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Expanding role boundary management theory: How volunteering highlights contextually shifting strategies and collapsing work–life role boundaries

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Abstract

Despite interest in expanding work–family research to focus on work–life issues, few scholars have addressed non-family life enrichment roles and their potential additional forms of and issues for boundary management. Using in-depth qualitative interviews, this study investigates the management of under-researched work–life boundaries by focusing on how volunteers communicatively manage the volunteer role in light of work and home demands. The findings suggest new boundary management processes. Specifically, in addition to the established segmenting and integrating processes, the volunteers also articulated a process of collapsing boundaries. This latter new category is manifested in two forms, named simultaneous role enactment and role value fusion. Furthermore, findings highlight how rather than only enacting one stance, individuals described contextually dependent, shifting ways of managing multiple life roles. These findings have implications for how scholars study work–life management, how practitioners seek to recruit members, and how volunteers and organizational employees make membership decisions.

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Research on work–family role management is extensive, seeking understanding of how work and family life interact on individual levels (Kreiner et al., 2006, 2009), with institutional forces (e.g. Piszczek and Berg, 2014) and with what consequences for individuals and the organizations that employ them (e.g. Carlson et al., 2009). This work is known as boundary management research, focusing on how individuals seek to blend or create borders between work and family roles. However, despite numerous notes about the need to expand work–family research to broader work–life domains (e.g. Ashforth et al., 2000; Kirby et al., 2003), very little of the role boundary research has studied non-family roles in relation to work roles. This tendency inadvertently marginalizes these other roles (e.g. leisure, volunteer, athletic) (Taylor, 2004), and also limits understandings of how these additional role demands and boundaries interact with identity and workplace decisions.

One particular role of societal and scholarly interest that complicates the work–family realm is the volunteer role. Possessing similarities with both the work and family roles, the volunteer role creates additional demands on one's time and physical resources, and it may serve as a source of positive skill development that spills over into the workplace. Thus, by expanding boundary management research to consider how work and family roles interact with additional life enrichment roles, such as volunteering, scholars and practitioners may better understand individuals' daily interactions and membership decisions.

A communicative lens is particularly helpful in expanding boundary management scholarship because individuals' communication and embodied actions in everyday life shape and are shaped by the processes that constitute role boundaries. It is in the everyday interactions with role boundary breaches that individuals may succumb to, create and restructure role management strategies regarding the 'best' way to manage the multiple demands (e.g. Kreiner et al., 2009). These management processes tie in to an individual's decisions about maintaining organizational commitments (i.e. work and volunteer organizations) as part of their work–life. Overlooking the management of these additional roles and their boundaries hinders both research and praxis since it ignores the potential for distinct strategies and complications that may arise from these additional roles. Thus, the current project explores how the communicative constitution and interaction of non-family life roles, such as volunteering, complicates role management decisions. In particular, we seek to uncover how individuals articulate the experience of managing a volunteer role in relation to other roles.

Roles and role boundaries

Boundary work is an on-going accomplishment where both individuals and the roles they enact are influenced by shifting social expectations (Kirby et al., 2003). Three main elements affect how the individual enacts, manages and negotiates the role within a

socially constructed system: (a) the social norms, behaviors and demands placed on the person enacting the role, (b) the individual enacting the role, and (c) the organizational policies or technologies that facilitate boundary crossing (e.g. Golden, 2013; Kreiner, 2006; Thomas and Biddle, 1966). Those who engage in more than one role are faced with the challenges of managing meaning and interactions within and across multiple roles (Ashforth et al., 2000), including the various expectations systems place on the role and the individual's identity.

Whereas the role itself represents the behaviors and actions that are expected of an individual (Katz and Kahn, 1978), a role boundary refers to the boundary rules that individuals, organizations and societal structures make. For example, individuals may create rules regarding the acceptability of performing paid work in one's kitchen, at the dinner table, in the living room, and even during long commutes (Golden, 2013). These rules are also subject to influence by family members, co-workers and other 'border keepers' (Clark, 2000; Trefalt, 2013).

Current research tends to treat boundary construction as 'arelational,' that is, as isolated moments unrelated to past or future interactions (Trefalt, 2013); however, if role boundaries are viewed through a social constructionist lens (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), individuals actively seek to (re)construct the boundary interfaces through interactions with others. When individuals experience breaches or challenges to current boundaries, they may either try to change or reinforce the boundary through communication with others (Kreiner et al., 2009). Such a perspective suggests that boundary management is an ongoing communicative process where individuals make sense of and reconstruct boundary breaches, role demands, and macro and micro discourses surrounding roles. This process approach views the phenomenon as tangled rather than linear, where one may draw from previously established methods and discover new emergent means of organizing (Hernes, 2008). This study embraces the process approach by conceiving of boundary management as an ongoing communicative process through which boundaries are (re)negotiated, accepted and contested during contextualized every-day lived experiences.

Managing role interactions and boundaries

Boundary management processes are a product of how individuals perceive the relationship between two roles and the opportunities and resources that facilitate or deter boundary crossing. Nippert-Eng (1996) conceptualized boundary management practices by analyzing material, cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage role demands. If both roles are perceived as mutually exclusive, individuals would likely engage in segmentation behaviors (e.g. keeping separate calendars for work and personal life, having different sets of clothes for work and personal time). Extreme segmentors maintain distinct spaces and times for the performance of work roles and of family roles, avoiding any overlap. In contrast, extreme integrators rapidly switch between roles, using materials of and performing both roles in the same spaces. These ideal types are largely influenced by organizational conditions and resources (e.g. workplace does not contact employees outside of working hours, a person's ability to leave work at the office) that facilitate stopping work from affecting the home environment (Kreiner, 2006). In the other direction, technology transcends spatiotemporal boundaries, creating greater opportunities for integration (Golden, 2013).

Scholars are open to the idea that choices to segment or integrate exist along a continuum and are not permanent decisions. An individual's boundary management practices may exist anywhere on the continuum where complete integration and complete segmentation are at two extreme opposite ends (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Nippert-Eng (1996) argued that these extreme endpoints were merely ideal types, theoretical in nature, and did not exist in actual lived experiences. Instead, individuals shift along the continuum, enacting states of more or less integration. Overall, however, little research has demarcated levels in between or shifts along the continuum.

