

## The Nature of Leisure Revisited

### *An Interpretation of Digital Leisure*

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#### Abstract

Information and communication technologies have made it possible to engage in leisure and paid-work activities outside their usual context, thereby challenging the construction of their meanings. We explored 30 individuals' narratives in an endeavour to identify the properties of digital leisure and paid-work activities performed in and out of their usual contexts. Our interpretation suggests that the nature of leisure activities is only associated with the freedom of individuals to choose which activity to do and how to do it. The patterns of interpenetration, integration, and segmentation of spaces varied according to informants' occupations, but were also moderated by marital status and gender. We conclude with a discussion of how these findings challenge the traditional divisions between work and leisure.

**Keywords:** *digital leisure; border crossing; space boundaries; digital culture; interpretive research; space integration/segmentation*

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## Introduction

The incursion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into everyday life is transforming leisure practices (Bryce, 2001) not only by offering new leisure options but also by changing how, when, and where leisure is experienced (Boczkowski, 2010). In our research we analyse how the leisure experience is affected by the fact that ICTs have destabilized leisure activities in relation to place and time. This transformation represents an opportunity to re-analyse the nature of leisure and research conducted to date in order to define the nature of leisure activities from both the positivist and interpretive/constructivist paradigms and to consider the implications for the study of leisure.

Research into the nature of leisure has attempted to identify the unique properties of leisure activities in opposition to paid-work activities. To this end, researchers have studied sets of leisure and paid-work activities performed in their usual contexts in order to distinguish between the properties of leisure and paid-work activities, and have then used these properties to classify other activities (Kelly, 1978; Neulinger, 1974/1981; Shaw, 1985; Tinsley, Hinson, Tinsley, & Holt, 1993). This approach, characteristic of the natural sciences, has produced lists of properties of leisure that are largely shared with paid-work activities. Note that, as proposed by Robinson and Godbey (2000), we distinguish between work in exchange for a wage or salary (i.e., paid work), and homemaker, care, and other activities, differentiated from leisure activities at home but performed in the home during free time, which we call unpaid work.

Constructivist/interpretive research has emphasized the role of the context in which individuals interact as they construct the meanings they attach to leisure or paid-work activities. In general, research has focused on the production of meanings associated with certain face-to-face activities, demonstrating (1) that activities may change in meaning when context (space and time) is changed (Dupuis, 2000; Dupuis & Smale, 2000), and (2) that individuals may construct different meanings regarding the same activity (Churchill, Clark, Prochaska-Cue, Creswell, & Ontai-Grzebik, 2007).

ICTs offer an opportunity to investigate the production of meanings associated with leisure and paid-work experiences, and not just when the leisure and paid-work activities take place at home or at the work place, and during free or work time, respectively, but especially when these activities invade other spaces and times; for instance, when a leisure activity is engaged in during working hours in the work space or when a paid-work activity is performed in a person's free time at home. Thus, using the words of Nippert-Eng (1996), the digital technologies make it possible to construct a more integrative vision of job and home. This social transformation suggests that we need to explore anew the production of meanings associated with concepts that have traditionally organized our lives. Digital leisure adds a new complexity to questions regarding the nature of leisure. How do people assign meanings to leisure activities performed outside of their usual context? How do people attach meaning to their leisure activities when the typical spaces of before no longer have boundaries?

To try and answer these questions, in this research we draw on interpretive leisure studies and on political-economic theories regarding the post-modern society shaped by the digital technologies. Concretely we aim to contrast how people assign meaning to leisure and paid-work activities undertaken in the usual spaces and times and performed in more unusual spaces and times. Finally we discuss the implications of digital leisure for individuals living in society today.

## Conceptual Framework

From the outset, leisure studies have sought to delimit the knowledge domain for leisure by marking it as distinct from, and opposite to, paid work (Neulinger, 1974/1981; Soule, 1957). However, efforts to define the concept of leisure have produced mixed results. Our aim in this section is to show how leisure is analysed according to different paradigms, whether seeking a universal truth (an objective definition of leisure) under the positivist/post-positivist paradigm (Iso-Ahola, 1999, p. 35), or seeking a socially constructed local knowledge (socially constructed realities) in the case of the constructivist paradigm (Dupuis, 2000; Dupuis & Smale, 2000; Lewis & Johnson, 2011; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998). We conclude this section by reviewing the literature regarding social changes in leisure activities caused by the digital technologies (Bryce, 2001; Bockowski, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Postigo, 2003; Rainie & Wellman, 2012; Terranova, 2000).

### Leisure as an Objective and Universal Experience

Research conducted within the positivist/post-positivist/pragmatic paradigms considers that leisure is real, exists independently of the researcher (ontological position), should be studied objectively (epistemological position) and can be measured by quantitative methods, even if with measurement errors. The simplified paradigm proposed by Kelly (1972/ 2009) is one of the earliest attempts to define leisure. This author suggested, after reviewing the existing research, that we could classify activities according to how they relate to paid work and according to the individual's discretionary capacity to perform them. These two dimensions therefore form a space of properties that, when combined, enable us to exhaustively classify all leisure activities in four categories: (1) leisure chosen for its own sake (freely chosen and not work related); (2) coordinated leisure (freely chosen and work related); (3) leisure complementary to work (socially determined and not work related); and (4) leisure as preparation for, or recuperation from, work activities (not freely chosen and work related). Kelly's typology reflects the work-leisure relationship that formerly predominated in research: leisure as a compensation for work (Zuzanek & Mannell, 1983).

In the same vein, Neulinger (1974/1981) proposed a paradigm for studying leisure activities based on two dimensions that also build a space of properties. In this paradigm, perceived freedom is the main property of leisure, whereas motivation graduates the intensity of choice, forming six classes of experiences (note that for Neulinger only paid work is a job): (1) pure leisure (freely chosen and intrinsically motivated); (2) leisure-work (freely chosen and both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated); (3) leisure-job (freely chosen and extrinsically motivated); (4) pure work (not freely chosen and intrinsically motivated); (5) work-job (not freely chosen and both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated); and (6) pure job (not freely chosen and extrinsically motivated). One advantage of the Kelly and Neulinger typologies is the range of leisure concepts suggested. However, according to Unger and Kerna (1983), efforts to objectively and comprehensively classify leisure activities and to include them unequivocally in a given typology fail to account for the way in which activities are conducted and experienced.

Emphasis subsequently shifted from the classification of leisure activities to the subjective mental state of the individual performing the leisure activity (Mannell, 1979). Subjective approaches view leisure as a state of mind or as a personal experience and, according to Unger and Kerman (1983), this equips the concept of leisure with greater validity. This new approach sought to identify the subjective dimensions and properties of leisure in the minds of the individuals performing leisure activities (see Table 1). Iso-Ahola (1979) and Kelly (1978) refer to two

subjective dimensions, namely, intrinsic satisfaction and perception of freedom, whereas Miller and Robinson (1963) propose free time, recreation, and play, as dimensions of leisure. Unger and Kerman (1983), in an attempt to respond to what it means to have a leisure experience, subsequently characterized leisure as a multidimensional experience offering intrinsic satisfaction, freedom of choice, commitment, excitement, mastery, and spontaneity. The results suggest that the first three properties are present in a wide range of leisure contexts, whereas the last three dimensions only emerge in certain activities.

