

The use of mobile technologies for work-to-family boundary permeability: The case of Finnish and Canadian male lawyers

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Abstract

This article explores work–family interface and the use of mobile technologies (MTs) among male lawyers in Quebec (French Canada) and Finland – two civil law contexts with reputations for legislation friendly toward work–family balance. Drawing on 34 interviews with male lawyers and combining two theoretical lenses, shifting ideals of fatherhood and work–family boundary theory, our study shows how men's preferences for work–family boundary management relate to diversifying models of fatherhood and family. In Finland, male lawyers more readily embrace family responsibilities and they strive to set firm boundaries to curtail work spilling over into family life. Yet, the cultural and professional norm of men as breadwinners remains strong, especially for Canadian male lawyers whose spouses more often assume primary responsibility for childcare. Our study offers qualitative markers of boundary management styles and strategies (spatial, temporal, and psychological) of male professionals – as struggling segmentors, struggling integrators, and integrators. We observe that senior male lawyers, living in more traditional family models, frequently model integrating behaviours, such as around-the-clock availability via MTs. This modeling establishes expectations of what represents a committed professional worthy of promotion. These practices play an

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important role in sustaining and reproducing gender inequalities in organisations that employ professionals.

Keywords

boundary control strategies, boundary management, fatherhood, gender inequalities, male lawyers, mobile technologies, private law practice, work–family boundary permeability

Mobile technologies (MTs), including smartphones, laptops and tablets, enable contemporary professionals to break away from an absolute boundary between work and personal life. These technologies facilitate blurring of boundaries between work and nonwork spheres (MacCormick et al., 2012; Schieman and Glavin, 2016) and work extension (Mullan and Wajcman, 2017). MTs also exert subtle control over professionals' work behaviours. This control is not limited to the time professionals spend in their offices, but it extends to private lives through pressure for constant connectivity (Wajcman and Rose, 2011). In particular, high-status professionals, such as lawyers, are prone to work-identity spillover to private life as a result of a client-demanding culture (Thornton, 2016a) and as a trade-off for flexibility in managing work during and outside regular nine to five office hours (Schieman et al., 2009).

Law is a profession that has rapidly embraced the use of MTs to facilitate communication among lawyers within firms as well as between lawyers and their clients. Lawyers experience a hyper-competitive work culture that encourages work demands to interrupt personal time. Lawyers working in private law firms are expected to work especially long hours (Hagan and Kay, 2010) in order to meet the demands of employers and clients (Sommerlad, 2016). MTs facilitate the expectation of lawyers' around-the-clock availability to clients, colleagues, and employers (Thornton, 2016b). But there is also the possibility that work-related MT use helps lawyers to fulfill their responsibilities from work and family simultaneously (Allen and Shockley, 2009) and increase boundary control (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012; Kossek et al., 2012; Perlow, 1998), reducing work–family conflict and enhancing family role performance (Derks et al., 2016).

This paper explores male lawyers' use of MTs for work–family interface across organisational positions and national contexts through analysis of 34 interviews with Finnish and Canadian male lawyers. The study draws on two theoretical lenses, changing ideals of fatherhood (Humberd et al., 2015; Ranson, 2001; Reid, 2018) and work–family boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Kossek, 2016; Perlow, 1998), to advance work on national differences in men's use MTs for work–family interface and the strategies adopted to navigate competing demands of work and modern fatherhood. The issue of work–life interface is especially important for men in civil law jurisdictions where legislation actively encourages men to take up greater involvement in family life – for example, through paternity and parental leave policies as we see in Finland and Quebec, Canada. Although a norm of traditional breadwinning masculinity lingers in the legal profession in both countries, male lawyers vary in their desire to engage in family

life – and increasingly some seek careers that accommodate new forms of fatherhood (Collier, 2013).

This study advances research on work–life boundary management in four important ways. First, it extends prior research (Humberd et al., 2015; Ladge et al., 2015) by shedding light on the undertheorised coupling between shifting cultural ideals of fatherhood and male professionals' enacted career and family involvements. We offer a cross-national comparative analysis of similarly situated men to reveal differences in how men traverse competing realms of modern fatherhood and demanding professional careers. Second, this study contributes to the literature on MTs and work–family conflict (Derks et al., 2016; Mullan and Wajcman, 2017) by classifying male lawyers across an integration-segmentation continuum and specifying qualitative markers of boundary management styles that often harness MTs. Third, this study offers a more sociological account of boundary control by identifying, within contrasting national contexts, creative strategies, often involving social relationships, that male lawyers develop and deploy in their efforts to protect family time and increase boundary control. This undertaking responds to calls from researchers for improved theory to advance understanding of how individuals enact work–family boundaries in their employment settings (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012; Perlow, 1998) and with the use of MTs (Derks et al., 2016). Much of the prior research is quantitative and informed by a psychological approach focused on identity centrality (Kossek et al., 2012) and psychological trade-offs in balancing work-nonwork responsibilities (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). Finally, this study advances our understanding of the role of MTs in sustaining and reproducing inequalities embedded in the organisation of work in high-status professions such as law.

Family policies and the private practice of law in Finland and Quebec

Family policies in Finland and Quebec include paternity leave that is non-transferable to mothers. Paternity leave has existed in Finland since 1978 and as of 2013 this leave has been set at nine weeks paid at 70–75% (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014). Fathers can take up to three weeks of leave after the birth of a child while their spouse is on maternity leave and the remaining weeks can be used after maternity leave ends and before the child is two years old. However, studies show that only about one-third of Finnish fathers take the part of paternity leave during which they carry primary childcare responsibility (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014). In Quebec, paternity leave, included in 2006 under the *Parental Insurance Plan*, offers two plans: basic and special. Fathers can take three or five weeks of leave – either for three weeks at 75% of weekly earnings (special plan) or five weeks at 70% (basic plan). In addition, parental leaves of 26 weeks in Finland and 35 weeks in Quebec can be shared among spouses. Studies show that these leaves continue to be taken mostly by mothers in both countries (Karu and Tremblay, 2017; Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014).

In Finland, paternity leaves and political discourses of gender-equal childcare sharing are particularly strong (Eerola, 2014; Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014). In addition to paternity leave, some organisations in Finland provide their employees with the

flexibility to seek work arrangements that allow them to better reconcile professional and care responsibilities (Choroszewicz, 2016) and this is less common in Canada (see Kay et al., 2013). Although, the narrative of involved and nurturing fatherhood is strong in Finland, this narrative also co-exists with other more traditional models of fatherhood (Eerola, 2014). Therefore, even in Nordic countries where parenthood is politicised to facilitate fathers' greater engagement in childcare, organisational expectations about the division of childcare and paid work between spouses may still assume gendered patterns of responsibility, with fathers as main financial providers and mothers as primary caregivers of children (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014).