Although these initial conceptualizations are valuable, there are two key limitations: the assumption of a dualistic nature of boundary management and the focus on only the physical elements of boundary management. First, Nippert-Eng (1996) argued that the domains defined each other, thus, work was everything family was not. This dualistic perspective does not account for the ways other roles may influence work and family. Since changes to work and family demands may influence the level of integration and create future conflict (Dikkers et al., 2007; Gambles et al., 2006), the inclusion of a non-work or non-family role may also complicate how individuals view and manage roles. Secondly, the material focus of the original conceptualization results in a partial view of segmentation and integration that may overlook how spatial and material objects are the end result of decision-making processes that take into account personal frameworks influenced by micro (individual level moments of talk) and macro or societal-level discourses (e.g. capitalism). In other words, this prior research stance does not fully address arguments that meaning and expectations are socially constructed through communication (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Shotter and Gergen (1994) noted that a communicative social constructionist (CSC) stance means that meaning and reality are continuously (re)created and constrained in conversation, even as one develops official ways of accounting for the world. Thus, a CSC approach helps articulate both how routine patterns of expectations regarding role management communicatively exist and are subject to alteration.

A few recent studies have begun challenging these limitations. Ammons' (2013) longitudinal analysis noted slight shifts in preferred and enacted boundaries across time, suggesting that boundaries are always a work in progress. Bulger et al. (2007) discovered four types of individuals on the segmentation–integration continuum. In addition to individuals who fully integrated both roles, they also found that some individuals enacted one-way permeability, essentially shielding work from intruding on family while allowing family roles to permeate work at times. Another set of individuals had the opportunity to be high integrators, thanks to policies set in place by their employer; however, in practice these individuals did not engage in strong integration practices. These findings demonstrate that boundary management is far more complex than a decision to maintain separate objects and spaces and that the opportunity or desire to integrate does not directly result in successful integration practices. These findings also suggest the need to further consider the communicative and ongoing nature of the boundary management experience.

Additional problems present in the current work–family balance scholarship surround the issues of transitions. When a person is shifting roles, there is a transition period at an interface where two role boundaries intersect. Ashforth and colleagues (2000: 472)

referred to these 'frequent and usually recurring' theoretical spaces (e.g. 'the commute between home and work') as role overlap and micro-transitions. However, the proposed micro-transitions are ritualistic in nature and do not account for unplanned conflict and unplanned shifting between roles that individuals may sometimes encounter (Powell and Greenhaus, 2006). Furthermore, though Ashforth and colleagues mention possible work-third place domain transitions, none of the work–life boundary research has studied transitions beyond work and family roles. Finally, although boundary crossing research assists in explaining macro and micro transitions (Ashforth et al., 2000), most do not capture the communicative challenges and negotiations (e.g. encouraging integration when important family issues arise, negotiating rules surrounding how much work can be done at home, and asking for organizational resources to improve boundary strength) inherent in the ongoing processes of boundary management.

One noted exception to these trends is Kreiner et al.'s (2009) analysis of Episcopalian priests' use of work–family boundary conflict management tactics. Their project invites increased focus on how boundaries shift in relation to boundary violation episodes and increased understanding of the range of tactics individuals may use to manage such violations. Their research addresses one personal and one organizational identity that demands a permeable boundary, suggesting the potential to now consider how a variety of organizational roles and identities may interact and impact boundary management.

By accounting for the volunteer role and framing boundary management as a communicative process, the current study seeks to address these limitations of current scholarship. Furthermore, a communicative focus highlights the on-going (re)constructions of roles and systems (i.e. work, family and volunteer). Understanding the underlying practices of this on-going process will increase our understanding of boundary management decisions and practices including reification and gravitation towards certain strategies, emergence of new practices, and shifts along the continuum that are contingent on the current interrelationships between roles. Focusing on boundary (re)creation expands attention beyond the bifurcated framing of integration or segmentation and the material enactment of such stances. The volunteer role not only impacts how scholars define and manage work and family, but it also creates opportunities to address the ways it enriches the other realms.

Volunteering as an additional life role

As previously mentioned, some scholars have acknowledged the presence of third roles (e.g. Ashforth et al., 2000; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985); however, subsequent scholarship has established a precedent by only investigating interactions across the work and family roles (e.g. Ashforth et al., 2000; Bulger et al., 2007; Golden, 2013; Kreiner et al., 2006), without explicitly addressing the experiences and influence of additional life roles (Taylor, 2004). Yet, these additional life roles are part of the boundary management process.

One of the few empirical studies to account for work/family/volunteer tensions experienced by individuals is Kramer's (2002, 2004) ethnographic research on community theater groups. He found that the theater group had its own expectations for how members would manage multi-group commitment, including only 'trying out' if the person

could commit to the theater group, such that rehearsals would not conflict too much with work or family activities, and an expectation that potential role conflict (e.g. missing certain rehearsals) would be resolved before the individual joined the group. These findings demonstrate the boundary management process and role management expectations a group has constructed for its members, but they do not account for how volunteers manage conflicts and renegotiate boundaries with family members or co-workers. Kramer's initial findings about one theater group's leisure boundary management expectations invite further research on boundary management among various forms of life-enrichment groups including leisure activities, activist groups and other forms of seasonal and long-term volunteer commitments.

The volunteer role creates two new potential boundary interfaces individuals must manage (i.e. work–volunteer role and family–volunteer role boundaries). Of particular interest to this study is how individuals communicatively construct such roles into their lives. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following research question regarding the interfaces of the work, family/relational and volunteer roles:

> *Research question*: How do volunteers communicatively manage role interfaces constructed by engagement in a volunteer role?

Method

This study was part of a larger inquiry into the lived experiences and identity processes of multiple role engagers. The study used a hermeneutic phenomenological lens, which explores, interprets and describes human experience as a means to understanding the central nature of the phenomenon itself (Van Manen, 1990). Van Manen pulled from both Husserl and Heideggerian thinking, though more so from the latter. The hermeneutic stance insists on recognizing all description as necessarily interpretation. Indeed, Heidegger (1962) offered an abstract definition of 'things' that suggests how the material is immaterial. Discourse and matter are intricately related. Furthermore, a Heideggerian ontological, being-focused approach highlights how the individual and world constitute and are constituted by each other, acknowledging the both/and-edness of agency and control in experiencing a phenomenon. In this case, the phenomenon under study was the communicative management of volunteer-related role interfaces.

