

VU Research Portal

Leading and Leisure

Bunea, E.M.

2020

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

citation for published version (APA)

Bunea, E. M. (2020). *Leading and Leisure: How serious leisure influences leaders' development and effectiveness.*

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

E-mail address:

vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

Chapter 6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This dissertation set out to investigate what having a serious leisure interest can mean for leaders' development and effectiveness. Recognizing that the strong personal identity that serious leisure develops is one of the most important ways that distinguish it from casual leisure, in Chapter 2 I proposed taking an identity "augmentation" perspective by investigating how a serious leisure identity can influence a leader's identity, using a conceptual approach. In Chapter 3 I further followed the identity-centered approach to empirically understand how CEOs of major companies who have a passionate nonwork interest construct a more authentic leader identity using their serious leisure identity. The model that is proposed in Chapter 2 also addresses how serious leisure can impact a leader's effectiveness, by delving into the role enrichment and the positive diversification provided by serious leisure. Chapter 4 further investigated this research theme by showing how CEOs perceive the role of their serious leisure in helping them cope with the demands of their job. Chapter 5 presented findings regarding this dissertation's research question in a practitioner-oriented form, specifically looking at the role of serious leisure for CEOs' leader identity and effectiveness, as well as emerging theory directions with regard to how an athletic serious leisure interest could impact women's leader identity and effectiveness. In what follows I first summarize this dissertation's answers to its main research question, organized into three key themes, as prefigured in the introduction to this work. I then outline the findings of each chapter and how they relate to the same three key themes. This is followed by a discussion of this dissertation's overall contribution to leadership studies, the many promising avenues it opens up for future research, the limitations it is subject to, as well as practical implications for leaders and their organizations.

6.2 Summary of main results and findings per key theme

As already mentioned, when all findings comprised in this dissertation and how they answer this work's main research question, "how does having a serious leisure interest influence leaders' development and effectiveness?" are considered together, they can be grouped into three main themes, as follows:

6.2.1 Role of the serious leisure identity in leaders' identity construction

We find that the serious leisure identity can play an important role in leaders' identity construction and specifically in their adding desirable attributes to their leader identity such as authenticity. We theorize that this is more likely to happen when the two identities (serious leisure and leadership) are compatible, when the nature of the passion for the serious leisure activity is harmonious, not obsessive and when the leader identity is highly salient for its holder. We also theorize an important role for followers in accepting or rejecting this "claiming" of a broader and stronger leader identity by the leader. Our empirical findings then shed light on how leaders (specifically CEOs of major companies) use their serious leisure identity to construct a more authentic leader identity.

6.2.2 Enrichment of the leader role by the serious leisure role

Our findings illuminate how having a serious leisure role can create important resources and how, when the individual is also a leader, these resources can be transferred to the leader role, effectively "enriching" it (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), that is increasing effectiveness in the leader role. The resources generated by serious leisure can be psychological resources, such as psychological capital (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017) and stress coping, as well as skills applicable to leadership or social capital. We propose that this enrichment is more likely to happen when the type of passion for the serious leisure is harmonious, rather than obsessive

and when the leader role is highly salient to the individual. Importantly, our findings also illustrate how leaders (specifically CEOs) perceive their serious leisure helps them respond to the high executive job demands they are confronted with, thus increasing their effectiveness in, and therefore enriching their leader role.

6.2.3 The “positive diversification” provided by the serious leisure identity

Our theory building proposes that the strong serious leisure identity that is replete with positive, self-affirmative attributes, can play a “positive diversification” role in the individual’s constellation of identities constituting the “self, by preventing the strong leader identity from taking a disproportionate, overwhelming representation within the self and protecting the individual from excessive reactions to events that reflect on the leader identity. Our empirical findings indicate that leaders (specifically CEOs) do see their serious leisure identity as “another me”, offering some balance and perspective against the “all-encompassing” leader identity.

Below I detail the main results and findings of each chapter and how they relate to each of the three key themes of this dissertation. Table 6.1 presents an overview of each chapter’s results/main findings.

Table 6.1

Main results and findings

Key theme	Chapter	Key results and findings
Role of the serious leisure identity in leaders' identity construction		
Chapter 2		<p>A theoretical model is proposed, according to which leaders incorporate desirable attributes from their serious leisure identity in their leader identity, through a process of identity construction that is both inward- and outward- oriented. This identity construction is moderated first by the type of passion for the serious leisure pursuit, with harmonious but not obsessive passion promoting it, second by the salience of the leader role, with high salience promoting it, and third by the compatibility between the serious leisure and the leader identity. Followers' reaction to leaders' identity construction using serious leisure attributes mediates its impact on the leader identity, with a positive reaction ("granting") leading to a stronger and "broader" leader identity and a negative reaction ("rejecting") having no impact on, or even leading to the weakening of the leader identity.</p>
Chapter 3		<p>CEOs of S&P 500 or comparable companies who have a serious leisure interest use it to construct a more authentic leader identity. First (projected authenticity) because their serious leisure identity is a strong, personal, "true self" identity, by disclosing it to their followers and sometimes by engaging in it with them, they project increased leader authenticity. Second (felt authenticity) they attribute to their serious leisure the power to have educated in them and to maintain values that are important to leadership and a whole "leadership philosophy", thus aligning their leader self with their "true self" as represented by their serious leisure identity.</p>

Table 6.1 (continued)

