WORK/NON-WORK EXPERIENCES IN ORGANISATION: A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND APPROACH

JEAN-CHARLES E. LANGUILAIRE, PH.D.
Assistant Professor in Business Administration, Ph.D.
Malmö University, Faculty of Culture and Society, Urban Studies
205 06 Malmö – Sweden; Tel: +46 (0) 704 91 13 78
jean-charles.languilaire@mah.se

ABSTRACT
Attaining work-life balance is one of most important needs expressed by the 21st century global population in the western world. Such balance relies on boundary work and boundary management processes that when combine lead to individuals' work/non-work experiences. As experiences, this paper aims underlining and understanding how narratives participate to the work/non-work experiences. This paper reveals that six narratives are in fact present in individual's work/non-work experiences. It reveals that each of them is purposive. Together, narrative participate to diverse elements of the work/non-work experiences especially to boundary work, boundary management but also to the development of work/non-work self-identity or even to the development of the actual organisational formal and informal context. This paper thus suggests that further and deeper adopting a narrative perspective is needed to understand work/non-work experiences especially when combined with a "narrative approach" to access work/non-work experiences.

KEYWORDS
work/non-work management, narrative, multi-level perspective
1. INTRODUCTION

Attaining work-life balance is one of most important needs expressed by the 21st century global population in the western world. Whereas balance has been discussed from diverse perspectives in the work-life research, it has more recently been related to the individuals' preference to segment and/or integrate life domains and how such preferences are fulfilled. The capacity in segmenting and/or integrating life domains is based on two interrelated processes: the boundary work and boundary management (see Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000, Nippert-Eng, 1996). Boundary work has mainly been seen as a proactive process (see Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000, Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999) so that the individual is able to foresee changes in his/her situation and, a priori, mentally change the boundaries concerned so that they fit his/her work/non-work preferences and contexts. Boundary management comes second and takes place according to these new mentally defined boundaries (see Ashforth, et al., 2000; Kossek, et al., 1999; Lambert & Kossek, 2005) so that new concrete boundaries are shaped. While concrete boundaries are created, individuals act between work and non-work and thus are performing work/non-work activities. In other words, in a proactive work/non-work process, mental boundaries are changed first according to one’s work/non-work preferences. Then mental boundaries are concretised in one’s individual, organisational and societal contexts via what could be called work/non-work activities. A proactive process can be represented as in figure 1:

In line with this process, individual create, develop and maintain consecutively mental and concrete work/non-work boundaries aiming at segmenting and/or integrating in line with their preferences for segmenting and/or integrating. The combination of both processes enables either distinctive work-life domains (segmentation) or similar work-life domains (integration); it enables individuals in their daily life to segment their life domains and keep them apart or to integrate their life domains and make them one. This is what can be referred as the “work/non-work experiences”.

The experience perspective in the work-life research is emerging and needs to be researched. In line with Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative research can be a way to access and study these experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) come indeed to this conclusion following 20 years of research on experience in educational research:

“Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it. (…) Thus, we say narrative is both the phenomenon and the method of social sciences” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 18)

In agreement with Clandinin and Connelly (2008), work/non-work experiences could be studied using narrative as "object" of the study and as "methodology and method" of the study. Whereas narratology has been mainly developed within and largely applied to literacy (see Herman & Vervaeck, 2005) as the theory of narrative text, it aims, broadly speaking, at analysing and

---

Whereas, non-work can be seen as composed of several sub-domains, especially family, social and private (see Languilair, 2009). I focused the example on organisation, but similar aspects are found when it comes to the family or other domains.
understanding what authors write and how they are writing. In that context, narratives have been used to understand scientific fields like economics (McCloskey, 1990) or organisation theory and social sciences (Czarniawska, 2004). In this line of research, the role of narrative analysis could be seen as twofold. It can be to understand, first, how management theories develop (see Llewellyn, 1999) and, second, how managers and leaders use narratives in management practices (see Czarniawska, 2004). The narrative objective in this paper builds on the second dimension and more exactly the aim of this paper is to underline and understand how narratives participate to the work/non-work experiences. In that regards, two research questions have been set as follows:

1. What are the narrated work/non-work experiences in organisation?
2. How are the narrated work/non-work experiences emerging?

The remainder of this paper present in part 2, a narrative approach as how work/non-work experiences have been methodologically approach with narratives. Part 3 reflects on how narratives can be used a theoretical perspective using both research questions. Part 4 is a conclusive part.