Participants

A total of 38 (17 males and 21 females) individuals participated in the study. Pseudonyms were used for all participants and organizations, and potentially identifying details were altered to protect confidentiality. Participants were recruited through the first author's personal and professional contacts using a criterion, snowball sample. After 20 interviews were collected, nonprofit organizations that served minority populations were cold contacted via email as a means of hopefully identifying more minority individuals who were multiple role engagers. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 64 (mean age: 40) and came mostly from the Midwest United States. Additional participants were from the East and West coast of the United States. All participants met the criterion of engaging

regularly in paid work, relational and volunteer roles within the month preceding the interview. A majority of the participants were European American (30 white, four black, two Hispanics, one Native American and one Indian). To address the limitations of previous work–family research (i.e. use of only marital relationships as the family role) the term relational role was used to allow for consideration of familial relationships and other close relationships. Participants' relational roles varied from parent–child, to casual dating relationships, to married, to divorced and dating. Lastly, participants ranged from light to heavy volunteering (1–150 hours per month; mean = 25 hours per month) and participated in a variety of volunteer activities and organizations including social service (e.g. mentoring programs, crisis hotlines) and environmental (e.g. river cleanup, tree planting) organizations.

With the exception of four phone interviews, the interviews were conducted in person at a mutually agreed upon location. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 to100 minutes, resulting in a total of approximately 37 hours of audio files. A verbatim transcript was created for each interview, yielding a total of 782 pages of single-spaced text.

Data collection and analysis

In line with Van Manen's (1990) phenomenological approach, a conversational interviewing technique was used to collect individuals' experiences of the phenomenon. Conversational interviewing is similar to semi-structured interviewing techniques in that this method gives the researcher the latitude to adapt the interview guide to explore the nuances of how the participants are making sense of their everyday experiences (Kvale, 1996).

During data collection, the first author was simultaneously transcribing, verifying, creating memos and meeting with the second author to discuss emergent findings. When no new themes emerged, suggesting phenomenological saturation (Van Manen, 1990), recruitment ceased and the remaining scheduled interviews were completed. When no new elements of the phenomenon's essence were found in the remaining interviews, data collection ended.

The first stage of a phenomenological analysis is thematic analysis. Van Manen (1990) offered three approaches to thematic data analysis of a phenomenon: holistic, selective and line-by-line analysis. The authors borrowed analytic tools from Charmaz (2006) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) to provide guidance in line-by-line analysis. Using NVivo, qualitative analysis software, the first author engaged in open and axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) refers to assigning codes to actions articulated in the data. Examples of open codes in this data set include 'communicating with the family less than before' and 'volunteering with relational partner.' These open codes were then aggregated to create larger categories, or axial codes (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Examples of axial codes included 'segmenting role resources' and 'value fusion.' These axial codes represented themes that reveal elements of the experience of managing volunteer role interfaces. During the coding process, the first author also created memos that helped identify which themes were the most prevalent and powerful (Charmaz, 2006) and developed connections across themes. Both authors read over and discussed the coded transcripts,

memos and resulting themes (e.g. value fusion). These processes led to the presentation of findings below, which focuses on offering exemplars of each theme as present across the data set.

Volunteers' experiences of managing boundaries

An analysis of participants' talk about their work–life interactions revealed how they (re) created and managed boundaries among three roles. The data demonstrated that the lived experience of work–life balance is not necessarily an act of reinforcing a permanent choice to segment or integrate, but rather a constant process of (re)negotiating the boundaries around the roles. As Table 1 illustrates, some of the participants discussed enacting various types of boundary management practices. Additionally, the inclusion of a third role in the analysis provided empirical evidence of 'boundaryless' management that has been described as an unattainable, ideal, theoretical state (Nippert-Eng, 1996) and has not yet been observed empirically by scholars. The results presented here answer the research question by focusing on how participants experienced and managed the boundary interfaces that involved the third role, which in this case is the volunteer role. Participants managed boundaries by segmenting, integrating and collapsing (via simultaneous role enactment and role value fusion).

Role segmenting

The most common frame and means of managing the volunteer role was to view it as separate from the work and relational roles. Participants described using segmentation processes to create or enforce non-overlapping role boundaries. For example, Randall, a government worker, described how material objects provided by his employer, including his salary and phone, were all materials paid for by state tax dollars and hence should not be used for personal matters. When a volunteer organization called him at work, asking him to volunteer for a special project during the week, he responded by saying, 'Nope, working here today. Governor wants me in the office today.' In fact, Randall would refer to his work computer, phone and other objects as 'the state's' (e.g. 'the phone in my opinion, that's the state phone . . . I don't want it clogged up [with personal messages]. I want that to have [the voicemail] for work'), reinforcing the division between work and personal items. Notably, Randall is interpreting and generating meaning for physical objects as part of his boundary management communication. Another participant, Carlos, established a rule that his monthly military pension went directly to his volunteer work with Hispanic ministries. This rule kept those finances from being used for other familial matters. Brandon, an engineer, also used rules to protect family time from his other demands:

> Let's say Friday and Saturday is the Family Time. It's always family time. My daughter, Friday is her day. She likes certain types of movies where the whole family doesn't like them. So I am the one who always go with her and we go to movies together. And then Saturdays we all [the whole family] go to movies. I like going to the movies. And so like I try to balance. It's a matter of balance.

Table 1. Participants quoted in results.

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Volunteer activity	Job title/type	Boundary management strategies
Aaron	59	White	Parks & Rec, Red Cross	Scientist (FT)	I, C (SRE)
Alethia	44	White	Farmers' Market	Health Records Manager (FT)	S, I, C (SRE)
Brandon	50	Indian	City Recreation Leagues	Engineer (FT)	
Bobby	54	Black	Crisis Pregnancy	Accounts Manager (FT)	S, C (SRE)
Carlos	54	Hispanic	Hispanic Ministry	Accounting Supervisor (FT)	S
Casey	19	White	Women's Outreach	Director of Wellness Programs (FT)	C (RVF)
Duffy	52	White	Scouting & Hurricane Relief	Power Plant Supervisor (FT)	S, C (SRE)
Erin	55	Black	Women's Ministries	Office Manager	S, C (SRE)
Julia	26	White	Low-Income Housing Construction	Sales Manager (FT)	I, C (SRE)
Jasmine	35	Black	Boys & Girls Club	Student Affairs Coordinator	I, C (SRE)
Kelly	27	White	River Clean-up	Office Assistant (FT)	C (SRE)
Mandy	32	White	Food Pantry, Children's & Youth Ministry	Cosmetologist	S, C (SRE)
Marie	24	White	Healthcare	Outreach Coordinator (FT)	S, C (RVF)
Mark	23	White	Environment Sustainability	Research & Teaching Assistant	I, C (RVF)
Megan	38	White	Professor	Advocacy Organizations	S, I, C (RVF)
Michael	50	White	Youth Ministries	Hospital IT Manager	S, I, C (SRE)
Phil	48	White	City Parks Maintenance	Manufacturing Engineer (FT)	I, C (SRE)
Randall	54	White	Zoo & Community Events	Policy Development (FT) Specialist	S, C (SRE)
Reshaun	43	Black	Youth Mentoring	Assistant Director (FT)	S, C (RVF)
Saul	54	White	Tutoring	Programmer/Analyst	S, I
Sergio	31	Hispanic	Youth Mentoring & Homeless Outreach	Production Manager (FT)	S, I, C (SRE)
Sofia	27	White	Habitat for Humanity; Feeding the Homeless	Freelance Marketing (PT) Assistant, Teaching Aide (PT)	C(RVF)
Susan	54	White	Income Inequality Outreach	University Professor & University Outreach Programs (FT)	S, I, C(RVF)

