Trouble at the Border?
Gender, Work, and the Work-Home Interface *

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RUNNING HEAD: GENDER WORK AND THE WORK-HOME INTERFACE

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ABSTRACT

The present study addresses three main questions: 1) Are schedule control and job autonomy associated differently with the work-home interface? 2) Do schedule control and job autonomy interact with different forms of work-home role blurring to influence levels of work-to-home conflict? 3) Do any of these observed patterns of association differ for women and men? We apply and refine a *gender* view of border theory and propositions about *resourceful* versus *demanding* work conditions in the work-home interface. Analyses of the National Survey of the Changing Workforce (2002) reveal that schedule control and job autonomy are associated positively with work-home role blurring, although the effects are stronger among men. In addition, the association between work-home role blurring and work-to-home conflict is greater at higher levels of schedule control. The findings challenge the view that schedule control and job autonomy *uniformly* function as resources that help people avoid or manage trouble at the work-home border. Moreover, observed gender differences are inconsistent with egalitarian views about contemporary work-home role arrangements. We discuss the implications for border theory and outline future research directions on gender, work, and the work-home interface.

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Sociologists have had a long-standing interest in the ways that social-structural arrangements influence exposure to stressors and the health implications of such exposure. One of the most common forms of role-related stress involves the conflict between roles (Pearlin 1983; 1999), especially between work and home domains (Schieman, Kurashina, and Van Gundy 2006; Wharton and Blair-Loy 2006). For some people, what happens at work stays at work. For others, the parameters are not clearly demarcated. The boundaries are porous or fuzzy (Nippert-Eng 1996). From a stress process framework, conflict between work and home roles is important because of its deleterious health consequences (Bellavia and Frone 2005; Grzywacz and Marks 2000; Voydanoff 2005a, 2005). Thus, we seek to extend conceptual and theoretical perspectives on this topic by examining links between work conditions and four distinct but interrelated forms of the work-home interface: Receiving work-related contacts outside of normal work hours, bringing work home, work-home multitasking, and work-to-home conflict.

Scholars from an array of disciplines have sought to establish the social antecedents of the work-home interface (Bellavia and Frone 2005; Friedman and Greenhaus 2000; Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Voydanoff 2004). Coser's (1974) characterization of work as a "greedy institution" directly implicates work as a dominant force that extracts time and attention from workers, especially those in higher status positions (Hodson 2004). Schedule control and job autonomy represent two central indicators of higher status work that may be influential for the work-home interface. We seek to elaborate on the common conceptualization of schedule control and job autonomy as "resources" that people use to navigate the borders between work and home (Bakker and Geurts 2004). Specifically, we address three questions: 1) Are schedule control and job autonomy associated differently with the four forms of the work-home interface? 2) Do

schedule control and job autonomy interact with forms of work-home role blurring to influence levels of work-to-home conflict? 3) Do any of these observed patterns of association differ for women and men? In this effort, we seek to apply and refine a *gender* view of border theory and propositions about *resourceful* versus *demanding* work conditions in the work-home interface.

BACKGROUND

Conceptual Dimensions of the Work-Home Interface

Border theory provides an organizing framework for understanding the ways that individuals construct and navigate the parameters between work and home (Clark 2000). It is assumed that actors are motivated to manage the work-home border in ways that yield a "balance," which implies high levels of satisfaction and role functioning, and low levels of work-to-home conflict. Research on the work-home interface has focused primarily on this latter construct—work-to-home conflict—which involves the extent that individuals perceive that work interferes with the responsibilities and expectations of family, and competes for individuals' finite amounts of time and energy (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1987; Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly 1983). That is, role pressures that emanate from work are incompatible with family or hinder family-related role performance (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). These ideas reflect a central theme in research on the work-home interface: The *interference* elements of these structural arrangements and their associated role-related processes are generally viewed as unfavorable, undesirable, and problematic. As structural, organizational, and cultural forces continue to alter the nature of work and family life, however, the conceptual dimensions of the work-home interface have become increasingly multifaceted. In some instances, these processes might more appropriately be viewed as work-home *border blurring* (Voydanoff 2005a).

The concept of border blurring derives from border and boundary theories, which specify the physical, temporal, and psychological boundaries that distinguish work and nonwork roles (Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate 2000; Clark 2000; Nippert-Eng 1996). In this framework, "flexibility" and "permeability" are highly relevant concepts. Flexibility is the degree to which work duties are allowed to be performed outside of the usual spatial and temporal arrangements of the workplace. Spatial and temporal rigidity constrain work to specific time and space parameters. By contrast, permeability involves the extent that aspects of one domain may intrude on another domain. These concepts have implications for work-home *border crossing* and *integration*. According to Clark (2000), "a person who has fully integrated family and work makes no distinction about what belongs to home and what belongs to work: the people, thoughts, intellectual and emotional approaches are the same, no matter whether the task has to do with work or home" (p. 755). Some elements of this process may involve the intentional and efficacious blending of work and home domains; others may be less favorable or controllable.

Although greater flexibility and permeability ease the transition between roles, they also may increase interference between work and home life (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell 2006). We seek to illuminate these negative consequences of work-home role blurring. Determining these connections, however, requires a clearer specification of three distinct but interrelated forms of work-home role blurring, including the extent that individuals: 1) bring work home; 2) receive work-related contact or communications outside of normal work hours; and 3) engage in work-home multitasking. Voydanoff (2005a) identifies these as "boundary spanning demands" and observes their *positive* association with work-to-home conflict. The reasons for undesirable effects of role blurring are more evident if we consider the ways that technologies expand permeability such that workers become accessible "anytime, anywhere" (Lewis and Cooper

1999; Valcour and Hunter 2005). This pattern is apparent in Chesley's (2005) finding that persistent communications (i.e., cell phones, pagers) are associated positively with work-to-home conflict. Likewise, in a sample of university staff employees, Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006:432) found that "employees who integrate work into non-work set fewer boundaries for using communication technologies during nonwork time and report higher work-life conflict."

