

Working towards leisure

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Abstract. Expanded individual availability and flexibility is necessary in order to progress in a management career to senior level. If managers owe all their time to the organisation and their work as managers they are left with no time to invest in the management of their private lives. Therefore, it remains 'unspoken' in their management work how they are able to create time and space to enjoy free time during their non-working hours. Managers' female partners prepare all the domestic work in the private sphere in order for the manager to enjoy their free time in any leisure activity.

The empirical evidence for this argument derives from 64 in-depth interviews with male managers from three European countries (Germany, Portugal, the United Kingdom) working for one large multinational company. These interviews cover the views of a variety of male managers with an age range between 30 and 65 years and, thus, different management positions and life stages.

This article explores three different layers of time in male managers work careers: non-working time, free-time and leisure time. It includes the concept of leisure work which enables managers to devote themselves absolutely to whatever they want to do in their non-working time. Therefore combining a professional career and family life for male managers is only a question of balancing their work as male managers and leisure time and not an issue of tension between employment and domestic obligations.

Key words: Multinationals, leisure, time, managerial work, work life balance.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate and analyse leisure work as a type of 'unspoken work' which men managers' female partners provide for their own careers.

I understand by 'unspoken work' the work done in the private sphere of men managers. It is

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‘unspoken’ because what their female partners do is as evident in what men leave unsaid as in what they actually say about the relationship between their private/home and working lives.

There are different forms of ‘unspoken work’. For example the ‘other work’ which men managers recognised their female partners do in their private spheres in the sense that they realise that it creates time and space for them as men managers to be free for their careers and put long hours into their management work. But the idea of leisure work as form of ‘unspoken work’ is that it creates time and space for male managers to enjoy their free time during their non-working hours. In this article I use the following concepts:

- Non-working time. Although male managers non-working hours are very few, they have a considerable amount of time available which is not spent on their work.
- Leisure times. Time that is used for any (organised) leisure activities to relax or get some excitement.
- Free times. The time somebody spends just for herself or himself. The managers of my sample describe spending these hours as «having time of their own».
- Leisure work. A wife who prepares all the domestic work in the private sphere in order for the manager to enjoy his free time in any leisure activity. Leisure work enables managers to devote themselves absolutely to whatever they want to do in their non-working time.

The following sections are organised along the different dimensions which the managers in my sample emphasised: the important role of the family within their leisure time, the problem of managing leisure time and activities, and the wide variety of leisure activities in which managers engage.

Background

The study is based on the empirical evidence of 64 in-depth interviews of male managers views and perspectives of three different European countries (Portugal, U.K., Germany) working in one large multinational company. These interviews, covered a variety of examples and views of managers with an age range between 30 and 65 years and thus within different career and family stages. Some of them had married early but do not live together any longer with their (former) wife and children. Other managers had married later in life and had young children. Again others are ‘single’. They were working in different cross-functional business areas of different sizes and structures.

The analysis uses a theoretical feminist materialist approach (Delphy & Leonard, 1992; Jackson, 1998; Reis, 2002) to the interpretation of men managers’ accounts.

Briefly, the theory from Delphy and Leonard (1992) regard the Western family as an economic system; therefore they focus on material and ideological structures of gender relations within a *domestic* mode of production. Feminist materialism presuppose a ‘real’ world outside and prior to discourse, but does not treat social phenomena as if this world exists prior to and outside the social

and cultural discourses, practices and structures which give rise to them. This is not to suggest any kind of essentialist analysis or arguments concerning differences between men and women; rather it is to analyse the different social conditions of women and men in and outside organizations. The work of materialist feminist has partly become forgotten but Hearn (2002) comments that post-modernism is not necessarily opposed to materialist analysis: «(...) postmodernism comes from an attempt to amplify and extend an understanding of the complexities and subtleties of materialism and gender power relations, not to dilute them in any way» (Hearn, 2002: 50).

The accounts

Leisure time with the family

A Portuguese senior manager says that his career is facilitated and managed by his wife, who is responsible for bringing up the children and all other domestic tasks.