1.1. Overview of the approach in this paper

This paper revisits the narratives generated in the empirical research using the narrative mind-set above. These narratives are discussed in the light of narratology literature and the role of narrative in research. The aim of the discussion is not to analyse the narrative structure and uncover the "narrative meaning" behind the behind the narratives, but to see how the narratives are of use in the work/non-work process that is happening in diverse contexts: individual, organisational and societal. The previous section represents the basic understanding of what is meant as narrative in this paper and can be seen as the "framework" of this paper. The choices of narratives study made in the empirical study were consciously made using 3 arguments (see table 1). These arguments are revisited in this paper to understand the value and role of narratives in work/non-work experiences. Additionally, the three contexts were problematized and defined a priori in the empirical research and they may influence a priori diverse levels of narratives. As a whole, the selected "narrative" frame that was argued in the empirical research is thus reflected upon in this paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Three arguments for using narratives in the original empirical research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first argument is that work/non-work narratives reveal the life domain of individuals and their characteristics as well as their work-non-work preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second argument is that work/non-work narratives reveal the social construction of work/non-work experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The third argument is that work/non-work narratives reveal the nature of individuals’ work/non-work process or the connections between the processes of boundary work and boundary management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. WORK/NON-WORK EXPERIENCES: A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Languilaire (2009), Kossek & Lambert (2006) as well as Poelmans (2004, 2005) underline that work/non-work process is a contextual process that occurs at different levels. Three levels of context are generally described in the work-life literature. First, the individual context, where individual characteristics as well as family and personal contexts are discussed. Research on the "couple" is an illustration of the individual context research (see Denker & Dougherty, 2013). Second, the organisational context, where the roles of organisational policy and national culture are in focus. Third, the societal context where the role of national (den Dulk et al., 2013), as well as international context are discussed see Poelmans 2005). Here the role of laws, social system, and culture are depicted (den Dulk et al., 2013). These three contexts are representing three narratives about work/non-work experiences namely, the individual, the organisational and the societal. These three narratives are explored in this part, as they are all observable in the middle-managers' narratives.
2.1. Individual work/non-work narratives
Experiences are conveyed when social beings are narrating their life for themselves and towards others (Riessman, 1993). This applies to work/non-work experiences when narrated by individuals. In fact, work/non-work narratives are made for individual’s themselves and for others in their environments. This reveals three roles for work/non-work narratives.

2.1.1. Individual work/non-work narratives as a way to perform boundary management
What has been noticeable is that in the context of work/non-work experiences, life domains boundaries as well as placement and transcendence mechanisms are being narrated in a certain way. Individuals want to persuade others about the flexibility (how extendable) and permeability (how elements go from one domain to another) of their life domain’s boundaries. Individuals seem to decide about narrating or not narrating certain work aspects in a non-work domain or vice-versa as a way to enact work/non-work boundaries in space and time. This is in fact the work/non-work boundary management aiming at creating, developing and maintaining concrete boundaries between domains. Narrating or not is a way to tell others what one wants or not when it comes to managing work-life. Such individual’s work/non-work narratives are thus purposive. This relates with the fact that narratives are a mode of persuasion towards others (Llewellyn, 1999; Soderberg, 2003). Llewellyn (1999) views narratives as a mode of thinking and persuading. Shortly, narratives are purposive (Czarniawska, 1997, 1998, 2004; Czarniawska & Gagliardi, 2003; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, 2002; Riessman, 1993). Riessman (1993) clearly indicates that “the story is being told to a particular people; it might have taken a different form if someone else were the listener” (p. 11).

I do not share purposely my private life at the office even with people I consider as friends, like Polydore. If I want to spend time with him, I would rather say “come for diner home one evening”, I will be more available and we will talk about work no more than a few minutes. (Paul)

there are now two new girls, Marie and Martine, working close to my office. This has changed the atmosphere and my routines. With them, I learn to take breaks during day time and not be at my desk from 8 to 18. I also talk more about myself. (Marine)

The purpose of individual's work/non-work narratives is to "concretely draw or not" their boundaries. However, the construction is the result of social interaction and of communication. This is a second observation when it comes to individuals' narratives. As a matter of fact, as narration and as a means of communication, narratives are not neutral. Rhetoric as the art of argumentation participates in persuasion processes (see Johannesson, 1996). Narratives are a rhetorical device and employ rhetorical devices (see Czarniawska, 2004) and narrative genres (Czarniawska, 2004; Llewellyn, 1999; Riessman, 1993) to persuade. I can see in few narratives that such rhetorical plots are used to "dramatise" the boundary management process in order to persuade others. Here again two examples:

(Romantic) What I liked in this work was that I had no daily routines. My work was punctuated by retailing cycles and the annual agenda of negotiations occurring between December and March. Working in a semi-open space with glass walls and no doors simplified communication. I personally replace mine after a while to be able to close it during individual talks, but had it open otherwise. I personally really consider negotiation times a funny period. The job becomes interesting when you face your customers and try to understand and examine signs and meanings of negotiations. .... (Drama) Generally, I liked this work but at the end of last year, I made my mind that it was the right moment to professionally change. It had been acting in this position for three years. I had three alternatives left when I discussed with my wife. I presented all three but indicated that the one in Macbala was professionally good. (Geremy)
However, the work/non-work interactions have not always been easy. I have been using my experiences to find my path, especially over the 5 years I was a consultant. As a consultant, I thought at first that my freedom would help me to preserve a work-life balance. I had told myself that I would be independent and be able to chose my working and non-working time. But this was totally wrong because you cannot decide on your agenda as the market demands do it for you. When a client requests something, your answer is mingled with the fear of possibly running out of business tomorrow. It was thus up to my family life to adapt and I felt my role as a mother was in danger. (Brune)

Finally, it is central to notice the content of the narratives. In that regards, the work/non-work preferences are not always narrated. Kossek et al. (2005, p. 351) touch upon what could be seen as preference in regards to work and family indicating that “everyone has a preferred, even if implicit, approach for meshing work and family roles that reflects his or her values and the realities of his or her lives for organising and separating role demands and expectations in the realms of home and work”. (2005, p. 351)

Languilaire (2009) shows that in their narratives, individuals revealing of an “overall” work/non-work preferences but that it is rather vague and this does not able to understand the actual preference. Overall preferences are a mirror of the segmentation-integration continuum (see Nippert-Eng, 1996) and this supports previous research considering that the continuum could be seen as a mirror of the work/non-work preferences (Ashforth, et al., 2000; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). But paying closer attention, 7 elements are in fact either segmenting or integrated and for each of them preferences are again more or less explicit and outspoken (Languilaire, 2009). These seven elements are time, space, people, thoughts, behaviors, emotions as well strain & energy. The level of explicitness for specific preferences varies across the different types of boundaries for the same individual. This indicates substantial differences in how one is aware about his/her specific preferences (Languilaire, 2009). Some of one’s specific preference may then play a greater role in the determination of the overall preference. Figure 3 is a graphical representation of the diverse preferences, their explicitness and their importance.

![Figure 3 - One middle-manager's work/non-work preferences (Brune)](image)

As a whole, when considering the preference, individuals have some explicitness about their work/non-work preference but at diverse levels. The level of explicitness of specific and/or overall work/non-work preference depends on two characteristics: self-awareness and outspokenness.
Languilaire (2009) defined awareness as the extent individuals are aware of their overall or/and specific work/non-work preferences and outspokenness as the extent individuals speak out their overall or/and specific preferences to oneself and others.

On the one side, when explicit, the level of explicitness depends on the extent to which individuals are aware of their preferences and on the extent individuals communicate them verbally to themselves and others. When explicit, the preferences can be formulated as "mental" rules that may be expressed directly but more often the work/non-work activities and their narration will be a way to express what is wanted. This is part of the boundary work as a way to place and transcend concrete boundaries. On the other side, when implicit, individuals are still acting between work and non-work. Nonetheless, they do not really know how to explain such approach and do not pay attention and do effort to verbalize it for themselves or others. It is seen as natural to deal with work and non-work interactions. Individuals will still act between work and non-work and will tell but they do not realize that they in fact construct or not boundaries.

Thibault's narrative illustrates these aspects clearly. As he is aware but not outspoken about them.

"I try to have a certain balance between both; that is to say when I am at the office, I am at work. If something goes wrong in my life I do not at least I try; but only the others could confirm this; not to make the others feel it" Undeniably, I aim at separating my private and professional lives so that there are no negative interferences. If, for example, work would take all of my time so that I cannot be with Thara or if it was so disturbing that I could not get mentally out of it, this would be distressing. For the time being, I manage to mentally get out of work. I believe the balance between the life’s domains comes from the understanding and management of the interfaces between the domains. And I think that I am aware of them (Thibault)

As a first conclusion, individuals' work/non-work narratives are revealing a part of individual's boundary management as an outcome of the narration between people in their respective domains.