Key theme	Chapter	Key results and findings
Role of the serious leisure identity in leaders' identity construction (continued)		
Chapter 5		<p>In an essay on women leaders' athletic pursuits, possible theoretical directions are suggested with regard to the role that the masculine attributes stereotypically associated with athletic pursuits can play in the construction of the delicate masculinity-femininity balance that successful women leaders maintain, according to research. Women leaders often find it difficult to establish an authentic leader image due to the misfit between the masculine attributes associated to leaders according to implicit leadership theories, and the stereotypically feminine attributes they represent, especially due to the gendered perceptions of their nonwork selves (mother, homemaker). It is suggested that adding masculine attributes to their personal, nonwork selves, through an athletic pursuit may increase the "fit" between their nonwork and their work identities and lead to higher perceived leader authenticity.</p>
Enrichment of the leader role by the serious leisure role		
Chapter 2		<p>A theoretical model is proposed, according to which the strong serious leisure identity motivates the creation of important resources in the serious leisure role and the transfer of these resources to the leader role. These resources can represent skills and perspectives valuable to leadership, self-views such as self-efficacy and self-awareness, psychological and physical resources (including stress coping resources) and social capital.</p>

Table 6.1 (continued)

Key theme	Chapter	Key results and findings
Enrichment of the leader role by the serious leisure role (continued)		
Chapter 4		CEOs of major companies who have a serious leisure interest perceive it has an important role in helping them cope with the demands of their job. Specifically, serious leisure first offers them freedom from the “all-consuming” CEO role that alleviates the strain coming from it and second, it produces important personal resources that promote optimal functioning in the CEO role, including rising to the challenge of transformational leadership they see as crucial in the top role.
Chapter 5		In an essay on how CEOs of S&P 500 companies perceive the benefits of their serious leisure for their leadership, multiple personal resources are being proposed, including resilience, a closer relationship with their employees, protection against the hubris that the CEO role can engender, and making them overall “better leaders”.

Table 6.1 (continued)

Key theme	Chapter	Key results and findings
The “positive diversification” provided by the serious leisure identity		
Chapter 2		<p>A theoretical model is proposed for how the strong, positive serious leisure identity provides “diversification” from over-investment of oneself in the leader identity, by increasing the leader’s positive self-complexity. This relationship is moderated by the degree of similarity between the two identities, with low, not high similarity promoting it, as well as by the type of passion for the leisure interest (harmonious vs. obsessive). This diversification leads to less extreme affective reactions when facing setbacks in the leader role as well as to staying more open to learning in the leader role, both of which are conducive to protecting the leader identity from “downward spirals of leadership development”. This relationship is moderated by the salience of the leader role, with high salience promoting it, while low salience may lead to no positive outcomes, and even to negative outcomes for the leader identity, as the individual may find it easier to abandon the difficult leader role when facing setbacks in it, if they have this stronger, self-affirmative identity represented by their serious leisure.</p>
Chapter 4		<p>CEOs of major companies who have a serious leisure interest identify it as “another leg to stand on” when facing major setbacks in their leader role, as helping them put those setbacks into perspective and learn from them instead of interpreting them as a reflection of the value of their whole self.</p>

6.2.4 Chapters' contribution to the theme of identity construction

The first key theme arising from this dissertation relates to how a serious leisure identity can become part of leaders' identity construction. In Chapter 2 we build theory grounded in leader identity construction theory (DeRue et al, 2010b), in the multiple identities literature (Ramarajan, 2014) and in the serious leisure literature (Stebbins, 1982). We theorize that, as the meaning of being a leader is ambiguous and constructed in social interaction (DeRue et al., 2010b), the attributes of the leader identity are themselves subject to identity construction, with leaders constructing desirable qualities or conversely, projecting onto others the undesirable qualities they may possess (Petriglieri & Stein, 2012). If they have a serious leisure identity, leaders are likely to associate with its positive attributes most serious leisure activities entail, such as perseverance, mastery, agency and self-actualization (Stebbins, 2001) as well as attributes specific to the leisure pursuit that "chime" with the ideal attributes of a leader as per implicit leadership theories (Offermann & Coats, 2018), such as strength (for athletic interests) or creativity (for artistic ones). Given that individuals who have strong, positive identities are motivated to create connections between them (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009; Caza & al, 2018), leaders will thus be drawn to incorporate the desirable attributes arising from their serious leisure identity into their leader identity construction efforts. Their followers will in turn "grant" or "reject" this leader identity claim (Down & Reveley, 2009; DuBrin 2010; Koveshnikov, Vaara, & Ehrnrooth, 2016). If followers grant the claim, the identity construction initiated by the leader strengthens the leader identity as well as broadens the number of attributes describing it. Conversely, if followers deny the claim, this serious leisure-based identity construction may not help the leader identity and may even weaken it.

The empirical findings brought by Chapter 3 illustrate how this "serious leisurite-leader" identity construction can happen for an extreme case of leaders, CEOs of S&P 500 or comparable companies. While being a leader is not synonymous with holding a formal

leadership position, formal leaders are more likely to have their leadership claims endorsed by followers (DeRue et al., 2010) and CEOs of major companies are a type of formal leader that is especially likely to have undergone multiple leader development programs and to have accumulated rich and relevant experience, one of the most potent antecedents of leader development (Day, 2000). Thus, CEOs of S&P 500 companies who have a serious leisure interest are an ideal sample to start our empirical investigation with. We found that these CEOs place great value on leader authenticity, both as felt by them and perceived by followers and that they use their serious leisure identity, which they believe reflects their “true self”, to strengthen their authenticity in the leader role. They do this first by transparently disclosing their serious leisure, which they believe conveys “humanity”, “approachability” and, through the very act of self-disclosure, promotes trust from followers (Nifadkar, Wu & Gu, 2019; Phillips, Rothbard & Dumas, 2009). Second, they often directly engage in their serious leisure activity with their followers, which they believe further deepens trust from followers and grants of authenticity to the leader by followers. Third, they aim to increase not only how authentic they are seen to be, but also how authentic they themselves feel in the leader role (a challenge for leaders (Ibarra, 2015)) by narratively constructing continuity between their “true self” (as represented by the values and philosophy of their serious leisure) and their leader identity and by including their serious leisure into their life stories, a powerful “meaning system” (Kegan, 1983: 220) that gives them a clear sense of self and allows them to provide justification for why they’ve become leaders and to feel legitimate in the leader role (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Chapter 5 includes an essay on what an athletic leisure interest could mean for female leaders’ identity construction and perceived authenticity, based on extant research and inspired by my interviews with six female leaders who have passionate athletic interests, of whom four CEOs of large organizations (counting between 5000 and 80,000 employees), one successful young entrepreneur and one middle manager in an investment bank. Women face a difficult