In sum, while evidence implies that work-home role blurring may elevate levels of work-to-home conflict, it is also important to consider the *context* of role blurring. For example, Grzywacz (2002) contends that the level of control workers have over the nature of work-home permeability is critical for understanding the work-home interface. Drawing from this view, we examine the extent that two central work conditions—schedule control and job autonomy—influence the effects of work-home border blurring. Here, we elaborate on border theory by contending that elements of role blurring involve desired arrangements that workers control and use to their advantage. Moreover, we expand on an overlooked paradox in prior research: Schedule control and job autonomy are typically viewed as work-related *resources*, but they may also contribute to work-home border blurring and higher levels of work-to-home conflict.

Schedule Control and Job Autonomy: Resources or Demands?

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model identifies resources as involving the physical, psychosocial, and organizational elements of work that foster the adequate completion of responsibilities (Bakker and Geurts 2004). In this framework, schedule control and job autonomy are conceptualized as two central *resources*. Schedule control, or the "temporal flexibility in work schedules," involves the extent that individuals are able to select the times that they start

and/or finish work (Golden 2001). By contrast, job autonomy involves the extent that individuals have the freedom to decide when, where, and how their work gets done (Hodson 2001).

Schedule control and job autonomy are considered highly desirable work conditions that most workers prefer, especially with respect to the challenges of the work-home interface (Voydanoff 2004, 2005b). According to Jacobs and Gerson (2004), schedule control and job autonomy are assumed to "help workers resolve conflicts between family and work" (p. 99). Although some evidence supports this assumption, the patterns are often observed when researchers use measures that emphasize conflict aspects of the work-home interface. We argue that different patterns may emerge for other forms of the work-home interface. Moreover, when schedule control and autonomy function as resources, they might contribute to intentional and efficacious forms of role blending and integration. Voydanoff (2005a:492–493) underscores this point in her account of "boundary-spanning resources," asserting that the "flexibility provided by resources such as…work schedule flexibility…reduces work-family conflict and perceived stress by increasing one's ability to perform work activities while also meeting family responsibilities." From this perspective, role blurring *in the context of* higher levels of schedule control and job autonomy should ease border crossing. Drawing upon this resource view, we propose the *role blurring-resource* hypothesis: 1) schedule control and job autonomy are associated negatively with work-home role blurring, and 2) schedule control and job autonomy attenuate any observed positive association between work-home role blurring and work-to-home conflict.

An alternative view, the *role blurring-interference* hypothesis, emphasizes the ways that schedule control and job autonomy—as indicators of higher status work conditions—obligate higher levels of responsibility for organizational outcomes (Schwalbe 1985; Smith 2002). These ideas also draw from core tenets of border theory. Workers with higher levels of schedule control

and autonomy likely experience the pull of the *work devotion schema*, which "demands that one give an immense time commitment and strong emotional allegiance to one's firm or career" (Blair-Loy 2003:7). In the language of border theory, these "central participants" should experience work-home border blurring as a more normative feature of higher status positions and the work devotion schema. Central participants are more likely to be socially integrated with other central participants at work, leading to stronger internalization of the workplace culture, and a deeper identification with and commitment to the organization (Clark 2000; Hodson 1996). Collectively, these ideas suggest that individuals in higher status work positions report more deliberate border-crossing and role integration. A potential down-side of these arrangements, however, involves one-sidedness in the work-home interface that favors work and manifests as unanticipated "border creep."[1] From this perspective, schedule control and job autonomy may reflect consequential elements of boundary-spanning *demands* that generate or exacerbate the interference aspects of role blurring. We draw upon these ideas to propose the *role blurring-interference* hypothesis: 1) schedule control and job autonomy are associated positively with work-home role blurring, and 2) the association between role blurring and work-to-home conflict is more positive among individuals with higher levels of schedule control and job autonomy.

Gender and the Work-Home Interface: Traditional versus Egalitarian Views

We elaborate on a *gender* view of border theory to further specify the hypotheses outlined above. The broad thesis is that women and men experience the antecedents and consequences of the work-home interface differently. These different orientations influence the nature and extent of work-home border crossing (Blair-Loy 2003). We outline two perspectives to frame our discussion: the *traditional role-balance* versus *egalitarian role-balance* views.

The traditional role-balance perspective posits that men and women hold different role meanings, values and obligations because of culturally-embedded ideologies about work and family life (Winslow 2005). Pleck (1977) argued that because women have traditionally prioritized the household, intrusions from home-to-work are more acceptable (and prevalent) than work-to-home intrusions. Similarly, the primacy of work for men implies that work-to-home intrusions are "natural" effects of the masculine stereotype of the "good provider." Employers' traditional preference has been a man whose priority is work (not family) and who has a spouse to manage home life (Acker 1990; Kanter 1977; Williams 2000). Moreover, the traditionally gendered division of childcare and household labor limits men's involvement, and by extension, shifts the balance of role commitments towards work (Gerson 1993). The gendered borders of work and family imply that interference from family to work is more likely for employed women, while it has been more acceptable for men to "take work home" (Duxbury and Higgins 1991; Pleck 1977, 1985). In the language of border theory, the traditional role-balance view implies that there is greater segmentation of work and family roles for working women and a greater integration of work and family roles for working men. By extension, the traditional view predicts that men should report higher levels of work-home role blurring than women, but work-home role blurring should be unrelated to work-to-home conflict for men because they have traditionally been "allowed" to bring work home. Moreover, the traditional views about the benefits of higher status work—as reflected in schedule control and job autonomy—should provide men with resources to create more favorable work-home role blurring arrangements.