The diversifying ideals of fatherhood are likely greatest among male professionals who face social pressure to take on more childcare responsibilities, especially in countries with non-transferable parental leave for fathers (Eydal and Rostgaard, 2014). Yet, studies suggest that even when government-mandated parental leave policies explicitly include fathers' right to both paternity and parental leave, as is the case in Finland and Quebec, there are cultural and professional barriers to male lawyers taking these leaves (Choroszewicz and Tremblay, 2018). There is some evidence that younger men are more interested to take paternity and parental leaves, however, the consequences of doing so include delayed or derailed career progress (Choroszewicz and Tremblay, 2018; Tremblay, 2013).

Despite men's diverse ideas and practices surrounding fathers' childcare responsibilities (Collier, 2013), law firms remain traditionally male-dominated work environments in which it is a woman's issue to juggle work and family (Sterling and Reichman, 2016). Law firms encourage *gendered* patterns of work–family boundary permeability by promoting parental leave and flexible work arrangements predominantly to women (Choroszewicz, 2016; Tremblay, 2013). Moreover, these arrangements continue to be understood as women-only career options (Thornton, 2016a) and these options often direct women to 'off ramps' from career advancement (Kay and Gorman, 2008). These arrangements also fail to challenge male advantage embedded in a traditional career model that rests on breadwinning fatherhood, linear and uninterrupted career progress, and long work hours (Sterling and Reichman, 2016).

Nonetheless, the existence of legislation creates opportunities for change in gender relations both in family life and in workplaces (Burnett et al., 2013; Maume, 2016). This potential for change is relevant to law firms that continue to be important sites of prestigious career opportunities (Faulconbridge and Muzio, 2008). To the extent that the law firm leadership and organisational culture support the use of governmental provisions, leave options will be inviting to men. Otherwise, these options are destined to remain underutilised (Tomlinson et al., 2018).

Theoretical foundations

Our study builds from two broad domains of literature. First, we build from existing work on shifting ideals of fatherhood to unpack how national policies and organisational mandates shape the practices of fathers in a high-status profession. Then, we draw on work–family boundary theory to consider how, given shifting expectations, men utilise MTs to negotiate demands of professional work and fatherhood.

Men, professional careers and fatherhood

Expectations of fathering have shifted profoundly in recent years (Burnett et al., 2013; Ladge et al., 2015). The contemporary ideal of fatherhood views fathers as role models to their children and co-parents who spend substantial time with their children, provide emotional support to them, and take on an equal share of household tasks (Burnett et al., 2013). These expectations challenge traditional images of 'good' fathers as primarily financial providers who are removed from day-to-day family responsibilities (Ladge et al., 2015).

Families are also changing in ways that prevent men from taking on traditional roles as typical breadwinners, even for men working in managerial or professional jobs. Increasingly, wives work outside the home, often on a full-time basis, even after having children (Reid, 2018). The rise of dual career couples challenges traditional gender-role divisions of labour (Minnotte and Minnotte, 2018). There is also growing evidence of men's desires to be more involved with their families, especially in countries where legislation and institutions enable it (Eydal and Rostgaard, 2014). It appears that the male breadwinner/female-homemaker family structure is fading in many western countries (Reid, 2018).

Although there is widespread agreement over the emergence of a new cultural ideal of fatherhood and changes to families themselves, there is also considerable debate over the extent to which an ideological shift takes place in practice for working fathers today. Fathers have increased their involvement in family life (Burnett et al., 2013; Ylikännö et al., 2014), however, for example in Finland and Quebec, fathers mostly take a leave at their child's birth, but do not take the second part of the parental leave that enables them to care for the child after their wife returns to work (Karu and Tremblay, 2017). The patterns among fathers in high-status professions are even less optimistic (Choroszewicz and Tremblay, 2018; Ladge et al., 2015; Tremblay, 2013). Even when policies to encourage fathers' participation in family life exist, many organisations have been resistant or slow to adapt to changing societal norms related to fatherhood (Burnett et al., 2013; Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014). A lack of flexible schedules and leave options limits men's opportunities to embrace involved fatherhood (Humberd et al., 2015), causing men to feel constrained in their ability to participate fully in family life (Kanji and Samuel, 2017).

Furthermore, traditional notions of fatherhood persist because organisations continue to expect ideal workers to be those unencumbered by obligations outside the workplace (Ladge et al., 2015). Men's increased involvement in childrearing is at odds with the notion of the 'ideal worker' – as one 'whose life centers on his full-time life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and children' (Acker, 1990: 149). Involved fatherhood is also at odds with societal definitions of manhood. The prevailing paradigm of masculinity views men who engage in 'feminine tasks' of house-cleaning, care of babies and nurturing young children as unconventional and therefore targets of stigma at work (Connell, 2005). A cultural assumption persists that the family breadwinner is typically a man whose primary devotion is to his work and that he is supported by a homemaker wife, or at minimum a spouse who works part-time in a less demanding job and that has flexibility to accommodate childcare responsibilities

(Reid, 2018). This assumption is especially aligned with men working in male-dominated professions (Williams et al., 2013). Gendered career patterns endure among professionals where a silent expectation of continuous careers for men and flexible careers for women prevails (McDonald, 2018). Thus, actual enactment of family involvement – the contemporary ideal of modern fatherhood – appears incompatible with cultural expectations and organisational realities (Thebaud and Pedulla, 2016).

While research has traced an ideological shift in conceptions of fatherhood as well as explanations for the resilience of traditional notions of fatherhood, relatively little research has examined men's gendered *actual experiences* of work and family, especially of men in professions (e.g. Ladge et al., 2015; Ranson, 2001; Reid, 2018). The few studies that exist focus on two lines of research. The first line of research shows that fathers' greater family involvement is very much customised by workplace demands (Ranson, 2001). Fathers often compromise their desires for more involved parenting when these desires come into conflict with what is expected of men in their work environment (Ladge et al., 2015). The second line of research explores how fathers' identities take form. Some work shows fathers' identities are given proximal meaning through day-to-day work lives within organisations (Humberd et al., 2015). Other work reveals that married men construct their identities as spouses in relation to their wives' careers, which they use to either support personal claims on the traditional breadwinner identity or on a more egalitarian identity as 'breadsharer' (Reid, 2018).

We extend this body of research by examining how the broader political-legal context and organisational expectations shape fathers' experiences of work and family. While most studies draw on surveys from the general population, we focus on the experiences of highly educated professionals – lawyers. Such a focus is important because expectations of involved fatherhood are largely based on ideals for men as middle-class educated professionals (Humberd et al., 2015; Miller, 2010; Ranson, 2001). MTs are now integral to the work practices of professionals and therefore we are especially interested to explore the role MTs play in shaping how lawyers navigate organisational and clientele pressures to overlap work time with family time.

Next, we draw on work–family boundary theory to explore how, considering shifting ideals of fatherhood and resilient organisational norms, men in two national contexts use MTs to negotiate demands of professional work and fatherhood.

