

## **FLEXING WORK BOUNDARIES: THE SPILLOVER AND CROSSOVER OF WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

MERIDETH FERGUSON  
Utah State University

DAWN CARLSON  
Baylor University

K. MICHELLE KACMAR  
Texas State University

Using boundary theory and conservation of resources theory, we examined how job incumbents' perceptions of supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support influence outcomes for both the incumbent and the spouse. First, we examined how supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support shape incumbents' perceived ability to flex work boundaries and thus affect their experience of family functioning and their organizational commitment. Second, we examine the effects of supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support on spousal marital satisfaction and the spouse's commitment to the incumbent's employing organization as mediated through boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of successful boundary management by the incumbent. Using a matched set of 503 subordinates and their spouses, this study found that both supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support contribute to work boundary flexibility. Further, for the incumbent, family functioning and organizational commitment were enhanced through work boundary flexibility, whereas for the spouse, marital satisfaction and commitment to the incumbent's organization were enhanced through both incumbent work boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of successful boundary management by the incumbent. We discuss the study's implications for theory, research, and practice while suggesting new research directions.

As dual career families become more prevalent (Elloy & Smith, 2004) and the proportions of women and men in the workforce equalize (49% and 51%, respectively; Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2003), the ability to manage and flex the boundaries between work and family grows in importance and salience. Boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, &

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Correspondence and requests for reprints should be addressed to Merideth Ferguson, Department of Management & Marketing, Huntsman School of Business, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322; Merideth.ferguson@usu.edu.

Fugate, 2000; Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010) maintains that individuals preserve boundaries that serve as “gateways” into different domains. Boundary flexibility is the cognitive appraisal by an employee of the situational or personal constraints on their ability to use the gateways to leave one domain (i.e., work) and enter another (i.e., family; Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). The ability to manage boundary flexibility hinges on the extent to which the spatial and temporal boundaries, such as workplace and work schedule, may be modified (Hall & Richter, 1988).

Organizational policies and workplace norms that encourage or support an employee’s ability to modify work activities or responsibilities in order to attend to familial responsibilities shape job incumbent’s work boundary flexibility. Research suggests that formal family supportive organizational policies are necessary to mitigate the increasing employee work and family demands and need for enhanced boundary flexibility (Allen, 2001; Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). However, it also emphasizes the critical role of informal discretion of supervisors who are in a unique position to influence employees’ work-related stressors (Beehr, Farmer, Glazer, Gudanowski, & Nair, 2003) and their experience of work–family conflict (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). Grounding our arguments in boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) and in conservation of resources (CORs) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) allows us to offer two forms of support that may shape work boundary flexibility. The first is at the supervisor level—*supervisor instrumental support*, which we define as employees’ perceptions that the supervisor assists employees in the successful management of their dual responsibilities in work and family roles (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009). The second workplace support that we investigate is at the organizational level—*organizational segmentation support*, which we define as employee perceptions that the organization supports segmentation and provides employees with the ability to keep work matters at work. Thus, we propose these forms of support as two critical resources that shape an employee’s work boundary flexibility.

Our purpose is to extend boundary management research by focusing on two resource conditions critical to employee work boundary flexibility: supervisor instrumental support (Hammer et al., 2009) and organizational segmentation support (Kreiner, 2006), which are important in that these workplace conditions may shape organizational and family outcomes. We develop and test a model to explore how these two types of support affect work boundary flexibility and how that flexibility relates to vital organizational and family outcomes for both the job incumbent and the spouse. We contend that supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support may shape an incumbent’s ability to flex work boundaries to attend to family demands. Further, we propose how work boundary

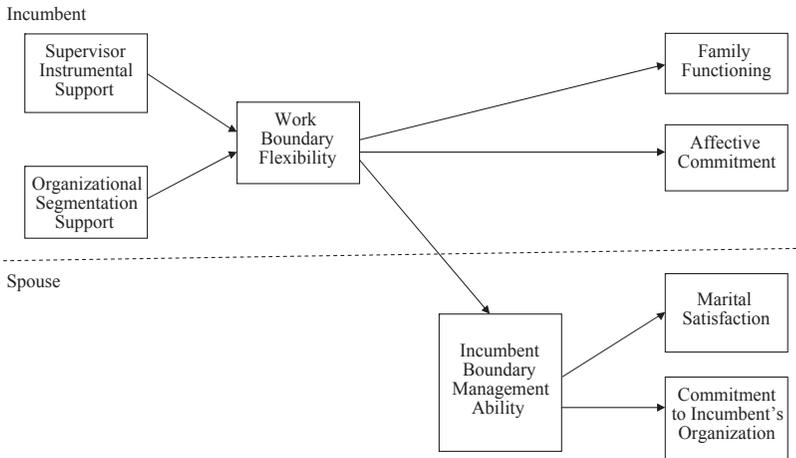


Figure 1: **Hypothesized model.**

flexibility will spill over to influence the incumbent's experience of family functioning and affective commitment.

Next, we aim to understand how work boundary flexibility crosses over to affect the job incumbent's spouse. Crossover is the process through which the experiences of one person influence the experiences of another in a dyadic relationship, like that of a spouse (Westman, 2006). Specifically, we theorize that the incumbent's work boundary flexibility is a resource developed in the work domain due to the support provided. That workplace resource will facilitate the spouse's perception of the incumbent's ability to manage successfully the boundaries of family and work and thereby the resource crosses over to affect the feelings and favorable impressions garnered by the spouse. As such, the resources garnered by the spouse will shape the spouse's experience of marital satisfaction and his or her attitude toward the incumbent's employing organization. The specific relationships we test are presented in Figure 1.

This research makes several contributions. First, we investigate how two workplace condition resources, supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support, are valuable resources that help individuals garner work boundary flexibility. This is important because it extends previous research (Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010), provides insight into how environmental condition resources play a role in workplace flexibility, and may help organizations by indicating what roles providing support play in workplace flexibility.

Second, we investigate the impact of work boundary flexibility on the incumbent, both at work in the form of affective commitment and in the

family domain in the form of family functioning. We make a contribution by including family outcomes and thereby extending current research that has only considered work outcomes (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). This is critical as organizations must continue to learn how the work domain influences an employee's life outside of the workplace (Carlson, Ferguson, Perrewé, & Whitten, 2011).

Third, this research extends both the boundary management and the COR literatures by studying how workplace supports crossover to affect the subordinate's family, specifically the spouse (Ferguson, Carlson, Zivnuska, & Whitten, 2012; Ho, Chen, Cheung, Liu, & Worthington, 2013). Although boundary management research has emphasized boundaries in both the work and family domains (Chen, Powell, & Greenhaus, 2009; Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010; Rothbard et al., 2005), incorporating the spouse's experiences extends prior research. This is important as organizations are learning that the spouse plays a critical role in the job incumbent's work life decisions (Forthofer, Markman, Cox, Stanley, & Kessler, 1996).

