
Dr. Ellen Ernst Kossek, Basil S. Turner Professor of Management
Krannert School of Management, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana USA
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• Co-authors
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Introduction

• While Covid-19 is not responsible for the job, work-home boundary blurring & domestic labor impacts on women academic scientists careers, the forced teleworking, & severe work-life boundary blurring has exacerbated them & made them more visible.

• Nearly all women academic scientists, esp. in STEMM fields where significantly under-represented, have long juggled unequal family caregiving and domestic demands, & faced gender discrimination some of which can attributed to the unequal effects of nonwork demands on career equality.
Introduction

• Ironically, workplace flexibility, and the ability to control the boundaries between work and nonwork roles, work schedules, location, workload, time off, & boundary blurring can facilitate gender equality when implemented in ways that support boundary control and align with women’s work and family life role demands and identities.

Report organization:
• What the research tells us pre-pandemic
• Preliminary trends: Post pandemic
Overview

• Work-Life personal and professional boundaries
• How gendered expectations of domestic labor, child & elder care demands have shifted or impacted professional labor and well-being for women
• Individual boundary management and family care coping strategies
• Current and desired organizational practices to support work life boundaries & integration
• Future Research: Opportunity for policy innovation & intervention research
Sources of Data

• **Literature Search**
  - Academic Search Complete
  - Psych Info
  - Covid-19 "women" "faculty" "stem" Yielded 3,290 results
  - “Covid-19” “women” “faculty” “stem” “U.S.” 2,890 results
  - Sample search terms: Covid 19 & faculty child care, elder care

• **Post Covid Work-Life Survey of STEMM women faculty**
  - Purdue University IRB review
  - List serves
  - NSF Advance grant members
  - American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) list of Eng. Deans
  - ACM Council on Women in Computing (ACM-W) & more
What the research tells us: Work-nonwork personal and professional boundaries & conflict

• Work-nonwork conflict – occurs when incompatible multiple role demands

• Early career scientists are often juggling partnering and starting a family, which harms their future career

• Some research suggests the rates for academic STEMM women leaving the profession after the birth of a first child were double the rates for men

• **Work-Life boundaries- permeability**

• Merged work and personal roles & identities

• **Overwork demands**
Types of Work-Nonwork Boundary Management Interruption Styles

Integrators

Separators

Work Firsters

Family/Personal Life Firsters

Cyclers

Individual.

Styles manage to fit identities;

Work group

Organizational cultures and structures shape boundary control context

Source: Kossek, Ruderman, Brady, Hannum, JVB, 2012
Managing Work- Nonwork boundaries & Demographic Diversity

• Besides a way to handle conflicting role demands, boundary management can involve managing workplace relationships & professional identities.

• Personal identities (e.g. being a parent, being an ethnic minority) can conflict with accepted or desired norms for professionalism at work.

• When women work in male-dominated fields such as STEM, often report feeling that their gender is seen as incompatible with their professional norms; boundary mgt. involves concealing aspects of their personal lives that highlight their gender or parental status if they are mothers.

• Racial minorities are also intentional in managing the boundary between personal and professional lives to preserve work relationships with dissimilar others; may refrain from disclosing personal information to their white coworkers due to concerns over career repercussions.
Boundary Control

The degree to which a person feels in control over how to manage inter-role boundaries between work life & personal life.

- **High**
- **Medium**
- **Low**
Organizations & Boundary Control

• Organizational policies and norms also shape the extent to which an individual employee can integrate or segment in the way that they prefer and their boundary control.

• While organizational work-family policies and cultures influence the degree to which an employee perceives choices to access flexibility to manage boundaries, and the effectiveness of boundary management strategies in context.
Sample Description (n = 763)

Tenure Status:
- Tenured: 66.10%
- Not Yet Tenured: 33.90%

Rank:
- Full: 34.70%
- Associate: 31.20%
- Assistant: 34.10%

Race:
- White: 72.90%
- Hispanic: 6.60%
- Asian: 9.30%
- Multi-Racial: 3.90%
- Black: 1.40%

Relationship Status:
- Partnered: 85.20%
- Single: 13.10%

Caregiving:
- Childcare: 58.20%
- Eldercare: 10.40%
- Sandwiched Care: 3.90%
Relationship Status by Ethnicity (%) sample

$X^2 (4) = 12.27, p < .05$
Effects on Boundaries & Domestic Labor

Sample results

- 51% total respondents blurring boundaries challenges
  \emph{(Pre and post sample: (5pt .scale) Change t = 33.42, p < .001; 3.98 and 2.33)}

- 1/3 report increased mental stress

- 56.96 % with elders reported Elder care challenges

- 71.17 & with children reported Child care problems
Forced Teleworking and Work-Life Boundaries During a Pandemic

• Because I work from home I have to hole up in my bedroom for work meetings, and because my husband and I both work full time jobs that require meetings with other people, we constantly have to switch back and forth between roles. I get an hour or two for some Zoom meetings, then it's my turn to play kindergarten teacher for two hours, then I might get another hour or two to work.
STEMM Associate Professor with young children on Covid-19 effects

- The constant task switching is mentally challenging and makes it hard to dive deep into any work task or accomplish anything that requires sustained attention for a longer period of time. ....if I'm really lucky. There are no boundaries between personal and professional life anymore. I really miss going to my office for many reasons, but being able to compartmentalize work and home ....is one of them.
The Impact of Childcare Responsibilities on the Changes in the Number of Days Working at Home Before and After the Pandemic

$t = 33.42, p < .001; 3.98$ and $2.33$ respectively).
The Impact of Childcare Responsibilities on the Changes in Boundary Control Before and After the Pandemic

![Bar chart showing the impact of childcare responsibilities on boundary control before and after the pandemic. The chart compares the total (n = 763), childcare (n = 444, 58.2%), and no childcare (n = 310, 41.8%) groups. Before the pandemic, the average boundary control was 3.98 for the total group, 4.03 for the childcare group, and 3.89 for the no childcare group. After the pandemic, the average boundary control was 2.33 for the total group, 1.95 for the childcare group, and 2.86 for the no childcare group.]