[...] it is extremely important to have a family life for me, even essential, although unfortunately and as result of my anxiety and of my challenges, it happens that the time I dedicate to the family is not as much as I would like [...] During the week, I am rarely with the family and they don't know if I will have dinner or not with the children. I have dinner with the children but indeed this is for myself. It is very important having such an anchor in life to beat stress, and indeed it's necessary to have it because it allows one to relieve stress and other worries. There are also other things to think about, other things to talk about and so I have the illusion that I have another life besides work.

Portuguese senior manager, 40 years old

His most important way of dealing with the stress and pressure of his work is to enjoy some family life.

Another Portuguese senior manager who enjoys being with his family said:

[...] we get together again around 8:30 p.m. for dinner, when possible and when I arrive home on time to have dinner. We have dinner together with the children and we speak with the children. We are together and then normally I listen to the news and I have a big dose of technical information and so I need many hours till I go to bed. On the weekend things are different and I intend to dedicate my time to the family during the weekends. I avoid any other business meetings normally during the weekend. I play a little bit of tennis with my children or friends and my wife stays at home and does her things. I always do that with the eldest son and then normally I play with the youngest son and I dedicate all my time on the weekend to the family and friends. I

said to you I have a farm in (xxx) and when it is possible I go there and I take the family with me, so it is my hobby. It is a very big farm and has some serious agriculture and so I need to give many hours to this work on the weekends.

Portuguese senior manager, 41 years old

He says that the time he spends with his children, friends and on his farm is leisure time for him.

Similarly, a German senior manager, regards the time with his family as time regeneration:

[...] what a job of 14 to 16 hours per day means in reality is what my wife usually tells me: «I have experienced what you are telling me for 30 years, this is what your work and profession requires.» I go home and I spend time with my family and this is my time of regeneration.

German senior manager, 50 years old

A German senior manager describes his leisure time with the family:

[...] When I am not at work I like to relax, and relax means sitting down on the sofa and watching television, it means going for a walk and going out with the children and that's what I like to do. [...] I also need time when I am back home at the weekend to be together with the family [...]. Normally I relax and nothing else. I want to relax and be at home and then go for a walk in the mountains or I like to do something with friends and I have the feeling I want to do more.

German senior manager, 46 years old

He says that he nearly always includes his family in his activities.

Another German senior manager also says that he spends his leisure time with his wife and family:

[...] First of all I have a wife with whom I spend my leisure time. I also take the free space I have on holidays and I use it, because I tended not to use my holidays. I used my holidays for extra work but now I usually take them because I want to spend holidays with my family.

German senior manager, 47 years old

He emphasises the importance of holidays together with his family.

A German senior manager compares how working and leisure time were organised during his studies at the University and now during his work at MC:

[...] when I was still at the University it was much easier because I had much more free time. I am much more bound in my work here and now the separation of work and leisure time is clearer. It means when I am here ten hours per day I do something different back home that is not connected to my job, for example by concentrating

myself completely on the family. I also don't work in the evenings and on weekends. I don't think about my job when I am at home.

German senior manager, 47 years old

An English senior manager emphasises that he spends the weekends with his children:

[...] I think it is very important now to spend time with the children at weekends.

English senior manager, 40 years old

The leisure activities of this English senior manager also include the family:

I like to go for walks. We live in the countryside, so I only tend to look after my garden and that's easy to do. We like to go out on weekends, have lunch together as a family. After that there is a big garden to occupy the rest of my time.

English senior manager, 44 years old

In opposition to other managers, a German senior manager describes the family situation as not always comfortable for the enjoyment of non-working hours:

[...] I try to do something about it. If something distresses me I try to do something in the garden, and it's not always easy to do that because I come home with anger and have anger at work in the company and if my wife also is angry about something else, with the children for example, she is too negative in her emotions, and then I say that does not interest me at all and I go into the garden [...].

German senior manager, 58 years old

He goes to the garden when things are not relaxing at home.