Last, we also extend prior research by introducing a new construct that captures the spouse's perceptions of how well the incumbent manages work and family boundaries in light of these work-related resources. As the spouse plays an important role in a job incumbent's attitudes toward the organization, much can be learned by exploring the spouse's perceptions of how well the incumbent manages boundaries.

### *Theoretical Foundations*

Boundary theory and CORs theory are both helpful in understanding how workplace supports may affect an employee in another domain and also impact the employee's spouse in an entirely different domain. Boundary theory (Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010) suggests that individuals maintain boundaries that serve as "gateways" into different domains. It is critical to maintain distinct boundaries as the work and family domains each have their own culture and provide different motivations for the behaviors performed in a domain (Ashforth et al., 2000). Individuals develop and preserve boundaries around the work and family domains as a means of simplifying their environments (Ashforth et al., 2000). Although theoretical understandings of domain boundaries are still developing (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2004), boundaries are thought to have flexibility. Work boundary flexibility is an employee's cognitive appraisal about whether he or she has the ability or power to change when and where work gets done and specifically whether he or she can leave work for the family domain (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). This research on the role of two forms

of workplace support in the boundary management process as support is likely to affect the job incumbent's ability to be flexible.

CORs theory posits that individuals aim to secure and preserve resources that are useful in achieving their goals (Hobfoll, 1989). Hobfoll theorized that resources stem from conditions, personal characteristics, objects, and energies (2001), and noted that condition resources include workplace conditions such as supportive workplace relationships (2011), and understanding of a supervisor (2001). We contend that supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support are *workplace condition resources* that lead to other resource gains and achievement of work boundary flexibility.

Recent research defines resources as “anything perceived by the individual to help attain his or her goals” (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014, p. 5). There is growing evidence that various forms of supervisor and organizational support are resources (see Halbesleben et al., 2014; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009) and that these resources lead to goal achievement. Social support is a powerful resource that equips individuals to cope with stress (House, 1981) and serves as a mechanism for developing additional resources with which an individual can meet his or her goals (Chen, Westman, & Eden, 2009). For instance, perceived organizational support relates to beneficial outcomes such as job satisfaction and positive mood (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), which are helpful in goal attainment. Further, the more effective a resource is in helping an individual reach a goal, the more valued the resource (Hobfoll, 2001). We contend that supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support are resources that individuals value because those supports are critical to achieving the goal of work boundary flexibility.

Further, workplace support specific to work–family issues in particular may spill over and cross over to the employee's life outside of work (e.g., Hammer et al., 2009). We contend that workplace conditions such as supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support serve as resources that employees use to flex work boundaries. Furthermore, work boundary flexibility is a resource that helps employees engage in effective and successful boundary management, which leads to beneficial outcomes both at work and in the family domain. One of the corollaries of COR theory is that as individuals gain resources, they are better equipped to *invest* in and *acquire* additional resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Likewise, as individuals gain the workplace supports of supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support, they invest those resources in acquiring the resource and goal of work boundary management.

*Workplace Support to Outcomes Through Boundary Flexibility*

Supervisor instrumental support provides a resource beneficial to employees' family lives by reducing role overload (Ransford, Crouter, & McHale, 2008), stress, and work–family conflict, and increasing family satisfaction, life satisfaction, and positive work–family spillover (Thompson & Protas, 2005). We believe that when supervisors express a willingness to help job incumbents address work–family conflicts, incumbents will be able to modify their work schedules in order to address family demands. Thus, the resource of supervisor instrumental support provides the ability for employees to engage in work boundary flexibility behaviors.

Organizational segmentation support is the second form of support we believe is critical to work boundary management as a workplace condition resource. Organizational segmentation support is present when the organization provides an environment in which employees have the ability to keep work matters at work (Kreiner, 2006). Segmentation occurs when the flow, movement, or transition between the work and family domains is reduced and less blurring occurs between domains (Ashforth et al., 2000). We contend that organizational segmentation support is a resource that increases the sense of control over when and where work gets done or whether the individual can leave one domain for another. As organizational segmentation support signals that work matters can be kept at work and that employees can mentally leave work behind when they are at home, employees also may feel freer to physically leave work to attend to a family matter. Segmentation support lowers both time-based and strain-based work-to-family conflict (Chen et al., 2009). Insufficient organizational segmentation support indicates unmet needs, desires, or goals, which create tension and negative affect that have an undermining effect on subsequent well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Specifically, we theorize that employees will view both of these forms of support as resources and can be used to meet boundary management goals and to fulfill work and family demands. Support from both the organization and a supervisor jointly affects important outcomes such as job satisfaction (Ng & Sorensen, 2008) and organizational commitment (Erickson & Roloff, 2007). Support from the organization and a supervisor affects employees' likelihood of using work–family balance opportunities offered by the organization (Smith & Gardner, 2007). Thus, the presence or absence of organizational segmentation support and supervisor instrumental support provide a signal and resources with which employees make evaluations about their own work boundary flexibility.

*Family functioning.* Work boundary flexibility can influence family functioning, an overarching concept that includes a range of family processes such as a family's effectiveness in relating to one another and the

closeness of its members (Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop, & Epstein, 2000). Prior research suggests that happiness in the family domain relates to satisfaction in the work domain (Ferguson, Carlson, Zivnuska et al., 2012) and that experiences in the family domain influence experiences and behaviors in the work domain (Ferguson, Carlson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012; Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts, & Pulkkinen, 2006). Thus, the experience of family functioning in the family domain, or lack thereof, is of interest to organizations and their managers. We argue that supervisor instrumental support will help employees manage work and family boundaries by allowing them more flexibility when they have to meet a family need. In particular, supervisor instrumental support works through the employee's ability to modify his or her work schedule to attend to family matters to influence the employee's experience of family functioning. For example, when an employee receives a call at work about needing to pick up a sick child at school, a supervisor who provides instrumental support may help the employee find a way to leave to attend to the child while still making sure the employee's work tasks are fulfilled. This instrumental supervisor support leads the employee to have more work boundary flexibility and thus enhanced family functioning within the employee's family domain.

Work boundary flexibility also may serve as a mediator between family functioning and organizational segmentation support. When employees observe the resource of organizational segmentation support, they experience more work boundary flexibility that may result in increased functioning within the family domain. Further, employees will use the resource of work boundary flexibility to attend to a family issue, which improves family functioning. The limited research exploring the effects of work boundary flexibility on family outcomes has found that the ability to flex one's work boundaries relates to diminished work-to-family conflict and to lowered end-of-workday strain (Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010).