Shaw (1985) attempted to discover something of the experience of leisure in everyday life in order to determine how the leisure experience differed from the work experience. A sample of individuals were asked to categorize and assign meanings to routine activities, with the results suggesting that the meanings that best distinguished between leisure and work were enjoyment, choice, relaxation, intrinsic motivation, and lack of evaluation. Nevertheless, Shaw's main contribution was to demonstrate that leisure activities with the corresponding perceptual dimensions did not form a clear-cut pattern. Almost a decade later, Tinsley, Hinson, Tinsley, and Holt (1993) quantitatively analysed narrative essays by 304 students, finding that leisure experiences were most frequently characterized as providing pleasure, companionship, novelty, relaxation, aesthetics, appreciation, and intimacy, whereas paid work experiences were described as providing extrinsic rewards and as enabling accomplishment, learning, and altruism. However, paid work also shared a number of characteristics with leisure. Due to the overlap between the properties of leisure and paid work found in the literature, Shaw (1985) suggested that an understanding of the meaning of leisure requires us to turn our attention away from the activities themselves and towards the contexts where the activities take place.

### **The Nature of Leisure in Constructivist Research**

Research in the constructivist/interpretive paradigm does not view the leisure experience as an objective phenomenon whereby activities are identified so as to determine the mental states of individuals. The aim, rather, is to uncover how people assign a leisure or work label to their activities. In other words, it is assumed that activities do not have a universal meaning; rather, meaning is constructed by the individual in a given local context and during interaction with other individuals and objects. Kelly and Kelly (1994) investigated whether leisure, work, and home (family/community) spaces had unique meanings, and whether activities inherited the meanings or properties of the spaces where they were performed. Their results suggest that the three spaces share multidimensional meanings, although in different degrees. Thus, commitment and satisfaction meanings predominate in the leisure and home spaces (both share space, as many leisure activities are done at home), whereas productivity meanings predominate in the paid-work space.

More recent research has focused on how the meanings of activities change in the contexts where they are experienced. Dupuis (2000) and Dupuis and Smale (2000) have studied whether the meaning of caring for the elderly varied when care took place in the home-based context or in an institution-based context. For relatives who felt socially connected with their parents and for whom the visit was an opportunity for recreation and to disconnect or escape from routine, these authors found that the meaning of care-giving shifted from a work to a leisure experience. How can this difference in meaning be explained? Haworth and Veal (2004) have proposed that society is becoming increasingly polarized by time pressure, leaving people with a sensation of lack of choice.

Churchill et al. (2007) were interested in determining not only whether the context in which families live (in their case, low-income rural women with young children) affects leisure

activities that they consider fun, but also the nature of those leisure activities. Leisure activities could be classified in two categories: (1) activities that by definition were easily accessible and in which families frequently participated, and (2) activities that were less accessible and in which families participated less frequently. These authors' analysis of everyday activities pursued for fun and specific times set aside for leisure activities reveals that whether an activity was experienced as a leisure activity depended on internal and external family factors. For instance, a key internal family factor was whether the family was committed to fun (showing special creativity and commitment regarding everyday accessible activities), and whether the family valued less accessible activities and thus focused on the constraints that kept them from engaging in the corresponding leisure activities.

Hence, it is the experience and not the activity itself that is responsible for changing the meaning of free-time activities and converting them into leisure experiences. The changing nature of leisure activities is related to how family members live the experiences and it does not matter whether or not it is a caring activity (Dupuis, 2000; Dupuis & Smale, 2000), a gendered leisure activity (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000; Michael Bittman, Rice, & Wajcman, 2004; Lewis & Johnson, 2011; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Bryce & Rutter, 2003), an ordinary activity pursued for fun (Churchill et al., 2007), or a family leisure activity chosen with the aim of improving the functioning of the family (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). However, even though the meaning of leisure may change according to the context and to how people live the experience, the question remains: Are there any dimensions of the experience that are common to all leisure activities? Phenomenological researchers consider that although leisure activities are personally experienced, all leisure experiences share an essential set of descriptive dimensions. According to Watkins and Bond (2007), who analysed the descriptions provided by a set of informants about their leisure experiences in a range of contexts and times, the leisure experience dimensions common to all the informants' personal accounts were essentially four, ordered according to their complexity: achieving fulfilment, escaping pressure, exercising choice and passing time.

### Digital Leisure: A Society in Transformation

Although researcher efforts have not provided a definition of leisure that enables correspondence to be established between activities and their meanings, they have made it clear that researched individuals associate leisure with freely exercised choice, free time and an experience in a given space (Neulinger, 1981). Leisure was usually engaged in a private (home) or public (e.g., movie theatre) leisure space and work, in its usual space. Leisure and work activities, then, occurred in their usual times and spaces. This is no longer always the case, nonetheless, as the ICTs used for leisure activities have made it possible for certain leisure activities to take place in work spaces during work time, and for work activities to take place in leisure spaces during leisure time.

It seems, therefore, that the holy trinity suggested by modernist researches—time, space, and activity, whether work or leisure—has been dynamited by the ICTs (Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Postigo, 2003; Terranova, 2000). Now, not only is any hybrid combination possible, but as Foucault and Miskowiec (1986) suggested, utopic spaces have given way to heterotopic spaces in which any postmodern combination of time, space and activity is possible. Furthermore, the way activities are performed is also changing (Drotner, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Postigo, 2003; Terranova, 2000). The usual borders between the work and leisure domains are blurred due to the contamination of spaces, the result of leisure activities introduced in the paid-work space; this juxtaposition of spaces, according to Foucault (1986), destabilizes the usual categories of knowing (are facts what they were supposed to be?), relating (do people play their usual social

role?), and being (which is the actual status of the self if one is uncertain about the facts and social roles played by other individuals and organizations?), as demonstrated by Taylor and Kolko (2003) in their research into role-play games. In fact, the categories and divisions suggested by modern thinking are increasingly receiving less empirical support, and heterotopic spaces are coming to dominate (Bryce, 2001; Bockswosky, 2010; Taylor & Kolko, 2003).

It is not just that the very nature of leisure activities is being challenged. Rainie and Wellman (2012) have argued that the modernist concept of the family at home has also been dynamited by the ICTs. These authors suggest that, in incorporating digital technologies in their lives, people have changed the way they interact with each other, not only within the family, but also with individuals of other families. Concretely, the presence of the modernist, uniform family is being reduced, and a new breed of families—composed of networked individuals—is taking over social life, with the person, not the family unit, as the focus of attention. Individuals have changed in how they interact with others, to what Rainie and Wellman call a social network operating system, described as “personal—the individual is at the autonomous centre just as she is reaching out from her computer; multiuser—people are interacting with numerous diverse others; multitasking—people are doing several things; and multithreaded—they are doing them more or less simultaneously” (p. 7). The social network operating system also has implications for the nature of work, as demonstrated by Terranova (2000) for the digital media industry, where the mixing of unpaid work (with no income) with leisure (individuals love doing the unpaid work in their free time) has devalued knowledge work.