In opposition to the managers who regard time with the family as their leisure time, others see the family as a barrier to their leisure and free time. A Portuguese senior manager says that he sacrifices his leisure and free time because the family needs his presence:

Lately I do not manage to do what I want outside work, at least the way I would like to. But the family requires my attention. I have sacrificed some personal hobbies in order to support the family. Sometimes during the weekends in the morning I would like to do some sports but I don't do as much as I would like to do.

Portuguese senior manager, 34 years old

This is also how another non-senior Portuguese manager, regards his former family:

[...] She (xxx his wife) followed the steps of my career in a very involved way. I had the highest support one can have, even when I went to work in (xxx) [...]. Now I have a very healthy life style and I have time for myself. The family has advantages but takes all your time away. When I arrived home I felt like reading a book and then I couldn't because I had to take the boy to the doctor. Till the children are at least ten

years old they take a lot of work and make numerous demands. At that time I thought the requests were too many [...].

Portuguese non senior manager, 38 years old

Now that he is separated from his wife he manages more time for himself.

But the family can also be used as an excuse to get leisure time or free time when the company asks more from the manager. Another specific situation connected to family is described by a Portuguese non-senior manager, who is also separated from his wife:

[...] it is sacrosanct that I spend the weekends with my son and I dine with him during the week. During the week everything is very quick and he arrives very tired from school, he is sleepy and in the end it is a dinner where I am not with him 100% and I cannot be the father I wish to be. Obviously it is frustrating when a seminar is on a weekend. I am with him every fortnight or 15 days and then I have to go to these seminars. But again, if on the following weekend there is another seminar, then I don't go. Normally some days in advance I call the reservation office and I give them an excuse and sometimes I have to invent quite a strong excuse [...].

Portuguese non senior manager, 32 years old

He says that he tries to spend considerable leisure time with his son. Sometimes he has to invent excuses to get out of the extra duties of his job.

Managing leisure time

An English senior manager says that there is no problem with allocating time to leisure activities:

I suppose at a basic level it is, if you are determined to do it you do it. In that sense I consider myself to be a determined person. If I want to do something at the weekend, whether it is in the garden or in the home or doing some sport or something like that, then I just make events happen. So I don't see a problem in that area.

English senior manager, 48 years old

In his perspective, arranging time for leisure activities is only a matter of self-determination.

For an English non-senior manager, leisure time is a question of proper planning:

Yes I mean I make sure that there is time to do the work and nice time to do the fun things as well. This is planning, but sometimes if work needs to be done then you do the work.

English non-senior manager, 46 years old

But an English non-senior manager says that he is even able to manage time for himself:

I am pretty good at creating time for myself. I prefer to do work in the office and don't

take work home and if I have to do work on the weekend I come to the office to work. So again, I don't take work home, so that's the way I do it. So it is about making sure that I create a break between the work environment and home environment and I am fairly strict about that. Sometimes it means going home late rather than take work home with me. I took time off during this year for instance on paid leave to go climbing in the Himalayas on my own and then I took more holidays when I came back. I normally work a bit on the exciting side of my work life and with my family as well. So it's pretty good really.

English non senior manager, 38 years old

He emphasises a clear-cut separation between working time and time for leisure activities, which includes the family. However, holidays on his own have an important role for him, in the sense that he can enjoy time on his own.

A German senior manager stresses that he does not have any problems with his wife or family in doing whatever he wants to do during his own free time:

[...] it is relatively easy to do what I want to do and it doesn't need or require much effort. When I want to do something then I just say go, and most of the time it is discussed because I prefer when my family also does it with me, although I don't have many expectations. And I do things on my own whether or not someone goes with me. [...] There are no problems and when I want to sleep, I tell my wife that I am tired and then I go back to my room and I go to bed and she accepts that.

German senior manager, 56 years old

He informs his wife about what he wants to do and then he just does it.