When incumbents perceive the resources of organizational segmentation support and supervisor instrumental support, they will be more likely to feel free to flex work boundaries to attend to a family matter. The perceived support gives incumbents a sense of control over both their work and family lives (Hobfoll, 1989). These resources contribute to work boundary flexibility and give the incumbent the power and freedom to attend to family issues as they arise. As such, boundary flexibility allows the resources of the work domain to spill over and allow the incumbent to meet the goal of being a good family member, being able to spend time with family (especially when a unique need arises), and being successful in the family domain. Therefore, we believe that both supervisor and organization support will enhance the ability to engage in work boundary flexibility and subsequently lead to greater family functioning.

*Hypothesis 1:* Work boundary flexibility will mediate the effect of supervisor instrumental support on family functioning.

*Hypothesis 2:* Work boundary flexibility will mediate the effect of organizational segmentation support on family functioning.

*Affective commitment.* In addition to benefits that workplace support resources have for family outcomes, we theorize that supervisor instrumental support as a resource will work through the job incumbent's experience of work boundary flexibility to influence his or her commitment to the organization. Affective commitment is "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974, p. 604) and embodies an individual's propensity to "give energy and loyalty" to an organization (Kanter, 1968, p. 499). Effective commitment is important to organizations and their leaders in that it positively relates to both individual (Sinclair, Tucker, Cullen, & Wright, 2005) and organizational (Gong, Law, Chang, & Xin, 2009) performance.

When a job incumbent believes that his or her supervisor is supportive of the employee's attempts to successfully meet both work and family obligations, the incumbent is more likely to experience affective commitment (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). Having the instrumental support of the supervisor facilitates the acquisition and investment of resources that foster and protects the resource condition of work boundary flexibility, which the incumbent can use to successfully manage work and family boundaries, cultivating greater commitment to the organization so that the support and resources can continue to be acquired.

Furthermore, when employees perceive greater access to boundary management policies such as flextime, they experience a higher level of commitment to their employing organization (Rothbard et al., 2005). Being able to flex the work boundary and leave work to take care of a family issue gives the incumbent resources with which to navigate successfully the work–family interface. This ability makes the incumbent committed to the employing organization in that he or she values flexibility and desires to maintain and protect that resource.

*Hypothesis 3:* Work boundary flexibility will mediate the effect of supervisor instrumental support on affective commitment.

*Hypothesis 4:* Work boundary flexibility will mediate the effect of organizational segmentation support on affective commitment.

*Workplace Supports Crossover to the Spouse*

In addition to the spillover effects of workplace support, we contend supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support crossover from the job incumbent to affect the incumbent's spouse. Crossover occurs when the experiences of one individual can influence the experiences of another individual in a dyadic relationship like that of a job incumbent and spouse (Westman, 2006). Thus, these sources of support not only create resources for the incumbent but also crossover to influence the spouse's experience beyond the incumbent's work domain where they are initially perceived and experienced. This study explores the influence of the incumbent's work boundary flexibility on the spouse's perceptions, experiences, and attitudes. Through supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support, a job incumbent uses his or her ability to flex work boundaries and thus leave the workplace to attend to a family matter. By engaging in work boundary flexibility, the support resources cross over to impact how the incumbent's spouse perceives that resource, which then has important implications for the spouse's marital satisfaction and commitment to the incumbent's organization. Thus, we introduce the new construct of a spouse's perception of incumbent boundary management ability, which we define as the *spouse's perceptions of how well the incumbent manages work–family boundaries in light of family expectations*. Hobfoll emphasized that personal characteristics also can be resources and that these focus on key skills or personality traits (2011), such as the ability to organize tasks or the ability to communicate well (2001). We contend that a spouse's perceptions of incumbent boundary management ability is a key skill indicative of the incumbent's ability to manage work–family boundaries, and thus it is a personal resource held by the incumbent.

Understanding a spouse's perceptions of the incumbent's success at managing work and family boundaries is important for several reasons. First, these perceptions and their inherent evaluation have implications for the marital relationship. Spouses are able to validly assess qualities or experiences of their partners (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001) such as with the transmission of stress from work to the family domain (Ferguson, 2012) and work–family conflict (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2012). These assessments have implications for both the work and family domains where they influence outcomes such as marital satisfaction (Ferguson, 2012) and job satisfaction (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2012). Thus, we expect that spousal assessments of an incumbent's ability to successfully manage boundaries will affect the spouse's marital satisfaction and his or her attitude toward the organization.

Second, although research is just beginning to explore spousal organizational commitment as a variable of interest (Wayne, Casper, Matthews, & Allen, 2013), we contend that the spouse's attitudes and feelings about the incumbent's job and employing organization are critical factors in the turnover process and thus should be of interest to organizations and their managers. Given the strong, positive relationship between commitment and turnover (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), it is important to explore factors that may affect the spouse's commitment to the organization, which may later influence the incumbent's turnover intentions.

*Marital satisfaction.* Marital satisfaction is a global evaluation of how married couples feel about their relationships (Glenn, 1990) and captures the satisfaction or happiness experienced in that relationship. Combining boundary theory and CORs theory, we contend that the incumbent's work boundary flexibility (as fostered and protected by the resources of supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support) will shape the spouse's perception of the incumbent's boundary management ability and thus increase the spouse's marital satisfaction. When job incumbents acquire the resource of work boundary flexibility, their work lives are less likely to interfere with their lives outside of work, which increases marital satisfaction (Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006). The job incumbent may reduce the occasions when family demands go unmet or family expectations are unfulfilled by flexing boundaries at work, which leaves the spouse more satisfied with the marital relationship.

*Hypothesis 5:* The incumbent's work boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of the incumbent's boundary management ability will mediate the effect of supervisor instrumental support on the spouse's marital satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 6:* The incumbent's work boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of the incumbent's boundary management ability will mediate the effect of organizational segmentation support on the spouse's marital satisfaction.

*Commitment to incumbent's organization.* As argued above, the influence of supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support may crossover and affect a spouse's commitment toward the incumbent's employing organization. We define spousal commitment to the organization as the *spouse's positive attitude toward and desire for the incumbent to remain with the employing organization*. If the spouse is committed to the organization, he or she is more likely to support or even encourage the incumbent to remain with that organization. Prior research has investigated the effect of having a spouse (Lee & Maurer, 1999), of

having an *employed* spouse (Lee & Maurer, 1999), and of a spouse's negative emotional displays when discussing work (Green, Bull Schaefer, MacDermid, & Weiss, 2011) on incumbent turnover intentions. However, prior research has rarely explored the effect of a spouse's opinion or attitude in shaping employee turnover intentions. The one exception did find that spouses influence retirement decision, and the retiree views the spouse's role in this decision as more critical than does the spouse (Smith & Moen, 1998). Another found that spouse's commitment impacted job incumbent commitment (Wayne et al., 2013), and previous research has shown the job incumbent's commitment to the organization is a significant predictor of turnover intentions (Meyer et al., 2002). Thus, we posit that the spouse's organizational commitment may play a role in those turnover intentions, making it an important concept to explore. The crossover effect of work on family (and vice versa) is well documented (Bakker, Westman, & van Emmerik, 2009), and we expect the spouse to have attitudes about the employing organization based on the crossover effects of workplace supports. Grounding our thinking in boundary and CORs theories, we maintain that the incumbent's work boundary flexibility (as buoyed by supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support) will influence the spouse's perception of the incumbent's boundary management abilities and thus increase the spouse's commitment to the incumbent's employing organization to maintain the status quo or continue to acquire and protect those resources.

