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How the Digital Workforce Has Re-Defined Boundary Management and Perceptions of Technological Tools on Maintaining Work-Life Balance.

by

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Abstract

Technology has been criticised for blurring boundaries and making them more permeable, which has been previously portrayed as having a negative impact on work-life balance (WLB) and a cause for burnout among employees. With burnout a growing concern for organisations and governments, this thesis uses a boundary theory lens to explore the effects of technology on WLB. To improve understanding in this area, social media practitioners (SMPs) were selected as the sample to study because it could be said they are extensive users of technology and social media. Studying this group as an "extreme case" produces learnings and practices that could be applied to the rest of the social media industry and the digital workforce. Informed by a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) approach, this thesis draws from in-depth interviews with thirty-one UK SMPs and observation of an additional five SMPs, in their place of work, to investigate the role technology plays in managing boundaries between work and non-work and maintaining perceived WLB. Presented in this document are four contributions.

Firstly, this thesis turns its attention to the boundaries in the digital landscape. I introduce the new term digital virtual boundary (DVB) and acknowledge how these differ from their analogue counterpart and what this means for how we manage our boundaries. This research also recognises how Clark's (2000) "borderland" can assist role demand management and WLB when a user is within a digital virtual space. Secondly, this thesis presents a typology of new digital boundary preference groups that recognise the impact technology has on SMPs boundary preference and management. For each group, characteristics are defined so that one can identify and align themselves with the most suitable group to assist them in their boundary management style. Thirdly, technological strategies and tactics shared by my participants are listed in this thesis as a means of practices that can be adopted by others to aid them in their boundary management and technology use, to avoid burnout and maintain their ideal WLB. Lastly, the unique data collection method for this area of work, although growing in use for boundary theory, is the first time to my knowledge it has been applied to the WLB literature. Unlike its earlier counterpart grounded theory (GT), CGT places priority on the studied phenomenon over the methods of studying it and acknowledges the researcher's role in interpreting data and creating categories.

This research contributes to the WLB literature and boundary theory by providing a better understanding of how employees in digital facing roles manage their boundaries and avoid burnout whilst extensively using technology.

It must be noted that the data presented in this research was collected and analysed in 2019 prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. This had a significant impact not only on the way in which people work and interact with technology, but the national lockdowns have meant the majority of those employed were forced to work from home. This means now more than ever workers have undoubtedly thought about their WLB and how they manage their boundaries. This work could be of significant benefit to individuals learning to align appropriate strategies to their boundary preference.

Keywords

Boundary management, boundary theory, burnout, constructivist grounded theory, digital virtual, social media practitioners, technology, work-life balance

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This thesis is dedicated to my aunt Ally who sadly passed away suddenly.

Declaration of Authorship

I, Chira Nasya Tochia, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

HOW THE DIGITAL WORKFORCE HAS RE-DEFINED BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS ON MAINTAINING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Chira Tochia, BA (Hons), MSc

28.05.2021

Glossary of acronyms

CTU – communication technology use

DVB – digital virtual boundary

SMP – social media practitioner

WLB – work-life balance

WLC – work-life conflict

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Structure Outline

1 Introduction

1.1 An Overview

Being 'constantly connected' to the web using a smartphone has become commonly recognised as everyday behaviour in the UK. In the Ofcom report on Adults' Media Use and Attitudes (Ofcom, 2020), it was stated that "adult internet users estimate they spend an average of 25.1 hours online per week" (p. 7). The overall key findings of this report highlight that connected devices and smart technologies are increasingly being adopted and that there is also an increase in social media users using multiple social media sites/apps. An interesting finding is how adults "increasingly prefer smaller, portable devices for going online" such as smartphones (p. 2). Smartphones have changed our daily routines, social behaviours, habits, social interactions, and family relations because of the constant use and checking 24 hours a day (Samaha and Hawi, 2016). Some argue that smartphones have become an extension of the self (Belk, 2013) because these devices are very much ingrained in everyday life, leaving some with the feeling that the devices can never be permitted to be put down. This increased amount of time spent online even while on the move, comes from the mobile nature of smartphones. de Souza e Silva (2006) claims that mobile devices promote the blurring of borders between physical and digital spaces

> "The emergence of mobile technology devices has contributed to the possibility of being always connected to digital spaces. It has become possible to literally 'carry' the Internet wherever we go, feeling as though we are everywhere at the same time" (p. 263).

It is clear that constant connectivity has expanded the boundaries of work across space and time - opening up the opportunity for flexible working, using technology to work outside of normal work hours, on the move, and at home. However, this blurring of boundaries has also been criticised as having a negative impact on work-life balance (WLB) (Maier *et al.,* 2015; Oh and Park, 2016; Turel *et al.,* 2011).

It is now well recognised that work-related stress is a major health problem, costing over £5 billion a year just in the UK (HSE, 2017). As a result, governments and companies have started to take measures to deal with it, particularly in terms of the long hours' culture that pervades many nations in Western economies. In April 2014 officials from the Swedish city, Gothenburg launched a trial by adopting six-hour working days, expecting the mental and physical state

of their employees to improve and their productivity to increase (Crew, 2015; Gee, 2014). The experiment lasted two years and ended in early 2017 and the results were positive with employees feeling healthier and more productive (Alderman, 2017). Other European countries have considered similar measures. For example, Germany's labour minister has been considering an 'anti-stress' law as a measure to reduce mental health issues connected to the 'constantly available' paradigm (i.e. checking emails after working hours) and commissioned an investigation to determine binding thresholds (Stuart, 2014). More recently, the French government introduced a law on the 'right to disconnect' at the beginning of 2017, sanctioning companies who fail to clearly state what is expected of employees out of hours. To reduce the surge in (usually unpaid) overtime and prevent the disruption in personal time by work, employers should now negotiate with employees about how to reduce work intruding into their personal life, such as allowing workers to ignore their work phones outside of traditional work hours, with the intention of eliminating the 'always on' culture (Agence France - Presse, 2016). The Philippines have also legislated that employees cannot be disadvantaged or disciplined for not responding to emails after work hours. The act involves "granting employees the right to disconnect from work-related electronic communications after work hours" (Nicavera, 2017). A labour group in the Philippines, the General Alliance of Workers Association, highlights that although there are benefits from connectivity there are dangers of constant connection such as physical and mental burnout. Companies are also introducing their own internal policies such as Daimler-Benz where employees can delete any work emails received whilst on holiday (BBC News, 2014). The implementation of these new laws and policies suggests that Western governments perceive that not only there is an issue with workers' balance of work and life because of technology use in the workplace, but also that a change may be needed in working culture.

What seems clear is that there is not a one size fits all solution. If and how constant connectivity impacts individuals and their work life balance (WLB) varies. Whilst policy solutions offer support for those who may face stress from over-work, they do not contribute to our understanding of how to facilitate flexible work boundaries for those who benefit from them, nor do we know the role that modern digital technologies play in the negotiation of boundaries in certain industries and occupations. Therefore, we don't know enough about the conditions under which new technologies aids or hinders WLB (Kreiner *et al.*, 2009; Hirschi *et al.*, 2019).

This begs the question, what about those where their role requires them to be online and use digital devices and tools for a significant amount of time? To scope this thesis, there is a particular focus on communication technologies and social media practitioners (SMPs). Communication technologies include any computer-mediated communication channel and the devices on which they are used, as reported by the participants. SMPs remain an understudied population, and yet, they confront a unique intersection of work and non-work domains distinct from that within a traditional work environment.

Just over 15 years ago the role of a social media practitioner was practically non-existent with this task usually being added on as an additional responsibility to those already working in marketing positions. Fast forward to 2021, where there is a predicted job growth of 7.2% for the role of a social media manager with 3,832 new jobs calculated to be available by 2027 (NationalCareers, 2021), showing the continued rapid growth for this position over the past decade. Although the role is predominantly one that falls naturally into the digital marketing sector, it is not restricted to this, expanding across many industries from advertising and marketing to sports to the public sector (NationalCareers, 2021). It has been debated in the industry if all SMPs should be under the age of 25 (Forbes, 2012), the notion that older generations are better to reach via traditional mediums and younger generations will be more familiar with social media platforms, therefore communicate with ease and create a better environment for their audience. It is noted that although most jobs advertised for an SMP work usual office hours, there is a caveat that you may be required to work longer hours, events and/or weekends (NationalCareers, 2021; Prospects.ac.uk, 2021)

As of 2019, the average daily social media usage of internet users worldwide amounted to 145 minutes per day, up from 142 minutes in the previous year (Statista, 2020). If a full-time SMP (based on an average 35-hour week) spent all their working hours using social media, then they would be spending an average of 300 minutes per day, which is more than twice the average user.