FT = full time; PT = part time; S = segmenting; I = integrating; C(SRE) = collapsing (simultaneous role enactment); C(RVF) = collapsing (role value fusion). Pseudonyms were used for all participants and organizations, and potentially identifying details were altered to protect confidentiality.

Cognitive frames that view roles as distinct were reflected in actions and rules that protect material resources, and in some cases family time, which is consistent with previous research on segmenting spaces and material resources (e.g. Ashforth et al., 2000; Golden, 2013).

Although values are discussed in Ashforth et al.'s framework of boundary management, subsequent management research has not focused on the value element and has not unpacked the processes or the rationale behind role value segmentation (e.g. Hecht and Allen, 2009; Kreiner, 2006). Among this study's participants, segmenting roles based on values was only discussed in relation to the volunteer role, which may explain the absence of value segmentation strategies from the existing work–family research that has not considered volunteer roles. Participants sometimes created segmented boundaries via communication patterns and physical presence/absence owing to perceptions of distinct role values. For example, Marie, a women's rights outreach coordinator who advocated women's reproductive rights and early sex education as a volunteer and employee, described moments of value incompatibility and consequent segmentation that often occurred when she visited her family members who had more conservative values:

Marie:	[My roles are] basically like all encompassing.
Interviewer:	Do you ever see them as being separate things that you have to deal with—your work, your volunteering, your boyfriend and your family life?
Marie:	I can differentiate but they sometimes fall in the same. 'Cause a lot of my hours [at the Women's Center where I'm employed] are honestly volunteer hours, and this is just the type of job that requires that. But you know, with my family, I think they are two very separate things. My family life, it's more of me trying to [laughing] choke back my activism or my volunteering and—
Interviewer:	Is that with your parents?
Marie:	Yeah, not so much with my mom but with my dad. My dad's very conservative. And his wife is incredibly conservative. And we really don't get along very much.

Even though Marie integrated other roles in her life, through silence or omission, she segmented the relational and volunteer roles owing to value incompatibility. The choice to limit interaction or communication on certain matters reflects implicit boundary rules regarding which topics are acceptable to discuss when embodying a role.

In addition to situational silence as a value segmentation management strategy, some participants managed role value segmentation by ending one of the role commitments. For example, Bobby's volunteer involvement with the crisis pregnancy center ranged from mentoring young soon-to-be fathers to 'be a friend to the girl or father to the child' to eventually sitting on the board of the organization. Bobby possessed a strong commitment to both religious values and to challenging race-related stigmas. However, Bobby had recently resigned from the board because of 'some things that didn't sit well with me as a Christian.' When asked to elaborate, Bobby focused his response on his goal to 'try to be a Godly person and to try to be a part of the solution and not the problem.' The

exchange demonstrates an experience where personal values and organizational values no longer aligned. This dissonance was rectified through role exit; however, the discourse highlights a cognitive frame where his personal life values did not fit in the volunteer role and required value segmentation.

Lastly, some participants' discourse portrayed segmentation emerging as a boundary management practice in order to combat the effects of previous boundary management practices or other tensions that were occurring in other roles. Several participants mentioned discussions, and in some cases arguments, with relational others about the state of the relationship. For instance, Alethia, who worked full time and volunteered roughly 40 hours a week, would often have her daughter volunteer with her as she volunteered; however, sometimes the constant blending and switching across roles minimized the quality of time and connection between the two:

> There would definitely be times where we would both look at each other and realize we haven't really had a chance to talk all week. You know, let's take time out. This Sunday we're going to go for a drive. We're going to pack a picnic, throw the dog in the car. You know so that's how we did it. Or we would get into a really big argument, and it would suddenly be like why are we arguing? Well because we haven't touched based. We really haven't talked about things this week.

The Sunday drives and talks served to segment enacting the family role from the volunteer role.

Rather than being a previously held cognitive frame for managing role demands, segmentation emerged as a solution to repair the quality of relationships and connection participants had with members in the relational role. It also emerged as a solution to protect oneself from problems arising in the work or relational role. Megan described how volunteerism was both an avenue of fulfillment and a place to escape what was going on in her marriage:

> Part of my activist stuff was probably just sort of channeling energy that was unmet needs in my marriage. I think that I sort of gave up on the idea of marital fulfillment after a while. When I look at it and I think where was my satisfaction coming from, it certainly wasn't from my marriage. Doing activist stuff, at least it gets you a sense of affiliation meaning, purpose, comradery, friendship, um common dreams that were really lacking in marriage at that time.

In Alethia's excerpt, segmentation was merely momentary; however, Megan's excerpt demonstrates that an emergent practice may become a more desired way of viewing the interaction across roles. Whether it was a source of escape or means of minimizing distractions, segmentation emerged as a useful tool to manage experiences across roles. Overall, participants described segmenting roles owing to cognitive frames, conflicting role values, and because previous boundary management practices were negatively affecting other roles.

Role integrating

The second role management process is role integration (Nippert-Eng, 1996), defined here as a weaving or crossing back and forth between roles within one space or time (Hattery, 2001). Participants described using role integration, including talking to

relational others while at work, taking care of volunteer demands during work hours, leaving family to take care of work demands, and doing paid work from home.