Work–family boundary theory

Work–family boundary (Ashforth et al., 2000) and border (Clark, 2000) theories examine interconnections between work and family. These theories draw our attention to different types of borders and strategies for crossing borders. Clark (2000: 756) outlines three types of borders: physical, temporal, and psychological. Physical borders refer to different spaces – for example, office and home – in which work and family roles take place. Temporal borders refer to the time when these roles take place and are demarcated by work hours, working days, weekends, and holidays. Psychological borders refer to the mental focus, emotions and attitudes that are perceived as appropriate for a particular domain – work or family. According to Clark (2000), people cross these boundaries daily, balancing between *domain integration* and *segmentation*. Integration strategies

encourage permeability of boundaries between domains, while segmentation strategies aim to sustain distinct realms of responsibility (Ashforth et al., 2000; Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015).

Boundary theory contends that individuals differ in how much permeability in boundaries they prefer. More importantly, the theory argues how spillover (e.g. from work or family life) is experienced depends on the person's preference for segmentation or integration of work and family domains (Derks et al., 2016; Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). Some people prefer their work and family domains be kept as separate as possible, whereas others prefer these domains be more integrated (Kossek and Lambert, 2005; Kossek et al., 2006; Nippert-Eng, 1996). The greater the contrast between work and family roles, the greater the challenges people face in making transitions between these roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Segmented boundaries require that roles are rigidly conducted at specific places and times. Boundaries are impermeable with few cross-role interruptions. In contrast, integrated boundaries allow considerable overlap and variability in timing and place of roles (Kossek et al., 2012). The challenge is to build a system of boundaries whose permeability matches one's personal preferences and needs (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). This boundary maintenance preference to either separate or integrate work and family roles is treated as a value on which individuals systematically differ (Kreiner et al., 2009).

Kossek and Lautsch (2012) argue that it is crucial to include cross-role interruptions to examine the issue of boundary control. Individuals may not always have control over their boundaries, which may result in greater work-life conflict compared with situations when individuals perceive greater control over job enactment (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). Organisations play a crucial role in building a climate that is accepting of different ways of boundaries management (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). Some organisations, such as private law firms where lawyers work, assume employees are willing and able to make work their priority over family (Perlow, 1998) and these organisations have little compunction about extracting long hours from their employees. Moreover, the global economy, in tandem with rapid changes in communication technology and their increasing use, especially among professionals, have demanded greater accessibility on the part of employees (Bittman et al., 2009; Kossek, 2016; Perlow, 2012). These changes have resulted in greater crossover between work and family lives (Schieman and Glavin, 2016).

In this study, we see segmenting and integrating activities not only as the result of individual preferences (Nippert-Eng, 1996), but also as developed and enacted in the context of professional careers and cultural differences in fatherhood models. Gender norms vary across cultures and Nordic countries have high gender egalitarianism (Russo et al., 2018). These cultural forces with ideas of involved fatherhood may encourage greater separation of work and family lives. Yet, tensions are likely to surface when individuals strive to create and maintain role boundaries while organisations aim to maximise work-to-family boundary permeability (at least from work to family time). In addition, professional workplaces also offer incentives to influence individual efforts to segment or integrate activities. Our study aims to capture the ways in which men use MTs in their negotiation of work-family interface and efforts to control work spillover to the family domain. We draw on Kossek and Lautsch's (2012: 161) definition of individual

boundary control that specifies: ‘the degree to which an individual perceives s/he is in control of how s/he manages the boundaries between work and family life’. We focus on men’s control over three forms of boundary permeability in their use of MTs for work–family interface:

- *Spatial permeability* is the blurring of spaces reserved for work and family activities. In our data, we coded physical locations of work. For example, some lawyers set up home offices and routinely conducted remote work (not at law office).
- *Temporal permeability* is the blurring of the division between working hours and family time. We coded examples such as checking email while at home or at children’s sporting events and music rehearsals and taking phone calls from clients during weekends and holidays.
- *Psychological permeability* is the blurring of thinking and emotional patterns associated with work and family life. We coded examples such as thinking about cases when away from the law office versus actively seeking to not think about work when engaged in family events. Other examples include carrying emotional stress from work into family life and agitating over work matters while at home.

Although some studies point to the role of organisational leaders in disrupting gendered norms and expectations at work (Connell, 2006; Maume, 2016), the broader issue of role modeling has been ignored largely in studies of MT usage in work–family boundary management. To the extent that lawyers in positions of authority (e.g. partners in law firms) model distinctive patterns of MT usage with reference to work–family boundary permeability, this modeling is likely to influence organisational culture and expectations of an ‘invisibility of fatherhood’ among junior employees (Burnett et al., 2013: 632). We explore this possibility. There is also a positive side to MT usage. Professionals who incorporate work-related smartphone usage during off-the-job time incur benefits to their family role performance (Derks et al., 2016). Building on this work, we argue that consulting MTs for work-related correspondence during off-job time implies a quick switch in roles. This switch is minimally invasive and often effectual for men in traditional family models where spouses carry primary responsibility for childcare and family life.

Data and methods

The study uses a sample of male lawyers from private law practice in Helsinki, Finland ($n = 20$) and Montreal, Quebec, Canada ($n = 14$). In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted during the period of August to December 2016 and focused on male lawyers’ experiences of work–family interface. The recruitment of interviewees took place through three strategies: (1) a call for volunteers by the Finnish Bar Association and the Quebec Bar issued to their members; (2) direct emails with information about the study sent to male lawyers from the largest law firms in Helsinki and Montreal; and (3) snowball sampling techniques initiated in both cities. Interviews were scheduled by email and telephone. Most interviews were digitally recorded. However, for two interviews notes were taken using a laptop computer because interviewees did not consent to recording. Interviews lasted from 40 minutes to two hours, with the average interview

lasting 90 minutes. Most interviews were conducted at lawyers' offices, although two took place in coffee shops and two by telephone. All interviews were transcribed verbatim to facilitate analysis.

The men in our sample – middle-class, well-educated professionals – are employed in organisational settings where conflicting values of parenthood and business are most acute. The interviewees ranged in age from 32 to 68 years. All interviewees were either married or cohabiting. The majority, 21 of 34 interviewees (60%), were law firm partners. Most of these lawyers (27) worked in mid-size (11 to 100 lawyers) or large law firms (more than 100 lawyers). Appendix 1 provides a description of the sample.

Our data analysis focused on understanding the ways in which male lawyers use MTs for work–family interface. We relied on the portion of the interviews that dealt with changes in the profession, parental responsibilities, technological advancements, and aspects of work and family life. We analysed these data by searching for themes, using an inductive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and paid close attention to the micro-dynamics of lawyers' everyday work and life as recounted by interviewees.