Despite a plethora of research about social media use at the individual level and within organisations (Beigi and Otaye-Ebede, 2020; Chou and Edge, 2012; Kross *et al.*, 2013; Lin *et al.*, 2016; Sagioglou and Greitemeyer, 2014; Swar and Hameed, 2017), the role of an SMP has yet to be explored. Beigi and Otaye-Ebedei's work (2020) draws attention and argues the need for future research to address social media spill over into the work domain. An SMP is an employee of an organisation who runs specific social channels for said organisation and therefore manages online communities. For some workers, such as those that have virtual or

online focused roles, the access to digital technologies is likely to be much greater than that of the average person and it may be that their usage can be more than desired, creating a struggle to maintain a preferred WLB and potential for burnout. As social media platforms do not adhere to traditional working hours the role of an SMP could be considered an "extreme job" which has been characterised by Hewlett and Luce (2006) and Hochschild (1997) as roles that may have work-related events outside of normal business hours, fast work pace with tight deadlines, unpredictable workflows, or 24/7 availability to clients. Although, just because the platform is accessible 24/7 does not necessarily mean that SMPs need to be active for this period too. An SMP could be considered a client servicing role because they are responsible for engaging clients and customers and for looking after a community of followers. To clarify what a client service role is, this research will use Steyn and De Klerk's (2015) definition:

> "Client service employees can be defined as individuals in service positions who fulfil a boundary-spanning role between the service organisation and customers on a regular basis through the use of telephonic, face-to-face or electronically facilitated communication. Because of this boundary-spanning role, client service employees are exposed to a number of stressors, which could facilitate the development of burnout." (p. 3)

What the current literature tells us is that roles that have a client-servicing interface tend to have an expectancy to be constantly available and suggests that certain employees will adopt a work ethic of 'always-on' so they are ready to meet the demands of their clients (Chesley, 2010; Galinsky, Kim and Bond, 2001; Perlow and Porter, 2009; Ter Hoeven *et al.*, 2016), which can be challenging. Roles in which employees find themselves constantly at the demand of another person [a client] could affect certain individuals' health. Although Maslach's (1982) research focused on humans (patients) who are troubled or having problems, she noted how some of her respondents suffered from "the chronic strain of dealing extensively with other human beings" (p. 1), which could be applied to other job roles such as SMPs. Sarker *et al.* (2012) stated how these roles with "'temporal servitude' (being on call all the time)" can create work-life conflict (WLC). Over time this can affect the mental and physical health of employees, such as experiencing burnout which Steyn and De Klerk's (2015) research exposed for the role identities of client service employees. Steyn and De Klerk (2015) also found that respondents who hold the "belief that the client always comes first no matter what" (p. 7), suffered from higher burnout and there was an expectation of self-sacrifice with respondents willing to "go above and beyond the call of duty to assist the client" (p. 7). This research also

highlights that burnout can be a consequence of working in such a position. Therefore, due to the nature of the role of an SMP with the expectation to be always available, more than potentially double the average minutes per day spent on social media, and increased likelihood to suffer from burnout, I believe that SMPs can be considered an extreme case. Examining an extreme case can be beneficial to theory building in the future (Beigi *et al.,* 2019; Boiarintseva and Richardson, 2019; Eisenhardt, 1989; Pratt *et al.,* 2006). SMPs can be looked upon as a highly-skilled group in terms of communication technology use in the digital industry, therefore studying them helps to produce learnings and practices that can be applied to the rest of the industry and help theory building within the current literature.

With the ubiquitous nature of electronic communication and increasingly blurred lines between work and non-work domains (Duxbury *et al.,* 2014; Wajcman *et al.,* 2008), the individual differences in preference for managing the boundaries between these domains have growing importance, with potential implications for how one reacts to professional electronic communications received during non-work time and personal electronic communications received during work time. Due to the nature of their job, SMPs are naturally heavy users of communication technologies which, as described earlier, could challenge work and non-work boundaries and their boundary preferences. In addition to this, for the majority of the time their work has more flexibility in how it can be conducted, be that geographically, temporally and psychologically, when compared to manual workers for example. Therefore, it is imperative that research is conducted understanding this group's feelings towards their relationship with extensive technology use whilst attempting to maintain their ideal WLB, so that lessons learned can help those across the industry, and potentially further afield, to avoid burnout.

1.2 Key Research Questions

The key research questions are described below in order to frame the trajectory of the thesis and the narrative thread leading ultimately to the findings and contributions described in later chapters:-

1. How are digital tools affecting SMPs preferred boundary preferences?
2. What strategies are SMPs implementing with technology to manage their work and non-work boundaries and roles?

Question 1 aims to explore what role digital tools play in SMPs maintaining their preferred boundary preference and subsequent WLB.

The literature depicts excessive technology use as mostly intrusive, forcing the creation of blurred boundaries. Again, this is painted in a negative light. To see if it is possible to maintain WLB whilst working within a digital work force, I argue it is important to understand SMP's relationship with technology when considering their ideal boundary preferences, because if it is possible to do so for an extreme, special case such as SMPs, then drastic intervention measures such as government legislation and company policies may not be essential.

Question 2 seeks to investigate what strategies SMPs implement with technology to manage boundaries, based on whether they have a preference on how separate or integrated they like to keep the spheres of their lives.

It is valuable to investigate the strategies that SMPs are implementing because this group are highly skilled in terms of communication technology use in the digital workforce. Studying them could produce lessons and practices that could be applied to the rest of the industry, or impact further afield and help theorise the current literature.

This study departs from explanations of how some individuals report more or less WLC than others whilst using technology, and instead focuses on the 'lived experiences' of managing demands from both work and personal domains. Boundaries, and therefore entities defined by them, are socially constructed actors who come to shared definitions of reality through interactions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Not only then is using constructivist grounded theory (CGT) an appropriate method to co-construct the meanings behind which my participants define their boundaries, I will also capture the experience and behaviours of SMPs with the use of technology and boundary management rather than solely focusing on feelings. This thesis' overall aim is to explore the relationship between current communication technologies (i.e. devices and online channels) and work-life balance for social media practitioners (SMPs). By answering the questions proposed above, the findings from this thesis will hopefully help to prevent practices that lead to burnout and WLC.

To note, this research opted to explore work 'and' non-work domains rather than 'versus' to keep open the possibility that participants do not just have struggles between these singular domains but may have different boundaries and roles within each of those domains. Also, it was an active decision to use the terminology of 'non-work' or 'life' rather than the social

group of 'family' because it is more inclusive of less traditional families, such as those without a spouse or young children where their time outside of work may be spent leisurely, unlike the majority of the literature that has categorised non-work as 'family' time which follows the thinking of Kelliher, Richardson, and Boiarintseva (2018) and their reconceptualised description of 'work' and 'life'. By expanding beyond traditional definitions that focused on caring activities for dependent children and a traditional model of work, participants were interviewed and observed with varying 'life' situations and job formats.

In recent years I had started to witness friends and family members who worked in a variety of industries suffer from burnout with some even having to take a leave of absence, recalling one returning to work with a new rule of ignoring their emails outside of the office moving forwards. I subsequently noticed a marked improvement in their wellbeing, both physically and socially. Having worked as a social media practitioner in the past, both full-time for major film accounts looking after multiple communities with up to over 500k followers, as well as part-time alongside my studies, I noticed first hand that strategies were needed to assist in managing the demands from my different domains to prevent feelings of stress or being overwhelmed. During my time in an insight team at a large media agency I came across the term 'digital detox' for the first time and grew curious at the possibility of switching off from technology and the apparent health benefits promised with this behaviour. How, I thought, was it possible to carry out this practice of unplugging when nearly all jobs carried out some basic level of digital engagement? It was the sum of all these experiences that drew me towards the topic of this thesis and idea to explore what strategies, if any, were being created and implemented to aid workers in maintaining WLB in the digital landscape.

In this thesis, the findings were examined through a boundary theory lens as a means to explain the influence digital devices have on WLB for extensive online users. It concludes by discussing how the use of digital tools contradicts the majority of the literature which argues that blurred boundaries caused by technology has a negative impact and that segmentation is a preferred working state to maintain a better WLB. My data shows that my participants who use technology extensively for their work mostly preferred more integrated domains and roles. They find technology enables them to quickly switch between roles by clicking or tapping across digital virtual boundaries seamlessly, therefore integrating their domains more easily, allowing for them to juggle demands from several aspects of their life and maintain their ideal WLB. For those that did prefer to segment their domains and roles, technology was found not to be a complete hindrance but rather a supportive tool to allow them to strengthen

their boundaries when needed, therefore still giving them the ability to maintain WLB. Technology also allows for recovery through technological affordances that give temporary recovery breaks.