In many of these instances the individuals were in leadership or coordinator positions with the volunteer organization and would engage in integrative micro-transitions, overlapping or rapidly shifting between roles, when they needed to send volunteer related emails or make phone calls while at their place of paid employment. For example, Julia, a full-time sales manager at work, was also in charge of organizing a 120-person church-based volunteer team that was building and transporting three houses in the United States. One way Julia was able to accomplish her volunteer work was to incorporate administrative volunteer tasks into her hours spent at her work office. She would physically be at her sales job office from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day, but would integrate her work and volunteer roles:

> I would honestly try to fit [volunteer work] in the mornings. I would try to respond to all the emails from the church . . . so I did it sort of like during work time. But that just really pushed a lot of my [paid] work stuff till a little bit later . . . So, I'd really work at my job more like 10–7, and I would kind of do the church type work from like 8 to 9 [a.m.] and then again at night from like 9–10 [p.m.] before I would go to bed.

Alethia also described quick moments of shifting while at paid work. She would sometimes receive phone calls and messages at work about volunteer organization problems, 'there have been times where I get a call, "Oh God! We don't have a musician for this weekend. Can you help us find a musician?" So, I spend 10 minutes on the phone, and then I just work five minutes later.' Both of these individuals worked full time, were in salaried positions, and had the privilege to quickly switch between roles. This integration was a common practice among study participants whose volunteer roles involved leading or organizing others.

In addition to organizing activities, participants also took planned and unplanned breaks from work in order to engage in volunteer activities. Two participants reported taking unplanned work breaks during the day to counsel (e.g. alcoholics anonymous and spiritual counseling) or mentor individuals who were associated with the volunteer organization. Saul even described negotiating with his boss and exchanging one form of work–life benefit for another. Instead of spending paid work-time taking a course to teach himself new skills for professional development, he convinced the boss to let him use that time to volunteer by teaching students skills that he already knew: 'I pointed out to my boss that tutoring would be about equivalent to the time that I'd be spending taking a class so that was okay with him.' Thus, Saul would take an hour out of his day from a job that he claimed he did not derive meaning from, to go to a different building on campus and tutor students, a role that allowed him to 'find some source of meaning and connection with other people' during the workday. However, participants tended to describe using integration strategies along the work and relational role interface more so than along the other two interfaces involving the volunteer role (volunteer–work and volunteer–relational).

Role collapsing

In addition to moving back and forth between roles as integrators, some participants described a complete overlapping of roles. In these situations, the boundaries that normally would separate two roles are collapsed into one merged role enacted in the same

time and space. We use the term collapsing to clarify the distinction between rapidly crossing back and forth across roles (integration) and simultaneously enacting multiple roles (role collapsing) in the same time and space. For example, when volunteering with a relational other, participants sometimes said that they were both building the relationship with the person and helping the organization. The analysis revealed that role collapsing sometimes occurred across all three roles, but it was more commonly articulated when participants discussed the volunteer–work and volunteer–relational interfaces than work–relational interfaces.

Participants reported collapsing the work and volunteer boundary in two ways. The most common form of collapsing, simultaneous role enactment, occurred when participants enacted at least two role membership behaviors at the same time. The second form of collapsing, role value fusion, occurred when roles were fused together not only in behaviors, but also because multiple roles were rooted in a common value, usually a social justice cause.

Simultaneous role enactment. When the volunteer role becomes an extension of the work role or relational role, it becomes easier to simultaneously embody and enact two roles. Since the individual is not engaging in microtransitions or boundary weaving/crossing, the boundary has ceased to mark the roles as distinct. The collapsed boundary is noticeable in the discourses used to describe participant roles and subsequent embodied actions.

The most common articulation of role collapsing occurred between relational and volunteer roles. Over half of the participants in the study reported volunteering with relational others. These participants described unique relational benefits of volunteering with their spouses, fiancés and/or children. For example, Sergio, a 31-year-old Hispanic male, shared:

> With family I try to do as much volunteering [as possible]. [My fiancé] and I talk about volunteer activities that we'd like to do together, and we try to make that a point to do together. So it doesn't really take away from family . . .

Aaron did all of his volunteering with his wife ('We do everything pretty much together'). Saul noted that his volunteering role was his family role: 'they were pretty much one and the same thing—volunteering at the school and being with my family.' Other participants articulated instances of relationship reinforcement or growth that occurred during the time they spent volunteering with the relational other. Sofia, a full-time student, described her time volunteering with her fiancé as both increasing a fondness for the other person and the volunteer work: 'I probably enjoy [volunteering] more when I'm with Aiden. It's really cool to see the person that you know you love helping other people. And it just kind of reinforces, "That's why I like this guy".' For new and established couples, volunteering together gave them the opportunity to work together and learn more about their relational partner. Duffy and his wife had been married for over 25 years, and he described the value of volunteering together as:

> To me a marriage is doing as much together as you can. It's [not just] having the same address or sharing a phone number. To me that wouldn't be very much. We went on a church mission

> trip last November. It was a habitat build. It was a week of vacation time for us, but I enjoyed it just as much. If you do it with a family member, if both spouses enjoy the same thing, [spending time volunteering together] versus being more time apart not being a couple seems, to help a lot.

If one accepts that there is limited time one can use in a day (Marks, 1977), collapsing the boundaries between volunteer role and relational role allows the person to spend time with their relational other and volunteer work, reaping the rewards (and stresses) of both roles. New mother, Jasmine, shared: 'I'm a single parent so when I do mentor a student . . . I do have my son with me. So. I haven't given up any of my activities.' Two counter-examples who did not enjoy aspects of role collapsing were pastors' wives. Erin, who frequently led women's Bible studies and discussion groups at the church her husband pastored, discussed caution when sharing personal examples during discussion groups she was leading:

> There are certain expectations that are placed on a pastor's wife, and there are certain things you have to be really careful [with]. In fact, one instance just this past Tuesday . . . I had mentioned the pastor had called me and he was talking about dusting off my little knick knacks that I had on the shelving unit . . . And I said 'I wish he was cooking, I wish he was thinking about cooking.' Well one of the ladies told me, 'I'm going to tell pastor that you're putting his business out in the street.'

Mandy, a hair stylist married to a pastor, discussed how others altered their perceptions of her volunteer efforts once she married a pastor, 'they are like oh that's why you do nice things. You're a pastor's wife; you have to.'

