 % of them perform three trips or more before their travels linked to the main activity and only 0.8 % after.

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The comparisons with Bhat are not available for non-workers.

To summarise, these results suggest that the hypothesis that each of the three schemes contains between zero and two trips reflect the reality in a reasonable way.

We have finally brought out that as well for the workers as for the others, a positive interaction between the number of stops at different time of the day, which could indicate a weak degree of possible substitution between these stops.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The mobility management imposes as one of the major political stakes for the coming years, as well at the federal level as at the level of the three Belgian regions. The mobility policy and the scientific studies on this subject finally benefit thanks the 1998-99 national survey from an accurate and overall representation of the phenomenon. This representation allows the comparison of the situation in Belgium with the one in the other European Union countries which have established a long time ago mobility observation tools. The survey also shows the large complexity of the phenomena.

The achievement of the survey and its exploitation has showed the protocol efficiency. The final answer rate seems to be quite good as regard to other postal surveys. More important, the various crossed analysis as well as the comparisons with the surveys results of other countries proves the coherency and the quality of the collected data. This quality is mostly due to the validation telephone conversation.

The too long absence of complete and accurate data on mobility in Belgium let the idea grow based on former ideas, if not assimilated, rather than on facts. The national survey on household mobility allows today to revise these schemes. It has especially put in respective the importance of the travels between the home and the work or the school as regards to all the travels (about one third of the reasons). It has also showed a large asymmetry between the morning and evening trips, almost twice more numerous. This unbalance translates in the use of transportation networks. The evening peak hour is much longer than the morning one. Many characters take the opportunity of their return from work to home to stop and to perform other activities or go out from home after their return. The evening revealed a sufficiently taken into account activity moment, up to now.

The survey has also allowed to know for the first time accurately, the trips during the week-end days or bank holidays. More spread over the different times of the day but more concentrated on the use of the car, this mobility also performs congestion phases and not much to envy to the working days mobility in average number of trips and certainly not in driven kilometres. The survey has also underlined the relatively strong proportion of more than 6 years people (24 %) who stay home and at least one day per week (21 % in the case of a working day).

However, to put in perspective the importance of the home-work trips (or school-home) in all the individual mobility does not mean that the importance of the work or study activity must be reduced in the mobility reasons. Belgian has not gone, after the petrol hit, from a working society to a shopping or leisure society. The active population has grow and has include more and more women. It is probably the most important part of working women, as well as the rising of the studies duration, which has indirectly produced this mutation of mobility, at least the motorised mobility, and this extension to the evening of the activity period over a day.

Studies and work remains a strongly structuring element in mobility because the working and studying locations are not replaceable in temporality and the daily as the leisure or shopping locations are.

These location represent then a second base from which characters can perform other trips and other activities, unless they can insert themselves in an activity program often managed the best way.

The study on the activity program underlying to the daily mobility will have the possibility to be detailed thanks to a finer temporal and spatial segmentation. The date have not yet provided all the information they contain, especially for the trips localisation. A geocodage of the origins and destinations will soon allow to analyse the geographical dimensions of the characters individual behaviours but also the reflect of the organisation of a territory where a community lives.

Seasonal variations of mobility as well as non-mobility still contains many questions.

But these data will mainly find a new fundamental interest when other surveys will have been performed with a similar protocol or of equal quality in order to, on one hand, show the evolution in

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time of the behaviours, the modal sharing, etc, and, on the other hand, to relocate local surveys in their regional and geographical context.

We finally note that all the data collected during the national survey is available on a Web site (<http://www.mobel.be>) on which the users can remote connect to make the statistical requests in which they are interested.