The concepts of the contamination of utopic spaces and the networked individual both raise the issue of how individuals make daily transitions across the borders of work and leisure experiences and assign meaning to activities conducted in contaminated spaces. Nippert-Eng (1996) has explored the strategies individuals use to deal with the transition between the home and work domains—via integration or segmentation strategies—and the conditions and consequences of those strategies. Integration, then, results when people frequently and naturally cross the boundaries of home and work domains, when people do not care to bring work-related activities into the home and vice versa; instead, segmentation results from maintaining a clear-cut distinction between home and work, crossing the boundaries regularly but not mixing them. Clark (2000) subsequently proposed a work/family border theory based on Nippert-Eng's (1996) findings and further research on work/family domain crossing. The work/family border theory addresses how border creation and management, participation in the domain, and relationships between participants and others in both domains—work and home—shape integration and segmentation strategies, and influence the work/family balance.

Rainie and Wellman's social network operating system reflects the contamination of spaces and the crossing of borders. Individuals are faced with the task of assigning meaning to activities that take place outside their usual space (crossing spaces with contaminated activities); furthermore, nobody is clear as to whether the meaning should be one associated with unpaid work or with leisure. Terranova (2000), Postigo (2003), and Hesmondhalgh (2010) have provided evidence that leisure activities that produce digital culture, such as building websites, modifying software packages, reading and participating in mailing lists, and building text-based virtual spaces accessed via the Internet by multiple users from remote locations, have blurred the territory between work and leisure, production and consumption. This is what is called a social factory: work processes are shifted from the factory to society, and are enjoyed but exploited as free labour. This kind of intersection between work and cultural expression, Terranova argues, challenges the theoretical and practical links between work and leisure, and is an issue that remains under-analysed in leisure as well as media and cultural studies.

All these arguments lead us to reconsider the old work/leisure divide (Haworth & Veal, 2004) and to focus on what Rojek (2001) propose as an emergent working society of leisure, consisting of self-determined work, with a continuum of work practices throughout people's lives that offer social, psychological and economic rewards. Evidence that favours Rojek's proposition has been reported by Bowers (2007) and Ravenscroft and Gilchrist (2009) whose research suggests that some people have broken down the barriers between leisure and work to create a new working society of leisure.

The aim of this study is to revisit the nature of leisure and its relationship to paid work in leisure (home) and work spaces contaminated by digital technologies. We analyse how individuals make sense of leisure (and work) activities conducted in the work and home spaces and activities conducted in contaminated spaces. How do people assign meanings to leisure activities performed outside their usual context? How do people give meaning to leisure activities when what were formerly typical spaces no longer have boundaries? How is digital leisure changing the way individuals experience leisure and paid-work activities?

## Methodology

### Research Goal

Our goal was to interpret, from the narratives of a sample of individuals, the meanings constructed and assigned to activities performed in typical and nontypical work and leisure spaces. Specifically we wanted to do the following: (1) describe the contamination produced in work and leisure spaces, (2) point to meanings constructed during activities performed in typical spaces and in nontypical spaces, (3) describe situations for which the respondents draw no distinction between the meanings of leisure and work, and (4) discuss how contamination is socially shaped and its implications for the meaning of leisure.

### Epistemology and the Theoretical Framework

Our research is framed in the interpretive/constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), which asserts that human beings construct meanings for leisure activities as they interact with the world where the activity takes place, and with other individuals and objects. Individuals, then, interpret the contexts, objects, and other individuals, according to their meaning for the individual, and in so doing make sense of the activity they are doing (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 1994). Individuals, then, construct meanings and associate them with other individuals or objects when performing a leisure or work activity; they are, according to Crotty (1994) and Schwandt (1994), intentional subjects. Under this paradigm, it is possible (1) that the same people construct different meanings for a leisure activity performed in different contexts, and (2) that different people construct different meanings in regard to the same activity in the same context (Crotty, 1998).

This research aimed at describing and understanding the production of meanings regarding activities performed in and out of the normal space and time context, is framed in the hermeneutic tradition. Hermeneutics treats narratives (interviews, field notes, etc.) as strange texts that need to be interpreted (Crotty, 1998). At the same time, hermeneutics also assumes an affinity of some kind between the set of texts and the reader. This affinity is what makes it possible to interpret texts that are unrelated to the interpreter. The interpretation of texts makes it possible to share and communicate meanings among people, and doing so situates the interpretation within history and culture (Rundell, 1995). In line with the hermeneutic tradition, the purpose of interpreting a set of narratives is to gain an understanding that goes further than the interviewee's own interpretation. To complete that enterprise, hermeneutics claims that understand-

ing the whole set of texts is only possible through understanding its parts, and interpreting their meaning by dividing up the whole (analysing each interview, segmenting each interview, and then interpreting the set of interviews or texts). This procedure is called the hermeneutic circle.

### **Sampling Criteria**

We used four sampling criteria: selective sampling, snowball sampling, maximum variation sampling, and theoretical sampling (Patton, 2002). Selective sampling was used to identify informants with experiences of digital leisure activities in both the work and home spaces; these were asked whether during the last year they had used digital technologies (computers, consoles, smart phones or any kind of digital devices over the Internet) to perform activities for leisure purposes, with digital leisure defined as any freely chosen activity conducted with digital technologies during free time. Sampling started at an ICT training centre, with the initial informants helping us access additional informants via snowball sampling. Maximum variation sampling was used with the aim of capturing and describing shared analytical categories that cut across informants varying in characteristics in terms of sex, educational capital (secondary, vocational and university education) and occupation. Sampling stopped when additional informants did not add any new analytical category to those described in the findings section (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### **Data Collection**

The interviews, conducted over a period of six months in 2009 in two stages coinciding with teaching blocks at the ICT training centre (March-June and September-November), took place in different social settings in Barcelona (interviewees' homes, offices, and other places where the informants engaged in ICT-based leisure activities). Interviews were conducted on the basis of a protocol of twenty topics focused on obtaining a description of the kind of activities and technologies used to perform activities during leisure time, when and where those activities were performed, and how the activities were carried out. The goals were to produce a top-centred narrative (Riessman, 2002, p. 231) and foster theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). These semi-structured interviews provided the necessary narratives about leisure activities at home and work. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes (average around 60 minutes), were digitally recorded, and were transcribed verbatim with the help of Dragon Naturally Speaking 10 voice recognition software (Nuance Communications). Informants were guaranteed confidentiality, and were informed of the aims of the research and of the right to interrupt the recording if they wished.