Just as volunteering together helped to build romantic relationships, volunteering with one's children served as an avenue to enhance parent–child relationships. Some perceived benefits to volunteering with one's children included building familial relationships and socializing children into certain values, potentially leading to future role value fusion for family members. Through volunteering with a tree-planting organization, Phil, a divorcé with part-time custody of his children, was able to spend more time with his daughters, teach them new skills associated with landscaping, and use the time to instill positive values in his children:

> I mean getting your family involved is really important. They get to see caring parents doing good for the community and instill the thought in [their] head that, hey, this is a good thing. They get to do it and they get to feel good about it.

Other participants, who echoed Phil's sentiments, viewed volunteering with one's family as a way to serve as role models to their children. For Michael, he was displeased with the volunteers who were chaperoning his children during youth events, prompting his volunteer involvement: 'Somebody with a little more commitment than that needs to be [volunteering/chaperoning] when my children are involved. So, the following year, I made myself available to do it.' Megan, who segmented some of her activism from her husband but did collapse the family and volunteer roles on occasion and volunteer with her children, noted how activism became a part of their daily discourse and interactions:

> There are times when [my children] want to [volunteer] and times when they don't. It was nice to see. They tease me . . . my 11-year-old will say things like she'll just imitate me, 'Well, I just hope we all can enjoy this sustainable meal, produced by local farmers.'

Overall, when participants articulated the volunteer and relational roles as collapsed, they typically discussed how the collapsing simultaneously benefited the relational development and the volunteer organization. A potential problem may arise if there are tensions present in the relationship and the two people have a commitment to volunteer together or if participants do not view their roles as collapsed when others do (e.g. Mandy).

Finally, only one participant articulated simultaneous enactment of all three roles. Kelly worked for Save Our River with her significant other. Save Our River also sponsored a volunteer river cleanup organization that both Kelly and her partner volunteered for. As her work, volunteer and relational boundaries were all collapsed, Kelly noted:

> It's pretty much just like this organization is kind of just taking over our lives. I mean it is our lives . . . A lot of times we'll be at my house brainstorming. It's really ridiculous . . . My boyfriend and my roommate will be really going at it [about Save Our River]. And I'm just like 'I'm done.' And I just go out on the porch or go to bed. I'll just leave. Like if I'm really sick of it, you know, I'll just step away.

Kelly's story demonstrates how complete collapsing of roles can make it difficult to escape her paid work, basically a form of organizational colonization of her life (Deetz, 1992).

Role value fusion. Sometimes individuals engaged in value-oriented boundary collapsing (here named role value fusion), using more than one role to advance the same values or beliefs. This outcome is accomplished by engaging in roles, albeit not necessarily at the same time, that have a similar value base. This form of collapsing was primarily found in reference to the work–volunteer role boundary.

Role value fusion boundary collapsing occurred when individuals were doing paid work for social justice focused organizations. For example, Reshaun's work and volunteer roles helped disadvantaged youth. As an assistant director of student services, he spent his paid work-time helping minority college students with their academic career paths. Reshaun also spent his volunteer time with a youth mentoring program that provided leadership programs to minorities. Reshuan's valuing of helping young people is clear in his discourse about his paid work:

> It takes a special kind of individual from my perspective to go into this kind of work. This is not glamorous work at all. We've got to challenge young people. And for me, I got tired of seeing highly intelligent young people just making poor decisions . . . We deal with potential to be the best and brightest, but we have to figure out a way to bring that out . . . So, that's why I say it's a labor of love and I go and do it every night, knowing that I'm giving them a hard day's work, an honest day's work, and I hopefully impacted the life of a young person that will reap benefits down the line.

Similarly, when describing his volunteer work, Reshaun said, 'I love the one role of an older, singularly successful, black man working with a young person who could

use that kind of mentorship.' Thus, this valuing of mentoring young underprivileged individuals was a common thread for both Reshaun's work and volunteer roles, a form of role value fusion. Likewise, Marie, the paid women's outreach program coordinator, and Casey, a paid office assistant at the women's outreach program, both spent their volunteer time engaging in activities and advocacy efforts that also promoted and helped women in the community. Their volunteer work included helping sister organizations with events or speaking to student groups on issues related to reproductive justice.

Others engaged in role value fusion when they were able to apply a particular level of expertise from their work role to a volunteer project. Megan shared her expertise in neurological development stemming from her paid work to help create a legal argument for her volunteer work that advocated on behalf of a defendant in a juvenile death penalty case. Mark, a statistician and environmental policy graduate student, would dedicate over 100 volunteer hours a month to sustainability organizations/movements and environmental clean-ups. He described environmental organizing as a 'big passion.' As part of his quest to 'get more sustainable systems,' he proposed a service-learning class where he teaches students to compost waste material from the campus dining halls, effectively promoting his volunteer work and values even as he performed his paid job. Even though only a small portion of the participants described role value fusion, these examples demonstrate how individuals were able to build two roles on the same value foundation and have both roles grounded in the same social commitments.

Shifting among role management stances

One of the key findings in the current project is that participants shifted among integrating, segmenting and collapsing management stances. Table 1 shows how many of the participants excerpted above described multiple boundary management strategies over the course of their interview. Table 2 takes this analysis one step further by highlighting participants discussing implementing multiple boundary management strategies, including moments of negotiating strategies based on personal experiences or the requests of others. For example, Sergio described a conversation where his fiancé was dissatisfied with an integrated work-relational boundary resulting in a shift towards segmentation. This process becomes further entangled and complex when the person is shifting strategies with a collapsed role.

To further demonstrate this process, we offer a more detailed discussion of Susan's case in particular. Susan, whose paid job involved coordinating faculty and providing financial education to low-income communities, also volunteered for an advocacy group (HEP) for low-income individuals. Susan felt she 'needed HEP to exist to do [her paid] job right' and thus HEP became an outgrowth of her current job fusing the roles together. The interconnection and sometimes simultaneous enactment of roles was evident in the discourse Susan used to describe her roles as different hats one wears. She stated, 'I sometimes wear both of them. They're stacked.' The interconnected roles allowed her to mold her paid work tasks to help her volunteer work and vice versa, yet the distinctions among the roles sometimes reemerged in her talk:

Table 2. Exemplars of using multiple role management strategies.