Data analysis proceeded in three stages. The first stage aimed at familiarisation with the data as well as identification of passages of each interview, which were related to the practices, attitudes and strategies regarding the use of MTs for work, family life, and work–family interface. This stage resulted in a brief outline of each interviewee's narrative. The second stage included thematic coding of each lawyer's narrative in relation to spatial, temporal and psychological aspects of work–family boundary theory. The connections between boundary efforts and men's attitudes toward parental leaves, ideals of fatherhood and professionalism were also examined. This analysis uncovered three styles of boundary management that led to the categorisation of interviewees as *struggling segmentors* ($n = 8$), *struggling integrators* ($n = 17$) and *integrators* ($n = 9$). There were no complete segmentors in our sample. Next, we examined the interviewees' narratives in terms of the strategies they use to navigate work and family life. This analysis revealed 15 strategies. In the third stage, we examined national contours shaping boundary permeability among men, with attention to: (1) understandings of work–life boundaries; (2) ideals of fatherhood and involvement in family life; and (3) behavioural tactics to fortify or span boundaries. Further, initial codes were revisited in several rotations to confirm emerging patterns across national contexts along an integration-segmentation continuum (Clark, 2000). Our analytic process involved a constant comparative approach (Locke 2001), by iterating between interview data, prior research, and our own emergent theoretical ideas.

Results

Lawyers across the integration-segmentation continuum

We evaluated interviewees' positioning along the integration-segmentation continuum on the basis of three criteria: (1) their attitude to and use of parental leaves, (2) their ideas and practices surrounding fatherhood, and (3) gender roles within their family life.

Struggling segmentors were typically fathers of newborns and pre-school age children. One interviewee was planning to become a father. They were also involved in

family models with more fluid gender roles: they all used some part of paternity (and possibly parental) leave and they participated in childcare on everyday basis. Their narratives were marked by experiences of greater social opportunities and pressure to participate in childcare and family life owing to changed family policies.

Struggling integrators were located in diverse professional and family situations: some had teenage children, some had school-age children, and some had both school-age and younger children. They were also in senior and demanding professional positions. Their narratives were marked by contradictory views regarding their roles as fathers. On the one hand, they did not feel they needed to take paternity leave following childbirth or adoption. On the other hand, these lawyers emphasised their role as fathers actively involved in their children's upbringing. They were continuously negotiating the division of gender roles within the family together with their spouses. Yet, their spouses, even while also having demanding careers, still managed the bulk of housework and childcare responsibilities.

The *integrators* in our study had young adult children and more time to devote to career beyond regular work hours. They were rather absent from family life and focused on advancing their career while their wives took up primary roles as caregivers. Integrators' wives, if they worked at all, typically took longer parental leaves than did the wives of either struggling segmentors or struggling integrators.

Boundary management strategies across national contexts

All interviewees reported that the availability of MTs have facilitated the blurring of spaces, time and roles reserved for work and family domains (Perlow, 2012). They argued that this blurring resulted from the intensification of communication between lawyers and their clients. E-mailing, messaging and replying to phone calls appeared as widely institutionalised labour processes within legal work that contributed to fragmented work time and unpredictable hours. At the same time, these communication tools were deemed essential to client recruitment and quality legal service. Interviewees' engagement with MTs appeared to be largely reactive and these interruptions easily extended their work into evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays (Thornton, 2016b). These new labour processes also generated interruptions for lawyers' work at the office and empowered clients to leverage control over lawyers' work routines and priorities. Yet, while the informal professional norm of work-to-family boundary permeability appeared abundantly clear to all interviewees, interviewees categorised as *struggling segmentors*, *struggling integrators* and *integrators* engaged in different ways with spatial, temporal and psychological dimensions of work-to-family boundary permeability (see Table 1). Below we discuss interviewees' boundary management profiles and strategies within the wider national contexts of changing models of fatherhood and gender relations in family life.

Spatial boundary permeability and physical strategies. *Struggling segmentors*, as fathers of newborns and pre-school age children, argued that in order to fulfill their nurturing roles as fathers, they needed to maintain a physical separation between work and family domains. This also helped them not to think about work when they were with their

Table 1. Strategies of MTs use within work-to-family boundary permeability.

	Struggling segmentors	Struggling integrators	Integrators
Characteristics	Junior lawyers with growing families. They experience increased social pressure to be nurturing fathers.	Business owners or lawyers in senior positions in their firms. They navigate between maintaining their professional positions and fulfilling their fathering roles.	Business owners or lawyers in senior positions in mid-size and large firms. They treat law as a career and all-consuming lifestyle.
Children and family models	Newborn and pre-school age children, spouses with professional careers, progressive gender roles in family life, especially in Finland.	Children of diverse ages from newborn to young adults. Spouses with professional careers. They continuously negotiate gender roles in family life.	Teenage and adult children. Traditional family models with a clear division of gender roles. Spouses, if employed, stayed longer on parental and childcare leaves.
Fatherhood models	Nurturing and upbringing father as dominant. Men take some part of parental leave and share childcare.	Breadwinning and upbringing fathers. They do not take parental leaves, but they are actively involved in their pre-school and school-age children's upbringing.	Breadwinning fathers with engagement in aspects of children's upbringing. Paternity leave did not exist then or if existed, was not socially accepted.
Boundaries	<p><i>Spatial:</i> Try to perform work- and family-related activities in separate spaces. Finnish interviewees have more possibilities for remote work.</p> <p><i>Temporal:</i> Refrain from engaging in family activities during work time and vice versa.</p> <p><i>Psychological:</i> Try to preserve role boundaries between work and family life through self-imposed rules on use of MTs. Lawyers face challenges to not think about work when engaging in family activities – in particular, Finnish interviewees who carry more childcare responsibilities.</p>	<p><i>Spatial:</i> No physical boundaries between work and family. Lawyers work long hours at the office and work from home. Canadian interviewees are more skeptical about remote work and flexible work arrangements.</p> <p><i>Temporal:</i> Keep in touch with children during work hours and engage in work during family time.</p> <p><i>Psychological:</i> Boundaries between work and family are porous. Clients and files are often on lawyer's mind while at home.</p>	<p><i>Temporal:</i> Try to put some limits on 24/7 availability to clients via self-imposed rules on use of MTs.</p> <p><i>Psychological:</i> Role boundaries are fluid. Transitions from work-to-family spheres frequent and facilitated by wives who carry the bulk of responsibility for childcare. Lawyers able to invest considerable mental energy on work during evenings and weekends.</p>
Physical strategies Examples	Adapting or dismantling physical border between work and home (e.g., limit or facilitate work from home, set up home office). Manage physical artifacts such as phone, laptop computer, i-pad and email to separate or blend aspects of each domain. Limiting work from home.	Working a lot from home; creating office space at home; carrying work and private phones, laptop computers and i-pads; travel abroad for holidays where they can be less available through MTs.	