Alternatively, the egalitarian role balance perspective implies that the experiences of the work-home interface are becoming similar for women and men. Decades ago, Pleck (1977) predicted that "the objective demands of the work role…will emerge as the primary constraint on

men's family role if and when ideological support for the traditional division of family labor by sex is weakened" (p. 421). Several trends may have eroded the influence of traditional role-balance ideas, including increases in the number of dual-earner households and shifting gender norms about work and family life (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Moreover, the weakening of traditional norms should elevate the relevance of work demands for men's involvement in family (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). To the extent that these developments occur without accommodating changes in men's work role and the influence of work on men's identity, levels of work-home blurring will change because of men's commitment to and involvement in family. Pleck (1977) also foretold of the effects of decreases in occupational sex segregation for women's experience of the work-family balance, particularly as women gain access to higher status jobs. Likewise, Hochschild (1997:80) argued that "the female pattern is converging with the male pattern as women increasingly transfer their allegiance to the workplace." Collectively, these transformations predict an increase of men's contributions to household duties.

Drawing from Blair-Loy's (2003) ideas about role-related devotion schemas, recent trends suggest that men, by devoting more time and energy to the non-economic aspects of fatherhood, view themselves as more *central participants in the home* (Coltrane 1996; Gerson 1993; Townsend 2002). Some evidence shows that men have closed the gap with women in their contribution to child care, although women still do a disproportionate share of this work (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). The weakening of traditional norms may also elevate the relevance of work-related demands for men's involvement in family-related roles. The collective result of these social and cultural transformations, as we interpret them, should involve the expansion of expectations for men's contributions to household duties and women's contributions to the workplace. If accurate, these patterns should contribute to a greater

equalization across genders in exposure to work-home role blurring, the workplace conditions that predict it, and any observed association between role blurring and work-to-home conflict.

Empirical support for the egalitarian role-balance perspective has been mixed. Charles and Grusky (2004) document a "failure of egalitarianism" in the undiminished occupational sex segregation, despite a declining gender gap in educational attainment and level of agreement with the idea that women should be responsible for running the household. Although women spend more time on childcare and housework than men (Bird 1999; Bird and Fremont 1991; Hochschild 1989), Fuma (2005) found that the United States has one of the highest levels of egalitarian division of household labor. Despite lingering gender-asymmetries in work/family balance, increasing egalitarian forces may cause women to become less likely to characterize work as supplemental to family, while men may become less likely to define home roles as supplemental to work (Barnett and Rivers 1996; Grzywacz and Marks 2000). We might even observe a gender cross-over. Indeed, Milkie and Peltola (1999) found that men and women had similar levels of success in balancing work and family, and for men but not women, the tradeoffs made between work and family were associated with *lower* feelings of success. Yet, the implications of schedule control and job autonomy for gender differences and contingencies in work-home blurring and their associations with work-to-home conflict remains undocumented.

METHODS

Sample

The data derive from the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce, in which 3,504 adults in a nationally representative sample of the U.S labor force were interviewed by telephone between October 2002 and June 2003. Eligible participants are 18 years of age or older

and participating in the paid labor force, and were randomly selected using a random-digit-dial method. A response rate of between 52 and 61 percent of eligible respondents yielded the full sample, with a 98 percent completion rate (see Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, and Prottas 2003 for more details).[2] We exclude participants with missing values on our focal and control measures. This yielded a final working sample of 2,356 individuals (1,116 women and 1,240 men).

Focal Measures

Work-to-home conflict. Five items measure the frequency with which individuals experienced work-to-home conflict in the past three months: "How often have you not had enough time for your family or other important people in your life because of your job?", "How often have you not had the energy to do things with your family or other important people in your life because of your job?", "How often has work kept you from doing as good a job at home as you could?", "How often have you not been in a good mood at home because of your job?", and "How often has your job kept you from concentrating on important things in your family and personal life?". Response choices are coded as "never" (1), "rarely" (2), "sometimes" (3), "often" (4), and "very often" (5). We coded and averaged items such that higher scores indicate higher levels of work-to-home conflict ($\alpha = .86$). This measure and the other work-home role blurring measures described below are used in other recent studies (Voydanoff 2004, 2005a).

Receiving work-related contact outside of normal work hours. One item assesses the frequency with which individuals are contacted for work-related reasons outside of regular work hours: "How often do coworkers, supervisors, managers, customers, or clients contact you about work-related matters outside normal work hours? Include telephone, cell phone, beeper and pager calls, as well as faxes and email that you have to respond to." Response choices are reverse

coded as “never” (1), “occasionally” (2), “fairly regularly but less than once a week” (3), “once a week” (4), “several times a week” (5), “once a day” (6), “many times a day” (7).

Bringing work home. One item assesses the frequency with which individuals bring work home: “How often do you do any paid or unpaid work at home that is part of your job?” Response choices are reverse coded as “never” (1), “a few times a year” (2), “about once a month” (3), “about once a week” (4), “more than once a week” (5).