Although a Portuguese senior manager sees strong restrictions on his leisure time, he has found his own way of arranging his free time:

[...] one of the problems we have in this position is we never know the time we arrive home because the schedule is controlled by the clients. There is another time the clients don't control and that is in the morning. So, Thursdays and Fridays I am in a health club at 8 am. [...] I take an hour. Sometimes I also do mountain biking on Saturdays and then my Saturdays are complete. I do that once or twice a month but more is not possible.

Portuguese senior manager, 38 years old

So he enjoys time on his own, including some leisure activities in the early morning and on the weekends.

An English senior manager makes clear that work has the priority over leisure. But he says he also has some time for himself:

In relation to leisure time, I do not give it priority over work. Family life is a separate thing, too. I have time for myself. I particularly like to go to football matches and in

general it is something enriching. Frustration happens when I don't have the time at the moment. So, I would like to do things like golf or some other sport, for example squash. But it is not a problem.

English senior manager, 44 years old

He does not always have enough time for leisure activities but in general this is not a problem for him.

On the other hand, some managers' stress they would like to have more leisure and free time. As German senior manager reports:

I also would like to do other sports such as windsurfing but I don't. I don't have the time for it. It needs time and there's not enough, because I also need time when I am back home at the weekend to be together with the family and to go skiing. I also have very little time for that, and then I would like to go more often to the theatre but I don't do it.

German senior manager, 46 years old

More drastically, a Portuguese senior manager says that he does not have any time for leisure activities during the week:

During the week, we do absolutely nothing and I seldom do any shopping. My wife does all the shopping for me. During the week we never go out and this has been the case now for countless years because there is no time for it.

Portuguese senior manager, 40 years old

An English senior manager also says that at the moment he is not able to get more free time:

I can't. I don't have enough time. I used to write and I have some notes. It seems there is no time to continue because there are lots of things. I spend so much time with music, but also I spend my time at work as well. I hope to redress the balance in one year or that sort of time, and get a bit more time to do some of these things. My life now is about work and sleep.

English senior manager, 44 years old

But he hopes he can change this situation in the near future.

A Portuguese senior manager also claims not to have enough leisure time and, particularly, free time:

[...] there are things I would like to do but I don't. For example I would like to read more but I don't. I would like to go to concerts but it is not even worth buying a ticket in advance because then I cannot go the day the concert is performing. There are certain things I still can do that are compatible with my job, such as listening to music while I am driving back home. There is a need to choose between having a career and

not having one. An MC career is not a show in paparazzi magazines; otherwise one would not be having a career at MC.

Portuguese senior manager, 60 years old

He says that you have to decide between a career and more time on your own and for leisure activities.

More elaborated in getting free time is another English senior manager, who also connects his leisure time to the workplace:

I suppose I don't have any hobbies in particular. Some people are out working long hours. I am not saying that I have to work long hours but I do quite enjoy it. I don't go home late and I do not make an effort to leave the office after a full working day because I would rather spend the extra time here. I think the work is interesting enough [...].

English senior manager, 52 years old

He says he prefers to give more time to his job, then to go home although it is not necessary.

However it is interesting to note that some managers seem to require the presence of their wives in their leisure time. An English senior manager describes the specific situation when his wife is not at home:

My wife has a hobby. She still plays net ball, and if I get home earlier on Wednesday night, she is still at net ball training. So I go away, and get home later or I do antisocial hours for the rest of the time till she arrives home.

English senior manager, 40 years old

Since he does not enjoy time on his own alone he leaves home again and comes back later when his wife is there, too.

An English senior manager says that he first helps his wife with her domestic tasks before he can spend his leisure time together with her:

Managing free time out of work, I don't always (pause) my wife is a domestic organiser and she basically has a lots of things like (pause) things that need to be done in the house, whom we should see, what is in the refrigerator, so she does not have any time. She has a long list of things, things to be done, and she is happy to give me those lists. I try to resolve some of the issues but I do not have quite as much time as I would like and, I suppose, to do what needs to be done.