2.1.2. Individual work/non-work narratives as a way to perform boundary work
Following the rhetorical devices, plots are used for different purposes. Following Aristotle’s the "logos, pathos and egos" in the narrative enable to understand how narrators construct the narrative plot (Bonet, Siggard Jensen, & Sauquet, 2003). This becomes relevant to boundary work and its nature. As presented in the traditional view (see figure 1), boundary work is considered as first and boundary management as second. In other words, boundary work is seen as proactive. Languilaire (200) however discusses the nature of the boundary work and see more variation from proactive, active (same time) and reactive (afterwards). The level of proactivity is actually emphasised via these rethorical devices. Proactivity can be expressed via egos where the storytellers stage themselves as "heros". Reactivity can be expressed via Pathos where suffering is why preferences may be adapted.

Table 2 presents few examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Boundary work and rhetorical devices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egos based narratives revealing a proactive boundary management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathos based narratives revealing a reactive boundary management</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Do not mix, but...) Of course, you could argue that I have met Thara in the workplace while working in the same location. Even so, we did not act as a couple. When we were both placed in Lansa, we were not so close to one another even during breaks. I did not want to the relationship to be noticeable across the office. This is not often well perceived in organisations. In other terms, we do not loudly declare or claim that we are together. Above all, the fact not to make our relationship official is that I consider that my private life is my private
life and so long as it does not influence my work, people have not right to know with whom I am living; I am not going to ask them with whom they sleep in the company... This segmentation is eased now that I work in Jyve even if there are some colleagues who know Thara. I have already mentioned that I had few friends I met at work. These friends are nonetheless not hierarchically related to me and are even working at offices in other locations. Even if we were working together, I think that the most important thing for the relationship is the person and not how the person is labelled. (Thibault).

As a second conclusion, individuals' work/non-work narratives are revealing a part of individual's boundary work especially it may reveal the nature of the boundary and the level of proactivity of the process.

2.1.3. Individual self-work/non-work narratives as a way to develop their work/non-work self-identity

At the individual level, a third observation needs to be done. In fact, individuals are also largely telling the narratives for themselves. Narratives express foremost how one considers oneself and what is one's preferences. Part of that is related with the level of explicitly as reflecting in section 3.2.1, but part of that is also related to how individuals are self-reflecting and use the narration of their experiences to construct their identities. As Riessman (1993, p. 2) puts it: “individuals construct past event in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives” so that they become “autobiographical narratives by which they tell their lives”. Languilaire (2009) reveals that the origins of preference are central in how do people make sense of what they wish between work and non-work. Individuals are by themselves reflection of the origin of preferences when they can. In each narrative, the origins of the preferences give reasons for one’s actions between work and non-work. It is clear that the combination of the origins of work/non-work preference gives a certain capacity to individuals to foresee changes, to recognize the changes that occur but as well as to appreciate one’s satisfaction with one’s current work/non-work process. Languilaire (2009) argue that knowing whether he or she prefers to integrate or to segment is not as essential as knowing why he or she prefers to integrate or to segment. The concept of work/non-work identity may be stronger than the sole concept of work/non-work preferences. The concept of work/non-work identity builds on the fact that one identity develops across boundaries (Lindgren & Wåhlin, 2001) and across domains. It builds on the view that identity is socially developed and developed over time. Zerubavel (1991) emphases “cognitive socialisation” as a way for the social mindscape to be developed. The
The narratives of the origins represent how one individual integrates his/her work/non-work experiences into the understanding of oneself between work and non-work. The concept of identity goes beyond the notion of role that is central in the boundary theory. Whereas a role may or may not be displayed, may be on or off, identity has a long term value. One’s identity is deeper than one’s role which supports the fact that one’s understanding of roles in and outside work may affect and be affected by one’s work/non-work identity (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) even talk about self-identity as being deeper than identity and more inaccessible. Giddens (in Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003) views self-identity as the self as reflexively understood by the person” where self-identity is more stable in time and space. The concept would be applied in the context leading to finally consider “work/non-work self-identity”. The concept of self-identity represent indeed the role of the self-narratives.