Work-home multitasking. One item measures the extent to which respondents perform work and home tasks simultaneously whilst at home: “How often do you try to work on job tasks and home tasks at the same time when you are at home?” Responses are reverse coded as “never” (1), “rarely” (2), “sometimes” (3), “often” (4), and “very often” (5).

Gender. We use dummy codes for men (0) and women (1).

Schedule control. One question asks participants about schedule control: “Overall, how much control would you say you have in scheduling your work hours?” Responses were reverse coded as “none” (0), “very little” (1), “some” (2), “a lot” (3), “complete” (4).

Job autonomy. Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following three statements: “I have the freedom to decide what I do on my job?”, “It is basically my own responsibility to decide how my job gets done”, and “I have a lot of say about what happens on my job”. Response choices are reverse coded as “strongly disagree” (1), “somewhat disagree” (2), “somewhat agree” (3), and “strongly agree” (4). We averaged the items such that higher scores indicate higher levels of job autonomy ($\alpha = .67$).

Control Measures

Age. We coded participants’ age in years.

Race. We coded participants' race as "white" (1) versus all other categories (0).

Married. We coded marital status as "married (1) versus all other categories (0).

Children. We coded participants who reported "having at least one child under 18 living in the household" (1) versus those who did not have children under age 18 at home (0).

Education. Education is coded according to the highest level of schooling achieved: "less than high school, "high school or GED," "some college", "Associate Degree," "four-year college degree," and "graduate or professional degree." For the sake of space, we analyze this as a continuous variable; separate analyses that used categorical contrasts showed similar results.

Occupation. Participants are categorized into the following occupational groups: "executives," "professionals," "technical," "service," "sales," "administrative" and "production." We use "executives" as the omitted contrast category in all regression analyses.

Personal income. Participants' personal income is assessed with the question: "How much did you earn from all jobs in all of 2002?"

Job demands. Job demands is assessed with responses to the following four items: "My job requires that I work very fast", "My job requires that I work very hard", "I never seem to have enough time to get everything done on my job", and "My job is very emotionally demanding and tiring". Response choices are "strongly disagree" (1), "somewhat disagree" (2), "somewhat agree" (3), and "strongly agree" (4). We scored and averaged the items such that higher scores indicate higher levels of job demands ($\alpha = .55$).

Work hours. We contrast participants who work "more than 50 hours per week" (0) with workers in two other categories "1 to 39 hours per week" (1) and "40 to 49 hours per week" (2).

Supervisor. One item asks participants: "Is supervising or managing other people a major part of your job?" We coded "yes" responses as 1 ("supervisor") and "no" responses as 0.

Plan of Analyses

After reporting basic descriptive statistics (Table 1), we present multivariate analyses to test our hypotheses in several steps (Tables 2, 3, and 4); all models use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression techniques. In each of these three tables, we split our presentation of findings into two parts. The first part reports the results with one of the work-home role blurring measures as the dependent variable (i.e., work-related contact, bringing work home, or work-home multitasking). The second part reports the results for work-to-home conflict as the dependent variable and focuses on each of the work-home role blurring measures as a focal predictor of work-to-home conflict. For example, in the first model of Table 2, we regress receiving work-related contact on gender, schedule control, job autonomy, and all control measures. The next two models tests gender-contingent effects of schedule control (model 2) and job autonomy (model 3). In the second part of Table 2, model 4 regresses work-to-home conflict on gender, schedule control, job autonomy, and receiving work-related contact outside of work. Model 2 tests for gender, schedule control, and job autonomy as contingencies in the association between work-related contact and work-to-home conflict. We repeat the analyses in models 4 and 5 with bringing work home (Table 3) and work-home multitasking (Table 4) as the focal predictors.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics. As Voydanoff (2005a) reported, there are no gender differences in levels of work-to-home conflict and the frequency of bringing work home. By contrast, however, men report significantly higher average levels of receiving work-related contact outside of normal work hours and work-home multitasking. Although we observe no

gender differences in levels of schedule control, men have a higher average level of job autonomy than women. Among the controls, men have a lower average age than women, are more likely to be married, have lower average levels of education, higher income, work longer hours, and differ significantly from women in each occupation category except technical occupations. For example, women are more likely to hold administrative support, service, sales, professional, and executive occupations, and less likely to be in production jobs. Men are more likely to be supervisors, but there are no gender differences in average level of job demands.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Receiving Work-Related Contact

In model 1 of Table 2, multivariate analyses that include all control measures confirm the bivariate patterns: Women report a lower average frequency of receiving work-related contact outside of normal work hours than men. We also observe that schedule control and job autonomy are associated *positively* and independently with receiving work-related contact. In models 2 and 3, however, these associations differ for women and men. Specifically, in model 2, the negative women × schedule control coefficient indicates that the positive association between schedule control and work-related contact is stronger among men compared to women. Likewise, in model 3, the significant women × job autonomy coefficient indicates that the positive association between job autonomy and work-related contact is stronger among men compared to women.