Approaching my methodology through the epistemological stance of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2003; Charmaz, 2006) and using the observational method of shadowing as a supplemental means to corroborate my findings from the interviews, I was able to contribute a unique approach to the research surrounding WLB and boundary theory. Not only did this help with identified empirical gaps, but this meant my research acknowledged the co-construction of data via interpretation and focused on the studied phenomenon rather than the method itself unlike its earlier counterpart of grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978; 1992; Glaser, and Strauss, 1967).

This study examines the strategies used by those that work extensively online and with digital devices to manage their WLB, and the findings from this begin to build an argument for whether it would be beneficial if similar laws of disconnection should be implemented in the UK. It also highlights that wider conversations need to take place within organisations and teams, and between family and friends, to simply manage expectations and demands - instead of strict policies that do not address every individualistic need.

Overall, this study steers away from explanations about WLC being reported more or less by individuals, and rather focuses on lived-through experiences of how WLB is maintained whilst using digital tools. The results from this study could inform organisations and employees that require online working or the use of modern digital tools about the best ways in which they can strategise to suit their individual needs, avoid burnout, and achieve their ideal WLB.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The following section outlines the structure of the thesis by chapter.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The literature review focuses on key pillars of literature informing the analytical framework, discussion, and overall approach to the thesis. I will be examining the current debate around burnout and technology consumption, as well as exploring the intertwined literature of

boundary theory and WLB research and what role, if any, technology already plays in workers managing their ideal boundary preference. Drawing from a range of disciplines including organisational behaviour, sociology, and human resource literature, this culminates in the application of boundary theory and WLB literature to the digital realms.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter introduces the use of constructivist ground theory as the methodological approach chosen to conduct this study and address my research questions. It begins by explaining why social media practitioners were selected over other roles, as well as the choice of sampling method that was implemented. For data collection, in-depth interviews and ethnography in the form of shadowing are justified as the ideal approaches in relation to this particular research and the methodologies, or lack thereof, used in other fieldwork that has been carried out in this area. Qualitative data coding was selected to analyse the data with the aid of computer software, NVivo, and the way in which this is performed is described in detail to allow for ease if other researchers choose to simulate a similar study. Finally, ethical considerations were taken into account, including evidence and excerpts of a reflexive diary that was kept.

Chapter 4 Conceptualising Online Boundary Management: Digital Virtual Boundaries

Chapter 4 is a short introduction to the new term 'digital virtual boundary' (DVB) as well as an explanation of Clark's (2000) borderland model and how it can be applied to the digital realm and my findings. In doing so before the main findings and discussion chapters, I establish these ideas as a foundation to the reader before introducing the category typologies that build upon them. Here I explain how Clark's (2000) model is ideal for communicating the way users are enacting multiple roles at once when in digital virtual spaces which gives them the feeling of being boundarylessness as they simply tap or click their way across their domains. I also detail the features of DVBs, how these differ from what we know about traditional transitions, and why they are important to maintaining WLB.

Findings and Discussion

Chapters 5-7 introduce the three categories in the typology I put forward; *Constant connectors, Partial (dis)connectors*, and *Wannabe segmentors*. This typology extends Kossek and Lautsch's (2008; 2012) boundary preference groups which mostly considered analogue factors only - in doing so this recognises the role modern technology has on maintaining WLB and boundary preference. Each chapter is structured by first detailing the characteristics and motivations to said preference type, so that one can easily identify with which group they most strongly connect. The second half of each chapter identifies the strategies and technological tools my sample use to manage their digital boundaries, to enact their preferences and help maintain their WLB.

Chapter 5 Constant connectors

The first group to be introduced in the typology are *Constant connectors*. They have a preference to have integrated boundaries and to do so remain connected over multiple devices, platforms, and within digital virtual spaces. As per each group proposed I detail characteristics and motivations of the make-up of a typical member of this group, which for a *Constant connector* includes traits such as avoiding feelings of guilt by being readily available or a need to impress so being responsive at all times of the day. I also highlight the strategies they implement using digital tools that enable them to have their preferred integrated boundaries. Examples such as not disconnecting or making time to switch off and managing multiple demands from varying domains concurrently.

Chapter 6 Partial (dis)connectors

Chapter 6 presents the second group in the typology, the *Partial (dis)connectors*. This group sits between the other groups identified because of their nature to flex between preferring integrated or segmented domains. Paradoxically, through the use of digital tools *Partial (dis)connectors* have the ability to temporarily unplug or separate from just a few digital virtual spaces in order to give domain centrality to the area of their lives that requires more focus and attention for that moment in time.

Chapter 7 Wannabe Segmentors

This chapter introduces the third and final group in the typology, *Wannabe segmentors*. Their characteristics and motivations are mostly true to traditional segmentors, except now with the integration of digital tools in their lives they understand and accept that occasionally they need to allow exceptions to their preference, as long as it occurs on their terms and in short bursts. Many in this group have previously reported WLC from past behaviours and have since either changed preference or adapted their strategies to better suit their needs.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This section discusses the limitations of the study, its contributions, and finally the ways in which the contributions of this thesis could be applied in future research. This research extends academic literature and understanding of the field of WLB and boundary theory by aligning with research on technology, connectivity, and disconnecting practices. It challenges previous notions of technology as a disruptive tool that enables WLC and sees the favourable benefits of using digital tools to maintain WLB according to boundary preferences, by proposing a new typology of boundary preference groups.

From the data collection, this research supports the argument that when it comes to organisational or national policies, 'one-size' does not fit all (Adame-Sánchez *et al.*, 2016; Darcy *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, disconnecting legislation may not be beneficial for all workers and instead open conversations should be had within teams to establish preferred boundaries and working practices. SMPs themselves, and other practitioners, should take heed of the research presented in this thesis to not only help identify which category group from the proposed typology aligns most closely to their characteristics, but also learn from the examples of strategies presented that could better help them to maintain their WLB whilst remaining connected.

2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews the expansive body of prior literature in order to contextualise the present study, communicate the conceptual framework that informs the study, and to establish the need for the present research. In the following discussion, I first focus on the literature about constant connectivity and how technology has been characterised as the villain for multiple facets. Next, I discuss how WLB literature has been problematised by the growing trend and concern with burnout in the workplace, with links correlating to excessive technology use being the main culprit. Then, I bring to the reader's attention the literature surrounding the specific characteristics of boundary theory to explore how the framework can be fully applied to the digital landscape, and to establish how it is already woven into the WLB literature. Finally, I explore the literature on boundary management and tactics that have been identified by previous studies, what has aided or hindered one's goal to achieve WLB, and establish what role, if any, technology may have previously played in this.

2.1 Constant connectivity

2.1.1 Technology addiction and lack of control

There is undeniably a growing use of technology and time spent online, however, what follows this is also a rise in technology burnout (Berg-Beckhoff *et al.*, 2017). There is a strong argument put forward in the current literature that technology has addictive tendencies and that it creates habitual behaviours that can leave users feeling they have a lack of or no control over how they manage their technology use. In the following paragraphs, I will highlight a considerable amount of literature that has been published on not only the idea of internet addiction but the notion of the addictive and problematic nature of technology use too, all of which could be argued as an attributing factor to the rise in burnout. "For centuries, 'addiction' referred to the state of being 'given over' or intensely involved with any activity" (Alexander and Schweighofer, 1988, p. 151) and is often associated with the idea that one has no control over their actions because the addiction is an all-consuming disease. This was furthered, by acknowledging that "prior to the nineteenth century, 'addiction' was rarely associated with drugs" (p. 152). Now, society has created a restrictive version of the traditional. Focusing on the phrase "intensely involved with any activity" (Alexander and Schweighofer, 1988, p. 151), Akers (1991 cited by Walters and Gilbert, 2000) believes that the contemporary meaning is beginning to revert back to this with addiction being "extended to substances that do not appear to promote physical dependence and to such non-substance

related activities as gambling, sex, and eating disorders" (p. 211). This latter approach to addiction supports the ideas put forward by authors such as Guedes *et al.* (2016) and Brown (2012), that technology platforms such as social networking sites, could be said to have addictive tendencies.

Few studies have evaluated the short term effects of what authors are calling 'Internet addiction' (Young, 1996) or 'technological addictions' (Griffiths, 1995). Several authors have even created a scale to measure technology addiction, with varying focus from social networking sites to more specific platforms and devices (Young, 1998; Windyanto *et al.*, 2011; Andreassen *et al.,* 2014a; Kesici and Tunç, 2018). Griffiths' (1999, 2000) later work explained how many of the addicts identified by Young in her study were actually excessively using the Internet as a platform to fuel other addictions such as gambling and sex, and that there must be a clear difference between addiction *on* the Internet and addiction *to* the Internet. This can still be seen as problematic because technology is being depicted as a tool to assist in ones' addictions or it is an addition in itself.