### **Informants**

The sample consisted of 30 informants, 15 women and 15 men. Education levels were varied: 11, 10, and 9 informants had completed or were completing a postgraduate course, an undergraduate course, and a general or vocational secondary school course, respectively. Data on respondent employment and occupational profiles were also recorded, as follows: 17 were in full-time paid work (three informants worked as engineers: three as journalists; two works in audiovisual industry, five in administrative and operational tasks, three in education and training, and one in entertainment); 10 were students (including two combining studies with part-time paid work as clerks and two receiving payments for occasional projects related to their studies); two women performed unpaid work at home (one a home worker and the other a carer for a relative) and one man was unemployed. Most respondents were aged 20 to 30 years (range 17-58 years old); this was a result of the sample having been selected from among technology users and individuals who stated that they engaged in digital leisure. The sample was not distributed evenly

by age because digital technology use was unevenly distributed; consequently the exploration of gender differences was limited due to the fact that these generally appear after marriage and having children.

### Analysis

Narrative analysis in sociology refers to extended accounts of lived experiences in context, narrated in one or several interviews. Despite differences in definitions of narrative, all the methods of analysis involve constructing texts (interview transcripts, field notes, photos, etc.) that require analysis in order to be interpreted. We applied thematic analysis as it focuses on the context and on what is said (see Riessman, 1993; 2004). Our interest lies in the contexts in which leisure and work activities are engaged in, because, on this basis, we interpret the meanings in our informants' narratives. Researchers usually collect many narratives and inductively create conceptual groups from the data, then present segments of narratives organized by themes. Thematic analysis is useful for understanding what is said across a number of cases, and for identifying themes across informants.

The qualitative analysis was assisted by the computer program EdEt, an editor for ethnographers (available from <http://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/etno/dlaStudentow/edet>), and by Cassandra's environment for qualitative analysis (Lejeune, 2011). Both computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) are designed to aid in conducting collaborative analyses. Both are based on a server-client framework where the server acts as a data repository (EdEt) and as a backend data analysis tool (Cassandra's environment). We inductively constructed a simple set of themes in order to group narratives according to the activities performed, the technologies used for the activities, the spaces (work and leisure) where the activities were performed, the times when the activities were performed (work and leisure), and one final theme that grouped the meanings assigned to activities. During this process, in order to improve the validity of the categories, we held several meetings of different durations to share and discuss our interpretations of texts, codes, categories, and properties (for validity, see Polkinghorne, 2007). After coding, simple and conditional searches of the co-occurrence of categories produced the meanings of the activities performed (and the technologies used) in different spaces and times.

## Findings

In this section, we describe activities performed outside their usual context and the technologies used to perform them and activities conducted in leisure time slots inserted in work spaces and work time slots inserted in leisure spaces. We then describe the meanings that informants give to leisure and work activities performed in their usual context, and compare these with contaminated activities. Finally we show under what conditions the meanings of leisure and work are blurred, and when informants fail to separate them.

### Crossing Work-Space Boundaries

There has traditionally been a high coincidence between work activities, work space, and work time. Although formerly there may have been exceptions in regard to taking work home, it was undoubtedly unusual for leisure activities to be performed in the work space. However, with the proliferation of the ICTs in everyday life, the insertion of temporary slots of leisure time in the work space has become increasingly frequent. Mariana (23 years old), a single graduate in audiovisual communications, and a community manager, clearly demonstrates this when she compares her behaviour with that of a friend who has just bought an iPhone with Internet access:

A friend bought an iPhone because she thought it was cool, it caught her eye, or whatever, but of course, now needs have been created that she did not have before... Because at work, we check our personal mail once or twice a day, or once every evening. But this girl, because she has an iPhone with Internet, then it's every half hour: Let's see if I have an email, let's see if I have Facebook updates. (Mariana, para. 2009)

Instant messaging and e-mailing have introduced typical social interactions in leisure time and space into work time and space. Social interaction now takes the form of synchronous (chats or video calls) and asynchronous (e-mails and messages) leisure slots that momentarily break the routine of work activities. Manuel (29 years old), a trainee researcher, uses instant messaging to stay connected and informed, so social interaction is not interrupted by work time and space.

...my job requires me to be glued to a computer, sending and receiving information, and meanwhile messages come in that prompt me to see what's happening, digital leisure is practically constant ... from when you start up your computer messages come in, and with just a click you have leisure time during work. (Manuel, para. 2269)

Adriana (18 years old), a student, inserts leisure slots into her work to keep connected with friends via Facebook. She performs activities simultaneously so, as she works, she listens to music, and downloads digital files for her own use, using iGoogle to bring the technologies she uses for work and leisure together in the same place. She also tells us that she thinks leisure slots at work are a good thing to keep active:

...whatever task I am doing, on the computer I have a window open with Facebook or something, online radio is always on for music, and if I like it, I download it, and also iGoogle [is open]. I have to be busy; I'm distracted if I have no work, I look at something on the Internet and I get distracted, I don't like doing nothing... (Adriana, para. 694)

Martina (26 years old), a project manager, introduces leisure slots at the end of her working day to facilitate the transition to leisure. This is when she connects to Facebook to catch up with people and plan social activities. Normally her choice of the communication technology depends on the recipient: Facebook for maintaining regular contact with people and e-mail for communicating with family or with friends with whom she relates sporadically.

...with e-mail you connect to people, and they know you exist and if, say, they are in the same city, you could write them an e-mail and say let's meet up! It lets you know which people are ... and ... that's great! ....Facebook is more a matter of: I've finished something on the computer, and now what to look at before switching off. (Martina, para. 351-354)

### Crossing Leisure-Time Boundaries at Home

Digital technologies facilitate home access to work data and tasks, resulting in contamination of leisure time at home by work-related activities. Whereas before, work was physically taken home for completion or review, nowadays working from home is done much more easily, as Jaime (34 years old), a telecommunications engineer, informs us: "Since my work is linked to the Internet, it may be that sometimes I do something that's unfinished, so I look at it after work." (para. 1677)

Work technologies (software) have even been cloned in devices designed for leisure (home personal computers) according to Samuel (33 years old), an engineer, who has turned his own laptop into a clone of his work computer:

I could use this laptop, I have exactly the same programs as I have at work, and since the computer is portable, if I have to do something at home...the truth is that I don't usually bring home the company computer, but my laptop is a tool. Without it I could do nothing. (Samuel, para. 43)

Work activities carried out with digital technologies during free time in the home space are integrated into daily routines, especially for people who feel under pressure to keep up. This is the case of Javier, a sports journalist. Keeping up with sports news is his job, so he has to keep informed, but it is also leisure because he likes sports, he says. Information slots about sport are part of his daily routine at home:

I always have the computer on, to check e-mail ... for my work, even for leisure, I have to keep up with what's happening in sports, then, working or not, as many days are free days, at the weekend I have to visit the websites of newspapers and sports papers, to keep up, because maybe the next day I'll be at the newspaper office, and I'll need to be on the ball. So, whether it's for leisure, because I like it, because it's sport, it's leisure. I like it, but it's also part of work. (Javier, para. 2883)

At other times, activities performed in the leisure space (theoretically leisure activities) are performed with the intention of later transforming them into work or money. This is the case with Antonio (22 years old), an audiovisual communications student, whose leisure activities include activities that he expects will eventually yield a return, whether in the value of the productions themselves, or because the new knowledge will potentially lead him to a job.