Models 4 and 5 in Table 2 examine work-to-home conflict as the focal dependent variable. As shown in model 4, there is a positive association between receiving work-related contact outside of work and work-to-home conflict. By contrast, schedule control and job autonomy are associated negatively with work-to-home conflict. Moreover, the non-significant interaction terms in model 5 indicates that the positive association between work-related contact

and work-to-home conflict is not contingent upon gender, schedule control, or job autonomy. In addition, although peripheral to our focal associations, the patterns among our control measures deserve brief mention. Specifically, the youngest, the well-educated, individuals in executive occupations, supervisors, and workers in demanding jobs report receiving more frequent work-related contact outside of normal work hours. In addition, younger workers, parents, executives, those in demanding jobs, and full-time workers report higher levels of work-to-home conflict.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Bringing Work Home

As shown in model 1 of Table 3, women and men report similar average frequencies of bringing work home. We also observe that schedule control and job autonomy are associated positively with bringing work home. In model 2, the negative women × schedule control coefficient indicates that schedule control is associated positively with bringing work home among men only.[3] By contrast, the nonsignificant women × job autonomy coefficient implies that autonomy is associated positively with bringing work home similarly for women and men. Among the controls, we found that married individuals, the well-educated, workers with greater job demands and longer hours, and supervisors report a higher frequency of bringing work home. Workers in administrative, service, sales, production, and technical jobs report bringing work home less often than executives, but professionals report it more frequently than executives.

In model 4 of Table 3, with work-to-home conflict as the focal dependent variable, we observe a positive association between bringing work home and work-to-home conflict; that is, workers who more frequently bring work home report higher levels of work-to-home conflict than those who do not. Moreover, the significant schedule control × bringing work home coefficient in model 5 indicates that the positive association between bringing work home and

work-to-home conflict is stronger among workers who have *higher* levels of schedule control. The other nonsignificant interaction terms indicate that the positive association between bringing work home and work-to-home conflict does not vary by gender or level of job autonomy.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Work-Home Multitasking

Model 1 of Table 4 shows that men report more frequent work-home multitasking than women. Although schedule control is unrelated to the frequency of work-home multitasking, individuals in autonomous work report higher levels of work-home multitasking than those in less autonomous jobs. We found non-significant interactions for gender × schedule control (model 2) and gender × job autonomy (model 3). Among the controls, the well-educated, supervisors, and workers in demanding jobs report more work-home multitasking. Workers in administrative, service, sales, production, and technical jobs report less frequent multitasking than executives, but professionals report more frequent multitasking than executives. In model 4 we observe a positive association between work-home multitasking and work-to-home conflict. The significant schedule control × work-home multitasking coefficient in model 5, however, indicates that the positive association between work-home multitasking and work-to-home conflict is stronger among workers who have *higher* levels of schedule control. The other interactions in model 5 are not significant, indicating that the positive association between work-home multitasking and work-to-home conflict does not vary by gender or job autonomy.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

DISCUSSION

Our study contributes to three central themes in the literature on the work-home interface: 1) Work conditions that are typically viewed as resources—schedule control and job

autonomy—are associated in different ways with different forms of work-home role blurring; 2) The association between work-home role blurring and work-to-home conflict varies by level of schedule control; and 3) Despite broad socio-cultural changes in patterns of work and family life that are suggestive of egalitarian trends, our observations vary for women and men. In general, the findings challenge the widespread view that schedule control and job autonomy *uniformly* function as resources that help people avoid or manage trouble at the work-home border.

In an effort to test and refine border theory, we proposed two hypotheses. The *role blurring-resource* hypothesis predicted that schedule control and job autonomy would be associated negatively with work-home role blurring and that role blurring would be associated positively with work-to-home conflict only among workers with low levels of schedule control and job autonomy. By contrast, the *role blurring-interference* hypothesis predicted that schedule control and autonomy would be associated positively with work-home role blurring and that role blurring would be associated positively with work-to-home to conflict, especially among workers with schedule control and autonomy. Although our observations generally support the *role blurring-interference* hypothesis, the patterns are contingent upon gender and the form of work-home role blurring being considered. Moreover, each form of role blurring—receiving work-related contact outside of work, bringing work home, and work-home multitasking—is associated positively with work-to-home conflict. Based on these patterns and the well-established inverse link between work-to-home conflict and health (Bellavia and Frone 2005), we conclude that *some* elements of work-home role blurring represent *adverse* arrangements.

Border theory emphasizes the ways that workers' structural arrangements shape the borders between work and home. We found that two central work conditions—schedule control and job autonomy—do not uniformly translate into "problem-free" work-home role blurring.

Specifically, schedule control and autonomy are associated positively with work-related contact among women and men, but those associations are stronger among men. Although autonomy is associated positively with bringing work home among both women and men, the association between schedule control and bringing work home is positive among men and negative among women. Thus, the patterns predicted by the role-blurring interference hypothesis are more characteristic of men's experience. By contrast, autonomy is associated positively with work-home multitasking among women and men, but schedule control is unrelated to multitasking. Collectively, these observations speak to current debates about communication technology and the work-home interface. One camp asserts that role blurring associated with technology use has favorable effects because it promotes flexible role arrangements (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman 2001; Valcour and Hunter 2005). Another view contends that work-home blurring is harmful because of its links to excessive demands, individualism, or stressful role intrusions (Galinsky, Kim, and Bond 2001; Kraut et al. 1998). There is little doubt that technology enables the greedy tentacles of work. Higher status workers may especially feel the force of norms about *ceaseless* availability and their own desires for status. These ideas challenge the notion that work-home balance is more easily attained for central participants (Clark 2000). Although it is critical to acknowledge and elaborate on cultural and organizational norms that influence the likelihood of and consequences for workers taking advantage of flexible policies (Galinsky and Stein 1990), it is also worth exploring the implications of workers' "taking advantage" of such policies for the nature of their own work-home role blurring activities and its implications.