English senior manager, 59 years old

Variety of leisure activities

The former accounts have already shown the wide diversity of leisure activities of managers.

I demonstrate this variety in the following accounts of managers at different management levels:

[...] now I'm thinking about installing a new digital telephone system at home, so (pause) it takes time (pause). I have a plan that is still in my head and then one day or after two weeks or three weeks or whatever I make plans and plans and plans at home sitting there, while I am reading the newspaper. I am sitting there and doing some drawings and sketches and then one day I say ok now I am thinking about installing that equipment; and my wife usually says ok [...].

German senior manager, 56 years old

I have free time [...] to listen to music, literature, or I go out with friends. Ok, something different [...]. Well, I have friends in Munich but I also have friends all over Germany. I lived in Sweden and many different places where I have good friends. I met a friend from France in August; I went to Belgium two weeks ago to meet another friend there. I met friends yesterday and Monday from different companies. I have friends in Rome, I met a friend yesterday she came from Rome to meet me here, and we went out for dinner. I have friends, but not within MC because when I leave MC I want to be free from discussions about MC.

German senior manager, 49 years old

[...] so apart from going to see friends, we go on our bikes out to the coast. It is not a great deal but I also need to do it and it is outside work. So at the weekends, as I said, 50% of my time is spent visiting someone socially, and the other 50% is working around the house or garden.

English senior manager, 52 years old

I go jogging or I play tennis with whoever comes. I go shopping.

German senior manager, 56 years old

[...] lots of interests and I try to do a little bit of exercise. I do a little bit of cycling once a week or so and once or twice a year I go to see some friends. We normally go for a longer weekend and I am interested in old cars and gardening and I go for a walk sometimes, or do it yourself. I mean everybody here in Britain is into DIY and is a very expensive toy or thing for the house. I quite enjoy sitting in the office all day but it is quite nice to get out and have a new 'job' sometimes.

English senior manager, 54 years old

[...] I plan with my wife and when it is for myself I organise a group of men and these are seminars. We meet once or twice a year for one week. I plan these seminars in advance and when I am not here. I have two other male friends and it's a mixture of

business and private (leisure). We go once a year to Italy and we have to look for an appropriate date and have a weekend by the sea.

German non senior manager, 40 years old

Analysis

Leisure time with the family

When managers say they spend their leisure time with the family, they tend to describe family life as relaxing, and home as a comfortable place of private harmony. They hardly mention that it can only be like that because their wives manage and organise the private sphere, their family and home. For example, a Portuguese senior manager sees spending time with his children as a way of relaxing from the demands of his work. This is his leisure time. He does not talk about domestic work or work related to the children. His effort to be present on weekends as a participating father is in the end something he does for himself; he describes these time as a short holiday that include entertainment with the children. He does not need to be available for the family on weekends in order to participate in the family's domestic activities. His domestic and private life is already prepared and arranged for him, so it just needs to be enjoyed in his free time. He does not mention the services that his busy wife provides behind his glamorous professional career to enable him to enjoy his leisure time.

Other Portuguese senior manager similarly explains that the time he spends with his children means leisure time and represents a kind of hobby for him. What this Portuguese senior manager does not say is that in order for him to enjoy his time with the children, his wife manages his private sphere for him; he just arrives home, sits and eats at the table with the children. The children are already prepared and wait for him to have dinner. After the ritual dinner, he leaves the table and continues his leisure time, pleasing himself by watching the news on TV or getting some technical information that helps him in his paid work and his career development. He does not point at that somebody else has to arrange the household and bring the children to bed. During the weekend he has again his leisure time with the family. When he says that he dedicates his time to the family on weekends, he really means that he devotes it to leisure activities with the family, particularly with the children. His wife is still responsible for all household tasks.