*Hypothesis 7:* The incumbent's work boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of the incumbent's boundary management ability will mediate the effect of supervisor instrumental support on the spouse's commitment to the incumbent's organization.

*Hypothesis 8:* The incumbent's work boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of the incumbent's boundary management ability will mediate the effect of organizational segmentation support on the spouse's commitment to the incumbent's organization.

### *Method*

#### *Sample and Procedure*

A total of 503 pairs of spouses ( $N = 1,006$ ) completed surveys for this study. In order to locate spouses willing to complete our surveys, we engaged the services of Survey Sampling International (SSI). SSI is a data management services firm that maintains a database of willing survey

participants. We forwarded our survey link, which we managed in Qualtrics, to SSI, who forwarded the link to qualified participants in their database. Inclusion parameters for our study were being married and both spouses working at least 30 hours a week. As a crosscheck that all respondents matched our criteria, our survey began with qualifying questions regarding marital status and employment. The respondents reached the survey only after all qualification questions were answered correctly. The job incumbent, who was registered with SSI, first completed his/her portion of the survey. Once the job incumbent's survey was no longer available for access or review, the spouse completed his/her portion. The spouse accessed his/her survey through an SSI link to the survey using the job incumbent's SSI identification code. We used the SSI registration number to match the surveys.

The sample of incumbents recruited by SSI was 36% (182) male, had an average age of 45 years, was 84% (422) Caucasian, worked an average of 43 hours a week, and had worked for their organization an average of 10 years. The spouse sample was 64% (321) male, had an average age of 46 years, was 84% (423) Caucasian, and worked an average of 43 hours a week. A total of 80% (401) of the couples had children. The sample represented a wide variety of both salary ranges (i.e., \$25,000 or less to more than \$150,000 annually) and industries (i.e., education, manufacturing, health care, real estate, finance, and construction, among others).

### *Measures From the Incumbent*

*Supervisor instrumental support.* We used the three items for the supervisor instrumental support dimension from Hammer et al. (2009) to measure the degree of instrumental support the incumbents felt they received from their supervisors. Sample items include "My supervisor works effectively with workers to creatively solve conflict between work and family" and "I can rely on my supervisor to make sure my work responsibilities are handled when I have unanticipated nonwork demands." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .91.

*Organizational segmentation support.* To measure organizational segmentation support, we used the four-item segmentation supplies scale developed by Kreiner (2006). Sample items include "At my workplace, people are able to prevent work issues from creeping into their home life" and "Where I work, people can mentally leave work behind when they go home." Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .92.

*Work boundary flexibility.* We adapted three of the four items from Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010) to tap work boundary flexibility. We

adapted items 1 and 3 by removing the phrase “and my personal life” so the items focused on family, which was relevant to this study. We eliminated one item because of its redundancy. Correlations between the three-item and four-item scales were .99 and .98 indicating that the item we dropped was indeed redundant.<sup>1</sup> Sample items include “While at work, I can stop what I am doing to meet responsibilities related to my family life” and “If the need arose, I could leave work early or arrive late to attend to family related issues.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .87.

*Family functioning.* We used six items from the Family Assessment Device based on McMaster’s model of healthy family functioning (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983) to capture family functioning. Sample items are “In times of crisis, we can turn to each other for support” and “We are able to make decisions about how to solve problems.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .92.

*Affective commitment.* We measured affective commitment with three items from Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). Sample items are “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization” and “I feel like part of the family at my organization.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .86.

### *Measures From the Spouse*

*Incumbent boundary management ability.* We developed three items for this study to measure how well the spouse thought the incumbent was able to manage the boundaries between work and family. These items are listed in the appendix. To develop these items, each author generated suggested items for a total of 12. Each author then ranked the 12 items with respect to how well each mapped to the construct definition. We retained the top three that best fit the definition. We then conducted a content adequacy study (Schriesheim, Powers, Scandura, Gardiner, & Lankau, 1993) using the retained items. We asked 65 undergraduates enrolled in a business course (57% male; average age of 23.66 years; 75% Caucasian; 59% seniors) to rate, on a 1 to 5 scale, the degree to which each item mapped to the construct definition provided. The means for the three items were 3.82, 3.95, and 4.05. In addition, we pretested these items using a sample of 119 nurses (89% female; average age 46 years; 100% married; average length of marriage was 17 years; 75% had children living at home). Our goal with the pretest was to ensure the items loaded on a single factor and produced an acceptable reliability. Thus, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 19, a principal axis factoring method, and an oblimin rotation to determine if the items produced the expected single factor. Results confirmed our expectations by producing one factor with loadings ranging from .78 to .96. The Cronbach’s alpha for these items

was .89. To ensure the respondents in our sample reacted to the items in a similar manner as our pretest sample, we performed the same analysis on the current data. Once again, a single factor resulted. The three factor loadings ranged from .87 to .95, and the Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .94.

*Marital satisfaction.* We adapted the three-item job satisfaction scale developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) to measure marital satisfaction. Specifically, we replaced the word job with the word marriage. A sample item is "All in all, I am satisfied with my marriage." The Cronbach's alpha for these three items was .96.

*Commitment to incumbent's organization.* Three items were used to capture the degree to which the spouse was committed to the organization for which the incumbent worked. We modified two items from a scale originally developed to measure a job incumbent's affective commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). These items include "I really care about the fate of my spouse's organization" and "I hope my spouse will work for his/her current organization for a long time." Another item ("I think my spouse's organization is a great place for my spouse to work") was adapted from Meyer et al.'s (1993) scale. All of the items are listed in the appendix. To ensure that the items were viewed as content valid, we conducted a content adequacy study (Schriesheim et al., 1993) using these three items and three additional filler items to ensure that respondents could distinguish between relevant and irrelevant items. We asked 65 undergraduates enrolled in a business course (57% male; average age of 23.66 years; 75% Caucasian; 59% seniors) to rate, on a 1 to 5 scale, the degree to which each item mapped to the construct definition provided. The means for the three items in this scale all exceeded 4.0 (i.e., 4.58, 4.08, and 4.42), and the mean for the filler items never reached 3.0. In addition, we pretested these items using a sample of 197 full-time employees (82% female; average age 42 years; 100% married; 74% had children living at home). Our goal with the pretest was to ensure the items loaded on a single factor and produced an acceptable reliability. Thus, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 19, a principal axis factoring method, and an oblimin rotation to determine if the items produced the expected single factor. Results confirmed our expectations by producing one factor with loadings ranging from .61 to .91. The Cronbach's alpha for these items was .84. To ensure the respondents in our sample reacted to the items in a similar manner as our pretest sample, we performed the same analysis on the current data. Once again, a single factor resulted. The three factor loadings ranged from .64 to .91, and the Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .86.