Normally I know what I have to do, if I'm setting up a digital project ... I try to do it as a leisure activity, although it could also be work time, in the future it could be the subject of work ... that because you work at home, you don't say that 'you have to work.' If I have an hour free at night, I look at things, to see what's happening. (Antonio, para. 1654)

### **Making Sense of Everyday Work and Leisure Activities**

The evidence presented above indicates that digital technologies have facilitated work and leisure space contamination. It is now common for leisure slots to be inserted in the work space and vice versa; this means that activities are often engaged in out of context. To show how respondents assign meanings to activities, first we discuss the meanings assigned to activities performed in their usual spaces and times—what we refer to as pure work or leisure. We then show which properties are altered in activities performed in non-typical (contaminated) spaces and times. Finally we examine activities performed out of context to which respondents are reluctant to assign strictly specific work or leisure meanings.

**Making sense of the conceptual divide between work and leisure: The meanings of the traditional divide.** Informants separate work from leisure according to the purpose of the activity, no matter whether they work as a freelancer or for a company or are studying at university. If the purpose is to earn money, the activity is interpreted as paid work. Camilo (23 years old), a student, is clear about the meaning of his activities on the Internet:

Well...I distinguish between what is Internet leisure, and what is Internet for practical reasons ... for me, when I'm looking for a scholarship, it isn't leisure, it's looking for the future ... when I refer to the Internet [as leisure] it's listening to music, listening to radio online, seeing this group...having a good time... it passes the time. (Camilo, para. 1070)

The search for information on a scholarship has to be done in the time periods and following the procedures set by the convening institution. Jaime (34 years old), an engineer, makes it very clear what it is to be ruled by processes when he says that he distinguishes work from leisure in terms of choice: “You simply have to do work,” he says. Work is mandatory, there is no choice, and you also must demonstrate that the work has been done; in other words, “you are accountable and have to report back” (para. 1714). In contrast, with leisure, according to Jaime, “you can choose to play or not to play,” and if you play you do not have to report to anyone except yourself.

The respondents indicate that accountability is not only about demonstrating that the activity was carried out, but also that set guidelines have been followed that enable an assessment of whether the activity was successfully and correctly completed. María (37 years old), a trainer for Teachers Without Borders, specifically refers to posting videos on websites, when aspects such as video quality, size, etc., arise as a source of stressful complications; when difficulties arise, however, she cannot choose to leave the activity to one side, as the problem has to be solved and the task completed:

If I need to upload a video for work, then I worry about the quality, size... Things I never asked about before. That's when it stops being leisure and becomes part of the job, a formal part, it isn't less satisfactory, but it becomes something that's an effort, it can even cause you stress, if you want to do something, and you cannot do it, and don't know why... you can spend 20 hours on it ... if it's leisure you give up, but if it's work, you find out and you do it. (María, para. 2145)

María indicates that not having to account to anyone means that she can devote the time she wants to an activity; furthermore, she does not have to follow guidelines, can stop when difficulties arise and can resume later when the obstacles have been overcome. As she says: “Since it's leisure, no effort is needed, because it works itself out gradually, you start to browse, search ... and if you find nothing, you go onto another page and another.” (para.2144).

This enhances the satisfaction associated with the activity, and diminishes other properties that could increase the burden of performing the activity. María also explains that the effort invested in audiovisual activities for leisure purposes is as exhausting as that for work purposes but is, nevertheless, pleasurable:

For me ... for example, this does not mean ... you don't feel you're working, although the physical exhaustion is real, your back, your wrist hurts ... stuff like that, it's easy and brings great satisfaction in that. You find things very fast, you can read, you can listen, and with little effort you discover things. That's a good thing, or at least I like it, to discover lots of things you did not know, and you're amazed and say, wow, what a good series, this article is terrific, or that one is terrible. But you always discover things ... (María, para.2138)

**The meaning of activities performed in non-typical spaces and times.** In spaces contaminated by the introduction of activities taken out of their usual context, some properties of the usual context are preserved, whereas other properties are acquired from the new context. The ability to choose whether or not to perform the leisure activity is maintained, according to our informants (there is no choice in the case of work). However, the time that can be spent on the activity varies, and, in particular, the time spent on leisure activities performed at work is reduced. In other words, in the work space individuals lose the ability to choose how much time they spend on leisure activities. Juliana (26 years old) gave us a specific example in the half-hour

slots of leisure time she takes during work time to check Facebook, read Twitter messages, and view photos on Twitpic:

Yes, I don't go... [amazement] more than half an hour, an hour ...That's addiction! ... I'm writing a text and I have to look in Facebook, I'm always on the lookout for messages and things... And more so with Twitpic, Twitter photos, you can upload photos straight away. For example, the other day there were Lenny Kravitz photos ... and there I was on Twitpic [clicking with the index finger] and flicking through them, so, half an hour of work and half an hour of the Internet. (Juliana, para. 425-427)

These time-limited leisure slots in work time contrast with no time limit on digital leisure activities in leisure and free time. As Juan points out, leisure activities have no time limit as long as the desire to perform the activities continues: "Another thing is, you have free time, and you say, I'll go online here, I'll read the paper, I have the time... calmly, unhurriedly, slowly, going with the flow, not thinking too much." (para. 1812)

When Martina (26 years old) takes time out to contact an acquaintance who is also connected, whether from work or home, simultaneity and interactivity from opposing spaces is revealed: "You might take 20 minutes and come across someone who is also working, or doing something else on their computer." (para. 379)

Manuel, on the other hand, informs us that including digital leisure slots in his work provides moments of relaxation that, he claims, will enable him to refocus on his work. In other words, the relaxation time will enable him to return to work with renewed vigour:

Digital leisure ... is the way to disconnect from a task that is based on using technology ... if there was no digital leisure, well, maybe instead of working for so long, I'd have to stop concentrating, and go somewhere for a breather ... (Manuel, para. 2277)

Some activities conducted during free time help informants to maintain a necessary working pace. This is the case of Javier keeping abreast of sports news at home, although in a more leisurely way than at work. The same activity (keeping up to date with sports news) is performed differently in work and leisure time:

Things ... [his blog] have always been used for recreation but it turns out that ... what I'm working on now, something [formerly a leisure activity] helps me later on in my work, so I use it. It is leisure, but it's something I then use for work, how to record sound, convert files from a format ... these are things I do at home more as leisure, but then I use them in my work, to be up to date. It's the same thing really, one is for fun, another is for work, but they are the same tools, I learn them as leisure at home, and then when I get to work, I know and use them. (Javier, para. 2885)