As a third conclusion, individuals’ work/non-work narratives are revealing individual’s work/non-work self-identity as how individuals integrate their work/non-work experiences in the understanding of themselves as individuals acting between their various life domains.
2.2. Organisational work/non-work narratives

Czarniawska (2004) indicates that when it comes to individual story “its importance is connected with the fact that in order to understand their own lives people put them into narrative form – and they do the same when they try to understand the lives of other” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 5). Stories are thereof made by individuals as a sense-making process about themselves and the same sense-making is applied when listening to other's narratives. When stories are shared, they become social and are interpreted by others so that they are used in social interaction as part of the communication. This is what happened in organisations so that three roles of work/non-work narratives in organisations and in the organisation life are revealed.

2.2.1. Organisational work/non-work narrative as part of the boundary management process

At the organisational level, individuals share their lives via narratives and negotiate their work/non-work boundaries and how they concretely could be shaped. At a highest level, an organisational narrative about work/non-work experiences is socially developing. Such organisational narrative may become part of one's understanding of how work/non-work issues are seen and addressed in the organisation. This is in line with narratology. Indeed, narratives are individual but not wholly personal (Tierney, 2000). More exactly they are socially shared via their narration. Czarniawska (2003, p. 10) indicates indeed that “narration is a common mode of communication”. For Riessman (1993, p. 3), telling story to others is what we learn in our childhood. Narratives influence how each individual acts in social reality. Individuals share their narratives with others so that they position themselves in society. Others’ narratives are heard and interpreted by individuals, leading to the creation of new narratives and experiences. In the frame of the narrative hierarchy, the narrative of the constructed story is accessible to others through its narration. This narration is interpreted as a new narrative by others and gives birth to a new story and new work/non-work experiences. One’s narration of experiences is also about others’ experiences. It thus reveals part of the social reality here part of the work/non-work practices among the people in the organisation. Here is an example showing how integration is part of the social practices and how this is not fully fit the specific individual.

Generally, I have developed the impression that it is required to blend work and personal life. However, personally I draw barriers between my work and non-work domains on a daily basis. (Marine)

I observe as well that people have a tendency to talk about mainly if not solely about their work and thus define themselves through their position in company hierarchy. It is worth noting that during conversations, I find that people are completely immersed in their professional lives. They do not have at all time to cultivate their minds, to give another dimension to their lives which is easy to notice during discussions taking place while working or in breaks. (Sarah)

In narrating their work/non-work experiences, people negotiate their boundaries with others. One is making sense of other's experiences and he or she is then adapting his/her boundaries. Somehow, a collective outcome of boundary management is emerging. This could be related to an informal culture work/non-work culture and as work/non-work practices among people who are interacting together. As social process it indicates how boundaries are placed in the specific context. In turn, individuals may consider proactively this context, as they understand it so that they adapt their boundary making and may develop concrete boundaries that are adapted to the context and not fully in line with their preferences or mental boundaries. For example Sarah has adapted:

Nonetheless, there are three exceptions to such segmentation. ...Second, Simone, a colleague I met while commuting from the underground to the office, informed me few months ago, because she knew I liked to travel, that the company had developed options to benefit from the “solidarity holidays” programme (Sarah who wants to segment accept to talk about her private side and to combine work and non-work)
The organisational narratives become the organisational context. This supports the idea that narratives do not only reveal how the boundaries of life domains are personal but how they are socially constructed. They are part of social reality and are shared during social processes and communication. Narratives reflect how other social agents and social reality are central to the construction of boundaries as they may enhance or hinder the construction, maintenance and change of life domains’ boundaries. By accessing work/non-work narratives, especially the characters (actants/voices) in the narratives and the scene, one access how the construction, maintenance and change of life domains boundaries is influenced by social context and social interaction from the individual’s perspective. Indeed, even if the narratives have been collected only via the voice of the storytellers and not using multiple voices, numerous actants are appealing. Here are few illustrations:

As a first conclusion, individuals' work/non-work narratives become organisational narratives when shared with people and this reveals the organisational context in which boundary management is developed. By narrating, individuals are shaping their work/non-work organisational context as practices of work/non-work between people in the domain in focus. This can be seen as the informal social context.

2.2.2. Organisational work/non-work grand narrative as a cultural pattern of a work/non-work culture.

Theoretically, this work/non-work organisational narrative may be institutionalised and crystallised in what could be seen as the work/non-work culture. Indeed, based on Crossan et al. (1999), one can expect that people will learn how to "act" between work and non-work so that practices will be institutionalised in structures, process and policies and even culture symbolic values and artefacts. As a matter of fact, the actual formal work/non-work culture will become an organisational narrative or to be more exact a grand narrative that is shaping the context in which individuals are taking work/non-work decisions. As the objective of this paper is not to discuss work/non-work culture, I will end my reflection here.