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

	Struggling segmentors	Struggling integrators	Integrators
Psychological strategies <i>Examples</i>	<p>Prioritising urgent work for response from home (e.g., selective responsiveness to work-related emails and phone calls); using family activities to create mental border between work and family; role modeling for themselves and other lawyers.</p> <p>Selective responsiveness to work-related emails and phone calls.</p> <p>Engaging in games with their children.</p> <p>Listening to music on their way to home.</p> <p>Not sharing personal mobile phone numbers with colleagues and clients.</p>	<p>Selective responsiveness to work-related emails and phone calls.</p> <p>Selective responsiveness to work-related emails and phones calls while engaging in leisure and family activities.</p> <p>Raising threshold for contact though phone by colleagues or clients during holidays.</p> <p>Sharing personal mobile phone numbers with colleagues and clients.</p>	
Temporal strategies <i>Examples</i>	<p>Bicycling to and from work.</p> <p>Controlling availability to work when at home or on holidays (e.g., deciding when to engage with work-related messages, emails, calls).</p> <p>Switching off work mobile phones or keeping them out of sight when at home.</p> <p>Avoiding reading emails when at home.</p>	<p>Work from home when children are asleep (early mornings and late evenings).</p>	
Benefits/Costs of MTs for work-life interface	<p>Mostly costs: Risk to career progress, doubts raised about their work commitment. Family and private plans can be disrupted by availability to work through MTs.</p>	<p>Being with their family while being available through MTs for work activities if needed.</p> <p>Mostly benefits: MTs provide more flexibility to be physically with family but also constantly available to work, good career prospects, competitive advantage.</p>	<p>Mostly benefits: MTs assist them in enabling consuming careers.</p>

families. This pattern was particularly strong for Finnish interviewees, who compared to their Canadian counterparts, were more involved in childcare right from the children's birth. They claimed that the ability to detach oneself from thinking about work while home increased in importance after they became fathers:

I never work at home. I sometimes check my emails on my mobile phone, or something like that, but I don't work at home. I can't concentrate on work when I am at home. I have to come to a specific physical place like my office here. My day rhythm has changed a lot after I had children. Now I start working earlier and I end earlier. I am nowadays more tired in the evening. (. . .) I do my work in a way that I come here to a physical place where I do my work so it's also like a barrier I make between my home and family life and my work. Then when I walk out of here, then I can start thinking other things like my family. (F7)

On occasions of greater workload, in both countries, *struggling segmentors* preferred to stay longer at the office than to bring work home. When urgent cases demanded from them extended work hours during weekend, *struggling segmentors* often preferred to travel to the office in order to get work done. This preference was tied to the fact that at home these lawyers had small children and many did not have dedicated home office space:

It doesn't happen every week, but it has happened that I woke up on a Sunday morning, looked at my emails and said sorry I gotta go to the office all day. (C12)

When it's really busy at work I usually agree with my wife that I stay longer at the office one or two nights and not come home to help her to put the kids to bed. It is also easier for me, because I don't have to sort of feel guilty about it. (F20)

Only a few Finnish *struggling segmentors* confessed to working from home and when they did so, this work was done as a substitute for office hours rather than as an extension of office-based work – which was more typically the case for older colleagues in both countries. Finnish interviewees felt particularly comfortable with remote work and this is an integral element of Finnish equality policies (see Plantenga and Remery, 2010). Flexible work arrangements, including remote and part-time work, are popular in some Finnish law firms (see Choroszewicz, 2016), but they are still relatively new in the North American context (Menzies, 2017).

In comparison to *struggling segmentors*, *struggling integrators* and *integrators* used MTs to dismantle physical borders between work and family domains. The use of MTs provided them with more opportunities to be physically at home and spent time with their families (Derks et al., 2016) and experience some sense of control over their non-work-work boundary (Kossek et al., 2012). They perceived and treated MTs as solutions to the professional requirement of being 'on call' – an integral feature of what they understood it meant to be a responsible lawyer. They also perceived spatial boundary permeability as a way to reconcile competing demands of legal work and family care responsibilities:

We also can work, nowadays of course, remotely so, if you are in a busy situation, your kid is sick, and you still want to be there, at least in some cases it is possible to do at least some work from home. (F10)

Interestingly, the majority of interviewees who argued that it is possible to work from home while taking care of sick children in fact had spouses who acted as primary caregivers in these situations. Although *struggling integrators* and *integrators* rarely used the opportunity for telework as an alternative to office hours, they recommended it as a desirable work arrangement to their colleagues (see Perlow, 1998). Therefore, they advocated for the use of MTs as a means to enable telework in circumstances that previously would have prevented lawyers from performing legal tasks – for example, in situations such as taking care of sick children or being on parental leave or sick leave.

While Finnish *struggling integrators* and *integrators* were extremely supportive of flexible work arrangements owing to MTs, Canadian interviewees were more skeptical about the ability to telework or to work part-time:

I am not really convinced about how as a lawyer you can work part-time, because the files need your full attention. It is not really possible here to say that ‘I am working on it today and tomorrow and then I will keep Thursday and Friday off.’ Maybe remote work is easier to implement here, but it can also be less efficient for some to work from home. Flexible work arrangements we already have, you can choose the time of day to work. The only problem here is that there is so much work that you feel like you need to work all the time. (C13)

Meanwhile, Finnish *struggling integrators* observed that even though family life continues to be invisible in their workplaces, they felt there is some social acceptance to leave work early owing to childcare responsibilities:

Family life it’s not visible. And it’s not something you would talk about, although I have to say that here in Finland it’s easier to say ‘I’m sorry, I can’t do a call at 4:30 PM because I’ve gotta pick my kids up, can we move it to six?’ (F6)

Integrators tended to enable full work spillover to home life. This behaviour contrasted to that of *struggling segmentors* and *struggling integrators*. *Integrators* also had more time to dedicate to work owing to the fact most of them had children who were now teenagers or young adults. There were no notable differences between *integrators* in Finland and Canada. Typically, *integrators* did not face pressure to balance career and family demands, and therefore, they enjoyed a sense of boundary adaptability that accommodated their often-expansive work demands:

I don’t make any difference between office and home. [. . .] I work a lot at home. I always carry my computers with me. Because if I say I’m working regularly normal office hours, it means that, I keep contact with my clients and I have other things also which I do, nowadays after office hours. These I don’t count as working hours. They are more like legal hobbies. (F19)

Temporal boundary permeability and strategies. The interviewees navigated temporal boundary permeability through controlling availability to work when being at home or

on holidays. All interviewees admitted to experiencing a reduced ability to control temporal work extension to family life because of the professional expectation of being 'on call' via MTs. *Struggling segmentors* refrained from engaging in family activities during work time and work activities during family time. Finnish interviewees, in particular, argued that they work efficiently when at the office by limiting disruptions and breaks so that they can leave work on time and then focus attention on being with their families and fulfill their share of childcare responsibilities:

I still try to maximise the time I spend at home and that means I make a little bit more of an effort to organise my work more efficiently and also do it more efficiently. I don't take many long breaks during the day and I try to plan my work well so I can be with my family. (F20)

Furthermore, Finnish *struggling segmentors* also admitted to being strict with their self-imposed rules of not checking work phones and emails while at home. By contrast, Canadian interviewees revealed a more alternating style (see Kossek and Lautsch, 2012) whereby they tended to continue reading work-related emails even after they arrived at home for the evening. Interestingly, Canadian *struggling segmentors* did not consider this to be work, but rather 'keeping on top of things'. They were also acutely aware of an expectation that they should be 'on call' beyond regular work hours and workplaces and this expectation was clearly communicated to them by their superiors. Yet, as junior lawyers, they felt that they could only resist this professional norm to a certain extent by prioritising which work inquiries to respond to first:

With the iPhone it's hard to not be connected or attached to work. But if a client writes to me, after office hours, I usually don't answer because I don't want the clients to be accustomed to having an answer right away. If there's an emergency, I'll answer right away. If it isn't, I'll give the answer the next day. I think most partners here encourage the fact that they're always available for the clients. But when I get home, usually my phone stays in my jacket pocket, and it's turned off all the time because otherwise it's just too much management. (C12)

In contrast, *struggling integrators* and *integrators* in both countries experienced greater blurring between working hours and family time owing to their own willingness to draw extensively on MTs for work-related activities outside of work hours and their offices. Yet, *struggling integrators* particularly faced continuous negotiations to find and protect time to devote to their growing children. Although the demands of their advancing careers easily spilled over to the family sphere, MTs provided opportunities for a quick and relatively easy switch in roles enabling fathers to be involved in the upbringing of their children. This was especially salient in the case of Finnish *struggling integrators* who wanted to play a prominent role in the upbringing of their growing children. Some Finnish interviewees could better control their schedule in the morning compared with work schedules in the afternoons and evenings. Therefore, they elected to engage in work during early mornings when other family members were asleep:

Usually I wake up around 6 AM and I start working. I work for an hour or two, depending when the kids wake up or I wake them up [. . .]. I cherish those mornings when I take care of my boys. I like the mornings because I like to be there. It's not a burden. I really want to be there

for them. And it also gives me the flexibility that I don't need to watch my clock as by the time the boys wake up, I usually have managed to do some work. (F18)

In comparison, Canadian *struggling integrators* managed little time to see their children following long workdays during Monday to Friday. Therefore, it became crucial for them to set some self-imposed rules on availability via MTs during weekends. For example, some lawyers determined carefully which part of the weekend they devote to family life:

During the week, I'm not much at home. I leave early, I come back late. Usually, I can see my children early morning, a few minutes, maximum an hour, and I will see them at night occasionally because they go to sleep very early. So, I do not see them much, but during the weekend, I try not to work and be with the family. If I need to work, I will try to concentrate on work on Saturday morning or Sunday morning before our family day starts. (C10)

I will organise myself to work usually the Saturday so that I can be home with my family for the Sunday. (C13)

MTs enabled *struggling integrators* to be with their families during holidays while also available to clients and colleagues. Yet, Canadian interviewees tended to raise the threshold for what was deemed urgent enough that a colleague might interrupt their vacation with a work matter. These strategies were supplemented by informing clients and colleagues in advance about the upcoming holidays or leave of absence and setting email notifications:

During the summer holidays we typically make a trip abroad for a week. Then I try to communicate that during that week of the holiday I'm off. So, I have a much higher threshold to do anything there and I've communicated it. Sometimes I shut my phone off or put it on soundless and leave it in the hotel room and then I might say to my assistant that 'If it's urgent, here is my wife's phone number.' So, the threshold is very high for them to contact me through my wife. (C2)

When *struggling integrators* in both countries had extensive administrative roles in their organisations, they were not comfortable with the idea of being 'fully off'. Instead, they felt a greater sense of control when they could use MTs to monitor internal communications at the firm and to stay in touch with key clients:

I always have my mobile phone, I always look at my emails even during the holidays. It doesn't bother me that much. I'm more calm, for example, during the holidays when I know, how things are going rather than just opening the email after a couple of weeks and seeing that there are 1000 emails waiting and then trying to go those through and check what is the current status. (F15)

For *integrators* in both countries, the main challenge was to set limits on their availability to clients during nights, weekends, holidays and sports activities with children or other family members. Their strategies rested on self-imposed rules regarding MT usage:

I turn off my cell phone at around 11 PM and I don't leave it on during the night. I turn it back on in the morning but not during the night. Sometimes I'll tell clients I'm not available on Saturday. I'll leave the iPhone at home and I go cycling, for example, long distance with my son and so then I don't check the emails. (C9)

The dominant attitude among *struggling integrators* and *integrators* was that MTs provide lawyers with the flexibility to conduct legal work away from the office. They perceived MTs as a positive innovation, even while acknowledging that MT usage may lead to interruptions and stressors in family life (Barley et al., 2011). Yet, this flexibility came with an intensification of work activities and the assumption that lawyers must be adept at working at any time (Perlow, 2012). They also argued that while there is some flexibility to accommodate childcare responsibilities (specifically in Finland), but not other nonwork or leisure activities (e.g. sports, music, socials), in exchange they expected their subordinates to be available to them late into the evening:

I have to say that I'm a little bit disappointed if somebody says that 'I can't really do this today because I have floorball practice' or something like that. Because yeah, I mean, if you have kids, I understand you have to leave earlier. [. . .] That's totally 100 percent valid that you need to pick up your kids from daycare, unless you're closing a 100-million-euro deal and everybody else is prepared to be there the entire night. Then you can't do that. But in any normal situation, that's totally acceptable. [. . .] Of course, if there is really important work situation, then I would be disappointed if you would not offer to work perhaps later in the evening. (F18)

Struggling integrators and *integrators* also demanded of themselves that they make themselves available to attend to legal work at all hours during periods of deadlines and crises, and in so doing they modeled this behaviour for colleagues and subordinates as an obligation of committed lawyers. They expected that their junior colleagues will make similar family sacrifices when work demands require it.

Psychological boundary permeability and strategies. While all interviewees experienced a reduced ability to preserve role boundaries between work and family life because of the popularity of MTs, *struggling segmentors* were the most skeptical about positive impacts of MTs on work-life interface. They developed a number of strategies to help them to disconnect from work such as engaging in housework and playing with their children, avoiding reading work-related emails, listening to music on their commute home, or bicycling to and from work. Finnish interviewees made pronounced efforts to disconnect from work:

I would like to really be present while at home, but sometimes it's pretty hard to turn your brain off when you leave from work. So, sometimes I notice that I am thinking some case or a client, when I'm home and I'm not really that present. I guess that is the main problem and the main change after getting a child. I've been trying to get rid of it like not really reading emails at home. Yet, this kind of unconscious thinking – it's harder to switch off. (F2)

I also try to clear my head on the way home from work. I take the train and listen to some music or just think about something completely else. That helps. (F20)

Only a few *struggling segmentors* from small offices in both countries could afford not to share their personal phone number with clients:

I do not give my cell phone number to clients [. . .] They've asked, but I explain that I have an office number and that I'm at the office and when I'm not at the office I am at court or at home and then I am unable to handle their cases. (C11)

Finnish *struggling integrators* also faced some difficulties to disconnect from work when they were with their children:

I think you have to be quite disciplined not to read emails all the time. There's a temptation when you hear the noise to look straight away. So, I quite often actually leave my phone at home if I'm going out to play football with the kids, for example, because then I'm not tempted to look at it. You've got an hour and a half, maybe a couple of hours where it's just kids' time. (F6)