**Bridging the divide between work and leisure.** The descriptions of the informants suggest that activities with a high creative component are done for fun, and are associated with enjoyment, freedom, and the thrill of achievement. In such cases, informants say it is difficult to separate the properties of leisure and work: the activity has no exclusive work or leisure meaning, but has both at once. Goyo, as a disc jockey, organizes events, and this job includes preparing music and images; these are activities he likes doing and that occasionally make him some money. The preparation usually begins as leisure but, given the effort required and the economic value, he eventually begins to think of it as work. So the task is both things at once, he says:

I might start playing with the 4D, thinking it's just fun, and I end up considering it as work, so I don't usually draw a distinction. The commitment is total; I think that if I

was paid for it, I'd be a millionaire, hours stuck in Facebook, in Hi5, my own website, sending e-mails, getting more data. I do everything you can imagine, suddenly I'm inspired ... I start because I think I'd look to see where I could upload something ... or a friend tells me to watch this program, download Mac programs, and I start with the program and then I say, with this program I can also download music, and that is work, and then I'm hooked again. So for me it's a vicious circle, work and leisure go together. Besides, I'm doing something I like, I really enjoy it, and I'm doing what I want. (Goyo, para. 3025-3026)

On the other hand, Antonio, a final-year journalism student, a cyber journalist and a blogger, does not distinguish between leisure and work tasks; rather he considers them the same because, with every project he starts: "I don't consider it a job, I don't get paid for it, I do it like it's a job, but it's leisure ... everything's mixed in together." (para. 766). And finally Mariana, who is in paid employment as a community manager, enjoys her work and has a high degree of choice in it:

My job is also leisure for me ... let's say that some part of the work is obligation, but the other part of my work comes from knowledge I have acquired through digital leisure. There are times when I'm working but I'm having such a good time! There are few people today who can say 'I'm doing this, but it's also this'. For me it's satisfaction, it's fun. (Mariana, para. 2199)

**Making sense of variations in patterns of crossing borders and bridging the conceptual divid.** Work space contamination patterns appear to vary depending on the person's occupation. Hence, while digital technologies facilitate the introduction of leisure slots at work, their influence on the interpenetration of spaces changes depending on the occupation of the informant. Those working in jobs with a certain amount of discretion in planning their work activities (part-time and full-time occupations—like systems engineering, graphic design, architecture, and audiovisual editing—in which individuals work mostly with computers), tend to insert leisure slots throughout the day. This is the case of Adriana (18 years old), who attributes getting his part-time current job in the ICT field to "spending so much time on Facebook" (para. 714): at work he continues to use Facebook, listen to online radio, surf the Internet, etc. Miquel (29 years old), a student working part-time for an architects' studio, says he sandwiches in digital leisure time during work and when he is at the university. Adela (23 years old), a documentary maker, confesses that she slips in "a bit of digital leisure at work, visiting Facebook and connecting to Gmail when she is editing an image." (para. 268) Her job, in fact, is the result of her curiosity and the passion for World of Warcraft she witnessed in her brother, her partner, and their friends: "I'm making a documentary about the game; it's a kind of diary in which I relate how I try to stay in that world of my brother, my partner, and our friends." (para. 224)

The contamination pattern for respondents in occupations where activities are time controlled or under direct supervision is different: leisure activities are typically slotted in at the end of the working day, as a transition to leisure. This is the case of Martina (26 years old), a project manager, with very tightly scheduled work activities, and with a packed agenda, who tells us "it isn't easy to find the time for leisure on weekdays since work is so tightly programmed." (para. 335)

However, as we saw earlier, at the end of the workday and before logging off, she takes a look at Facebook to catch up with people and check out social events. Other informants—like Alex, a 35-year-old engineer—keep spaces and activities completely separate. During working hours: "There is no leisure, digital or physical; basically it's pure work, and interaction and communica-

tion with others is all focused on work.” (para. 113) Alex further explains that his work involves frequent interactions with other individuals inside and outside the office, leaving little room for leisure at will.

At home, digital work patterns also differ according to the occupation of the respondents. Our sample includes respondents who work in jobs in the audiovisual, communications, engineering, and electronics fields, all of whom tend to take work home. Juliana (26 years old), who manages social media in the advertising and marketing field, says she takes work home because she is always connected, and even has a mobile phone that allows her to “stay connected and on top of things.” (para. 440) She considers that her social relations at work are potentially leisure activities:

Since I also work with computers, I’m always mixing activities at home, work and leisure activities. It’s entertaining. I typically use Twitter and Facebook for public relations. For example, through Twitter I got to know the social media of Barcelona, and I started working on the issue of social networking as work, but also as entertainment, depends on the moment.” (Juliana, paras. 431-443)

María, a 37-year-old teacher, when asked about her digital activities at home, explained how she performs some work-related tasks at home, but also makes queries related to her work as a teacher, which she feels might prove to be useful for work, even though her first motive is pleasure:

The first thing I do is read my mail, as soon as I arrive, I open that up. I have Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail, the university, and the education centre, and I do the rounds, after that, I answer Emails. Sometimes I look for stories that I use, I visit story pages a lot, to get texts that I like, save the authors’ names, stories that I might use. (María, para. 2044)

However, the influence of a person’s occupation on digital leisure in the home and on contamination patterns varies depending on the social status of the respondent. Single respondents, younger respondents, and respondents in jobs in the audiovisual, communications, engineering, and electronics fields experience greater contamination in the home; in contrast, work and home spaces are better separated by people with a partner or children. Informants who are in a relationship explain how the time spent on personal leisure decreased when the relationship started. This is the case of Mariana, who tells us: “At the weekend I try to get out, you know? I’m not usually at home with my computer, I try to get out on Saturday, and such, and spend time with my boyfriend.” (Mariana, para. 2172)

Finally, the leisure interests of respondents who have small children tend to be focused on activities suitable for their offspring. Samuel is divorced, and his digital leisure habits change when he has his 7-year-old son with him. He explains that he likes video games and likes to share this with his son. What this means is that the type of game and its duration is changed: “I have my own video games, for me.... But with him [his son], its football, adventure, something fun ... like the Lego ones, they’re fun, or sports or some skill, but controlling time and content.” (Samuel, para. 48)

Although our sample includes few married women, their narratives show that their free time is significantly reduced, both as far as taking work home is concerned, and for engaging in leisure activities at home. Clara, 27 years old and married, works as an accountant. She spends a lot of time on housework, such as cleaning, and she usually engages in leisure activities simultaneously with another activity, sometimes housework, sometimes conversation with a friend,

“sitting on the sofa with my laptop, conversing or touching up photos” (Clara, para. 1315). A time restriction on leisure becomes even more evident in the case of someone like Sonia, married with two children (one an infant who is not attending kindergarten), who takes care of the home and family. She only surfs leisurely on the Internet “after I have done all I planned to do that day, and when my kids are in bed” (para. 2807), but she recalls:

Fifteen years ago, I'd stay up until five in the morning (even when I had to work the next day), playing to kill, to kill someone in a game, in a war game! Now I don't buy Play Station 3, to avoid that! But I have Wii, with Wii my children have educational games, caring for animals, one game has horses ... but I don't play, I don't like it. (Sonia, para. 2550).