*Control variables.* We controlled for three different variables that we thought might present an alternative explanation of the results based on

previous research: number of children (Carlson et al., 2011), work–family conflict (Judge et al., 2006), and organizational tenure (Cohen, 1993). The job incumbent provided data for all of these control variables.

### *Data Analysis*

We began by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 9.10 to ensure that the scales we used discriminated from one another and that the items produced the expected factor structure. We then added paths to the measurement model to test the hypothesized model shown in Figure 1. At this point, we also incorporated our control variables into the model. Next, we tested four alternative models to ensure that our theoretical model was the best representation of our data. Finally, we examined the strength and significance of the indirect effects to test our hypotheses.

### *Results*

Table 1 shows the correlations, means, and standard deviations for the scales used in this study.

### *Model Testing*

The first model we tested was a measurement model. Our model contained eight factors, one for each scale used, and the three control variables: number of children, work–family conflict, and organizational tenure. The model fit the data well ( $\chi^2(649, N = 503) = 1,859, p < .000$ ; CFI = .96; NFI = .94; RMSEA = .061), and all of the paths were significant ( $p < .001$ ). Given that our scales were provided by two different sources, we estimated an alternative measurement model in which we combined all of the scales from the incumbent in one factor and all of the scales from the spouse in another. The fit for this two-factor model ( $\chi^2(703, N = 503) = 13,250, p < .01$ , CFI = .61, NNFI = .60, RMSEA = .190) was not as strong as the measurement model, and the chi-square difference test was significant ( $\chi^2_{\text{diff}}(54) = 11,391, p < .01$ ), demonstrating that the source of the data for the scales is not a significant factor in our results.

To further explore the discriminant validity of our scales we followed the procedure outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and calculated the average variance explained (AVE) for each of the scales in our study. This value represents the amount of variance explained by the scale. Fornell and Lackner suggest that AVE values greater than .50 are desirable as they indicate the items in the scale capture more variance than can be

TABLE 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among the Variables of Interest

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Measures from incumbent													
1. Supervisor instrumental support	3.80	1.20	<b>0.88</b>										
2. Organizational segmentation support	3.43	1.01	0.28***	<b>0.87</b>									
3. Work boundary flexibility	3.64	1.05	0.32***	0.23***	<b>0.83</b>								
4. Family functioning	4.39	0.69	0.17***	0.18***	0.20***	<b>0.87</b>							
5. Affective commitment	3.31	1.03	0.51***	0.18***	0.34***	0.18***	<b>0.84</b>						
6. Number of children	1.71	1.26	-0.07	-0.05	-0.01	0.05	0.04						
7. Work-family conflict	2.48	0.88	-0.31***	-0.33***	-0.42***	-0.25***	-0.18***	-0.03					
8. Organizational tenure	10.69	8.76	0.13**	0.02	0.10*	0.02	0.14**	0.06	-0.11*				
Measures from spouse													
9. Incumbent boundary management ability	4.04	0.82	0.20***	0.32***	0.26***	0.34***	0.12**	-0.03	-0.44***	0.08	<b>0.92</b>		
10. Marital satisfaction	4.43	0.75	0.06	0.05	0.14**	0.54***	0.09	0.03	-0.17***	0.02	0.31***	<b>0.94</b>	
11. Commitment to incumbent's organization	3.51	1.04	0.43***	0.30***	0.37***	0.22	0.59***	-0.04	-0.35***	0.11*	0.35***	0.20***	<b>0.83</b>

Note.  $N = 503$ . Values on the diagonal are the square root of the average variance explained which must be larger than all zero-order correlations in the row and column in which they appear to demonstrate discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

attributed to measurement error. All of the AVEs for our scales exceeded .69. Finally, we calculated the square root of the AVEs and present these values on the diagonal in Table 1. Fornell and Lackner suggest that if the square root of the AVE, which represents the variance account for by the items that make up the scale, exceeds the corresponding latent variable correlations in the same row and column, which represents the variance shared by two construct, the scale demonstrates discriminant validity. As shown in Table 1, this condition is met for all of our scales.

Next, we added paths to the measurement model to test the model shown in Figure 1. We also incorporated our control variables into the model by linking number of children and work–family conflict to all four outcome variables, and organizational tenure to affective commitment and spouse’s commitment to the organization. None of the paths for number of children were significant; work–family conflict was negatively and significantly related to family functioning ( $-.22, p < .01$ ), affective commitment ( $-.12, p < .05$ ), and spouse’s commitment to the organization ( $-.29, p < .01$ ); and organizational tenure was significantly and positively related to both affective commitment ( $.17, p < .01$ ) and spouse’s commitment to the organization ( $.12, p < .05$ ). The data fit the model well ( $\chi^2(677, N = 503) = 2,515, p < .000$ ; CFI = .94; NFI = .92; RMSEA = .074), and the standardized paths among our focal variables were all significant ( $p < .05$ ).

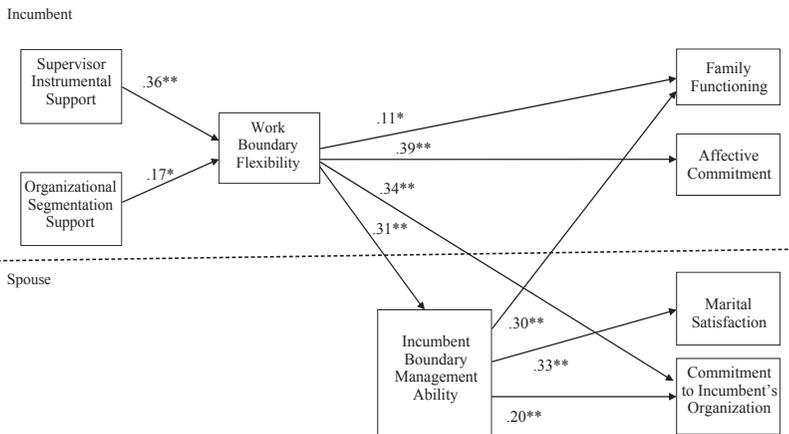
We tested four alternative models to ensure the hypothesized model was the best fitting and the model was appropriately specified. The relationships tested in the alternative models were consistent with the foundations of COR theory. For example, we wanted to see if the perception of the spouse regarding the boundary flexibility of the incumbent produced any resource that had a positive impact on outcomes of the incumbent. Based on COR theory, we believed that the spouse’s favorable impressions of the incumbent’s boundary management abilities is a resource gained by the spouse that could influence the outcomes of the job incumbent. This idea of resources crossing from one partner to another has been previously demonstrated (Westman, 2001; Westman & Etzion, 1995; Westman, Etzion, & Chen, 2009). Thus, favorable impressions of the incumbent’s boundary management abilities held by the spouse could then contribute to the job incumbent feeling more favorable toward family functioning and positively affecting affective commitment.