When work-related phone calls and emails came unexpectedly and suddenly changed the schedule for the whole family, these interruptions created stress for both *struggling segmentors* and *struggling integrators* (see also Barley et al., 2011). This stress appeared to be especially salient for Finnish interviewees and was linked to their greater participation in their children's upbringing (Eerola, 2014; Ylikännö et al., 2014). Yet, while *struggling segmentors* in both countries felt it was legitimate to fortify role boundaries, *struggling integrators* in both countries felt stiff professional pressures not to preserve boundaries because of intense competition in the market for legal services (Gustafsson et al., 2017) and 'the specter of de-equitalisation' that has made partnership increasingly dependent on ongoing performance evaluation (Galanter and Henderson, 2008). *Struggling integrators* understood that psychological boundary impermeability is not an option for them. While professional role identity was dominant in their lives, MTs offered to these lawyers a means to control the frequency, timing and direction of boundary crossings (Kossek et al., 2012) so that they could reconcile competing demands of legal work with their roles as fathers. These lawyers remarked that work was always on their mind:

And trying to relax also, not think about work. So that's a question of discipline. It normally involves not consulting your device and trying to turn it off. But obviously, you can't, because work is always in the back of your mind. It's always there, because it's part of reality. So, I'm constantly thinking about my cases. (C2)

Struggling integrators and *integrators* in both countries believed that eight-hour long working days are insufficient for someone to be considered a committed lawyer. Thus, they imposed on themselves and their subordinates the need for fluid transitions between professional and family roles:

So, I try to take all of it [annual holidays] but of course I'm online every day . . . If you're a partner of course you do that. Everyone does that . . . We [law firm partners] try not to do it to them [junior lawyers]. But if they're working on a deal we need to be able to get the hold of

them at any time. But we don't expect them to follow their emails all the time . . . I think in this business you have to keep your phone on. I think that's a universal thing that you have to keep your phone on. It would be really weird if you didn't, I think. (F12)

The fluid transitions between professional and father roles for *struggling integrators* and *integrators* were possible because these men were more likely to live by a traditional family model that enabled them to prioritise work over family demands, making their professional identity paramount (Williams et al., 2013). Wives acted as facilitators of role permeability for their husbands:

When the children were small, I was always working. I travelled quite a lot. Clearly, it was my wife that took care of the children and life at home. For instance, when the children were born and very small, I didn't have the opportunity to stay at home. Fathers' leave did not exist. When I recall those days, it was always work, during weekdays and weekends as well. (F5)

For these lawyers, their professional and family lives were interwoven and their clients could reach them even when they were with their families. They did not experience a pressing need to set limits on their work time:

I want my clients to be able to reach me, and that's one of the secrets of my success, that I'm always available for them. They know when they call that I will always answer, regardless of what day or time it is. I could never have given up or abandoned my clients. (F19)

Discussion and conclusions

This study contributes to the literature on work–life boundary managements and inequalities among high-status professionals in several ways. First, our study offers a cross-national analysis of men's navigation of spatial, temporal and psychological dimensions of work–family boundary permeability in the context of shifting ideals of fatherhood and changing family models. The results show that the issue of work–family boundary management is not as simple as it may seem in light of varied organisational norms that encourage men to prioritise sudden unanticipated work demands over family time (see Jacobs and Gerson, 2004). Men differ in their preferences and strategies of work–family boundary permeability. These differences are related to national differences in policies that encourage and legitimate fathers' involvement in family life. In Finland, male lawyers more readily embraced family responsibilities, having taken on greater involvement since the birth of their children. At the same time, they were also more inclined to set firm boundaries on work spillover to family life. Yet, the male breadwinner remains a culturally and professionally salient model, especially for Canadian fathers whose spouses are more likely to carry the bulk of responsibility for childcare and housework. Canadian male lawyers also experienced greater pressure to be 'on call' at all times via MTs. When they brought legal work home these work hours were typically in addition to, rather than a substitute for, law office time commitments. Not surprisingly, these men were more skeptical about the prospect of remote work and MTs to promote work–life balance.

We gain leverage on understanding men's efforts to manage work and family interface by examining three dimensions of permeability: spatial, temporal, and psychological. Our study moves beyond quantitative studies of these dimensions to reveal qualitatively how professionals understand and utilise these dimensions, sometimes separately or in concert, to protect boundaries between work and family (to devote undivided attention to their children) or to enable the flow of information from one sphere to another (enabling lawyers to stay abreast of case development and client needs). Our cross-national comparison reveals nuanced differences in men's tactics across these dimensions rooted in cultural norms of fatherhood (Eerola, 2014; Salmi and Lammi-Taskula, 2014; Tremblay, 2013).

A second contribution of our study is that we applied a segmentation-integration continuum (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000) to produce qualitative markers of boundary management styles (e.g. *struggling segmentors*, *struggling integrators*, and *integrators*). We identified physical, temporal and psychological strategies that lawyers deploy to increase their own control over work-life boundaries (Kossek et al., 2012; Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). For example, *struggling segmentors*, especially those in Finland, attempted to keep work-family boundary as impermeable as possible in an effort to protect their involvement in childcare and family life and thus, restrict the need for laborious switches in roles. *Struggling integrators* invested considerable effort to balance contradictory expectations of their advancing careers and rising involvement in the upbringing of their growing children by drawing on a mixture of integrating and segmenting activities. This finding is consistent with research that suggests a hybrid approach exists that involves alternating between separating and integrating work and life (Kossek and Lautsch, 2012). Thus, MTs offered *struggling integrators* a means to control the frequency, timing and direction of boundary crossings so that they could carve out time for their children and family while still being professionally 'on call'. This was especially salient for Finnish interviewees who were under greater social pressure to be involved in the upbringing of their growing children.

In contrast, *integrators* had more time at their disposal to blur boundaries between work and family domains because their children had reached adulthood and were independent. Lawyers in this group worked long hours in their early career years, with work routinely spilling over into home life. While *struggling integrators* and *integrators* accepted that psychological boundary impermeability is not an option for them, they used MTs as a means to build their reputations as dedicated lawyers worthy of partnership. They also referenced MT usage and time availability to draw a distinction between their subordinates who are professionally suitable and thus deserving of promotion and those who can be shunted off partnership tracks. MTs provided these lawyers with an opportunity to model the behaviour they desire from coworkers in their law firm, that is, that these lawyers would be available to them to work at any time and from any place (see Perlow, 2012).