Two German senior managers also perceive the time they spend with their families as leisure time and therefore as a way to relax from work, as it is for the Portuguese managers discussed above. One German senior manager regards it as his *«time of regeneration»* and he says *«[n]ormally I relax, and nothing else»*. Other German senior manager spends his leisure time with his family. None of them mentions obligations which they have to fulfil, or work which they have to do in the private sphere. This German senior manager emphasises that after joining MC the se-

paration between his private and public life has become very clear. He says that after work he dedicates his time to his family, but again giving time to the family means leisure activities and relaxing, and not such domestic work or responsibilities as he probably undertook in the past.

Other managers have similar views. An English senior manager says that it is very important for him to spend the weekends with his children. He does not talk about any domestic or family work which they require because somebody else prepares and arranges everything for them in the private sphere.

Interestingly, an English senior manager mentions that besides having lunch together with his family he takes care of his large garden. This work is, of course, not an obligation for him or the kind of work that needs to be done in private on a daily basis. It is the kind of work that helps him to regenerate and recover from his work as a manager.

There are other managers who do not become involved in any family work by engaging themselves in a specific domestic task. A German senior manager seems to be regularly confronted with conflicts and problems within his family. Since he does not want to face these problems, he escapes by going to the garden to do some work there. The family does not offer a relaxing environment therefore he has to be on his own. If this German senior manager sees that his wife cannot be physically or mentally free to care for him (emotional work) he goes to the garden and begins a domestic activity regarded and taken as leisure. He fails at a practical level to deal with family issues, which in his perspective are his wife's obligation. However, it is possible that managers understate what they actually do domestically, because doing domestic work has low status for men, in particular if their wives have told them to do it.

Differently, a Portuguese non senior manager complains about not having enough time for his hobbies because of the family, and he sees himself as a kind of victim. He also says that he participates more in domestic work activities than his colleagues at MC. In addition, he complains that he is taking time away from his working hours; this is a reasonable complaint, due to his career demands, but he fails to say that his wife requires his help because he has two small children and recently bought a large house, and because she herself has a career as manager too. Like most managers, he still claims his free time, although not doing as many hobbies as he would like.

Two other non-senior managers, who have children but do not live with the mothers of their children any more, are in a distinctive situation. A Portuguese non senior manager says that now he has enough time on his own, but does not clarify that he managed to get away from his family obligations through engaging in a legal divorce process begun on his own initiative. His former wife takes care of the children during the week, so he can enjoy leisure time after work. Differently, a Portuguese non senior manager describes a situation in which he has to manage the private side of his career, at least in respect of taking care of his son on some days of the week and some weekends. He even cancels some seminars that are part of his work, to create his leisure time with his son and probably his free time. What is 'unspoken' is how much domestic support a Portuguese non senior manager gets from other women, for example his mother or fiancée.

Managing leisure time

The accounts of the managers in my sample demonstrate very different perceptions of the amount of leisure time and free time which these managers have. They also show how differently they arrange free time and leisure activities.

For an English senior manager, leisure time is only a matter of self-determination and establishing priorities. Also another English non senior manager refer only to the need for priorities and proper planning. Similarly, a German senior manager does not see any problems in getting enough free time. They do not make clear that their priorities and their plans concern only the time which they allocate to their work and to their leisure and free time. Differently, an English non senior manager clarifies that he creates a clear division between working and private life; and his private life only includes his leisure activities and time for himself. He describes, for example, how he uses his free time for holidays on his own (without his family). The Portuguese senior manager never gets home early from work, but he says that he still arranges his leisure time in the morning during the week and at the weekend. He goes to the gym early in the morning, because this is the only time when he is not disturbed by clients. All these managers do not seem to give a thought to the management of the private sphere in the sense of any domestic work. More importantly, they do not clarify that they are only able to set priorities and plan their non-working time as they want because the leisure work has been done for them.