Whilst discussing mobile technology the literature highlights the negative impact it is having on behaviour, describing some as socially disengaged, unsophisticated and unable to function particularly in social settings and that they suffer from addictive behaviours similar to attention deficient disorder and poor social etiquette (Bauerlein, 2009; Carr, 2011; Forgays *et al.*, 2014; Rodi *et al.,* 2014; Spangler and Skovira, 2015; Wartella *et al.*, 2013). In addition to this, Turel *et al.*, (2018) state that "addiction symptoms in relation to the use of social networking sites (SNS) can be associated with reduced wellbeing" (p. 1). Guedes *et al.* (2016) conclude that social networking meets the criteria of having an addiction and that there is a growing concern with parents and mental health professionals about the excessive use of such platforms to make people "feel better or more self-assured (increased level of excitement or escape)" (p. 45). Technology has also been seen as a way for users with anxiety problems to avoid awkward social interaction, but some have argued that the technology is only encouraging escapism and facilitating these behaviours which could aid the development of socially anxious behaviours (King *et al.*, 2013; Sapacz *et al.*, 2016). Some individuals may opt for social media as a tool for relaxation, however, Lemola *et al.,* 2015 (cited by Elhai *et al.*, 2018) found that "increased smartphone use causes psychopathology, such as overuse causing sleep problems and increased stress" (p. 28), highlighting how smartphones can be an "object of both pleasure and frustration" (MacRury and Yates, 2016, p. 63). Calzada and Cobo (2015)

note a socio-technical misalignment because of social adoption and technological evolution happening at dissimilar rates which could be why there is an abundance of literature surrounding undesirable behaviours and technology use. Research to date has not yet determined practices that are being put in place to curb our technology consumption or explore the opinions and attitudes of users that may welcome and benefit from the feeling of being constantly connected.

There is a recurring theme of lack of control and links to addictive behaviours when using technology throughout the literature. Lee *et al.* (2014) posit how problematic usage behaviour such as "limited self-control when consuming online content (e.g. aimlessly following web/Facebook links while in bed)" (p. 2328) when users should have been going to sleep. 'Phantom vibration syndrome' (Deb, 2015; Rothberg *et al.*, 2010) is the feeling where people believe their phone is ringing or vibrating when in reality it is not at all and so they repeatedly check to see for what they think is an incoming notifications on their phone. Goodin (2018) states how repetitive and compulsive phone checking does not add value to our lives but instead, shows how we are responding to the addictive nature of sophisticated technology. She goes on to argue how this addiction can end up draining energy and concentration in everyday life, which ultimately increases stress levels. Psychotherapist, Hope Bastine, (DOSE, 2018) says that "we've gotten so habitual around our smartphone use that we have yet to develop the healthy habits and growing our emotional intelligence around our social tools." She discusses, the emergence of the new trend, Fear of Switching Off (FOSO) which acknowledges a growing problem users now face with finding time, or having the ability, to switch off their technology. It describes the inability to look away, to unplug and this fear is causing users to stay 'on' all the time which is leading to health issues like insomnia or problems with physical socialising. Cropley and Millward (2009) found that control played an important part for their participants in the unwinding from work process, those that felt more in control of their work and leisure time could actively avoid work-related issues with ease. According to Langer (1983), there is a strong correlation between control and wellbeing, specifically that an internal locus is believed to generate better wellbeing. Langer states that people tend to desire more control over different facets of their lives and that without the perception of control it could lead to experiences of greater stress and lower self-worth. The format of social media platforms alone can be highly distractive; "a user preoccupied with social media activities tends to be distracted from other primary tasks" (Swar and Hameed,

2017, p. 141). This idea proposes how social media use may be detrimentally affecting how student and employees' complete tasks to their best ability due to the distractive nature of social media that is preventing focus. Jeong *et al.* (2016) conclude that individuals who already lack skills in self-regulation are more likely to be addicted to smartphones. The existing body of research on technology connectivity portrayed in this section suggests that use of the Web can be problematic, that technology is addictive by nature, and we lack a sense of control when engaging in it causing several negative repercussions on behaviour.

2.1.2 Problematic use of the web and technology

The ability to multi-task is usually depicted in a positive light due to the outcome of meeting multiple demands at once, however Hembrooke and Gay (2003) state how multitasking may have a negative impact on areas such as learning due to cognitive overload, with Rosen *et al.* (2013a) echoing this having identified a link between multi-tasking on a smartphone with poor academic performance. Ugur and Koc (2015) also support this notion of multi-tasking having a negative effect in an educational setting, "when college students multi-task with mobile phones in classrooms, research indicates it may hamper their ability to pay attention" (p. 1,029). This new behaviour has been labelled as phubbing and is causing distractions not just in the classroom but other social settings. Phubbing is a portmanteau of phone and snubbing; it is used to describe "the act of snubbing someone in a social setting by looking at your phone instead of paying attention." (p. 1,023). These are some examples captured by the literature of when technology use has been problematic because the user lost their ability to control their behaviour due to the distraction of technology and therefore time spent online has been portrayed as impairing daily functions and jeopardises personal relationships, work, education and health.

There is a notable narrative in the literature about links between technology use and the effects on users' mental health. A number of studies have outlined the effects smartphone use has on mental disorders, including depression, antisocial personality disorder, narcissism and compulsive personality disorder (Cheever *et al.*, 2014; Harwood *et al.*, 2014; Kraut *et al.*, 1998; Rosen *et al.*, 2013b). There have been multiple studies that link social media use with depression, declines in subjective mood, sense of wellbeing and life satisfaction (Chou and Edge, 2012; Kross *et al.*, 2013; Lin *et al.*, 2016; Sagioglou and Greitemeyer, 2014).

Evidence suggests that there is a significant concern about the potential implications social media addiction has on young adults' mental health (Bodroža and Jovanović, 2016; Lee, 2014). According to a study carried out by the Pew Research Centre (2015 cited by Sampasa-Kanyinga and Lewis, 2015), a high frequency of time spent online progressively results in mental health problems within young adults. The study showed that individuals who spend more than two hours online per day suffered from higher psychological distress, poor mental health and required a higher need for mental health support than those whose everyday lives do not involve the frequent use of social media. A study carried out by Deloitte (2017) discovered that more than half of 16-24-year-olds in the UK believe that they use their phone too much with 79% of young adults stating that they frequently check their phone just before they go to sleep and 55% check them in the first 15 minutes of waking up. As argued by Dredge (2018), this could be having a significant impact on mental health. Social media intensifies feelings of chronic stress daily by encouraging its users to constantly be on alert for social media messages and notifications including likes, follows and recognition (Sorochan, 2017; Westhoven, 2018). As argued by Amedie (2015), this form of high alert is processed in the same way by your instinctive fight or flight system as being on continuous alert for predators and danger. This can result in a release of the stress hormone cortisol (McHugh, 2009).

Even when positive notions are put forward of how technology enables employees to have the ability to work flexibly (Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Diaz, Chiaburu, Zimmerman and Boswell, 2012; Hall and Richter, 1988), coordinate demands for work and non-work domains (D'Abate, 2005) whilst being situated in one physical location, and also aiding recovery by using the internet at work for personal time (Andreassen *et al.*, 2014; Krishnan *et al.*, 2010) that can result in "renewed vigour and better focus" (Ivarsson and Larsson, 2011, p. 77), there is a disposition in the literature to caveat these points with a negative twist or imply it is a double-edged sword (Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2016). For instance, Gkearslan *et al.* (2016) investigate the relation of smartphone addiction with cyberloafing, also known as cyberslacking (Lang, 2001; Lim, 2002; Ugrin and Pearson, 2013), a behaviour where users allegedly waste work or school time to do personal activities thus blurring the lines between work and leisure (Mills *et al.*, 2001), which has been said to be seen as counterproductive work behaviour. Griffiths (2003) noted that employees using the internet for personal tasks during work time is a huge problem for employers. In their work, they highlight tasks such as gambling, pornography

and sexually related internet crimes occurring in the workplace, "Internet abuse has the potential to be a social issue, a health issue, and an occupational issue and should be taken seriously by all employers who use the internet in their day-to-day business." (p. 95) Not only can it cost businesses a lot of money, but it can also be damaging to their reputation. With time being noted as a company's greatest resource, Lang (2001) states that cyberslacking can create huge problems for a company and its 'bottom-line'. The internet has been described by several authors as a means of wasting time and unproductive behaviour (Armstrong, Phillips and Saling, 2000; Greenfield and Davis, 2002; Lim, 2002; Whitty and Carr, 2006) with Phillips and Reddie (2007) finding that e-mail in particular "wastes employees' time, decreases productivity and potentially detracts from quality of work" (p. 2423). To avoid or decrease cyberloafing in the workplace Ugrin and Pearson (2013) do not consider that individual practices and self-control is sufficient, what they propose are needed are for companies to implement detection mechanisms and active enforcement alongside the possibility of being fired. To put blame on the technology instead of recommending that the user create better practices to curb their technology consumption implies that they think technology by nature is a tool that facilitates a lack of restraint when it is within reach.