Our results build on the work of Derks and colleagues (2016) who report that for *integrators* smartphone use during off-job time reduces work-family conflict and enhances family role performance. We find that this dynamic is most applicable to male *struggling integrators* and *integrators* who live in traditional family models. For these lawyers MTs facilitate fluid transitions between work and family roles. Yet, for male

lawyers with greater care responsibilities and more fluid gender roles in family life, MTs generate additional stress linked to the psychological burden associated with an unanticipated and abrupt switch in roles. This was specifically the case for Finnish interviewees who were under greater social pressure to actively participate in the day-to-day upbringing of their children. Finnish interviewees also perceived greater legitimacy for spatial boundary permeability because remote work is popular in Finland (see Plantenga and Remery, 2010). Yet, these lawyers could also more easily set limits on this permeability owing to stronger social acceptance to leave work early for childcare responsibilities (Ylikännö et al., 2014). Finnish *struggling segmentors* also experienced less pressure for temporal permeability in comparison with their Canadian counterparts who used self-imposed rules to resist the professional norm of unlimited availability that was encouraged by their superiors. Interesting, among *struggling integrators* and *integrators* in both countries, remote work was used to extend working hours rather than to replace them (see also Thornton, 2016b).

Our study makes a third contribution. While studies show that the opportunities to keep separate work and nonwork domains have been undermined in recent years (MacCormick et al., 2012; Schieman and Glavin, 2016), our research demonstrates that male lawyers have the capacity to act as resourceful agents who develop strategies to manage work pressures in the era of MTs (Duxbury et al., 2014; Kossek, 2016) – in fact, harnessing MTs for this aim. The physical strategies rest on lawyers' ability to manage physical artifacts such as phones, laptop computers, i-pads and email communications to separate or blend aspects of each domain. Temporal strategies included controlling lawyers' availability to work from home or during holidays. Here the Canadian interviewees tended to raise the threshold for being accessible via MTs during vacation. Psychological strategies in both countries included selecting which work tasks for immediate response, engaging in activities with children and family members to create mental borders between work and family, as well as role-modeling boundary permeability for other lawyers. Modeling high boundary permeability, however, primarily benefited lawyers in more traditional gender-role families where a spouse was available to take on more of the childcare responsibilities.

Finally, this study shows that MTs facilitate the development of new mechanisms through which certain social inequalities can be reproduced. MTs reinforce a gendered professional norm that demands lawyers prioritise career over family life and that they allow work demands to cross over to family time. While this norm has long been problematic for female lawyers with family caregiving responsibilities, it has become increasingly problematic for male lawyers who seek to be more actively involved in family life than their senior colleagues once were. As a result, dominant patterns of MT usage contribute to the advantage of lawyers without childcare responsibilities (or those with spouses who take on these responsibilities), reinforcing gendered assumptions about how professionals ought to reconcile work and family life (Thornton, 2016a). Thus, our study demonstrates that socio-cultural and organisational environments deeply influence professionals' work–life boundary management styles and the strategies lawyers embrace. As technology continues to pervade professional work (see Mullan and Wajcman, 2017; Schieman et al., 2009), lawyers are pushed toward integrating strategies with high work-to-family boundary permeability. The use of MTs

further normalises a culture of long hours in private law practice that values not only extended hours at the office but also unlimited remote availability via MT communication outside conventional work hours and office locations. Interestingly, the importance of face time and visibility at the workplace have not decreased significantly. Instead, remote availability has increased work hours *in addition* to lawyers' presence at the office. Moreover, this remote availability offers flexibility that benefits primarily lawyers who live in traditional family models where they carry lower childcare responsibilities.

Leaders and organisations play a central role in enabling or constraining boundary control (Kossek, 2016). Our study shows that role modeling by *struggling integrators* and *integrators* helps to sustain the competitive advantage of those lawyers untethered by childcare responsibilities over lawyers with more demanding caregiving responsibilities. Lawyers who aspire to climb career ladders in law firms in Finland and Quebec are required to be available at all hours via MTs to demonstrate their commitment to the firm, clients, and senior partners. Rising pressure to be available for work whenever lawyers are called upon via MTs signals a disregard for male lawyers' caregiving responsibilities. These pressures also rob men of the right to 'down time' when they are away from the office. Remarkably, the interviewees in our study spoke nearly exclusively about boundary-crossing interruptions as asymmetrical – with intrusions coming from work into family time, rather than family urgencies interrupting work roles. Future research should examine asymmetry and direction of boundary-crossing interruptions among professionals (see e.g. Kossek and Lautsch, 2012) and whether both preferences for, and experiences of, boundary-crossing interruptions vary by gender.

Our study suggests that in countries where legislation actively encourages men to take up greater involvement in family life, male lawyers are interested to spend more time with their children. The self-imposed boundary control strategies – that male lawyers develop and that are fragile to organisational pressures – are insufficient to challenge prevailing professional norms in ways that shift these norms toward greater inclusivity and gender neutrality. In order to improve social integration and equality in private law practice, results of our study advocate for law firms to take a more active role in supporting a healthier work–life balance and fluid gender roles by establishing formal organisational rules and expectations regarding the use of MTs by their employees outside of work hours and workplaces.


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Appendix 1. Participant characteristics.

Location	Approximate age	Job position	Office size	Classification	Number of children
Helsinki, Finland					
1	34	Senior Associate	> 100	Struggling segmentor	1
2	33	Senior Associate	< 10	Struggling segmentor	1
3	40	Specialist Partner	> 100	Struggling integrator	2
4	60	Sole Practitioner	solo office	Integrator	1
5	67	Of Counsel	11 ≤ 60	Integrator	2
6	41	Partner	11 ≤ 60	Struggling integrator	2
7	32	Senior Associate	11 ≤ 60	Struggling segmentor	2
8	52	Counsel	61 ≤ 100	Integrator	3
9	42	Partner	11 ≤ 60	Struggling integrator	3
10	42	Managing Partner	11 ≤ 60	Struggling integrator	3
11	43	Managing Partner	> 100	Struggling integrator	3
12	48	Partner	> 100	Integrator	1
13	60	Partner	> 100	Integrator	4
14	45	Partner	< 10	Struggling integrator	3
15	39	Partner	> 100	Struggling integrator	2
16	32	Senior Associate	> 100	Struggling segmentor	2
17	50	Partner	> 100	Struggling integrator	3
18	45	Partner	11 ≤ 60	Struggling integrator	2
19	59	Partner	11 ≤ 60	Integrator	3
20	32	Senior Associate	11 ≤ 60	Struggling segmentor	2
Montreal, Quebec, Canada					
1	41	Partner	61 ≤ 100	Struggling integrator	3
2	45	Partner	61 ≤ 100	Struggling integrator	2
3	51	Partner	61 ≤ 100	Struggling integrator	4
4	43	Managing Partner	11 ≤ 60	Struggling integrator	3
5	52	In-House Counsel and Sole Practitioner	11 ≤ 60 and solo office	Integrator	4
6	35	Associate	61 ≤ 100	Struggling segmentor	2
7	41	Sole Practitioner	solo office	Struggling integrator	3
8	68	Managing Partner	< 10	Integrator	3
9	62	Partner	> 100	Integrator	4
10	46	Partner	> 100	Struggling integrator	3
11	42	Associate	< 10	Struggling integrator	2
12	38	Associate	> 100	Struggling segmentor	0
13	35	Partner	> 100	Struggling integrator	3
14	34	Sole Practitioner	solo office	Struggling segmentor	1

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