Pseudonym	Segmentation examples	Integration examples	Collapsing examples	Negotiation
Sergio	When I'm with Amy, I don't take phone calls from work or anything. I forward those to voicemail.	Amy calls and says 'I really need to talk to you about something.' I'm like 'okay, let me step away.' I just tell my boss 'I'm going to step away for a few minutes to get a little longer break than usual' He's like 'okay go right ahead take care of your business.'	Amy and I talk about volunteering activities that we'd like to do together so it doesn't really take away from family because we're doing it together.	Amy told me last night 'it's different it's very hard because I'm used to things being things between you and I being a certain way and now they've changed because you have to work so much' . . . . But we've been able to bounce back and we were able to adjust and adapt. And we also had to learn how to make new boundaries. And right now it's time for me to learn how to make new boundaries.
Susan	Because I'm supposed to focus on education and not take the position on candidates. I can talk about issues, but I have to be a little bit careful with that line.	So if she [a co-volunteer] is not able to get something done, I may drop everything and go work with her, and then I've got to figure out a way to make work up.	My hats, I sometimes wear both of them. They're stacked.	So I'm constantly renegotiating with myself. You can't do everything so okay, can I get this Lucy (HEP Volunteer) to do this Ehh. She's a little busy. Maybe I can get somebody else to do this or whatever. So it's this never ending cycle of taking on too much and then having too many balls in my court and lobbing them back.

> [Managing the roles] is a challenge . . . [My paid job] has I think, we've got [a] $13,000 grant to get [the coalition] started and then somebody has to work with the other like partners in the coalition to persuade them [to] give us some grant funding or whatever. And because I'm supposed to focus on education and not take the position on candidates, [through my volunteering with HEP], I can talk about issues, but I have to be a little bit careful with that line.

There are some unique tensions experienced when her roles are collapsed. Because her employer does not restrict what topics Susan should focus on when educating the rural communities, she sometimes is able to collapse the boundary and create education workshops and materials that would benefit HEP and coincide with HEP's mission. However, because Susan's job is partially funded through grants that involve rules about advocacy, her paid job limits the amount of advocacy she can conduct when wearing the 'work hat':

> Right now I'm working very hard on this statewide, anti-predatory lending coalition and I wear both hats with that too. HEP is in a lead because HEP, not taking [the state's] funding and not having any limits on what they can do, they should be in the lead.

Because HEP does not have these restrictions, Susan temporarily segments and performs the most salient role, where her volunteer hat is in the 'lead.' Yet, Susan also shifted between integration and collapsing prompted by feelings of over commitment and stress. In Table 2, Susan describes managing the closely tied work and volunteer role as a process of 'constantly renegotiating with oneself.' Throughout the data, individuals described times when they collapsed boundaries in one moment and also demonstrated moments of temporary segmentation, highlighting the transitory nature of the boundary management process.

Shifts in boundary management strategies may be dependent upon contextual factors (e.g. maintain state or grant funding, organizational rules) and relational others, demonstrating that shifts are not always a product of personal agency. More importantly, as Table 2 demonstrates, these shifts often involve working with others in order to reduce tensions that may have arisen due to a previous boundary management strategy.

Collapsing the integration–segmentation continuum of role boundary management

While prior scholarship has theorized and analyzed boundary management communication from a dualistic work–family perspective, the current findings expand scholarly focus to consider intersections among additional roles and their on-going boundary management processes. This broadened perspective supports prior research on role segmentation and integration of work–family roles as well as recent research on process approaches to organizing. The project also adds understanding of how a third role, volunteering, complicates and alters boundary management communication processes to sometimes include a collapsing of roles.

The first major contribution of the current project stems from its inclusion of the volunteer role. Not only did the findings extend the number of boundaries and roles under exploration, but the findings challenge the segmentation/integration dualism. In Nippert-Eng's (1996) boundary management theorizing, all forms of boundary management that are not considered segmentation fall under the general umbrella of integration. However,

the completely overlapped roles, as discussed in the current study, have more than a permeable boundary that individuals cross. In some instances, instead of crossing the boundary, the individual is removing the boundaries between roles both physically and in their talk, enacting both roles at once, referred to as boundary collapsing. With role integration, a transition in space or time between roles is still present, whereas with role collapsing there is no perceived transition between roles. Instead, both roles are enacted as present in the same time and space. Nippert-Eng (1996) believed these actions to be a theoretical, unachievable, ideal. Our findings suggest that the previous lack of empirical identification of this work–life management style might be due in part to only studying work and relational roles. When accounting for the volunteer role, a role that shares similarities with both work and relational roles, the ability to collapse boundaries and simultaneously enact both roles becomes a reality. The current results suggest that fundamentally, integration and boundary collapsing are worthy of future research as two distinct concepts that may be associated with distinct outcomes.

Although collapsed boundaries may create perceived efficiency and opportunities for relational growth and adoption of others' values, the results also highlight some challenges with this type of boundary management. Kelly's discussion of her difficulty in escaping her paid work, since its boundaries with her close relationships and volunteer work were frequently collapsed, is indicative of these potential downsides. For those who volunteer with their relational partner, unless the couple is able to segment the source of tension, volunteer work fights can easily be carried over into one's home roles or vice versa. Collapsed boundaries also potentially challenge perspectives that suggest that volunteering builds social capital through the broadening of weak social ties (e.g. McAllum, 2014; Putnam, 2000) since this study has found volunteers may be narrowing their range of social ties to a core group of people across roles. Also, reflecting Deetz's (1992) concerns about the corporate colonization of family, the home space can become a place for work, eliminating places for personal restoration and relaxation.

Another contribution of this study comes from the collapsing sub-process of role value fusion. Participants sometimes engaged in role collapsing by fusing the value foundations upon which once-distinct roles were built. This process of role value fusion aligns with research on boundaryless careers in that the person identifies more with personal commitments than the employer (Tams and Arthur, 2010). Role value fusion collapsing occurred when individuals used more than one role to pursue certain social justice values. The impetus for the collapsed boundary was a desire to promote or work on behalf of a particular cause; hence allowing the individual to advocate and be a voice for a cause in both the volunteer and work organization. For example, individuals who are passionate about LGBTQ issues may volunteer and do paid work for organizations that work for LGBTQ rights. This study's examples of role value fusion all came from individuals engaging in paid work in nonprofit organizations. Although participants in this study did not discuss value fusion in for-profit settings, Mize Smith and Sypher's (2010) research on philanthropy within a corporate financial institution found that through organizational leaders' messages promoting philanthropic giving and leaders embodying philanthropic behavior and volunteering, organizational leaders were able to introduce philanthropic values into the company culture, inviting research on how employees create and/or resist this fusion within their own work role.