“double bind” when claiming a leader identity (Zheng, Surgevil, & Kark, 2018) as the ideal leader’s attributes are still “masculine” (competitiveness, dominance, assertiveness, self-confidence) while the stereotypical female values are kindness, nurturing, sensitivity and affection (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This mismatch makes followers more likely to perceive women leaders as either inauthentic, not “true to themselves” when enacting masculine behaviors in the leader role (Liu, Cutcher, & Grant, 2015) or authentic but a “pushover”, unfit to lead, when enacting feminine behaviors in the leader role. Successful women leaders manage to navigate the paradox of enacting the two types of apparently contradictory behaviors (Zheng et al., 2018). We propose that a passionate sports identity (by its nature authentic, since serious leisure can hardly be “faked”) could help in managing this paradox, by developing and conveying stereotypically “masculine” personal values such as confidence, winning, discipline and risk taking.

6.2.5 Chapters’ contribution to the theme of enrichment

The second key theme of this dissertation refers to the potential of the serious leisure role to enrich the leader role. Chapter 2 proposes a theoretical model for how the serious leisure role can enrich the leader role by transferring to it valuable resources, building on role enrichment theories (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These resources represent a) *skills and perspectives*, as various nonwork activities such as the arts, sports and volunteering have been shown to develop leadership skills (Gordon & Gordon, 2017; Hameiri, 2019; Mojza, Sonnentag & Bornemann, 2011; Romanowska, Larsson & Theorell, 2014); b) *self-views* such as self-efficacy and self-awareness (Brown, 2007; Dilley & Scraton, 2010; Stebbins, 2001a) that are essential for leader development (Day & Dragoni, 2015); c) psychological and physical resources based on feelings of happiness, personal growth, confidence, mastery, belonging and the creation of meaning (Stebbins, 2001a) and stress coping properties (Gibson, Wilming & Holdnak, 2002; Falcous, 2017); and d) social capital, given the special world of a serious

leisure interest and the fact that a passionate interest will foster deeper trust and attachment among its members (Uzzi & Dunlap, 2005).

As role enrichment studies find that the strength of identification with the source role is associated with higher enrichment of the target role (Dumas & Stanko, 2017; Graves, Ohlott & Ruderman, 2007; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006), we theorize that the serious leisure identity will motivate greater enrichment from the serious leisure role to the leader role. We also propose several moderators for this enrichment relationship, such as the type of passion for the leisure pursuit (with harmonious but not obsessive passion supporting the creation and transfer of valuable resources), the salience of the leader role (with high salience motivating a higher transfer of useful resources to the leader role) and the compatibility of the two identities, with perceived incompatibility leading to little or no enrichment from the serious leisure to the leader identity.

In Chapter 4 we find that CEOs of major companies who have a serious leisure interest perceive it has an important role in helping them cope with the demands of their job. Specifically, they see two major contributions of their serious leisure activity: first, it offers them “freedom” from the “all-consuming” CEO role and this freedom alleviates the strain coming from the demands of the CEO job; and second, experiencing this freedom produces important personal resources (such as energy, positive affect) which, together with the resources produced directly by the serious leisure activity (energy, positive affect but also sense of control, discipline, “mental toughness”) not only help them cope with the demands of their job but also support them in rising to the challenge of these demands (including the challenges of practicing transformational leadership in the top job) and functioning optimally in their role. Thus, the serious leisure role enriches the CEO role by lending it valuable personal resources.

Chapter 5 includes an essay on CEOs’ perceptions of benefits arising from their serious leisure. These benefits include a summary of those identified in Chapter 4 and (to some extent)

the authenticity “benefit” from Chapter 3 but they also include other insights based on my interviews with “serious leisurite” CEOs and on publicly available data regarding S&P 500 CEOs’ serious leisure, such as the fact that serious leisure educates “humility”, thus helping CEOs resist the temptation of hubris in the top job.

6.2.6 Chapters’ contribution to the theme of “positive diversification”

The third main theme arising from this dissertation refers to the “diversifying” benefits a serious leisure identity can bring to one’s self, that otherwise risks becoming over-invested in the leader identity. Chapter 2 includes a theoretical model for how the strong, positive serious leisure identity can act as “diversification” against overinvestment of the self in the leader identity. We build on role accumulation theory (Sieber, 1974) and on self-complexity theory (Linville, 1987) to propose that adding a positive, voluntary role identity such as serious leisure to the other identities one has offers diversification when facing negative events in one of those other identities, by “buffering” their effects on one’s self-evaluations. As the serious leisure identity is associated with feelings of mastery, self-expression, self-actualization, (Stebbins, 2007), it will increase the leader’s positive self-complexity, defined as self-complexity arising from identities that the individual associates with positive attributes (Brook, Garcia & Fleming, 2008; Hannah et al., 2009). This diversification is especially needed in the leader role, because the latter typically entails high instrumental, interpersonal and image risk (DeRue & Ashford, 2010b), likely to fill leaders with insecurity and anxiety (Ibarra et al., 2014) and at the same time one risks overcommitting to a leader identity and turning it into an obsessive passion (Vallerand et al., 2003; van Wijhe, Peeters & Schaufeli, 2014). However, this diversification effect is not only beneficial to leaders’ mental well-being, but also to their performance in the leader role, since individuals high in self-complexity tend to demonstrate increased self-regulation (Brown & McConnell, 2009) which is a prerequisite for effective leadership

(Goleman, 1998) and since leader self-complexity is an antecedent of leader developmental readiness (Hannah & Avolio, 2010).