To accomplish such separation, I refuse offers to have company laptops or mobile phones or any such gadgets. In addition, I do not give my office phone number to anyone even to my mother. Moreover, when I am on holiday I never give away any phone numbers, because I assume that I am not indispensable. I even do not want to talk about work outside the office and do not want to share my private life at work unless with the few people I consider close to me. For example, I did not send any post cards from Mongolia though a few might have known about it but I did not publicize my going there. For me, all these are artefacts dictated by organisations that prevent the establishment of authentic relationships based on authentic people and not on organisational roles. Personally, I do not play any roles at work. I am myself. On the whole, I feel somehow that my attitude is against the overall context and the organisational culture, where being an individual is to some extent not well-perceived and hard to achieve. For example, I do not accept to be disturbed by colleagues when I am having lunch with an old colleague but this often happens. Similarly, there are some activities for personal development like Yoga which are organised on the working site. I have been asked to join, but I have not. I do not want to join. These activities are for me too personal and when I want to practice them for and by myself. (Sarah)

As a second conclusion, organisational work/non-work narratives may become a grand narrative in terms of culture that is developed and crystallised in organisational process and policies forming the formal organisational context in which individuals must take work/non-work decision.

2.3. Societal work/non-work narrative

Two main roles for the societal have been observed.

2.3.1. Societal narratives as cultural norms
Even if there is a large diversity is how do people narrate their domains and thus in how they have segmented and integrated the diverse elements of life, having a deeper understanding indicate that the domains are social domains. This is in agreement with Zerubavel (1991, 1997) who defines two main types of mindscapes. One the one hand, there is the “rigid mind” by which one defines strict lines because one does not accept a mixture and wants to avoid it. On the other, there is the “fuzzy mind” by which one defines no lines and does not distinguish any categories, making fluidity of mind possible. Zerubavel’s social mindscapes are equivalent respectively to segmenting and integrating preferences that indicate what is socially to be integrate and what is socially to be segment.

As a matter of fact, societal norms are seen as constraint when people have a high-segmenting preferences as people understand society as integrative. This is the example of Sarah who is claiming a lack of authenticity in society and a high pressure mix (see quotes before). The societal norms are seen as enablers for integrator who are using them to reach to enact their boundaries. This underlines the “integrative context” people are living in especially that integration is facilitated by IT which literally makes work portable, thus accessible anywhere and anytime (Valcour & Hunter, 2010).

To me being in the same company is also easier to communicate during the week via emails, unless it disturbs work. Thara, for example, emails me the shopping list so that I have it on my mobile phone when I do the grocery shopping on Friday evenings. This is my share of household work. It is also easy to bring the laptop home. This may give the opportunity to work a while. (Thibault)

The social perspective is reinforced by the fact that the origins of the preferences underline three social interactions as central in the development of preferences. There are three interactions - interactions with family, interactions during our education and interactions in the workplace. First, family plays a role in how family values and norms are embedded into underlying, in depth cultural assumptions among those the “public vs. private” assumptions that show, for example, how spaces and relationships may be diffuse or specific (see Trompenaars, 1993 in Deresky, 2008). Central social roles as spouse and as parents are essentially shared and learned during one’s upbringing in the family spheres.

Second, the notions of community and social life are developed and applied in the context of school. Via education, roles are learned among those the roles of citizens, the role of friends, or later in professional education the role managers, employees, leaders or followers.

Third, it is related to the socialisation or acculturation when entering a workplace as mentioned by Thibault previously. These three spheres of interaction correspond to the main arenas for the socialisation process (see Burr, 1995; Collin, 1997) which indicates that preferences are embedded in ones’ societal context.

As a first conclusion, the societal narrative underlines that work/non-work experiences are above social and that the outcome of the work/non-work process is cultural embedded. is a.

2.3.2. Societal narratives as "practical advices"

A last element this has been less directly observable but that can emerge from a deeper understanding how some individuals are referring to "work/non-work norms" and "best practices".
This can correspond to a societal narrative that is transferred via "work/non-work" consultants or psychologist or similar such as Paul who is seen a psychologist for stress who gave him advices on work/non-work. This is a narrative that is created by work/non-work research or associated field such as stress management or cognitive psychology and thus, we, as work/non-work researchers have a central influence is how do manage work/non-work. This aspect could be developed more in research as a sense of ethics.