Based on this theoretical logic, the first alternative model added a path from the spouse’s perceptions of the incumbent’s ability to manage boundaries to the incumbent’s rating of family functioning. As can be seen in Table 2, the added path and the chi-square difference test were significant, indicating that the alternative model fit the data better than the hypothesized model. The next alternative model included a path from

TABLE 2  
Alternative Model Test Results

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2_{diff}$	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Measurement model with controls of work-family conflict, organizational tenure, and number of children	2,063	649		.96	.94	.066
Theoretical model with controls of work-family conflict, organizational tenure, and number of children	2,515	677		.94	.92	.074
Alternative Model 1 Add path between incumbent boundary management ability -> family functioning .30**	2,481	676	34(1)***	.94	.93	.073
Alternative Model 2 Add path between incumbent boundary management ability -> affective commitment -.01	2,515	676	0(1)	.94	.92	.074
Alternative Model 3 Add path between work boundary flexibility -> spouse's marital satisfaction .07	2,514	676	1(1)	.94	.92	.074
Alternative Model 4 Add path between work boundary flexibility -> spouse's commitment to incumbent's organization .34**	2,473	676	42(1)***	.95	.93	.073
Final model Add path between incumbent boundary management ability -> family functioning .30** and between work boundary flexibility -> spouse's commitment to incumbent's organization .34**	2,439	675	76(2)***	.95	.93	.073

Note.  $N = 503$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .  $\chi^2$  = chi-square, df = degrees of freedom, diff = difference, CFI = comparative fit index, NFI = normed fit index, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.



**Figure 2: Final model (Alternative Models 1 and 4) with completely standardized path loadings.**

the spouse's perceptions of the incumbent's ability to manage boundaries to the incumbent's rating of affective commitment. As can be seen in Table 2, neither the added path nor the chi-square difference test were significant, indicating that the second alternative model did not fit the data as well as the hypothesized model. Next, we added a path between work boundary flexibility and spouse's marital satisfaction. Once again, neither the added path nor the chi-square difference tests were significant, indicating that this alternative model did not fit the data as well as the hypothesized model. Finally, we added a path between work boundary flexibility and spouse's commitment to the incumbent's organization. As can be seen in Table 2, the added path and the chi-square difference test were significant, indicating that the fourth alternative model fit the data better than the hypothesized model.

Given the results of our alternative model testing, we estimated a final model that incorporated the significant paths from Alternative Models 1 and 4 and used it to test our hypotheses. The standardized path loadings for this model are shown in Figure 2. Although not pictured in Figure 2, several of our control variables were significant. Work–family conflict ( $-.09, p < .05$ ) and organizational tenure ( $.16, p < .05$ ) were significantly related to the incumbent's affective commitment. In addition, work–family conflict ( $-.10, p < .05$ ) was significantly related to the incumbent's perceptions of family functioning. On the spouse's side of the model, work–family conflict ( $-.16, p < .05$ ) and organizational tenure ( $.10, p < .05$ ) were significantly related to the spouse's commitment to the organization.

The results for the indirect effects we used to test our predictions can be found in Table 3. Our first hypothesis, which predicted that work boundary flexibility would mediate the relationship between supervisor instrumental support and family functioning, was supported. As shown in Table 3, the indirect effect (.04) was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero. Hypothesis 3 predicted that work boundary flexibility would mediate the relationship between supervisor instrumental support and affective commitment. This hypothesis was supported as the indirect effect (.14) was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero. Hypotheses 2 and 4 mirrored the first two hypotheses with organizational segmentation support serving as the independent variable. The indirect effect on family functioning (.02) was not significant, and the 95% confidence interval contained zero, while the indirect effect on affective commitment (.07) was significant and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero.

Hypotheses 5–8 included both work boundary flexibility and the spouses' perceptions of incumbent's ability to manage boundaries as mediators. Hypotheses 5 and 6 used marital satisfaction as the dependent variable and supervisor instrumental support (H5) and organizational segmentation support (H6) as the predictors. Hypothesis 5 was supported as the indirect effect (.04) was significant and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero. Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Although the indirect effect on spouse's marital satisfaction (.02) was significant, the 95% confidence interval contained zero. Hypotheses 7 and 8 used spouses' commitment to incumbent's organization as the criterion variable and supervisor instrumental support (H7) and organizational segmentation support (H8) as the independent variables. We found support for both Hypotheses 7 and 8 as the indirect effects of the spouses' commitment to incumbent's organization through supervisor instrumental support (.02) and segmentation support (.01) were significant and the 95% confidence intervals did not contain zero.

As shown in Table 3, two additional mediated paths were introduced with the addition of the path from spouses' perceptions of incumbent's ability to manage boundaries to family functioning, and two additional mediated paths were introduced with the addition of the path from work boundary flexibility and spouses' commitment to incumbent's organization. The first new path is supervisor instrumental support as the predictor and family functioning as the dependent variable with the indirect effects going through both work boundary flexibility and the spouses' perceptions of incumbent's ability to manage boundaries. The indirect effect for this path (.03) was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero. The second path was the same as the first except that segmentation support served as the independent variable. The indirect effect

TABLE 3  
*Indirect Effects for Hypothesis Testing*

Path	Indirect effect	p	95% Confidence interval
Hypotheses			
1. Supervisor instrumental support -> work boundary flexibility -> family functioning	.04	.038	.002, .074
2. Organizational segmentation support -> work boundary flexibility -> family functioning	.02	.108	-.004, .040
3. Supervisor instrumental support -> work boundary flexibility -> affective commitment	.14	.003	.073, .224
4. Organizational segmentation support -> work boundary flexibility -> affective commitment	.07	.008	.002, .121
5. Supervisor instrumental support -> work boundary flexibility -> incumbent boundary management ability -> spouse's marital satisfaction	.04	.002	.012, .056
6. Organizational segmentation support -> work boundary flexibility -> incumbent boundary management ability -> spouse's marital satisfaction	.02	.047	.000, .032

*continued*

TABLE 3 (continued)