We also propose that the salience of the leader role moderates the effects of this diversification on the leader identity. Namely, when the leader role is important to its holder, the diversification offered by serious leisure will benefit their leader performance and ultimately leader identity, as described above. If, however, the leader role is not highly important to its holder (for example when they are only considering accepting a first leader role and have not yet committed to it), this diversification may work against the leader identity, since, when facing setbacks in the leader role, the individual will find it easier to abandon it, given that they have this other self-affirming, positive identity to give them meaning, the serious leisure one.

Chapter 4 illustrates how this diversification effect can unfold, as it contains among its findings perceptions by CEOs that their serious leisure identity offers them “another leg to stand on”, so that, when they face negative events in their CEO role, they do not interpret them as reflecting upon their whole self, but continue to trust themselves as whole, able human beings and can thus renew their efforts and motivate themselves and their followers “once more unto the breach” in the daily struggles they encounter in their leadership role.

6.3 Theoretical implications and future research directions

While each of the previous chapters have discussed the theoretical implications of their findings, I now turn to the overarching contribution of this dissertation to management studies.

6.3.1 Leader self-development

While this dissertation has identified numerous ways in which a serious leisure interest could benefit a leader’s development and effectiveness, serious leisure would be ill-suited to becoming part of a prescriptive leader development program, given its intrinsically

motivated and freely chosen nature. The decisions to choose a leisure interest, to persevere and to turn it into a passion, are all individual, and therefore best fit to complement leaders' self-development. This is timely, as organizations increasingly realize that leader development is most efficient when leaders take control of their own growth (DeRue & Ashford, 2010a). Self-developing leaders are characterized by "mastery orientation" (Reichard & Johnson, 2011), a set of traits that seem to have much in common with those of serious leisurites. Moreover, it is argued that what underpins leader self-development is the mobilization of three "meta-skills": ability to manage one's emotional reactions to feedback, practicing self-reflection and enacting self-regulatory processes (Nesbit, 2012), all of which, as this dissertation has argued, can be promoted by having and practicing a serious leisure interest. This would suggest that a serious leisure interest would not only directly benefit one's leader identity and effectiveness (as proposed in earlier chapters) but could promote the very mindset needed to engage in leadership self-development in the first place. Intriguing directions are suggested by studies showing that mindfulness training programs can enhance self-directed leader development efforts (Rupprecht et al., 2019), since mindfulness and practicing serious leisure share common features such as detachment and both can lead to experiences of flow (Wright et al., 2006). Research on leadership self-development could therefore examine under what conditions serious leisure can act as fertile ground for sustaining leaders' self-development efforts. As serious leisure is often a life-long commitment, thus allowing for a long-term growth trajectory (unlike the quickly fading results of development programs), finding out how serious leisure can act as a self-development companion along leaders' lifetime growth trajectory deserves further research attention.

6.3.2 Positive psychology in leadership development

Considering serious leisure as a potential help in leaders' growth and effectiveness hails from the same philosophical grounds as the positive psychology approach to leadership development. Like positive psychology, serious leisure is grounded in Aristotle's view of happiness as eudaemonia, "living in a manner that actively expresses excellence of character or virtue" (Haybron 2000: 210). Research on leadership and eudaemonia describes the latter as occurring "when one feels intensive involvement, special fit with an activity and intensively alive" (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005:375), a description that also closely fits engagement in a serious leisure activity. The concept of "flow", central to positive psychology (Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre, 1989) is also often associated with serious leisure engagement (Stebbins, 2009; Shupe & Gagne, 2016). Several studies document similar experiences of "flow" in leadership roles or in jobs that have a leadership component (e.g. teachers and physicians) and in purposeful, passionate leisure activities and/or intensive arts or sports participation (Delle Fave & Massimini, 2003; Harung & Travis, 2012). Serious leisure corresponds to Aristotle's representation of leisure as space for the development of the self, as a purposeful search for achievement and learning (Beatty & Torbert, 2003; Carr, 2017). As suggested in this work (Chapters 2 and 4), leaders perceive that their serious leisure develops and protects their psychological capital ("Psycap"), seen as an essential antecedent of positive forms of leadership (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The concept of authenticity, central to authentic leadership research informed by positive psychology (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) is also central to "serious leisuire" leaders' constructions of consistency between their personal serious leisure identity and their leader identity, as we find in Chapter 3's empirical investigation. Another concept grounded in positive psychology (and specifically, positive organizational behavior), "best-self activation" relies on the enriching, self-affirming power of personal identities for positive outcomes at work (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013).

Thus, while this dissertation contributes to positive organizational behavior thought and specifically to leadership development from a positive psychology perspective, many directions are left for further scholarly investigation in this area: does having a serious leisure interest promote psychological capital for leaders more than bespoke short-term Psycap increasing interventions would and is there a qualitative difference in terms of the short-term vs. the long-term effects on psychological capital? Serious leisure conflates the positive, self-affirming qualities of a strong personal identity with the benefits of the engagement in the actual activity (as shown for example by studies documenting the beneficial effects of arts or sports for leaders' psychological resources (Romanowska et al., 2014)). This would suggest, as we theorize in Chapter 2, an especially powerful effect of serious leisure on leaders' psychological resources, compared to other nonwork roles and activities, but deeper empirical research is needed to more granularly understand how and when this happens.