3. WORK NON-WORK EXPERIENCES IN ORGANISATION: A MULTI-LEVEL NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

While having applied in the empirical research a narrative approach in the form of a narrative mindset based on the structuralist narrative hierarchy on the one hand and on narrative in social construction on the other hand, several narratives were in fact narrated by storytellers. While these storytellers were asked to talk about their "own" life, they in fact reveal different narratives. The basic level of these narratives relates to the three levels, individual, organisational and societal in which one is interacting. These three levels are concretely representing "spatial" and "temporal" in which one individual is involving and interacting so that his/her experiences is shaped but these "narratives" and "discourses" in this arena. After having exploring the three levels, 6 narratives are emerging. This answers the first part of the purpose of this paper that was to underline how narratives participate to the work/non-work experiences. These narratives are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Six narratives at three levels: A multi-level narrative perspective

As underlined in the analysis, the narratives have different roles at the three levels. Figure 5 visualises these diverse roles where the societal level overarches the organisational that in turn overarches the individual level.

Figure 5: The roles of the work/non-work narratives
As a whole, narratives may be seen to play central roles in the work/non-work boundary process as it influences preferences, boundary work and boundary management and it enables individuals to manage these processes in their contexts that in turn become narrated and become part of the social reality in which individuals shall manage work/non-work. This reflection around these roles enables to answer the second part of the problem namely to understand how narratives participate to the work/non-work experiences.

Overall, this paper underlines that using a "narrative approach" in the concrete form of a narrative mind-set (see figure 1) generate data and understand work/non-work experiences enables to uncover different narratives about work/non-work so that a "narrative perspective" on work-life issues can be explored. This enlightens more clearly the centrality of the narratives in the understanding of individuals’ work/non-work experiences and justify the premises made originally in the empirical research (see table 1). This paper thus suggests that further and deeper adopting a narrative perspective is needed to understand work/non-work experiences especially when combined with a "narrative approach" to access work/non-work experiences.

Two essential elements in the work/non-work experiences are mostly revealed when adopting the narrative perspective. First, the focus on narratives in the work-life research has brought together individuals and their apprehension of their contexts in the centre of attention. The sense making process the work/non-work consists of is thus revealed and the role of narratives in this sense-making process is central. Second, it uncovered the uniqueness of work/non-work self-identity and its significance in the work/non-work experiences and for the work/non-work process. Actually, every individual is a work/non-work boundary maker and boundary crosser, so that everyone is experiencing work/non-work. This natural life experiences has thus a role in our identity and it is when narrated to ourselves that we understand how our experience and can take more effective and expert decision between work and non-work. This supports the fact that a narrative perspective becomes essential to understand individuals’ experiences as part of our identity building (see Czarniawska, 2004; Riessman, 1993). The understanding of the role if work/non-work on individual's identity would enable them to maybe become more "authentic" between work and non-work and could enable them to be better leaders or followers. Indeed, with agreement to authentic leadership, story life telling to one self and others is essential to authenticity and authentic leadership and finally to "performance, change, development and growth". Further research connecting work/non-work narratives and authentic leadership could be done to explore how authentic leaders enable authentic work/non-work balance to be developed.

REFERENCES


Je préfère à la rigueur si je veux être avec [Polydore] lui dire « bon écoute viens manger à la maison un soir », je serais beaucoup plus disponible.

L'intérêt de ce boulot c'est que je n'ai pas de journée standard. J'ai des phases de l'année qui sont plutôt typées, donc je vis au rythme des grands cycles de la grande distribution et les négociations annuelles grosso modo décembre et mars.

Tout le monde se voit, c'est ouvert, on a envie de passer des moments. On a tout viré. Moi, j'ai remis une porte pour les entretiens individuels mais ma porte est tout le temps ouverte [...] il y a vraiment une bonne ambiance.

Dans ma tête il était clair que c'était le moment professionnellement pour moi de passer à autre chose, ça faisait trois ans que j'étais dans mon job.

Je m'étais dit, je vais finalement être indépendante, je vais finalement décider des moments où je travaille et de moments où je ne travaille pas. En fait c'est complètement faux car ce qui vous dicte vos périodes d'activité c'est le demandeur du marché et quand il y a une demande de clients bien on répond avec l'angoisse qu'il n'y en ait pas le surlendemain.

J'essaie d'avoir un certain équilibre entre les deux. Ça veut dire que quand je suis au travail, je suis au travail. Si ça ne se passe pas bien avec la vie, je le fais pas forcément ressentir... enfin j'essaie, en tout cas je ne sais pas si c'est le cas, il n'y a que les autres qui pourrait le dire... j'essaie de ne pas le faire ressentir au gens qui sont autour.