Our observations also speak to border theory's notion that levels of permeability and flexibility influence the *strength* of work-home borders. Higher levels of impermeable, inflexible borders that thwart work-home role blending are viewed as "strong," while low levels of these

characteristics that facilitate role blending are deemed as "weak." According to Clark (2000), "popular literature frequently lauds the weak border as the one that is most functional for individuals. However, as 'responsive workplaces' add more flexibility, *many employees continue to express frustrations*" (p. 758, italics added). This point is critical but largely overlooked in the work-home interface literature. Here, our findings directly challenge the view that a weak border is necessarily *more functional* for individuals. Future research might attempt to better understand the extent that workers' "frustrations" with more flexible work reflects a form of "high status blowback." That is, schedule control and job autonomy are often viewed as elements of flexible workplace policies. Tinkering with levels of these conditions, however, may not help higher status workers manage work-home borders because they may simply compress their work into smaller spaces of time (Milliken and Dunn-Jensen 2005). Future research should explore the extent that individuals actively integrate work and nonwork life—as a form of *efficacious role blending*—in order to more effectively complete tasks, advance in higher status positions, and ensure the successful operation of the workplace. We are not arguing that efficacious role blending is "stress free," but rather that these processes entail status-enhancing intentional acts.

We have also sought to elaborate and refine a gender view of border theory by testing the traditional versus egalitarian role-balance hypotheses. Our observations yield mixed conclusions. Consistent with the traditional view, men report higher levels of receiving work-related contact outside of work and work-home multitasking than women. By contrast, the finding that work-home role blurring is related to work-to-home conflict in similar ways for women and men is consistent with the egalitarian view. The traditional view proposed that the benefits of higher status work provide men with more resources to create favorable work-home arrangements. We found evidence to challenge that view. For example, among men, schedule control and autonomy

are associated positively with receiving work-related contact outside of work. What might account for these differences? The *instrumental* meanings of schedule control and autonomy may be more closely linked to role blurring processes among men. That is, men may be more able to tap the resourceful benefits of schedule control and job autonomy to shape the work-home interface. Yet, the positive association between work-related contact and work-to-home conflict—irrespective of levels of schedule control and autonomy—implies that instrumental control over the work-home border may have limited benefits. These ideas are speculative, however, because we do not have measures of the meanings of border control and crossing. Additional research is also needed to more adequately document the causal interrelationships among complex work-home interface arrangements and processes.

Another direction for future research involves the ways that schedule control and job autonomy shape a "selective permeability" of the work-home interface, especially technology use outside of work. We have challenged the assumption that technology necessarily *enables* the negotiation of the work-home border and the achievement of balance. A workforce that is reachable via BlackBerry—24/7—may experience personal and social costs regardless of the benefits of higher status. Moreover, the definition of "normal work hours" and the border it implies may have less relevance for higher status workers who *expect* to exchange work-related communications outside of work. Some workplace cultures may convey that work is supposed to happen at other times and places—cultural changes that insist on greater work-home integration. The organization of work influences and is influenced by cultural dictates about what may or must cross the work-home border. In high status contexts, work-home integration may be less likely to coexist with successful work-home balance; instead, for many individuals, work may dominate to create one-sidedness or "border-creep" in the work-home interface.

NOTES

1. Milliken and Dunn-Jensen (2005) have used the term “work creep” to identify “a situation in which the work domain gradually encroaches on personal and family time.” They specify the term “creep” as the “gradual and often unnoticed spillover of work into family time” (p. 48).

2. An exact response rate could not be determined because of incomplete data on the eligibility of households contacted. Eligibility estimates were thus used to predict the resulting response rate range (Bond et al. 2003).

3. We interpret the schedule control × bringing work home interaction coefficient with respect to the ways that levels of schedule control modifies the focal association between bringing work home and work-to-home conflict. It is plausible to interpret the interaction differently by focusing on the ways that bringing work home modifies the association between schedule control and work-to-home conflict. We choose the former interpretation, however, because of a theoretical interest in understanding the ways that hypothesized work-related “resources” condition influence that relationship between work-home role blurring and work-to-home conflict.

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APPENDIX. Correlation Matrix of Focal Work-Home Interface and Work Condition Variables (Women above the Diagonal; Men below the Diagonal)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Work-to-Home Conflict	—	.21*	.21*	.31*	–.22*	–.18*
2. Work-Related Contact	.12*	—	.46*	.36*	.07*	.16*
3. Bringing Work Home	.15*	.40*	—	.56*	–.02	.22*
4. Work-Home Multitasking	.32*	.26*	.37*	—	–.04	.13*
5. Schedule Control	–.12*	.21*	.23*	.06*	—	.33*
6. Job Autonomy	–.12*	.25*	.22*	.09*	.41*	—

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed test)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	Men (1,240)	Women (1,116)	Total (2,356)
Focal Measures			
Work-to-home Conflict	2.528	2.477	2.504
Work-Related Contact	2.701***	2.287	2.505
Bringing Work Home	2.045	2.107	2.074
Work-Home Multitasking	2.058***	1.884	1.976
Schedule Control	2.821	2.910	2.863
Job Autonomy	2.999**	2.899	2.947
Control Measures			
Age	39.991***	41.985	40.936
White	.789	.801	.795
Married	.696***	.620	.660
Children	.440	.420	.430
Education	3.171***	3.409	3.284
Administrative Support Occupations	.077***	.222	.146
Service Occupations	.107*	.134	.119
Sales Occupations	.072*	.101	.085
Technical Occupations	.034	.048	.041
Production Occupations	.416***	.100	.266
Professional Occupations	.166***	.239	.201
Executive Occupations	.130	.156	.143
Personal Income	51465.46***	37033.31	44625.21
Job Demands	2.959	2.977	2.967
Work Hours (1 to 39)	.146***	.391	.262
Work Hours (40 to 49)	.790***	.588	.695
Work Hours (50 and above)	.063***	.021	.043
Supervisor	.418***	.329	.376

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests for differences between men and women).