6.3.3 Leader communication

6.3.3.1 Projecting an “ideal” leader image in the 21st century

If this century is to be when the Western corporate world will finally afford to abandon the “protestant work ethic” (that prescribes that salvation comes from hard work, preferably work that involves drudgery and self-denial), this can only happen through shifts in the relevant discourses. Many of these discourses still champion the protestant work ethic across Western cultures and especially in the US (Amos, 2019). Among the voices that are important in changing prevailing discourses, leaders play a key role, through what they say but especially through what they do and how they model new paradigmatic possibilities. It is thus timely to start our exploration of what serious leisure can mean for the future of leadership, “at the top”, with serious leisurite CEOs of major companies who, by passionately believing in the powers of their nonwork passion to make them better leaders, actually turn belief into reality, supported

by the constructed, self-fulfilling nature of leadership (Reichard, Walker, Putter, Middleton, & Johnson, 2017). Thus, serious leisurite CEOs actively contribute not only to the re-shaping of work-life balance standards for leaders, counteracting the earlier perception that leaders should live and breathe their work (e.g. Whyte, 1956), but also to a new discourse on what being a good leader may entail in the new century. Future research could explore how CEOs balance projecting an image of a 100% dedicated leader with portraying a “rounder” self with an active and fulfilling personal life. Extant research has mostly shown CEOs constructing a fully dedicated work identity (Liu et al, 2017; Guthey & Jackson, 2005), while, as this dissertation shows (Chapter 3), not all statements by CEOs in the media project an “all-work” personal brand. Future research could also study how CEOs’ communication around this delicate balance between abiding by the protestant work ethic and portraying an “interesting”, well-rounded personal self, might vary depending on the target audience (e.g. employees, journalists, investors), on the medium used (social media vs. company website, for example) and on context (such as a crisis or extremely high job demands). Extant research makes conflicting predictions in this regard: On one hand, in the words of Schon and colleagues (2015), in a crisis “no actor wants to be seen investing time or having the time for improving his/her golf handicap.” (Schon, Ehrmann & Rost, 2015: 261). On the other hand, Hambrick and colleagues (2005b) predict that CEOs who face extremely high job demands (which would definitely happen in a crisis) may feel not only freer to communicate about their extensive leisure interests but also more motivated to do so, in order to signal that they are not overly pressured by their job. This dissertation’s findings suggest that CEOs may stay mindful of how their serious leisure is perceived in relation to their dedication to work and of how this may change depending on context (see Chapter 4), but at the same time that they may be aware of a slowly shifting discourse on how the ideal company leader divides their time. In his influential 1956 book, William Whyte wrote about corporate managers: “they are not well-

rounded for the simple reason that, if they had been well-rounded, they wouldn't have gotten to be executives in the first place" (Whyte, 1956: 141), powerfully illustrating the expectation of the time that executives focus on nothing but their work. Anecdote has it that Jack Dorsey's 2008 ousting from Twitter (like Steve Jobs, Jack got fired from the top job only to be later re-hired) was partially caused by his passion for fashion clothes making: "You can either be a dressmaker or the CEO of Twitter", co-founder Ev Williams reportedly told him. "But you cannot be both" (Roose, 2013). Now Jack is again dividing his days between his Twitter CEO job and another important role: this time not a serious leisure interest, but another CEO job (at Square). Admittedly, this "part-time CEO" model proves too much for some of Twitter's investors (Murphy & Bradshaw, 2020). Still, we do not know how important holding more than one "job" may be to Jack and what the outcomes of it are in terms of creativity, leadership performance or recovery (as this dissertation's empirical findings show, it takes a deeply absorbing pursuit to detach from one's CEO role: at the extreme, that absorbing pursuit could be another CEO role). The traditional "scarcity" view whereby adding other roles, however fulfilling, can only rob a leader role of resources and harm leader performance may be increasingly challenged in the new century. In conclusion, future research could delve deeper both into CEOs' communication with regard to their nonwork selves and into expectations and perceptions by followers regarding this topic.

6.3.3.2 Social media communication as an act of leadership

Leaders, and especially CEOs, are increasingly expected to be "personal" in their communication, which includes being active in social media (Edelmann trust survey, 2018). But there may be a subtle yet crucial difference between what this social media presence means to someone born in the "analog" age, and what it represents for younger audiences. To the older eye, social media is another communication channel: a highly important and different one, because of the interactivity it offers and demands, but still only another channel for the

messages of the real, flesh-and-bones person at the keyboard. For younger generations however, who a person is in social media, their “persona”, their social media identity, defined by the tasteful or “faux-pas” choices it makes, what this persona “likes”, the “theme” and color palette they choose for their Instagram account, may be almost as real as the live person. This brings up important questions with regard to what leadership may mean in the Instagram age: does the “claiming and granting” of leader and follower identities (DeRue et al., 2010a), the negotiation of a leadership relationship in social interaction, also occur in the realm of social media? Do leaders “lead” both in the real and in the virtual world? And when these leaders are publicly visible CEOs who at the same time are hardly ever physically visible to some of their employees in the more remote corners of their “empire”, does their leading in the virtual world gain even more weight within their overall leadership? In this context, CEOs’ communicating personal information (such as their serious leisure passions and what they mean for their leadership) represents an intriguing avenue for future research. This dissertation has shown that most serious leisurite CEOs do actively communicate about their nonwork passion in social media. It is probably no mere coincidence that, while “serious leisurites” represent roughly 10% of the S&P 500 CEOs (as earlier shown in this work), eight of them are ranked among the top 20 “most connected leaders” according to Brunswick’s new “connected leadership index” (Brunswick, 2019).