L'équilibre peut venir dès lors que l'on comprend les problématiques d'interfaces et que l'on arrive à la gérer.

Le fait de ne pas l'officialiser c'est que je considère que ma vie privée, c'est ma vie privée et que tant que ça n'a pas d'influence sur mon boulot, à la rigueur ils n'ont pas à savoir avec qui je suis ; dans l'autre sens je ne vais pas aller leur demander avec qui ils couchent au sein de la société.

Non, des amis pas forcément. Mais des relations amicales, oui, c'est agréable, c'est motivant. Ça permet aussi parfois de débrouiller des relations professionnelles.

La personne en question qui serait potentiellement un ami, c'est quelqu'un qui je vois volontiers pour un verre et pour parler de tout à fait autre chose ; ben lui est au courant des grandes lignes de ma vie personnelle. Mais justement par exemple un jour, il a invité son amie qui est quelqu'un qui travaille ici. À l'époque j'avais prévu de venir avec [Mathieu] et le fait qu'elle vienne, j'ai dit à [Mathieu] : « non ce n'est pas possible, on va parler boulot, ca va me stresser ». Donc je n'arrive pas à mélanger ou alors il faut vraiment d'honnête confiance mais à priori je n'ai pas envie de mélanger et de dire : « on va tous devenir ami » ; c'est vraiment très très différent.

Je vais manger chez moi surtout quand mon ami est là puisqu'il fait à manger. Et puis là, j'essaie de faire la sieste de temps en temps parce que je n'arrive pas à me coucher tôt et donc forcément l'après-midi je tombe du nez. Je préfère donc dormir 5 minutes à la maison et ça va mieux je lisais on courrier, j'essaie donc vraiment de faire un break. Je ne ressasse pas tous les problèmes du boulot.

D'ores que j'ai une vie professionnelle pour moi est importante, enfin il est clair que ca a toujours eu un place importante de manière presque évidente. J'ai toujours su que ça aurait une place importante.

C'est sans doute une transmission familiale. Ma mère ne travaillait pas, mon père lui avait une vie professionnelle très bien remplie. Le jour où ils ont divorcés, ma mère s'est effondrée parce que finalement il y avait que sa vie familiale au cœur de sa vie. Ne serait ce que cet exemple la ma tante fait dire que de manière très clair que « jamais ca ». Jamais une situation qui est celle là. Donc à partir de là, j'ai sûrement plus pris le modèle paternel d'une vie professionnelle intense et d'une vie personnelle et familiale bien remplie. Aussi j'ai surement privilégié la vie professionnelle comme étant un facteur de qui finalement ne pouvait dépendre essentiellement de ce que j'en ferais et non pas de la décision d'une tierce personne.

Me sentir bien c'est vivre le plus possible en accord avec moi-même, vivre le plus possible dans l'authenticité.

Je me sentir bien c'est avoir un regard conscient sur chaque instant de ma vie et c'est essayer de vivre ma vie sans la subir.

L'équilibre peut venir dès lors que l'on comprend les problématiques d'interfaces et que l'on arrive à la gérer.

Classe préparatoire " 2 year university level preparation class for entrance into a French business schools and few national or private engineering schools."

Je ne dis pas que avant que l'intellect ne fonctionne pas et ne refléchit pas dans son coin mais je ne vais pas m'y mettre mentalement et physiquement ; à part sur les derniers moments [...] Ca, je le fais aussi à titre privé.

Quand je pars en vacances je ne donne jamais un numéro de téléphone, parce que je sème que je ne suis pas indispensable.

Je ne joue pas de rôle.

Ce qui est assez étonnant, c'est que dans mon premier poste où je gérais vraiment très mal les deux puisque ma vie professionnelle me bouffait ma vie perso, mon boulot me stressait, donc je ne dormais pas bien, toute mon énergie allait au boulot donc le soir je rentrais j'étais crevé, je n'avais plus d'énergie pour ma vie personnelle. Le weekend, c'est pareille je devais me coucher tôt, je ne sortais pas trop parce que le lendemain dans mon boulot je savais que je ne serais pas aussi performant, donc c'est vrai qu'il y avait un ingénier de ma vie professionnelle dans ma vie personnelle, qui foutait en l'air ma vie.

Je le vivais un petit peu de manière judéo-chrétienne : le travail est une punition.