Not all authors assume that cyberloafing or cyberslacking is bad for the workplace; Andreassen *et al.* (2014) consider diversion rest-breaks "as pleasurable refreshment, and need not necessarily be a negative time consumer" (p. 917) and Krishnan *et al.* (2010) refer to them as "digital water coolers" believing they can enhance productivity and effectiveness. What has been illustrated in this section are two different top-down approaches that companies could take either to enforce strict technology consumption so employees cannot complete personal tasks whilst in the office or allow for blurring between work and non-work which could act as short breaks of recovery from office tasks and have a short-term positive impact on overall productivity (Farivar and Richardson, 2020; Ivarsson and Larsson, 2012). The existing body of research on technology use at work suggests that it is highly distracting and detrimental to productivity. Much uncertainty still exists about the relationship between technology use, especially completing non-work tasks during work hours, and the benefits this may have on employees' WLB and their feelings and attitudes about these behaviours.

Studies over the past few decades have provided important information on the potentially addictive nature of technology which could be said to be perpetuating this idea of constant connectivity and always-on culture, and as established has many negative connotations on mental health, behaviours and a feeling of lack of control. However, in recent years, Apple (2018) launched an in-built digital wellness tool to their devices that can help regulate users' technology consumption through features that reduce interruptions and are meant to assist in better managing screen time. This answers Harwood *et al.'s* (2014) call for the creation of an app that educates users to consume technology in a better way after suggesting that "people need to be made aware of the potential mental health-related consequences of over-involvement with technology/smart-devices and possible early warning signs that they are developing habits, which have been linked to addiction" (p. 271) and Lee *et al.* (2014) who also suggested, "designing and evaluating intervention software" (p. 2335) when they identified that push notifications were a stepping-stone to problematic usage patterns. Little is known about these behaviours and practices that have if any, been developed to help us better manage our technology use and it is not clear from a user perspective how we are using digital tools to support in meeting work and non-work demands.

2.1.3 Always-on culture

Monideepa *et al.* (2007) discuss how individuals feel they are always "on call" and live in a world of constant connectivity because of the pervasiveness of modern technological devices which they suggest can lead users "to believe that they have lost control over their time and space, which creates feelings of being stressed out" (p. 303). Thom´ee *et al.* (2010) also identified that young people experienced feelings of stress, guilt, and resentment from time pressures associated with receiving e-mails and prioritising them, this is because of a perceived idea that they can be in demand around the clock. According to Bakker *et al.* (2000) relationships are judged if the outcomes or benefits are equal to the investments put in and Perlow and Porter (2009) found their respondents' "believe an 'always on' ethic is essential if they and their firms are to succeed" (p. 102). Oulasvirta *et al.* (2012) put forward the idea that this lifestyle of never 'switching off' could be part of a desire to "stay on top" which is supported by the findings in Sarker *et al.*'s (2012) study where employees looking to progress their career "are often expected not to openly prioritise personal time over work time" (p. 148) and that in some companies, routinely not replying to emails after hours would become an issue. This idea supports the notion that if employees are accessible by being available around

the clock and quick to respond, they will be rewarded through signs of appreciation and perhaps over time recognised in their organisation with a promotion or pay rise. It could be said that the literature draws a correlation between the readiness to be constantly available as well as accessible through modern technologies and a strong, dedicated work ethic. Even in studies that fail to mention technology, Beauregard and Henry (2009) found that employees might refuse offers for flexible working and childcare for fear of harming their careers. Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) discuss how the use of communication technologies after hours is seen as an attribute of employees with high ambition and job involvement. However, their findings also suggested this led to "lowered affective commitment because of a feeling of frustration or burnout" (p. 603) (ibid.). If companies were to challenge this behaviour, they would have to change the mindset that a working culture of long hours, working weekends and being instantly responsive is not rewarded and do more to educate their employees on the symptoms and consequences of burnout. What has been identified is disparity over remaining connected in the workforce and therefore there is still uncertainty on the views of the 'always-on' culture from the perspective of employees.

2.2 Burnout in the workplace

The following discussion of the literature illustrates that technology has become deeply embedded in the workplace such that it could be said it is almost unavoidable and according to Srivastava, Chandra, and Shirish (2015) techno-stressors exist to some extent in any workplace that uses computers. The work and non-work interface have begun to address a new form of technology-induced stress such as techno-invasion which Gaudioso *et al.* (2017) define as "a sense of technology intrusiveness, which blurs desired boundaries between work and other life domains" (p. 189). Oh and Park (2016) identified that the emerging hyper-connected technology advancement world we live in is a factor for the development of the concept of techno-stress and therefore, WLC. Burnout, or more specifically put by Small and Vorgan (2008) a 'techno-brain burnout' (p. 19) or 'information overload' can be defined as, "the point where an individual's ability to process information reached its maximum" (Schick *et al.*, 1990, p. 200). However, burnout was not always related to technology; the term 'burnout' was originally coined by Freudenberger (1974) to describe a syndrome of psychological withdrawal from one's job relationships that occur, especially in the helping professions. This might be why the literature has had a particular focus on the health care industry when it comes to discussing burnout in roles (Lampert and Glaser, 2018; Landrum *et al.*, 2012; Schulz

et al., 1995). 'Technostress' is a similar illness to that of burnout, with a more obvious attachment to technology use and was originally coined by Brod (1982), who defined it as a situation resulting in difficulty adapting, stemming from the use of new technology by an individual or organisation. It is defined by Weil and Rosen (1997) as an effect of direct or indirect use of technology on human behaviour, thought, attitude and psychology. Burnout and technostress are common disorders characterised by some symptoms such as joint discomfort, headache, panic, anxiety, mental fatigue, and insomnia as documented by Coklar and Sahin (2011). This stress is not to be confused with anxiety over using technology, which is rather a symptom of technostress. It could be said that it is these conditions that are the driving force behind the new government laws and organisational policies that are being put in place as mentioned in the introduction chapter because if not addressed as early as possible it could cost a significant amount of money on employees suffering from technostress or burnout and needing a leave of absence making it a cause for concern.

By allowing employees to be more connected and responsive to work issues, Turel *et al.* (2011) highlight several negative outcomes that come from this, such as addiction, work overload, WLC and burnout. The capabilities of technology have created an expectancy of instantaneous replying in some workplaces, emails, in particular, have become an issue for some workers (Turel *et al.*, 2011). Thom´ee *et al.* (2010) identified that particularly for young people they experienced feelings of stress, guilt, and resentment from time pressures associated with receiving e-mails and prioritising them, this is because of a perceived idea that they can be in demand around the clock. As Perlow and Porter (2009) concur, "Responsiveness breeds the need for more responsiveness. When people are 'always on' responsiveness becomes ingrained in the way they work, expected by clients and partners, and even institutionalized in performance metrics" (p. 109). Smartphones in particular are referenced as having transformed the way business can be conducted, but also creating a culture where employees may increasingly feel the need to be available around the clock. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Barley, Meyerson and Grodal (2011) found some employees suffering from overload at work when they spent more time processing e-mails. Bird (2018) and Kotwinski (2016) recognise that constant availability from new technologies can have its advantages such as opening up the opportunity for flexible working but also this has led to additional stress where employees overwork or experience an increased workload (Chesley, 2010; Galinsky, Kim and Bond, 2001). This literature tells us that technology's ability to enable communication

with instant replies only encourages the 'always on' work culture and it tends to focus on the negative repercussions of overworking and WLC.

The culture of overworking can be found in various professions, such as health workers as mentioned previously but also, education, banking, law and media and advertising. In an article from The Economist, Cohen (2016) draws attention to a 2012 study by the University of Southern California that found every one of the 24 entry-level bankers they followed developed a stress-related illness (such as insomnia, alcoholism or an eating disorder) within a decade on the job. Another study Cohen (2016) highlights is a 9,000+ survey of financial workers in cities across the globe conducted in 2014 by eFinancialCareers, where the findings showed bankers typically working between 80-120 hours a week, with results of the majority surveyed feeling at least "partially" burnt out, and some countries reporting between 10% and 20% describing themselves as "totally" burnt out. There is a growing body of literature that recognises overuse of technology can be a hindrance on health and a potential cause for burnout, yet, so far, very little attention has been paid to the role of burnout as the dependency on technology within several occupations increases and in particular, those roles that have a heavier reliance on technologies. Swider and Zimmerman (2010) look at burnout at the individual level and conclude that personalities play a very important role, which suggests that these blanket policies that governments and companies are putting in place will not be suitable to meet everyone's needs.