6.3.4 Future of work

As we stand on the cusp of sweeping change on a global scale, heralded by technological progress (Fleming, 2019), the “gig economy” (Petriglieri et al., 2019), an aging population (United Nations, 2017) and generational clashes in work values (Cogin, 2012), the very meaning of “work” is going to change. Globally, an increasing number of people have more free time, more and more individuals do not need to work for financial reasons, increasingly many have a portfolio of (paid and unpaid) jobs (Barley, Bechky & Milliken, 2017). Thus, the

upward trend in serious leisure that we notice in various fields is likely to continue, with serious leisure becoming a main source of meaning for an increasing number of individuals. Understanding how their serious leisure participates in their “portfolio” of identities and how it relates to the various shapes and conceptualizations of “work” is becoming highly relevant. Serious leisure shares many characteristics with work, and indeed is often hardly distinguishable from “devotee work”, “a strong, positive attachment to a form of self-enhancing work, where the sense of achievement is high and the core activity (set of basic tasks) is endowed with such intense appeal that the line between this work and leisure is virtually erased” (Stebbins, 2009: 768). For an increasing number of individuals, their need for meaning and meaningful work (Lysova, Allan, Dik, Duffy, & Steger, 2019) may be satisfied by the combination of one or several paid but uninspiring jobs (that they may increasingly undertake on a “gig” basis), and of an unpaid, “serious leisure” passionate endeavour. Unanswered callings are often transformed into passionate leisure pursuits through “leisure crafting” (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010). But, as this dissertation highlights, the potential of serious leisure can go well beyond compensating for needs unmet at work. Serious leisure can help bring one’s life (work and nonwork together) to the best it can be, it can create a surplus, “le superflu, chose très nécessaire”⁴⁹ in Voltaire’s words, that is much needed if one is to flourish and not just to survive. While this dissertation argues that the “augmenting” potential of serious leisure is especially valuable to the leader role and the leader identity, it also suggests serious leisure holds the possibility to enrich one’s work life more generally, especially in the new, fragmented, multi-shaped world of work. Thus this dissertation contributes to efforts of understanding what tomorrow’s “job portfolio” may look like for most individuals, building on emerging research on multiple work identities (Campion, Caza, & Moss, 2020; Caza, Moss,

⁴⁹ “The superfluous, a very necessary thing” (fr)

& Vough, 2018) and on precarious work identities in the “gig” economy (Petriglieri, Ashford, & Wrzesniewski, 2019). Specifically, this suggests several promising directions for future research:

6.3.4.1 Serious leisure as a stabilizing identity

While this dissertation has discussed the unstable, anxiety-prone nature of the leader identity (Ibarra et al., 2014) and how a serious leisure identity may act as a “stabilizer” for leaders’ selves, future research could look more broadly at how a serious leisure identity may anchor one’s sense of self when their work identity (or identities) are precarious, as is increasingly the case in the “gig” economy, often accompanied by the absence of an organizational “holding environment” (Petriglieri et al., 2019: 133). The stabilizing potential of the serious leisure identity in such instances would be further supported by the fact that serious leisure interests are characterized by the presence of an ethos, their own world with its special social rules (Stebbins, 1982) and that serious leisurites often report feelings of belongingness and human connection (Bendle & Patterson, 2009; Falcous, 2017).

6.3.4.2 Serious leisure seen from a multiple jobholding perspective

Emerging research on multiple jobholding differentiates motivations for engaging in it as belonging to either the “push” category (e.g. taking more than one job for financial reasons) or the “pull” category (e.g. psychological fulfilment) (Campion et al., 2020). There are indications that, while “push” motivations are likely to be associated with a net depleting effect of multiple jobholding (that is, the underlying multiple work roles are more depleting than enriching each other), “pull” motivations foster a net enriching effect (Averett, 2001; Osborne & Warren, 2006). As serious leisure is often in many ways similar to work (specifically, passionate, “calling” work), by studying the motivations and outcomes of adding a serious leisure role to one’s work role(s) using similar tools to those used to research multiple

jobholding can add depth and perspective to this new and increasingly relevant strand of scholarly thought.

6.4 Practical implications

While I have already outlined the implications for practice of each of this dissertation's studies, in what follows I summarize the practical takeaways applicable to the entirety of this work.

6.4.1 Implications for leaders

This dissertation, together with further future practitioner articles inspired by it, opens the way for leaders to become aware of how a serious leisure interest can represent an important tool in their self-development "kit" while avoiding its pitfalls. Building awareness is important so that (aspiring) leaders may choose and develop a serious leisure interest significantly earlier than when they would most dearly need it as a buffer against setbacks in their leader identity and/or as a fountain of psychological resources when the demands of the leader job prove depleting. Starting out in a serious leisure pursuit is likely to be time consuming and to engender its own stress, as one struggles against the typical steep learning curve involved in mastering the pursuit's special skills, or maybe as one switches from one interest to another in search of one's true passion. Therefore trying to implant a new serious leisure interest in one's life only at the moment one is in, or nearing work-related burnout, would probably not be a winning strategy.

Leaders can accelerate and reinforce the benefits their serious leisure can bring to their leader identity and effectiveness (as illustrated in this work) by actively engaging in sensemaking around the meaning of their nonwork passion for their leader role: similarly to the process of constructing one's "life story" and how one got to where one is, (Shamir &

Eilam, 2005), this sensemaking can add felt authenticity and legitimacy, as illustrated in Chapter 3.