Other managers emphasise that they do have not enough leisure time and, particularly, free time. A Portuguese senior manager, for example, complains that he does not have any time for leisure activities during the week. Other German senior manager says that because of his work he is not able to do all his leisure activities as extensively as he would like. They do not mention any other problems or activities, particularly domestic tasks; it is only their work that prevents them from having more leisure time and free time. English senior manager has the same problem, but makes it clear that work has a clear priority over leisure activities. For an English senior manager *«family life is a separate thing»*. But he does not say that in the private sphere there is a wife, who is responsible and does the leisure work in order for him to enjoy his free time and leisure activities. The only frustration which he has is not having enough time for even more hobbies, because time has instead to be allocated to his work. An English senior manager says that his *«life is now about work and sleep»*. On the other hand, he mentions listening to music and, again, it is only his paid work, and not any other obligations or work that hinders him from getting more free time. Similarly a Portuguese senior manager, who claims not to have any time for leisure activities, and he leaves out the relaxing time he spends at home where everything is prepared for him, as he said earlier in his account. In the perceptions, of these managers, they may not have as much leisure time or free time as they wish. However, this is not because they are allocating their time after work to the management of their private spheres. Their discourses hide that everything is done or organised by their wives for them to enjoy leisure and free time.

Another variation appears in the account of an English senior manager, who does not even want to come home before his wife, in order not to spend his leisure time alone. Of course he does

not say that he does not want to get involved with any domestic work. If he arrives home and his wife is not there, he leaves again and spends more hours at his job, or does something else outside home. Similarly other English senior manager says that although he does not have to go back to his job he prefers to stay at his workplace instead of going home earlier. But he does not clarify that this is a way of avoiding any family work. An English senior manager describes a different situation. He helps his wife with 'her' domestic tasks, to get some leisure time together with her. But domestic work remains his choice, and it is not an obligation or necessity for him to support her in this way. The same English senior manager does not do domestic activities on a regular basis; he only does them when he feels like it and when he wants to have his wife available for his leisure time.

Variety of leisure activities

Besides different 'male' sports activities (e.g. football), getting together with friends, travelling, reading and working around the house and garden are the most common activities for these men. Managers also take domestic activities like gardening or some «do-it-yourself» work as a kind of hobby. In fact they do these domestic activities only when they feel like it, whereas, when wives do gardening or other domestic work they usually do not do so as leisure activities in the same sense. For wives it is mostly an obligation, work, something they have to do or at least should organise (even when they have full domestic support).

In general, the mainstream literature regards leisure activities as a public as well as private issue. For example, Deem (1985) says, «Whilst some sociologists argue that leisure has become commercialised, others claim it is something which remains private. Leisure can be linked not just to individuals or to particular social groups, but also to communities and to the home» (184). Many scientific discussions about leisure time and work are based on studies of males and most of these studies ignore the fact that «women participate less in sport and have less leisure of all kinds than do men, and female leisure is more often a home-based domestic kind than is the case for men» (Deem, 1985: 186). Deem acknowledges that 'free' time for women is also mixed with the notion of their leisure activities. But these explanations of women's position in relation to leisure time often remain vague.

Delphy and Leonard (1992) explain why leisure is a problem for wives (also ex-wives) and not for managers.

«[w]omen are certainly differently located from men when it comes to treating their family as 'an escape from work'. Domestic life may be a counter to certain of the stresses women face in employment, but families do not constitute 'leisure' for women, even when they have paid domestic help. Women do not have leisure in the strict sense of 'time other than that sold to be employer by a wage worker who owns his own labour power', because married women (and some unmarried women too) do not own their own labour power» (250).

Furthermore, if wives do not agree with the managers on any of their plans, the managers

follow them anyway. In opposition to the managers, wives have to negotiate their free time away from the home. «They can only hope to do this when they are not needed full-time at home and if they can find appropriate employment and leisure activities» (Delphy & Leonard, 1992: 247).

Money is another important factor that stops women from enjoying as much leisure time as their husbands. Some authors argue there is a trend towards a society polarized between 'unemployed' or low paid people and employed, well-paid people. One group has time but little leisure or income, and others have money, which enables leisure to be enjoyed (Deem, 1985). Managers' wives seem to form a different group, because they do not have much time for leisure activities and, although some of them earn a considerable amount of money, they seem to lack money for these activities, too. The earnings of wives are often allocated to the extras needed in the household or for the children. Wives do not seem to have spare money to spend on expensive extra leisure activities on their own. Managers, on the other hand, do not seem to lack money for leisure activities. Moreover, their wives have to understand men's requirements for leisure activities (e.g. men's seminars by the sea in Italy) or for free time to relax and have some excitement (e.g. climbing in the Himalayas) because otherwise they would be disturbed and stressed at home.