Ter Hoeven *et al.* (2016) describe communication technology use (CTU), in the workplace as a paradox for employees between engagement and burnout, "as employees' CTU helps them gain the autonomy and flexibility to work anywhere at any time, they simultaneously lose autonomy due to the increased expectations of continuous connectivity and responsiveness that are also associated with CTU" (p. 242). They acknowledge that communication technologies, such as smartphones, have several positive outcomes in a workplace such as increased work satisfaction, effectiveness and engagement; however, they also understand that CTUs ability to interrupt the work process can lead to stress and deplete employees' wellbeing causing burnout.

Organisation resilience is "the ability to rapidly adapt and respond to business disruptions" (Lopes, 2016, p. 365) and tends to be a form of training put in place by companies to decrease the number of their employees suffering from burnout. It could also be seen as a way for organisations to make themselves less liable if an employee were to need time off from such illnesses of work-induced stress because they have offered and implemented the appropriate training. As Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011) point out, resilience can be measured as how competent one is as an employee, being able to show one is capable of dealing with large workloads could reflect on their professional identity. This training could also be said to be employed to prevent technology fatigue for those in more digital facing roles. Colbert, Yee and George (2016) propose future research in the effects of the growing use of technology by a digital workforce and also how recommendations can be made to provide guidance of how best to utilise and manage technology to the user's advantage.

As established in this section, burnout is an increasing cause for concern for employers and employees alike, and technology has been illustrated in the literature as being heavily associated with the cause behind workers experiencing symptoms of burnout and burnout itself. To counter falling victim to burnout, it is no surprise that we are seeing an increase in 'unplugging' behaviours involving the withdrawal from technology (Rauch, 2014) as a way to segment boundaries and manage demands.

2.3 The relationship between WLB and boundary theory
2.3.1 What is boundary theory?

Why do we create boundaries? Some literature argues as individuals, we invent conceptual divisions around geographic areas, events, people, and ideas to help create order and to simplify our environments and constructing differentiation within these social spaces imply boundaries and transitions (Clark, 2000; Gupta and Ferguson, 1992). In doing so, the study of this phenomenon has been termed boundary theory (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000) or border theory (Clark, 2000). Boundary theory is a development of frameworks intended to increase understanding concerning the ways in which individuals create and manage the boundaries which when applied to the work-family literature encompasses not just the physical, but cognitive and behavioural too (Hall and Richter, 1988). Boundaries are a way for people to segment areas of their lives and assign meanings to places such as home, work or Church (Nippert-Eng, 1996b) which may be referred to as domains. Different roles and identities are

how we act when associated within a particular domain e.g. home domain and being a parent role may be strongly linked. How integrated or separate we attempt to keep these life roles and facets determines where we position ourselves on an integration/segmentation continuum as conceptualised in boundary theory and label these groups as integrators or segmentors (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000; Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996b; Park and Jex, 2011). Boundary theory is a useful lens to address WLB literature and understand the practices that are being created to define the lines between work and home to help avoid conflict between these domains. Especially when WLC has been strongly associated with unfavourable outcomes from stress, high turnover, absenteeism, burnout and life dissatisfaction (Ahuja *et al.*, 2007; Eby *et al.* 2005; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006; Kreiner, 2006; Rice, Frone and McFarlin, 1992).

Boundaries have many characteristics which define how they can be blended or kept separate. Flexibility is to what degree how adjustable the spatial and temporal boundaries are between two or more domains (Hall and Richter, 1988) for example an organisation allowing an employee to adjust their working hours due to childcare is thought as flexible. Permeability is how much a role or domain allows one to be physically present in one but psychologically and/or behaviourally involved in another (Pleck, 1977; Richter, 1990, 1992) for example an employee not being allowed to take personal calls whilst at work would be considered an impermeable work role boundary. Work extending technology, such as smartphones and laptops have been said to improve productivity (Smith, 2005) and help in the goal of WLB (Cousins and Robey, 2005) therefore these mobile technologies offering the benefit of flexibility in completing work can be viewed as having positive outcomes on stress and satisfaction. However, mobile technology has also been criticised for being invasive and counterproductive (Hallowell, 2005; Jackson, 2007) as it can allow work to intrude during personal time and vice versa. This can be seen as WLC which can cause stress and have a negative impact on satisfaction and perceived balance.

Nippert-Eng (1996a; 1996b) noted two forms of boundary work, the first is boundary placement that visibly drew lines between the realms and the second is boundary transcendence, to help keep the boundary in place by allowing us to jump back and forth over it. To move from role to role or another domain, one must transition to the other. The management and movement of and across boundaries make this what I believe the most key

feature of boundary theory. Nippert-Eng (1996b) also discovered that roles can range from high segmentation to high integration and this differs for individuals in their work and home roles. The more integrated a role is the easier it is to move from one role to another because they no doubt overlap already. Hartmann (1997) found that there is a varying degree of thickness around these roles and categories too; a thick boundary represented a highly segmented role whereas a thin boundary can be found on highly integrated roles. The thickness of a border surrounding a role or domain can therefore vary the difficulty or ease in which one can transition across to another role or domain and this depends on factors such as permeability, flexibility, and the degree to which blending of activities is possible, and these may be stronger in one direction versus the other (Clark, 2000).

To facilitate transitions, certain rites of passage have emerged to help cross between segmented roles (Richter, 1990). These rites of passage were defined as rituals or ceremonies by Van Gennep (1960) that aided the movement from one role or domain into another. They can be either a micro transition, which occurs regularly such as a commute between home and work (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000), or macro transitions which are less frequent and can be considered a more permanent change such as becoming a parent or getting a promotion (Ashford and Taylor, 1990). Rites of passage are more common with macro role transitions, however, can apply to micro transitions but for these, they will be a more temporary, rather than permanent, state of change (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000). Van Gennep's (1960) rite of passage consisted of three main factors:

- Rites of separation – this is to facilitate exit from one role
- Rites of transition – this facilitates psychological (and, if appropriate, physical) movement
- Rites of incorporation – this is to facilitate entry into a new role

The micro transitions that Ashforth *et al.* (2000; 473) hypothesise are meant to be these frequent crosses between work and other domains. Without any empirical evidence, they suggest that these micro transitions are "difficult" because of "the effort required to become psychologically and physically disengaged from one role and re-engaged in another role" specifically focusing on those with a preference for segmented boundaries. This notion that transitioning across roles can be costly is supported by Carlson *et al.* (2015) and Smit *et al.* (2016) who state that transitioning is a "cognitively demanding task that depletes finite cognitive resources" (p. 2,143) and also by Matthews *et al.* (2010) who found that frequent

transitions can cause employees to experience increased work-family conflict (WFC). Hamilton *et al.* (2011) and Leroy (2009) also found frequent attention switching and multitasking to be cognitively effortful and therefore concluded that role transitioning caused depletion. Becker *et al.* (2018) argue that employees' well-being diminishes because of the frequent micro-transitions caused by work-related electronic communication after-hours that made them feel an obligation to shift roles in their non-work time. Although their study is one of the few to consider technologies in the act of transitioning, they only focus on the significant other and manager of an employee in their results.

Work and family roles and their intersection have been recognised as an important area of research within industrial and organisational psychology and sociology for several decades (Allen, 2013). An individual can embody several roles throughout the day, such as a parent, colleague, friend, employee, etc., none of which exist in a vacuum. However, there is the concept of domain centrality which is defined by Stryker and Burke (2000) as the degree to which an individual defines their self-concept regarding that specific domain. The more central a domain is Hobfoll (1998) states the more frequent you are to transition into that domain by allocating more resources to it, and less likely to transition out, by preventing resource loss from the said domain. Matthews and Barnes-Farrell. (2010) quite simply put that the more central to one's self-identity a domain is the more likely they are to maintain the boundaries that protect that domain. When demands from one domain interfere with the non-focal domain this type of transition is called a boundary violation defined as "an individual's perception that a behavior, event, or episode either breaches or neglects an important facet of the desired work-home boundary" (Kreiner *et al.*, 2009, p. 713). These unexpected transitions are also known as interruptions, intrusions or "an externally generated, temporary cessation in the current flow of behavior" (Van den Berg *et al.*, 1996, p. 236). As this field grows, and technology develops there are several new aspects to be considered, not least such as the role that technology plays in defining and challenging life roles and domains.

Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010) and Matthews *et al.*'s (2014) further research indicated that to deal with role overload employees used interdomain transitions, which are conceptualised as bidirectional and occur when resources are reallocated from one role or domain (the accommodating one) to another (the overloaded one). These interdomain transitions had costs of greater WFC in the short term but also recognised the benefits of less

role overload by using resources from the accommodating role (Duxbury *et al.*, 2008). Winkel and Clayton (2010) showed that those with greater role integration would frequently transition and this familiarity would create a regular practice over time which Monsell (2003) said should mean more efficient transitions due to developing a script that would reduce switching costs. Delanoeije *et al.* (2019) echo Monsell's findings by suggesting their results show how role transitions can serve as a resource to facilitate the combination of multiple roles to aid response to a particular domain's demands and therefore relate to less work-to-home conflict. However, we still know so little about transitions that occur in the digital landscape, with a particular lack of knowledge of transition and boundary management for workers in digitally focused roles.

Sometimes to transition into another role or domain people use symbolically self-relevant objects as tools such as clothes that represent a uniform in a place of work (Belk, 1988). Nippert-Eng (1996a) identified interesting behaviours and artefacts used to create, maintain and manage boundaries. At the time her study was published, she used the kind of analogue artefacts that people used then to define boundary work such as physical calendars and key chains and as such, technology was not considered. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) preferred the definition of boundary-crossing put forward by Suchman (1994) who introduced it as entering unfamiliar territory and combined that with Star's (1988; Star and Griesemer, 1989) definition of boundary objects that were less of aiding someone to cross over to another domain but rather bridging the intersections. Future work, including Star (2010), still does not address the notion of electronic devices as a boundary object.

What the literature does not tell us is how transitions are happening not only with modern technologies but how they are occurring within the online and virtual realms. We also do not know if rites of passage and the rituals previously mentioned differ when using modern technologies from traditional offline behaviours. It begs the question if you move something into the digital space, does it behave the same? The notion that we are always connected via our technological devices implies that we can be connected to another domain or role whilst physically being in another and yet we do not understand what this means for how we traditionally observe defined boundaries and transitions. It is important to explore this as understanding boundary crossing in the digital realm can potentially help us better manage our boundaries to suit our preference and overall, maintain an ideal WLB and avoid WLC.

2.3.2 Why boundary theory is interwoven with WLB

The number of women entering the labour force has practically increased in every nation sharply contrasting the old traditional family model where we saw women staying at home, usually to look after the children and a male breadwinner which is seeing a decline, which created the foundation of conversation around a need to balance work and home duties (Gattrell *et al.*, 2013). The societal change over the last four decades witnesses a shift to normalising the dual-earner couples' structure and therefore demanded a change in dynamics and share in domestic and family duties (Marks, 2006; Somerville, 2000), although this has not always happened in practice with childcare duties falling more heavily on women (Brannen, 2005; Craig and Powell, 2012) demonstrating WLB as being experienced unequally by men and women. Hochschild (1997) highlighted the struggle that some had at maintaining a balance with the demands of work and the stress of home life. There is a substantial amount of literature that covers the work–home, work-family or work life relationship. Across this literature, the major themes address the effects of (over)work on family life (Evans and Kelley, 2001; Pocock *et al.*, 2001); the opportunities offered by the market (or lack thereof), the role of gender, class and family variables within work–home transformations (Duxbury *et al.*, 1994; Gerson, 2004; Odih, 2003; Zeytinoglu and Muteshi, 1999); and the aspects of making work and home meaningful (Montgomery *et al.*, 2005). The research around WLB has grown and more recently, we have begun to explore how communication technologies blur the boundaries between work and non-work. The use of technology outside of normal work hours originally had good intentions for opening up the opportunity for flexible working but according to Kotwinski (2016) the role of digital technology, and the smartphone, in particular, has meant "work-life balance is at crisis point" (p. 18).

Previous research has noted that the current view of work-life balance is limiting as it assumes there are certain ideal quantities of work and life to be achieved (Roberts, 2008), however, work by Fonner and Stache (2012) builds on this and reveals that there may be no 'ideal' level of balance between work and life. Not everyone wants to work the traditional nine to five hours, Monday to Friday, and technology has been seen as a way in which workers can blur their boundaries. Nevertheless, technology has also been seen by academics as creating positive spillover by turning "homes into electronic work cottages, expanding work into family time, and the reverse" (Kossek and Lautsch, 2008, p. 153), allowing for the flexibility

that some employees desire. Online availability can be a help to working parents who welcome the ability to be always on and the timelessness of replying that enables them to juggle commitments (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Marshall and Barnett, 1993; Morris and Madsen, 2007). Having a positive attitude toward communication technologies was predicted to decrease work-life conflict (Wright *et al.*, 2014). There is much research that echoes work-life enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) but what is missing from the literature is what role technology may play in this and exactly if, and how workers are using modern technologies to manage their boundaries to achieve their ideal work-life balance.

Over the last two decades, there has been growing interest in popular media, government policy and academic research around the search for 'work-life balance'. The idea of balance is rooted in balance theory, as first described by Fritz Heider (1946), according to Heider, when people perceive important aspects of their life as being part of a system, they are inclined to maintain a state of balance among these elements. Work-life balance is understood by Kreiner *et al.* (2009) as an ideal equilibrium of well-being in all aspects of one's life, this definition is similarly echoed by Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) as the idea of spending equal time and being equally engaged in and satisfied with work and family roles. Other times 'balance' has been defined as being equated with the absence (or low levels) of conflict, or negative spillover, between work and family roles (Buffardi *et al.*, 1999). Roche (2015) provides an interesting historical reconstruction of balance research and uses Emslie and Hunt's (2009) metaphor to point out how this balance is often referred to as "a juggling act", where "some balls (roles) are larger (more demanding), some weigh more than others" (Roche, 2015, p. 18). How we juggle all these roles depends on many factors, some of which can have a positive impact on WLB (e.g. job satisfaction, telework), while others can negatively affect the balance (e.g. work overload and heavy job demands). Updated definitions in the literature now take into consideration that balance does not necessarily mean equal resources spent in each role, more that balance is when effectiveness in and satisfaction with work and family are consistent with one's life priorities (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011) and it is this definition that this thesis is referring to when WLB is mentioned.

Through the lens of boundary theory, WLB is discussed and how certain actions, attitudes and preferences cause work life enrichment or conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006), negative and positive spillover (Chen *et al.*, 2009; Chesley, 2005)

and the integration or segmentation of domains and roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996a; 1996b). The main interest in this area of the literature is how people manage their boundaries to create what they consider their ideal WLB (Duxbury *et al.*, 2008) which Clark (2000; 751) describes as, "satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with a minimum of role conflict"(p. 751). Each role often comes with its own expectations of time, attention, and resources. However, these many roles may often conflict with each other. "Work-life conflict occurs when the role demands in one domain interfere with meeting the demands of a role in another domain" (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2006, p. 436). Such conflict has been linked to several undesirable outcomes, such as burnout, absenteeism, and stress (Amstad *et al.* 2011; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Kreiner *et al.*, 2009). Hecht and Allen (2009) found individuals experience less WLC (or more specifically work-family conflict) for those that have strong (i.e. non-permeable) home and work boundaries. Employees may choose how flexible and permeable they want their boundaries in order to achieve their ideal WLB, however, if their preferred flexibility or permeability is not attained or must be changed due to other factors outside of their control this can cause WLC. Clark (2002) linked lower levels of WLC with boundaries that had high flexibility and low permeability and according to Edwards and Rothbard (1999) it is a matter of fit and maintaining preferred levels between actual and preferred boundaries saw employees experience lower stress and greater well-being. There is clearly some disparity between results that suggests there is no ideal, 'one size fits all' state and it could be down to individual needs and context.

The goal to maintain and achieve one's ideal WLB is to avoid scenarios that cause us to feel WLC. Regardless of where we position ourselves on Nippert-Eng's (1996a; 1996b) continuum and in which context, boundary theory suggests that those with less perceived control over their boundary strategies experience more challenging consequences (Kossek *et al.*, 2006; Kossek, 2016). These consequences come in different forms; one example might be dealing with emails outside of working hours, and as a result, feeling overwhelmed and compelled to reply. Hunter *et al.'s* (2017) study recently showed that boundary violations, meaning transitions that went against employees' boundary preference, mostly increased feelings of conflict, however, their results also demonstrated how boundary violations could be a form of other-domain support facilitating goals in the non-focal domain and enhancing positive reactions in the focal domain. It is when perceived boundary control is lacking that spillovers from one role to another are more likely to occur, causing interruptions that can distract us,

make us less productive (Jackson, Dawson, and Wilson, 2002, 2003) and ultimately, perhaps, more stressed (Kossek *et al.*, 2012).