6.4.2 Implications for organizations

Many organizations already engage in various initiatives meant to celebrate their members' nonwork lives, but these have traditionally focused on the parent role, from organizing events such as a "bring your kid to work" day to more generally fostering a supportive work-family culture (Lyness & Kropf, 2005). In a paradoxical combination of competing discourses, while organizations encourage employees to "blur" the boundaries between their work and their personal lives, their standards of "professional behavior" still discourage nonwork referencing at work (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). This dissertation's findings, showcasing top CEOs openly communicating about their personal interests at work and encouraging similar behavior by their employees can thus represent a useful model for organizations willing to foster a true "whole person" work environment for their members.

New employees' sharing stories of when they felt at their best in their nonwork lives with their co-workers was found to be associated with increased engagement, retention and positive customer outcomes (Cable et al., 2013). Similar outcomes could arguably also be attained through employees' disclosing their serious leisure self within favorable environments promoted by their companies.

Specifically with regard to developing leaders, organizations could support their leadership talent by encouraging them not only to consider serious leisure, but also, when they have a passionate interest, to actively reflect on its leadership value (Friedman & Westring, 2015), thus activating sensemaking and identity work and fostering the transfer of valuable resources.

6.4.3 Implications for investors

This work's findings may be a first nudge for investors to go beyond a strict scarcity view and consider the possibility that a CEO's investing time in serious leisure may yield a good return for the organization, especially in the social media age. Some investors are starting to get on with the zeitgeist: an investment analyst's comment about the passion for triathlons of PNC Financial's CEO, Bill Demchak, was "I think it's a sign of literal and figurative strength at the top of PNC" (Ensign, 2016). However, much is still to change before this becomes a widely shared view in the investments world.

6.5 Limitations and related suggestions for future research

This dissertation is subject to several limitations that also represent opportunities for future research. Some of these limitations were already identified as corresponding to one or another of the preceding chapters: I repeat them here because they apply to the entirety of this work and I take this opportunity to analyse them through a wider lens than each individual chapter has afforded.

6.5.1 Followers' perspective

This work refers to leadership, a socially negotiated relationship wherein followers are as important as leaders (DeRue et al., 2010b). Accordingly, the theoretical model I propose in Chapter 2 includes followers' reaction as an important mediator between leaders' claims of positive leadership attributes originating from their serious leisure identity and the strengthening and broadening of the leader identity. However, the empirical investigations I present in Chapters 3 and 4 do not reflect the followers' perspective on leaders' serious leisure and what it means for their leader identity. Although this does not weaken their ability to adequately answer their research questions (focusing on the serious leisurite CEOs' identity work, perceived job strain and sensemaking), it leaves open potential broader questions on the benefits of leaders' serious leisure as reflected in their followers' perception and sensemaking.

Thus, this work opens a serious leisure-leadership research agenda that can only be complete once future research explores questions such as how followers perceive their leaders' serious leisure interests, how these perceptions are informed by their implicit leadership theories, their values and their social identification constructions, when they choose to grant leaders' claims of a broader and stronger leader identity based on serious leisure attributes and what role do factors such as trust, perceived authenticity and legitimacy of the leader play in such choices.

6.5.2 Gender

The empirical investigations in this work do not account for gender, given the low representation of women both among the interviewed CEOs and among S&P 500 CEOs. It is only in Chapter 5 that I suggest possible implications of having a serious leisure interest (and specifically an athletic one) for constructions of women leaders' authenticity and their leadership effectiveness. However, there are many more questions of significance that arise with regard to the interplay of gender and of the serious leisure-leadership relationship, pointing to several future research directions:

6.5.2.1 Women leaders' access to serious leisure

Serious leisure research identifies numerous barriers to women's access, both within the leisure world and outside of it. Many leisure worlds overtly or covertly discourage women's participation, and that applies not only to masculinized sports such as golf (where some clubs have only just started admitting female members), skydiving (Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008) and ice hockey (Pelak, 2002) but also to apparently more gender-neutral pursuits such as cycling (Falcous, 2017) and snowboarding (Anderson, 1999). More importantly, the world outside the serious leisure's ethos places a heavy burden of gendered norms and expectations on women, frowning on their tearing time away from their families to engage in "selfish" goal-oriented leisure (Gillespie, Leffler & Lerner, 2010) even when such leisure is stereotypically

“feminine”: for instance, women quilters need to employ elaborate strategies to free time for serious leisure quilting, as “family negotiations over women’s serious leisure quilting carry hidden gendered components.” (Stalp, 2006:128). However, this gender-focused serious leisure research has not yet examined how these dynamics would look in the case of women leaders’ access to serious leisure, given that by assuming a leader identity (still stereotyped as masculine) these women have already “transgressed” the traditional distribution of gender roles. Would women who lead find accessing serious leisure easier or harder than women who do not lead? This is further complicated by considerations of class and economic level, with women leaders likely more able to afford delegating part of their home duties, for example. Thus, future research would need to assess the impact of gender role norms and expectations on female leaders’ access to serious leisure. More broadly, taking a critical perspective on the emerging athleticism norms for managers (e.g. Costas, Blagoev, & Karreman, 2016; Johansson, Tienari, & Valtonen, 2017), future research could investigate whether these norms could represent another barrier to entry for females aspiring to be seen as legitimate leaders, as they would tend to access leisure (including sports) less than their male counterparts.

6.5.2.2 Interaction of the woman, serious leisurite and leader identities

Gender-focused research on serious leisure identifies it as a potential site for women to construct alternative, subversive identities that challenge the traditional feminine identities they are prescribed. For example, committed female windsurfers and weightlifters construct empowering identities using their serious leisure, reflecting traditionally “male” attributes such as discipline, agency and physicality (Brace-Gowan, 2004; Wheaton & Tomlinson, 1998). In the context of the “double bind” whereby women have difficulty in being perceived as authentic and/or effective leaders due to the misfit between the masculine attributes associated to the leader identity and the “feminine” attributes their sex conveys (Zheng, Kark, & Meister, 2018), future research could explore the effect that adding an athletic serious leisure identity

may have on how women leaders construct their leader identity and how they are granted legitimacy by followers.