TABLE 2. Regression of Work-Related Contact (Models 1 – 3) and Work-to-Home Conflict (Models 4 – 5) on Gender, Schedule Control, Job Autonomy, Interactions and Controls

	Work-Related Contact			Work-to-Home Conflict	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Focal Associations					
Women	-.285***	-.280***	-.281***	.018	.018
	(.077)	(.076)	(.076)	(.038)	(.038)
Schedule Control	.124***	.198***	.121***	-.072***	-.073***
	(.028)	(.038)	(.028)	(.014)	(.014)
Job Autonomy	.225***	.223***	.360***	-.170***	-.165***
	(.050)	(.050)	(.067)	(.025)	(.025)
Women × Schedule Control	—	-.149**		—	—
		(.051)			
Women × Job Autonomy	—	—	-.263**	—	—
			(.088)		
Work-Related Contact	—	—	—	.055***	.043**
				(.010)	(.013)
Women × Work-Related Contact	—	—	—	—	.027
					(.019)
Schedule Control × Work-Related Contact	—	—	—	—	-.006
					(.008)
Job Autonomy × Work-Related Contact	—	—	—	—	.010
					(.014)
Control Measures					
Age	-.007*	-.007*	-.007*	-.004**	-.004***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.001)	(.001)
White	.141†	.152†	.140	.061	.063
	(.085)	(.085)	(.085)	(.042)	(.042)
Married	.042	.039	.045	.030	.031
	(.078)	(.078)	(.078)	(.038)	(.038)
Children	-.004	-.005	-.012	.132***	.132***
	(.073)	(.073)	(.073)	(.036)	(.036)
Education	.134***	.129***	.132***	.024†	.023†
	(.028)	(.028)	(.028)	(.014)	(.014)
Administrative [a]	-.543***	-.537***	-.542***	-.303***	-.300***
	(.132)	(.132)	(.132)	(.065)	(.065)
Service [a]	-.257†	-.263†	-.244†	-.165*	-.167*
	(.144)	(.144)	(.144)	(.071)	(.071)
Sales [a]	-.268†	-.277†	-.286†	-.165*	-.162*
	(.150)	(.150)	(.150)	(.074)	(.074)
Technical [a]	-.377*	-.367†	-.383*	-.055	-.057
	(.192)	(.191)	(.191)	(.094)	(.094)
Production [a]	-.116	-.094	-.094	-.197**	-.199**
	(.128)	(.128)	(.128)	(.063)	(.063)

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Table 2. *Continued*	Work-Related Contact			Work-to-Home Conflict	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Professional [a]	.120	.117	.133	-.160**	-.163**
	(.121)	(.121)	(.121)	(.060)	(.060)
Personal Income	.022	.019	.022	.020	.021
	(.046)	(.046)	(.046)	(.023)	(.023)
Job Demands	.324***	.323***	.325***	.360***	.361***
	(.049)	(.049)	(.049)	(.024)	(.024)
Work Hours (1 to 39) [b]	-.391*	-.386*	-.377*	-.367***	-.362***
	(.183)	(.182)	(.182)	(.090)	(.090)
Work Hours (40 to 49) [b]	-.353*	-.363*	-.337*	-.241**	-.237**
	(.169)	(.169)	(.169)	(.083)	(.083)
Supervisor	.692***	.697***	.693***	.071†	.070†
	(.075)	(.075)	(.075)	(.038)	(.038)
Constant	1.634	1.650	1.617	1.803	1.802
R^2	.175	.178	.178	.211	.212

† p < .10; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

[a] Compared to executive occupations.

[b] Compared to 50 hours or more per week.

TABLE 3. Regression of Bringing Work Home (Models 1 – 3) and Work-to-Home Conflict (Models 4 – 5) on Gender, Schedule Control, Job Autonomy, Interactions and Controls

	Bringing Work Home			Work-to-Home Conflict	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Focal Associations					
Women	-.021	-.017	-.021	.004	.011
	(.054)	(.054)	(.054)	(.038)	(.038)
Schedule Control	.033†	.097***	.033†	-.068***	-.066***
	(.020)	(.027)	(.020)	(.014)	(.014)
Job Autonomy	.117**	.116**	.106*	-.169***	-.174***
	(.035)	(.035)	(.048)	(.024)	(.025)
Women × Schedule Control	—	-.127***	—	—	—
		(.036)			
Women × Job Autonomy	—	—	.023	—	—
			(.063)		
Bringing Work Home	—	—	—	.093***	.090***
				(.014)	(.019)
Women × Bringing Work Home	—	—	—	—	.007
					(.024)
Schedule Control × Bringing Work Home	—	—	—	—	.020*
					(.010)
Job Autonomy × Bringing Work Home	—	—	—	—	.015
					(.018)
Control Measures					
Age	.000	.000	.000	-.005***	-.005**
	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.001)	(.001)
White	.058	.067	.058	.063	.061
	(.061)	(.061)	(.061)	(.042)	(.042)
Married	.138*	.135*	-.137*	.020	.016
	(.055)	(.055)	(.055)	(.038)	(.038)
Children	-.008	-.009	-.008	.133***	.131***
	(.052)	(.052)	(.052)	(.036)	(.036)
Education	.247***	.243***	.247***	.009	.009
	(.020)	(.020)	(.020)	(.014)	(.014)
Administrative [a]	-.811***	-.807***	-.811***	-.258***	-.257***
	(.094)	(.094)	(.094)	(.066)	(.066)
Service [a]	-.554***	-.559***	-.555***	-.128†	-.126†
	(.102)	(.102)	(.102)	(.071)	(.071)
Sales [a]	-.463***	-.470***	-.461***	-.137†	-.142†
	(.107)	(.107)	(.107)	(.074)	(.074)
Technical [a]	-.547***	-.539***	-.547***	-.025	-.023
	(.136)	(.136)	(.136)	(.094)	(.094)
Production [a]	-.755***	-.736***	-.756***	-.133*	-.136*
	(.091)	(.091)	(.091)	(.064)	(.064)