For Isa, who cares for her elderly mother at home, the time restriction is not so evident, as her mother so far has not required the attention required by two children, so now she spends many hours on her computer developing her technological skills; Daniel, unemployed, also explains how he uses the Internet to look for a job and to “retrain in the new digital technologies” (para. 1448).

To sum up, patterns of space interpenetration during free time varies depending on the person's occupation; thus, the greater the room for manoeuvre offered by an occupation, the greater the contamination of work and home spaces. The evidence points to the fact that that when an occupation admits the possibility of choosing what activities to do and how to do those activities; only then, informants experience the concepts of work and leisure to merge into what are simply rewarding activities, thereby challenging the traditional division between work and leisure. This is the case of Mariana, the community manager, who explains that it's “doing something that's fun and you are paid well” and that also allows her to “enhance her skills and personal knowledge.” (Mariana, para. 2204) Antonio (22 years old), single, a graduate in audiovisual communication and a professional blogger, is similar to Mariana in that he also draws no major distinction between leisure and work. When he is doing a project at home, he says, in theory it is leisure, but he is always aware that it is also potentially work that might in the future become a source of income. Goyo, a 32-year-old disc jockey by profession, is an extreme example, as the cross-contamination between work and home spaces in his case is complete, to the extent that Goyo says, “I don't usually draw a distinction.” (para. 3025)

## Discussion

Next we highlight the contribution of this research to the problem of defining the nature of leisure, discuss the properties of leisure that remain constant in all contexts, and consider how our conclusions compare with the results of research conducted to date. We then show that contamination patterns in paid work and home spaces differ according to specific circumstances, thereby contributing to our understanding of work/leisure borders and relating them to the work/home border theory. Finally, we address the social implications of a high degree of integration between work and leisure, where both concepts fade away to be replaced by the all-encompassing notion of activities that are simply rewarding.

### Leisure Out of Its Usual Space and Time Context: Its True Nature

Research conducted under a positivist/postpositivist paradigm has usually pointed to several properties that characterize the leisure experience: autonomy/self-definition (Neulinger & Breit, 1969; 2009); perceived freedom and its relationship with work (Neulinger, 1981; Parker,

1971); perceived freedom and motivation (Neulinger, 1981); perceived freedom and satisfaction (Iso-Ahola, 1979; Kelly, 1978; Dumazedier, 1974); satisfaction, perceived freedom, and commitment (Iso-Ahola, 1979; Kelly, 1978; Dumazedier, 1974); enjoyment (Dumazedier, 1974); relaxation and difference from work (Roadburg, 1983); effortlessness (Pieper, 1963); personal involvement, growth, and creativity (Dumazedier, 1967; de Grazia, 1962; Iso-Ahola, 1979); nonevaluability (Cavan, 1966; Shaw, 1985); and social interaction (Kelly, 1978; Cheek & Burch, 1976). Shaw (1985), for example, suggests that for individuals to assign a leisure meaning to their activities, the activity has to provide a combination of at least three of the properties of enjoyment, freedom of choice, relaxation, intrinsic motivation, and non-evaluability. Unger and Kernan (1983) also suggest three properties, namely, intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, and involvement.

In contrast, our results suggest that just a single category, namely, the freedom to make choices, characterizes the leisure experience and distinguishes it from work when it comes to digital activities. This category has two properties: the possibility of choosing the activity, and the possibility of choosing the way it is performed. This category, in fact, encompasses others such as freedom from evaluation (Cavan, 1969; Shaw, 1985), self-definition (Neulinger & Breit, 1969/2009), and freedom of choice (Kelly, 1981; Shaw, 1985). The interpretation of the narratives of our informants suggests that other properties of leisure are not necessary for individuals to interpret an activity as leisure; likewise with work. It is no coincidence that the research of Kelly and Kelly (1994) and Unger and Kerman (1983) demonstrates that most of the characteristics generally attributed to leisure, such as satisfaction, lack of effort, participation, etc., are also shared with some work activities, and Roberts (1978) admits that some find leisure in work times and places.

Other properties of leisure activities (such as intrinsic satisfaction) are shared with work activities, as other studies have found Tinsley, Hinson, Tinsley and Holt (1993). Unlike the proposition of Pieper (1963), our findings indicate that effort, a property traditionally associated with work, may also be a feature of digital leisure activities, as great effort may be invested in performing a leisure activity requiring perseverance to develop the necessary skills, as suggested by research into serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992). What differentiates leisure activities from paid-work activities, however, is the freedom of being able to choose an activity to do and also how to do it.

The choice of both the activity and how it is performed are two properties of leisure activities that do not change even if the context changes from one of leisure to one of work. However, the context switch does affect the time spent on the activity. In the case of switching from a leisure context to a work context, the time in which the activity is performed is compressed; in other words, the leisure activity is inserted into the work space and time and that temporary slot happens in a context where the individual has little choice, given that the work space restricts the time and freedom to perform certain activities. With paid-work activities performed at home during leisure time, however, the opposite happens: the time restriction on paid-work activities relaxes when at home. These results suggest that the context in which the activity takes place has a bearing on the time allocated to the activity and on how individuals interact with others during the activity; our data further suggest that the liberty to choose which activity to do and how to do it are properties of leisure activities (freely chosen) but not of work activities (affected by productivity constraints) and do not change depending on the context. Nevertheless, paid-work activities performed at home also relax the work pace, making it more controllable.

Individuals construct the meanings of activities in interaction with other people and objects during performance. The time in which leisure activities are performed at work is constrained

by the rules of work spaces, associated with productivity, as the time for both work activities and leisure activities inserted in work time is limited. Dupuis (2000) and Dupuis and Smale (2000) show how the context in which older people are cared for (home versus institution) affects the meaning of caring for the elderly: obligation gives way to choice and the institution becomes a leisure space offering time for relaxation. Thus, caring for the elderly changes from unpaid work at home to a freely chosen leisure opportunity that takes place during free time spent in an institution; this shifts the meaning of caring from unpaid work to leisure. The only respondents who did not enjoy their visits to the institution were those who viewed the care as an obligation, not as a free choice activity engaged in as leisure. Likewise, although Shaw and Dawson (2001) suggest that parents' choices are constrained by the achievement of certain goals for the family, their results indicate that this limitation is self-imposed, and is, in fact, an exercise of choice about what activities to perform and how; thus, whether the motivation is intrinsic or not does not matter. The context in which activities are performed and the interaction with family members, both have a bearing on actual perceived choice, although the choice remains free and is self-limited or group-motivated. In the same vein, the results of Schulz and Watkins (2007), Churchill, et al. (2007), and Lewis and Johnson (2011) also suggest that contexts influence the meanings that individuals construct in interactions with other individuals and objects.