Path	Indirect effect	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence interval
<b>Hypotheses</b>			
7. Supervisor instrumental support -> work boundary flexibility -> incumbent boundary management ability -> spouse's commitment to incumbent's organization	.02	.002	.010, .042
8. Organizational segmentation support -> work boundary flexibility -> incumbent boundary management ability -> spouse's commitment to incumbent's organization	.01	.030	.001, .023
<b>Alternative model paths</b>			
Supervisor instrumental support -> work boundary flexibility -> incumbent boundary management ability -> family functioning	.03	.003	.012, .056
Organizational segmentation support -> work boundary flexibility -> incumbent boundary management ability -> family functioning	.02	.035	.001, .031
Supervisor instrumental support -> work boundary flexibility -> spouse's commitment to incumbent's organization	.12	.000	.059, .197
Organizational segmentation support -> work boundary flexibility -> spouse's commitment to incumbent's organization	.06	.013	.013, .108

for this mediated chain (.02) was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero. Interestingly, the indirect effects of supervisor instrumental support on family functioning through work boundary flexibility was significant prior to the addition of the crossover path (.06,  $p = .004$ , 95% confidence interval .019, .104) but failed to reach significance once the crossover path was included. This result suggests that the spouse's crossover mediated effect on family functioning is stronger than the incumbent's mediated effect on family functioning. The third new mediated path is supervisor instrumental support to spouses' marital satisfaction mediated through work boundary flexibility. The indirect effect for this mediated chain (.12) was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero. The final new mediated path is organizational segmentation support to spouses' marital satisfaction mediated through work boundary flexibility. The indirect effect for this mediated chain (.06) was significant, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero.

The model shown in Figure 2 explained 20% of the variance in the incumbents' work boundary flexibility, 22% of the variance in incumbents' affective commitment, 14% of the variance in incumbents' perceptions of family functioning, 27% of the variance in spouses' affective commitment, 11% of the variance in spouses' marital satisfaction, and 10% of the variance in spouses' perceptions of the incumbents' boundary management ability. The variance explained without the control variables was 20% of the variance in the incumbents' work boundary flexibility, 21% of the variance in incumbents' affective commitment, 16% of the variance in incumbents' perceptions of family functioning, 29% of the variance in spouses' affective commitment, 11% of the variance in spouses' marital satisfaction, and 10% of the variance in spouses' perceptions of the incumbents' boundary management ability.

### *Discussion*

Our purpose in this study was to extend the literature on boundary management by focusing on two factors critical to employee work boundary flexibility: supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support. The ability to flex boundaries is enhanced through both of these workplace condition resources, which provide resources to the job incumbent with which to manage the work-family interface. Furthermore, this support contributes to the job incumbent's affective commitment and spills over to enhance family functioning and crosses over to influence the spouse's perceptions of how well the incumbent is managing his or her boundaries between the domains. In addition, work boundary flexibility directly relates to the spouse's commitment

to the incumbent's organization, in addition to working through the spouse's perception of incumbent boundary management ability. This may be because the spouse values the incumbent's work boundary flexibility and is interested in the incumbent remaining with that organization so he or she can continue to do so. Finally, the workplace supports related positively to the spouse's marital satisfaction and his or her commitment to the incumbent's organization through the job incumbent's work boundary flexibility and the spouse's perception of the incumbent's ability to manage boundaries.

### *Contributions*

First, we investigate two different forms of workplace condition support as resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014) contributing to work boundary flexibility and extend previous research that found that work boundary flexibility results in more work-to-family transitions and less work-to-family conflict (Matthews, Barnes-Farrell, & Bulger, 2010). Our research moves the field toward a better understanding of how employees use workplace condition resources to achieve work boundary goal attainment, and our results indicate that the employing organization wields significant power when it provides resources such as supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support. This extends previous research by showing the role workplace condition resources play in the experience of work boundary flexibility.

Second, our research captures the experiences of the job incumbent in both the work and family domains. Thus far, boundary management research has primarily focused on outcomes in the work domain such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Rothbard et al., 2005) and investigated a few work-family outcomes such as work-to-family transitions and subsequently more family-to-work conflict (Matthews et al., 2010) and end-of-workday strain (Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). The study of this construct is in its infancy, and its relationship to other work and family outcomes is unclear. However, both family functioning and affective commitment are often important to organizations and their managers. For instance, family functioning and relationships in the family can affect the workplace productivity (Forthofer et al., 1996) and affective commitment increases job performance and lowers turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The results of the present research suggest that work boundary flexibility relates not only to outcomes at work such as affective commitment, but spills over and relates to the employee's life outside of the workplace by its positive relationship with family functioning. As such, this research builds on previous research showing how workplace

condition resources can contribute to work boundary flexibility and impact both the work and family domains of the job incumbent.

Third, this research contributes to both the boundary management and to the CORs literatures by examining the crossover effect of work boundary flexibility on another individual in a different domain through the use of workplace condition resources. It has been established that general support at the organizational level (Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011; Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001) and from supervisors (Michel et al., 2011) relates to work–family experiences such as work–family conflict. However, what is less certain is how specific types of support may influence the incumbent’s spouse. The spouse plays an important role in a job incumbent’s attitudes toward the organization, and thus the spouse’s perceptions of how well the incumbent manages boundaries may play a critical role in the job incumbent’s work life. As conflict or unhappiness in a marital relationship can undermine workplace performance (Forthofer et al., 1996), organizations and their leaders need to understand the relationships between workplace supports and a spouse’s marital satisfaction. Although the study of spousal commitment to an incumbent’s organization is in its infancy (Wayne et al., 2013), we contend that this outcome also is of interest to organizations as commitment relates to turnover (Meyer et al., 2002).

Our study’s results suggest that the resources of supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support through work boundary flexibility not only benefit the incumbent at work and in the family but also are beneficial to the incumbent’s spouse in the form of heightened marital satisfaction and commitment to the incumbent’s employing organization. These findings also extend Demerouti’s (2012) work that found that one spouse’s job resources such as developmental possibilities, social support, and autonomy cross over to the other spouse’s resources at home, his or her family–self facilitation, and his or her energy levels. Whereas Demerouti’s research proposed a work–family interface factor (i.e., work–self facilitation) as the linking mechanism between incumbent job resources and spousal outcomes, our research supports and extends that work and the CORs literature in that we find that a work boundary management factor (i.e., work boundary flexibility) also links work-related resources to the outcomes of a spouse. Thus, this study contributes to the CORs literature by focusing on how workplace condition resources and different linking mechanisms that stem from those resources may have a ripple effect (Allis & O’Driscoll, 2008) that extends far beyond the domain or environment in which the resources originated.

Fourth, our research introduces a new construct, spousal perceptions of the incumbent’s effectiveness in managing work and family boundaries. Extant research has investigated a spouse’s

perceptions of the stress stemming from an incumbent's job (Pavett, 1986) and of an incumbent's job stress undermining the well-being of the family (Ferguson, 2012). However, as boundary management affects the work–family interface, it is important to understand how a spouse's perceptions of an incumbent's boundary management ability relate to outcomes that affect both the family and the incumbent's employing organization. Our study suggests that not only do these perceptions of boundary management ability relate to the spouse's satisfaction in the marital relationship and his or her commitment to the incumbent's organization, but they also associate with the incumbent's experienced level of functioning within the family. These findings indicate that not only do perceptions of boundary management ability color the spouse's world, but they also shape the experiences of the incumbent.