- Total (n = 763) Before: 3.98, After: 2.33
- Childcare (n = 444, 58.2%) Before: 4.03, After: 1.95
- No Childcare (n = 310, 41.8%) Before: 3.89, After: 2.86
The Negative Impact of COVID-19 on Work (n = 763)

- Increased workload/hours: 212 (27.79%)
- Decreased Productivity: 194 (25.43%)
- Difficulty Interacting with Colleagues and Students: 157 (20.58%)
- Challenges of Teaching Mode Change/Remote Teaching: 139 (18.22%)
- Negative impact on Research: 134 (17.56%)
- Less Time to Work: 80 (10.48%)
What the research tells us: Caregiving (on and off the Job and Domestic Labor

• More caregiving on and off job
  • Time expenditure studies show that female faculty spend more time caring for children & domestic tasks (8.5 hours) than do their male counterparts.
  • In dual-academic couples generally, male faculty are four times more likely to have a partner who provides full time domestic care than are female faculty
  • Among STEMM faculty, women were more likely than men to have spouses/domestic partners who were employed full time
The Impact of COVID-19 on Childcare (N = 444)

**Challenges**
- The Lack of Childcare: 316 (71.17%)
- Heightened Behavioral and Academic Needs: 210 (47.30%)
- Physical Health Concerns: 8 (1.80%)

**Coping Strategies**
- Being the Primary Caregiver: 77 (17.34%)
- Sharing with Partner: 71 (15.99%)
- Hiring Childcare Help: 26 (5.86%)
- Working Around Children's Schedule: 116 (26.13%)
- Less Sleep/Self-Care: 69 (15.54%)
- Blocking Off Time for Schooling: 69 (15.54%)
The Impact of COVID-19 on Eldercare (N = 79)

**Challenges** (n = 45, 56.96%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased Eldercare Demands</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being able to Visit</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coping Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing Emotional Support</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Domestic Support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of COVID-19 on Housework Demands (N = 763)

Challenges (n = 260, 34.08%)
- Increased Housework Demands: 260 (34.08%)
- Stopped Using Help: 63 (8.26%)

Coping Strategies
- Sharing with Partner: 208 (27.26%)
- Mainly My Responsibilities: 183 (23.98%)
- Hired Help: 24 (3.15%)
- Lowering Expectations/Neglecting: 53 (6.95%)
- Delivery/Online Shopping: 34 (4.46%)
Boundary Management Tactics

**Spatial Boundary** (n = 343, 44.95%)
- Separate Work Space
- Video Meeting Background to Protect Home Privacy

**Temporal Boundary** (n = 250, 32.77%)
- Recovery Time
- Creating Schedule/Cordinating with Partner

**Technological Boundary** (n = 180, 23.91%)
- Email Boundary Management
- Separate Device

![Please DO NOT DISTURB](image)
What the research tells us

• Peer and supervisor work-family support behaviors can reduce work-family stress

• Organizational climate and work-life sacrifice cultures can increase stress and make it difficult to manage boundaries

• University child and elder care supports viewed merely as benefits but not well linked to a talent management strategy, emphasized as a diversity and inclusion retention issue and long term investment in infrastructure
Post-COVID University Supports (n = 763)

How Universities are Helping

- The Options of Remote Work: 76 (9.96%)
- Tenure Clock Extension: 73 (9.57%)
- Support for Remote Teaching: 48 (6.30%)

What Faculty Want

- Support for Caregiving and School Support: 42 (5.50%)
- Workload Reduction: 36 (4.72%)
Flexible Work arrangements are a necessary but insufficient condition to have work-life well-being & productivity. Must have boundary control

- Work-life boundaries for women those with family more permeable than for men
- Women may be in greater ongoing regulation of “states of work-nonwork connectivity” heightening w-l technostress, lowering identity alignment, well-being?
- Increased pressures for ongoing connectivity to both work-nonwork communications and tasks does the growth of virtual work and the opportunity for increased self regulation of organization of flexplace and creating differential overwork tensions that are exacerbated by ideal worker norms?

Ellen Ernst Kossek, Ph.D.
Summary of Pandemic Work-Life Boundary & Care Challenges for future study

• Changes in boundary control
• Switching costs and the lack of ability to focus in a family or work role.
• Lack of time buffers between role transitions.
• Difficulties detaching from work
• Lack of control to control timing of work and nonwork scheduling
• Not having a large enough home to create physical boundaries
• Increased child and elder care challenges & housework – little support
Future Research

• Pilot and identify organizational policies that work in experimental studies.
• Consider the gendered productivity impact of using COVID flexibility accommodations, and other unintended use consequences.
• Effectiveness of individual boundary management strategies.
• Long-term health and wellbeing and piloting comparing work support, family support and peer support interventions.
• Covid -Career cohort, turnover and career success studies.