But husbands may occasionally allow financial support for the leisure activities of wives that can improve the status of the managers themselves. The managers benefit, because some hobbies support the development of certain social networks, which can be useful for managers when dealing with customers in big business deals where business is mixed with pleasure. Therefore managers' wives' leisure activities are not only a way for wives to enjoy part of their non-working time; certain activities, in the same way as some philanthropic occupations of wives, are developed around their husbands' interests and their required business networks. For example, when the wife of an English senior manager enters a horse-riding competition her husband also benefits from the status of her hobby. Moreover certain hobbies are connected to specific social classes. In England, the upper classes enter and visit horse-riding competitions. Therefore his wife hobby allows this English senior manager the development of certain social networks that could be helpful for his work in management and career progression.

Conclusion

Most of managers' non-working time is free time or leisure time, though in the case of senior managers, they owe all their time to the company and they are only free in so far as the company does not need them. In this sense it could be said they are like their wives who owe all their time to the husbands.

Leisure time is not a fundamental problem for the managers, because their sole concern is about how to prioritise time among the different hobbies (leisure activities) which managers wish to do outside the hours which they give to their jobs. The non-working time of managers hardly includes any domestic work, but it is an important part of the time of managers' wives. In the case of wives, it does not matter whether they are employed or not, because managers, work organisa-

tions, and society regard this kind of work as their natural duty or as part of a successful functional division of labour. Some managers would rather stay at the workplace doing overtime than go home and take care of any domestic work that may emerge when they arrive home earlier.

Leisure activities of managers may include activities at home, (such as gardening) or related to the family, such as playing with the children, but their structural dominance within the family allows them to conduct all these activities as leisure and not as housework tasks or domestic responsibilities. When managers engage in domestic activities it is as an occasional personal choice and not a routine obligation. They perceive these activities related to home or children as hobbies. Therefore combining a professional career and a family life is for managers only a question of balancing paid work and leisure time.

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Resumo. O aumento da disponibilidade e flexibilidade individual é cada vez mais necessária para progredir na carreira como gestor aos níveis mais altos nas organizações de grande dimensão. Se um gestor homem investe todo o seu tempo na organização e no trabalho, ficará sem tempo disponível para investir na gestão da sua vida privada. Desta forma, continua por investigar como é os gestores são capazes de criar tempo e espaço para gozarem os seus tempos livres nas horas em que não trabalham. São as companheiras dos gestores que continuam a preparar todo o trabalho doméstico na esfera privada, para que estes homens possam gozar os seus tempos livres em qualquer actividade de lazer.

A evidência empírica para este artigo deriva de 64 entrevistas com homens gestores de três países Europeus (Alemanha, Portugal e Grã Bretanha), que trabalham para uma multinacional de grande dimensão. Estas entrevistas cobrem as perspectivas de gestores homens com idades compreendidas entre os 30 e 65 anos, e com diferentes posições em cargos de gestão e ciclos de vida.

Este artigo explora três dimensões de tempo que são importantes para o trabalho e carreira de homens gestores: tempo fora do trabalho, tempo livre e tempo de lazer. Este último conceito é aquele que permite aos gestores dedicação absoluta ao que desejarem nos seus tempos fora do trabalho. Por conseguinte, para homens gestores, combinar uma carreira profissional com a vida familiar é apenas uma questão de equilibrar o seu trabalho com o seu tempo de lazer, não constituindo qualquer motivo de tensão entre emprego e obrigações domésticas.

Palavras-chave: Multinacionais, lazer, tempo, gestores no trabalho, equilíbrio na vida e trabalho.