Finally, our work complements that of Wayne, Casper, Matthews, and Allen (2013), which found that family-supportive organizational perceptions related to a spouse's commitment to the incumbent's organization through the incumbent's work-to-family enrichment, work-to-family conflict, and the spouse's attitude toward the employee's work schedule. Whereas their findings considered a global perception, the present research supports and extends that work by investigating how supervisory support, focused on helping subordinates manage conflicting work and family demands, and organizational segmentation support, which provides an environment where employees believe they can keep work matters at work, relate to work boundary flexibility. Our work further extends that of Wayne et al. (2013) by also examining how these two resources work through the mechanism of work boundary flexibility to relate to how the spouse perceives the incumbent's success in managing work–family boundaries and how those perceptions affect the spouse's commitment to the job incumbent's organization.

### *Practical Implications*

Our findings suggest that organizations and their managers have important roles to play in shaping employee impressions of the flexibility of work boundaries. In this study, both supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support were critical factors affecting respondents' experience of work boundary flexibility, the notion that they have the ability to use available gateways to leave one domain (i.e., work) and enter another (i.e., family; Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010). Given the positive impact of work boundary flexibility on affective commitment, it would behoove organizations and their leaders to provide both the mechanisms (i.e., policies or procedures that support work boundary

flexing) for employee flexing of boundaries and support for a culture that encourages use of those mechanisms.

Interestingly, the positive effects of supervisor instrumental support and segmentation support do not stop at the workplace perimeter. These effects extend past the work environment to relate to the spouse's perceptions of successful boundary management by the incumbent; furthermore, they associate with the spouse's marital satisfaction and his or her commitment to the incumbent's organization. Why should organizations care about spousal marital satisfaction or commitment to the incumbent's organization? First, satisfaction in the family domain relates to satisfaction in the work domain (Ferguson, Carlson, Zivnuska, et al., 2012) and experiences in the family domain influence experiences and behaviors in the work domain (Ferguson, Carlson, Hunter, et al., 2012; Kinnunen et al., 2006). Furthermore, the experience of marital distress results in work loss (i.e., being unable to fully carry out normal work activities; Forthofer et al., 1996). Thus, organizations have a vested interest in ensuring employee satisfaction and well-being not only at work but at home as well. If work is leading to unhappiness in the family domain and the spouse has an interest in changing that situation, the spouse may be more likely to support an incumbent leaving that organization. Taken a step further, or in particularly dissatisfying situations, the spouse may even pressure the incumbent to move to an organization that is more supportive or conducive to a happy home life for both the incumbent and the spouse.

These findings underscore the importance of making sure employees are aware of workplace supports such as supervisor instrumental support and organizational segmentation support. There are several ways that organizations can heighten awareness of these resources to allow employees to better utilize the flexibility of boundaries to manage work and life demands. First, supervisors need to communicate their support for keeping work and family separate, and one way to do so effectively is through modeling that separation. By matching their words and actions, supervisors demonstrate behavioral integrity and position themselves as appropriate role models. Another way supervisors can indicate their support for keeping work out of the family domain is to educate subordinates about organizational policies such as flextime that support that endeavor. Second, organizations should use the on-boarding process for new employees to communicate and signal its support for employees keeping work at work and not letting it encroach on family time and demands. Organizations also should consider that the types of work–family policies they offer signify, either intentionally or unintentionally, the organization's values to its employees (Bretz & Judge, 1994). For instance, offering on-site childcare may suggest that the organization supports integration rather than segmentation (Rothbard et al., 2005). Finally, organizations need to

continue to train supervisors on how to provide instrumental support for helping employees manage the work–family interface.

### *Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research*

Our research has a number of strengths. First, by using a matched sample of job incumbents and their spouses, we gain greater understanding into how workplace support affects both the work and family domains. Second, we examined the role of work boundary flexibility, a relatively new construct, as a key link between the work and family domains. Further, we extended previous research by also including the perception of the spouse regarding flexibility to understand more fully how boundary management efforts crossover to the spouse.

As with all research, there are limitations. One limitation is that we only examined two sources of support in the organization. Future research could build on our foundation by investigating other forms of support, such as the climate of the organization and coworker support. For instance, work–family climate (O’Neill et al., 2009) and coworker support (Ng & Sorensen, 2008) relate positively to organizational commitment and negatively to turnover intentions. Thus, these resources may affect one’s success in managing work and family boundaries. Another limitation is that our research only examined two outcome variables for the incumbent and two for the spouse. For the incumbent, future research might consider work boundary flexibility’s effect on organizational citizenship behaviors, as work–family balance experiences influence these behaviors (Carlson, Kacmar, Grzywacz, Tepper, & Whitten, 2013), and work boundary flexibility shapes one’s work–family balance. Another interesting approach would be to examine marital satisfaction as an antecedent of boundary management in that low marital satisfaction may motivate an individual to spend more time at work rather than leaving work to attend to family matters (Yaniv, 2011), though using work as a way to manage marital conflict may undermine work performance (Forthofer et al., 1996). With respect to the spouse, other outcomes of interest might include role stress and family-to-work conflict. In situations where incumbents have considerable work boundary flexibility, they may be able to attend to family matters or demands in such a way that spousal role stress or family-to-work conflict is reduced as the spouse is not required to shoulder those burdens alone. Another limitation is that we do not take into account the preference for segmentation with regard to the job incumbent and his or her value of workplace supports. Future research could consider the moderating role that preference may have on the effectiveness of workplace support as a person’s desire for segmentation tends to moderate the relationship

between organizational policies an employee can utilize and that person's organizational commitment (Rothbard et al., 2005). Last, the present research was unable to account for the effect of respondent occupation or job level within the organization. As job level may influence an individual's ability to manage boundaries between work and family (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006), future research into the effects of workplace resources for boundary management should include occupation or job level as a control variable or a variable of interest.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that organizations have considerable leverage in promoting employee work boundary flexibility through encouraging instrumental support among their supervisors (providing assistance to subordinates attempting to manage work and family demands) and offering organizational segmentation support (helping employees manage the work–family interface). Affording these types of support allows for work boundary flexibility and for the incumbent to improve outcomes important to the organization as well as the family. Furthermore, this support and work boundary flexibility as perceived by the spouse contributed to positive family and organizational outcomes as evaluated by the spouse.

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## APPENDIX

*Incumbent Boundary Management Ability*

- (1) I think my spouse does a good job of managing the boundaries between work and family consistent with the expectation of our family.
- (2) In order to meet our family expectations, my spouse is good at navigating the line between work and family.
- (3) My spouse is good at balancing work and family demands consistent with what we have agreed on is best for our family situation.

*Commitment to Incumbent's Organization*

- (1) I really care about the fate of my spouse's organization.
- (2) I hope my spouse will work for his/her current organization for a long time.
- (3) I think my spouse's organization is a great place for my spouse to work.