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Table 3. *Continued*	Bringing Work Home			Work-to-Home Conflict	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Professional [a]	.355***	.352***	.354***	-.186**	-.177**
	(.086)	(.086)	(.086)	(.060)	(.060)
Personal Income	.048	.046	.048	.017	.017
	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.023)	(.023)
Job Demands	.183***	.182***	.183***	.361***	.361***
	(.035)	(.034)	(.035)	(.024)	(.024)
Work Hours (1 to 39) [b]	-.336*	-.332*	-.337**	-.357***	-.351***
	(.130)	(.129)	(.130)	(.090)	(.090)
Work Hours (40 to 49) [b]	-.225†	-.233†	-.226†	-.239**	-.237**
	(.120)	(.120)	(.120)	(.083)	(.083)
Supervisor	.296***	.301***	-.296**	.081*	.081†
	(.053)	(.053)	(.053)	(.037)	(.037)
Constant	1.114	1.128	1.116	1.845	1.843
R^2	.350	.353	.350	.215	.217

† p < .10; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

[a] Compared to executive occupations.

[b] Compared to 50 hours or more per week.

TABLE 4. Regression of Work-Home Multitasking (Models 1 – 3) and Work-to-Home Conflict (Models 4 – 5) on Gender, Schedule Control, Job Autonomy, Interactions and Controls

	Work-Home Multitasking			Work-to-Home Conflict	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Focal Associations					
Women	-.127*	-.126*	-.127*	.030	.034
	(.051)	(.051)	(.051)	(.036)	(.036)
Schedule Control	-.016	.007	.016	-.062***	-.061***
	(.018)	(.025)	(.018)	(.013)	(.013)
Job Autonomy	.066*	.066*	.055	-.172***	-.176***
	(.033)	(.033)	(.045)	(.023)	(.024)
Women × Schedule Control	—	-.045	—	—	—
		(.034)			
Women × Job Autonomy	—	—	.023	—	—
			(.059)		
Work-Home Multitasking	—	—	—	.218***	.230***
				(.015)	(.019)
Women × Work-Home Multitasking	—	—	—	—	-.023
					(.029)
Schedule Control × Work-Home Multitasking	—	—	—	—	.035**
					(.011)
Job Autonomy × Work-Home Multitasking	—	—	—	—	-.017
					(.020)
Control Measures					
Age	-.002	-.002	-.002	-.004**	-.004**
	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.001)	(.001)
White	-.038	-.035	-.038	.077†	.078†
	(.057)	(.057)	(.057)	(.040)	(.040)
Married	.053	.052	.053	.021	.013
	(.052)	(.052)	(.052)	(.037)	(.037)
Children	.031	.030	.031	.125***	.130***
	(.049)	(.049)	(.049)	(.035)	(.035)
Education	.042*	.041*	.042*	.023†	.021
	(.019)	(.019)	(.019)	(.013)	(.013)
Administrative [a]	-.529***	-.527***	-.529***	-.218**	-.219**
	(.088)	(.088)	(.088)	(.063)	(.063)
Service [a]	-.213*	-.214*	-.214*	-.133†	-.130†
	(.096)	(.096)	(.096)	(.068)	(.068)
Sales [a]	-.328**	-.331**	-.327*	-.109	-.116
	(.100)	(.100)	(.100)	(.071)	(.071)
Technical [a]	-.338**	-.335**	-.337**	-.002	-.006
	(.128)	(.128)	(.128)	(.091)	(.091)
Production [a]	-.244**	-.237**	-.245**	-.150*	-.155*
	(.085)	(.085)	(.085)	(.061)	(.060)

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Table 4. *Continued*	Work-Home Multitasking			Work-to-Home Conflict	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Professional [a]	.174*	.173*	.173*	-.191**	-.187**
	(.081)	(.081)	(.081)	(.057)	(.057)
Personal Income	.020	.019	.020	.017	.018
	(.031)	(.031)	(.031)	(.023)	(.022)
Job Demands	.114***	.114***	.114***	.353***	.351***
	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.023)	(.023)
Work Hours (1 to 39) [b]	-.062	-.060	-.063	-.375***	-.377***
	(.122)	(.122)	(.122)	(.086)	(.086)
Work Hours (40 to 49) [b]	-.027	-.030	-.029	-.254**	-.259**
	(.113)	(.113)	(.113)	(.080)	(.080)
Supervisor	.248***	.249***	.248***	.055	.056
	(.050)	(.050)	(.050)	(.036)	(.036)
Constant	1.743	1.747	1.744	1.806	1.821
R^2	.100	.101	.100	.270	.273

† p < .10; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

[a] Compared to executive occupations.

[b] Compared to 50 hours or more per week.