### **Making Sense of Differences in Border-Crossing Patterns**

Individuals' narratives show that the way leisure activities seep into paid-work spaces and the way work activities leach into the home resemble some of Foucault's and Miskowiec's (1986) principles regarding heterotopic spaces: (1) work and home spaces are temporarily juxtaposed by digital technologies, such that paid work is done at home and leisure is engaged in at work; (2) slots of time introduced into the work and home spaces create heterochronies, that is, temporary heterotopic spaces created through the introduction of slices of time that change the usual experiences of time and space, allowing individuals to make a complete break with traditional time; and (3) temporal heterochronies seem to create a space of illusion that makes the work and home spaces seem even more socially constructed. However, according to the narratives of our informants, leisure and work space contamination patterns differ according to a set of social categories, as in the work/home border theory (Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). That is, individuals in certain occupations are more prone to integrate their paid work and leisure activities across spaces and contaminate them through work and leisure activities conducted ubiquitously; individuals in other occupations, meanwhile, showed more segmented work and leisure patterns. Individuals in the former occupations construct an integrated work/leisure space and mix both work and leisure activities in paid work and home spaces, whereas individuals in the latter occupations simply introduce leisure activities at the end of their workday, as a transitional phase to home-based and social leisure activities. In other words, individuals in occupations where integration of activities and spaces is high show a high degree of choice (Haworth & Veal, 2004) that helps them to regulate the working pace of paid activities.

Nevertheless, the influence of occupations on individuals' integration of work and home spaces by the mixing of work and leisure activities was constrained by another social category: whether the informant was single or living with a partner (with or without children). The influence of occupation was important for singles and trivial for couples; hence, it seems that couples need to build a common territory that reduces the further integration of spaces. Nevertheless, couples composed of partners with jobs with similar degrees of choice are more prone to integrate work and leisure spaces, as Nipper-Eng (1996) has shown in studying the boundaries between work and home spaces.

We also found that leisure was gendered at home when women live with a partner (with or without children), reporting findings similar to those published by researchers about men and women's different experiences of free time (quantity and quality), especially after marriage (Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Nomaguchi, 2006). Furthermore, such differences seem to be resistant to technological innovation (Bittman & Wajcman, 2004). Nonetheless, younger female informants in our sample show a pattern of interpenetration between work and leisure activities (integration or segmentation), that was similar for males and only influenced by occupation and technology. Yet female informants living with a partner reveal that their leisure at home was more restricted than that of their partners in that they lacked personal choice, most especially married women not in the labour force.

Summing up, therefore, work and home space contamination patterns resulting from work and leisure digital activities are socially constructed on the basis of occupations and moderated by social status. Moreover, leisure is gendered for women living with a partner.

### **Bridging the Divide between Work and Leisure Concepts: Social Implications**

Our interpretation of individuals' narratives suggests that the concepts of paid work and leisure are socially constructed to fit the social needs of an industrial society (occupations). The concept of paid work is needed to make sense of the time individuals sell to firms, whereas the concept of leisure accounts for the free time needed to recover from work, as Terranova (2000) has argued, and as is reflected in the early leisure models and paradigms (Kelly, 1972/2009; Neulinger, 1974). Our findings suggest that the difference between leisure-related intrinsic motivation and work-related extrinsic motivation becomes blurred when the possibility of choosing the activity and how it is done is admitted by paid work, or when a leisure activity can generate income. Many occupations requiring some degree of expertise in doing technological tasks fit the former case, whereas audiovisual production and journalism fit the latter category. Both classes of occupations are associated with creativity and a high degree of freedom of choice.

Digital leisure activities engaged in at home that may or may not generate an income in the future fit the social factory notion proposed by Terranova (2000); this is because they help develop skills that are marketable or because they produce saleable objects. We do not address the exploitation debate raised by Terranova (Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Postigo, 2003); rather, we consider the implications of developing saleable competences at home. Producing cultural expressions at home, as our informants have shown, reflects personal, multiuser, multitasking, and multithreaded inputs, as in Rainie and Wellman's (2012) social network operating system. (Drotner, 2008), however, has shown that learning in that way is chaotic, a collage of creativity, gratification and empowerment and a creation process that does not fit the blueprint for an ordered way of doing things during paid work time. Some firms have, in fact, tried to clone the leisurely approach to creating cultural productions; thus, Google's employees in Tel Aviv (Israel) have access to a fully equipped music room, giant Legos, a pinball machine, Nintendo Wii, etc. However, this approach conflicts with paid-work productivity and hierarchy constraints, as our informants have shown. What is clear, nonetheless, is that in increasing numbers of occupations digital technologies are challenging traditional concepts of paid work and leisure (Haworth & Veal, 2004), transforming our modern world into a postmodern one where traditional concepts no longer structure the divisions that organize our lives (Bowers, 2007; Ravenscroft & Gilchrist, 2009; Rojek, 2001). Individuals working in these changing occupations will need new concepts referring to the integration and segmentation of spaces, times, activities and meaningful experiences in order to make sense of their social lives and produce meaningful leisure and work experiences.

In relation to limitations and future research, it should be noted that we sampled informants using digital technologies for leisure in 2009; since our study represents a snapshot of social transformation; further research is needed to describe the adoption process. Statistics for Spain show that, in 2009, 66% of women and 72% of men used the computer regularly; 80% and 40% of Internet users regularly surfed from work or home, respectively; most users were below the age of 34 years; and the average age of marriage was 32 years for women and 35 years for men. Young, single, and well-educated people had more chances to be sampled for our study. Our sample is therefore biased, as patterns of cross-contamination between spaces may well vary with age and education; older couples are likely to have more free time at home after the nest has emptied, and less educated individuals (secondary education or less) may have different leisure habits. This suggests the need to conduct further research into patterns of cross-contamination in other groups using the ICTs for leisure. However, even though the chances that they will vary are not high—education varies with occupation, and age with the technologies used—we still need to demonstrate this. Further descriptions of patterns of digital leisure at home and how social interactions have changed due to digital technologies, if at all, would contribute to our knowledge about the patterns of digital leisure.

## Conclusions

The comparison between leisure and paid work carried out in their usual (utopic) spaces and in contaminated (heterotopic) spaces reveals that individuals construct the meanings of an activity based on the properties of time and space. Thus, leisure activities are associated with the ability of individuals not only to choose them, but to do them how they want (time and procedure), and with the people they want. Freedom of choice is therefore revealed as underpinning the nature of leisure. However, leisure activities performed at work cannot be done for as long as the individual would like as the work space imposes limits, and leisure is simply inserted as a temporary slot. Conversely, there is no time limitation on work activities performed in the leisure space. Patterns of space interpenetration, integration and segmentation differ according to informants' occupations, but are moderated by marital status and gender. These results have two implications: (1) the traditional separation between leisure and work loses its significance with the contamination of traditional utopian spaces and the expansion of integrated spaces; and (2) ICT-based contamination of spaces is associated with an increase in what might be called productive leisure or the emergent notion of a working society of leisure, consisting of leisure activities yielding potential economic value, whether in the development of skills or in the exchange value for a product developed during leisure time.

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