6.5.3 Role enrichment and conflict from a multiple role perspective

This work focuses on only two of the salient roles an individual can inhabit: the leader role and the serious leisure role. A more complete assessment of the role serious leisure can play in one's leadership development would need to include at least one other salient role, the family, and to map what is likely to be a complex web of conflict and enhancement relationships between the three roles and the conditions under which these relationships apply. Serious leisure research indicates both conflict and enhancement between the serious leisure and the family role, with the latter having more weight than the former in the eyes of serious leisure participants and their spouses (Lamont, Kennelly, & Moyle, 2019). However, we do not know how this balance looks like when the individual is at the same time a spouse/parent, a dedicated leader (at work) and a serious leisurite. Assuming a simplistic, scarcity perspective, whereby a leader who is a parent and a Taekwondo black belt has less time for their children than one who has no serious leisure interest would probably be misguided. For example, sedentary women who enrolled in a sustained exercise regimen for six weeks experienced less work-family conflict afterwards than before; part of this change of perspective may be due to the mood-enhancing chemicals released by sports, but part of it could also be due to the self-affirmation, self-efficacy effect of seeing oneself as a physically active individual. Participants in Ironman competitions (a notoriously arduous pursuit) found little conflict between their serious leisure, their family and their work roles (Simmons et al., 2016). Intriguing leads were also suggested by my interviews with serious leisurite CEOs, as many indicated that they "function" better at home, that they are more "present" in periods when they practice their serious leisure, and sometimes also saw their serious leisure as setting a good example: "I think

it's a good model for children, to see their parents doing more than one thing, and not just having it be work" said for instance "Jason".

However, assuming a rose-tinted view whereby the three salient roles (serious leisure, family and leadership) always coexist harmoniously, with little inter-role conflict, would also be unjustified. For one thing, gender weighs heavily in the equation (see "gender" below); for another, as our theoretical model in Chapter 2 suggests, identity compatibility is an important factor in the inter-role enrichment process, therefore a three-way assessment of identity compatibilities would be advisable. Future research could thus build on emerging entreaties to consider constellations of roles and identities as opposed to one or two identities in isolation (Caza, Moss & Vough, 2018b; Ramarajan, Rothbard & Wilk, 2017) by examining the three-way interaction of the leader, family and serious leisurite identities, for many people the most salient ones in their personal identity hierarchy.

6.5.4 Methodological limitations

The empirical work undertaken in the various studies that compose this dissertation exclusively relies on qualitative methods. This is due to the largely unexplored nature of its topic and to the broad angle of its research questions. However, the theory being built in this thesis (both based on conceptual and on qualitative work) can benefit from further specification and quantitative testing. Thus, while this newly rolled out thread of scholarly conversation on leaders' serious leisure still has plenty of room for qualitative contributions, I look forward to its gaining strength from future research of the quantitative persuasion.

The small interview sample (N=16) that underlies part of this work can be seen as another methodological limitation. As argued in Chapter 4, the fact that the "serious leisurite" CEOs interviewed together represent an extreme case makes their narratives valuable for qualitative prodding even when their number is relatively low. It is worth adding here that, as noted by other researchers, "the business elite is notoriously difficult to access for research purposes"

(Athanasopoulou, Moss-Cowan, Smets, & Morris, 2018: 621). This is reflected in the sizes or characteristics of the few other samples of interviews with CEOs that underlie the totality of published peer-reviewed papers that we are aware of. These samples are either of comparable size or smaller than the one in this work (e.g. Athanasopoulou et al., 2018: 12 female CEOs leading quite disparate sizes of companies, from \$36 million to \$76 billion in revenue; Golder, 2000: 11 CEOs; Glass & Cook, 2016: 12 women executives), or of larger size but comprising CEOs of significantly smaller companies that are arguably easier to access and, depending on the research question, less likely to represent extreme cases: for example, De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008: 73 interviews with CEOs of SMEs; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016: 60 CEOs of companies with median market capitalization of \$103 million; Wilcox-King & Zeithaml, 2003: 17 CEOs of hospitals and textile producers (typically much smaller organizations than S&P 500 companies); Mannor, Wowak, Bartkus, & Gomez-Mejia, 2016: 60 CEOs of companies with “annual revenues of at least \$20 million” (p. 1974), no indication of range or median size. An interesting exception is Gordon & Martin’s (2019) sample of 20 CEOs of major companies: these men and women shared their views of the characteristics the 21st century CEO should possess and their names were disclosed as they waived their right to anonymity. These examples illustrate not only the difficulty of accessing major company CEOs, “who are notoriously unwilling to submit themselves to scholarly poking and probing” (Hambrick, 2007:337), but also the fact that there is considerable value and theoretical contribution in examining even comparatively small samples when they are composed of CEOs at this level.

6.6 Concluding remarks

This dissertation has brought together two separate research fields that had hardly intersected before, serious leisure and leadership, both through building new theory anchored in the expansionist view on role accumulation and on identity theory and through empirically

examining the phenomenon of the serious leisurite leader, starting with the extreme example of CEOs of major US companies and their serious leisure interests. Like Brad Smith, CEO of Intuit, an S&P 500 company, who, upon earning his blackbelt, realized that his martial arts learning was only just beginning (Smith, 2014), I complete this dissertation aware that most scholarly knowledge regarding the implications of leaders' serious leisure lies ahead of us. Thus, I trust that this work is only the beginning of an animated scholarly conversation between serious leisure and leadership researchers and I hope to stay an active participant in this exciting new journey of research discovery.