Future scholarship may also investigate the ways employees negotiate organizational leaders' attempts at forcing incompatible values and volunteering via segmentation, integration and boundary collapsing.

The third main contribution from this study is how the study's communicative focus on process challenges and expands existing static and material-centric research about the relationship between role variables. Previous boundary research typically used self-report measures asking how often participants engaged in integration behaviors (e.g. Bulger et al., 2007). Although such questions measure one's boundary usage at a given point in time, the measurement does not account for the history and experiences that (re) create the boundary management choices, nor does it reveal how individuals may socially construct the boundary in distinct ways in different moments. Our project findings demonstrate how the previously theorized material boundary management processes are also tied into individual agentic choices that are experienced and expressed communicatively. Extending Hernes' (2008) process approach to boundary management, boundary management is seen as an ongoing process of managing and being constrained and enabled by both social and material elements. The findings suggest that boundary management involves connection and sometimes tension between individual agency and outside physical constraints more closely associated with organizational-level interests. Future research should focus more on the intersections of discursive and material realities in boundary management. Segmentation, integration and collapsing represent behaviors and decisions emerging in moments when engaging in various roles and responding to different organizational environments.

Indeed, the current findings show that how individuals communicatively manage these boundaries shifts from moment to moment. Researchers may be interested in exploring the differences in role management outcomes among those who segment, those who integrate, and those who collapse role boundaries. However, this project challenges such research to account for how the same individual may switch among management processes across contexts and moments. Thus, on the one hand, the project encourages future work–life management research to create measures for and determine interactions with boundary collapsing and other management variables, but on the other hand the findings highlight serious challenges to quantifying any one individual as a segmentor, integrator, or collapser. In particular, examples such as Susan's demonstrate the challenges of making such assumptions about an individual's role management preferences.

This shifting nature of the volunteer boundary management phenomenon also has implications for identity, identification and organizational membership research. Consideration of the experience and intersections of volunteer, work and other social category identities is gaining attention in the field (e.g. McAllum, 2014; Scott and Stephens, 2009). For example, Meisenbach and Kramer (2014) noted how various identifications associated with voluntary membership in a community choir were communicated as intertwined or nested by choir members. They found members described their membership decisions as tied to perceived congruence between nested layers of identification with the choir, music and families. However, participants did not view their choir membership as part of a volunteer identity. The current findings demonstrate how members who do view their voluntary membership as volunteering seek to intertwine those memberships and identities. Theoretically, these findings also suggest a need to consider

how theorizing on nested identities (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001) relates to boundary management research. Specifically, future research could consider how such nested or cross-cutting identifications are boundaried and are related to membership decisions for different types of organizations.

Additionally, although this study provided evidence of role collapsing between the relational and volunteer roles and between the work and volunteer roles, further research is necessary to fully understand the various processes and historical, situational context of boundary collapsing. The type of volunteering involved in the current study, where collapsing occurred, was primarily activist volunteer work, one of three types of volunteer work. Further, consideration of how boundary management processes work in leisure and interest volunteering is warranted. Future researchers may also consider other instances of role collapsing, including work-mandated community service and the work-relational other boundary. Finally, since this study sought to understand the communicative nature of boundary management, future scholarship is needed to understand how one experiences and communicatively manages pressure to or personal desire to (re)segment a collapsed boundary.

Practical implications and conclusions

The overall focus of this study was to explore how participants communicatively manage role interfaces involving the volunteer role. Individuals (re)create, collapse and describe boundaries that allow certain role interactions to occur, and these boundaries also influenced how individuals communicated when enacting roles. The findings from this study indicated that individuals articulate a wide variety of interface management practices, including a new form (boundary collapsing) that has not been explored previously.

Not only do these findings expand the theoretical knowledge-base of role management, but the findings also present some practical implications for nonprofit volunteer managers, corporate managers and individuals regarding membership decisions. It has been speculated that the decline or lack of volunteering among some cohorts may be attributed to difficulties experienced when managing multiple and sometimes increasing role demands (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2006). Permeable or collapsed boundaries provide additional opportunities to engage in more roles when time is a limited resource. For individuals who find themselves in leadership or administrative volunteer positions, certain organizational structures, such as flexible work schedules or permeable work boundaries, grant individuals the tools to create the flexible boundaries they may need to conduct volunteer-related errands during the regular workday. By fostering employee agency to accomplish outside role tasks while at work, employers reduce some of the tensions associated with multiple role engagement. Employees' involvement in additional positive roles in turn may benefit the employer in the form of positive emotional or skill spillover, which is also associated with employee well-being (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Yet, managers and organizational members should remain tuned to the potential for tensions and colonization of multiple roles by a dominant role.

While these findings tend to focus on how the individual creates and manages role boundaries, managers may use this information to adapt volunteer recruitment strategies. Particularly, volunteer managers may consider altering the types of opportunities available for those wishing to volunteer. Role collapsing between the relational and volunteer

role was one of the ways individuals were able to manage the time constraints associated with being involved in multiple roles. Typically, bulletins that advertise volunteer opportunities tend to focus on what the individual can accomplish for the organization. By altering some of these advertisements to include familial or relational volunteer opportunities, the organization may signal to others that these two roles do not always have to remain separate. These volunteer opportunities may even encompass tasks that are child-friendly, thus, giving parents an opportunity to socialize their children into the volunteer role and other benevolent values.

This study expands and alters role management scholarship by addressing how individuals deconstruct and create boundaries among work, personal and volunteer roles. Individuals constantly (re)negotiate and (re)implement boundaries via levels of: segregation, integration and collapsing. Many questions and issues remain for future scholarship to consider. For example, this project still has not addressed Kirby et al.'s (2003) critique that work–life research should address the gendered nature of boundary management practices. Furthermore, the current study only approached boundary management from the perspective of the individual. However, individuals have their own boundary management processes and preferences that may conflict with other individuals' and organizations' processes. A dualistic process perspective will look beyond the individual to focus on how organizations or couples work to communicate and (re)define the boundaries each person uses singularly and collectively. The co-construction of these boundaries with co-workers and loved ones and the potential establishment of rules for when to use which strategy warrants future scholarly attention. We have here established that individuals do articulate multiple distinct role management strategies. Understanding what brings about a transition between role strategies could be a particularly useful next step.

Future research should also investigate additional roles beyond the volunteer role. These roles include health/fitness, education and various leisure roles. Overall, exploration into additional roles may yield further understanding of the processes individuals and organizations use to manage multiple roles in contemporary society.

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