2.4 Boundary strategies
2.4.1 Technology as a tool for boundary management

In current times, it has become easy to be constantly connected. Connected through mobile technology devices such as smartphones, connected on a multitude of communication channels and accounts, and connected with the many daily roles and demands that pervade both work and personal life domains. The blurring of work and non-work domains due to this era of accessibility and connectivity is growing therefore managing these boundaries is becoming increasingly important as we begin to see potential implications and benefits, from the overlapping of these domains particularly for those that wish to keep their roles segmented. As several studies have illustrated, lower stress, better wellbeing and greater role satisfaction came from those who maintained their ideal boundary preference (Bulger *et al.*, 2007; Chen *et al.*, 2009; Edwards and Rothbard, 1999; Kreiner, 2002).

Thirteen years after Nippert-Eng (1996a; 1996b) examined how to define the lines between work and home, Kreiner *et al.* (2009) developed her work by creating a table of tactics and strategies that could aid in retaining boundary preferences to an ideal state. In the said table, they classified four types of boundary work tactics: behavioural, temporal, physical, and communicative. Not only can these be looked at as tactics to manage boundaries but also as the approach taken to transition across domains. Behavioural transitions can be psychological or cognitive and could take the form of a number of ways, for example, getting a personal phone call whilst at work or even simply thinking about a work task whilst out at dinner with friends. Temporal is the clock striking that hour that represents clocking off from work and switching into home time mode. Physical transition is the movement from a location such as an office which represents the work domain to getting home which could represent a family domain. Lastly, a communicative transition is informing others in a way of managing their expectations that you have transitioned such as letting others know you are on holiday and not at work. Instilling some degree of structure such as temporal or spatial constraints, as well as other cues to structure role transitions, could help working and non-working arrangements and justifies the need to implement boundary management strategies. Under the category of behavioural, a tactic listed that is very relevant to this thesis is 'leveraging technology'. This

tactic is defined in the table as "using technology to facilitate boundary work" (p. 716). Apart from this small mention in their table, technology is not mentioned as a strategy for boundary management anywhere else in their paper. It must be taken into consideration the timing this paper was published, which was over ten years ago and agree a more detailed discussion around boundaries, modern technologies and how they are being managed and used in current times needs to be understood. A more recent look at boundary management strategies by Hirschi *et al.,* (2019) explores strategies with the aim of achieving work-family balance too by proposing an action regulation model, but once again there is no technological focus to their work. Technology plays a large and important role in professional lives and the literature has yet to factor in technological boundary work tactics in depth.

It could be said it is too simplistic to characterise people as either consistently segmentors or integrators when we know that different boundary management strategies may be adopted at different times (Golden and Geisler, 2007; Hecht and Allen, 2009; Hislop and Axtell, 2011). We know that some technologies are being used as a tool to manage work and non-work boundaries (Kreiner *et al.,* 2009; Hislop and Axtell, 2011) such as Golden and Geisler's (2007) participants who were using PDAs to manage their work-life interrelationships, instead of just a device for work. Mobile technologies such as smartphones are frequently releasing newer, more innovative models, each of these with new affordances and functions, which could mean their use in and out of the workplace could be constantly changing too (Cecere *et al.,* 2015; Kim *et al.,* 2015; Park and Chen, 2007) and these changes possibly affecting employees' boundary management strategies. This makes it imperative for the research and understanding to be continuously updated so current and changing practices of mobile technologies can be analysed. Understanding these practices can be beneficial to employees to create a better working environment that fits around a variety of lifestyles, and employers so wider conversations can be had to tailor around their employees and reduce potential high turnover and absenteeism.

The psychological importance of a role to one's self-identity is another factor affecting boundary management (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000; Clark, 2000) and thus, WLB. If an individual highly identifies with a particular role or domain, that person becomes committed to the focal domain and the values that role holds (Stryker, 1980). Just as different roles have different expectations, also different environments like work and home have strong (but often

contrasting) expectations around rules, behaviours, and attitudes (Clark, 2000). The tensions, the interactions, and the management strategies thus created around the role/environment border are an interesting area of investigation. How we choose our boundary preference, to either segment or integrate, can be influenced by several factors such as our job structure, the perceived benefits or disadvantages of clearly defined boundaries versus blurred ones and individual differences (Kossek *et al.*, 2006).

Earlier, in the Introduction chapter, I highlighted that many organisations and governments across the globe are looking to create new laws and guidelines to help employees reduce their working hours and connectivity to work networks, to what they deem necessary. Scholars emphasize the difference between policy availability and policy use (Kossek *et al.*, 2006), given that while policies may be available, not all employees may choose to take advantage of them. Smit *et al.* (2016) propose that employees should be allowed to cross boundaries whilst at work because restrictive policies and boundaries may discourage the formation of functional script creation which aids frequent transitions. Butts *et al.* (2015) instead recommend that workers should seek out employers with clear guidelines and policies for how they would like their employees to behave regarding their boundary management preferences. Whilst McCarthy *et al.* (2010) argue that it is the role of line managers and their behaviours that affects the success of WLB policy effectiveness within organisations. Several papers recommend that more formal policies should be created (Beauregard and Henry, 2009; Derks and Bakker, 2014; Wright *et al.* 2014), but perhaps it is that more guidance is needed for employees about what are and are not acceptable working practices i.e. emailing out of office hours and still expecting a reply versus emailing out of regular hours because you were working from home and are making up the two hours you took to deal with a tradesman coming over during the day. Although these studies have recognised that organisations have created WLB policies and that the 'one size fits all' approach does not work (Adame-Sánchez *et al.*, 2016; Darcy *et al.*, 2012), none have mentioned how technology fits into these guides for employees or their preferences when considering the use of digital tools in the workplace.

Teleworkers as a group have been studied thoroughly in the literature for their boundary management techniques and although they are described as often having a desire to integrate their domains to a degree (Tietze, 2002) their struggles to define the boundaries between work

and home have also been addressed. Most teleworkers studied find themselves having integrated boundaries and with no clear transition between roles and domains, it can lead to anxiety (Tietze and Musson, 2002) and WLC (Kossek *et al.*, 2006). There is also a concern of employees that telework getting distracted by domestic duties and experiencing family interference (Kossek *et al.*, 2006) whilst working from home. Furthermore, due to conducting some personal tasks during the working day whilst teleworking and sometimes for not having clear distinct boundary management strategies, employees who work from home are known to work past their traditional working hours (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2004) which reinforces the idea that "flexibility is helpful to a point but too much flexibility, especially for certain kinds of people, might be damaging" (Hill *et al.*, 1996, p. 298). Some teleworkers physically try to segment their domains by creating designated workspaces within the home like an office space or use physical transitions into working mode such as a closed-door or the use of particular equipment has been identified (Fonner and Stache, 2012; Mustafa and Gold, 2013). Fonner and Stache (2012) also found that teleworkers used work equipment such as laptops and phones as symbolic rites of passage to transition between work and home roles, in particular being connected to their work network and communicating their availability with other colleagues helped facilitate transitions and segment work from home life. They also posited that time is used as a cue for transitions such as lunch breaks and children's school routines, but how do these transitions operate with modern technologies that make us feel constantly connected? Even if we temporally try to segment our boundaries, it is possible that we are still cognitively thinking about another domain whilst trying to transition to another because we are still connected to a device that we carry across domains. What these studies do not observe is if the devices or the accounts accessed, e.g. email or social networks, are used for both work and personal communication, therefore the shift from home to work domain may not be as defined and clear cut.

Maier *et al.* (2015) observed that although technology makes it possible to remain constantly connected, it can make it difficult for employees who wish to segment the boundaries between their personal and professional lives which they identified as a key stressor to techno-induced work-home conflict. Blurred boundaries caused by technology such as using mobile devices for work whilst at home has been described as a techno-invasion or intrusion (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017) in the literature and a general association with this spillover as a negative one (Ahuja *et al.*, 2007; Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006), although Kühnel *et al.*

(2017) try to argue against this line of thinking. Nansen *et al.* (2010) study several connected homes as case studies and concluded that technology plays a critical role in shaping the spatial and temporal strategies of working-homes. They also described the idea of balance as an open and continual process flexing between segregation and integration but the do not comment on whether they consider technology as the key to WLB or WLC. Some of the literature argues that more permeable boundaries and preference for integration means a higher chance of achieving WLB (Clark, 2000; Derks *et al.*, 2016; Park and Jex, 2011) and therefore with the use of technology being strongly connected to creating more permeable boundaries (Duxbury *et al.*, 2014; Wajcman *et al.*, 2008), it could be suggested that technology may support one in achieving their WLB, although this relationship has not yet been explored in the literature. The idea of being 'constantly connected' suggests for employees there will be a spillover of work into their personal lives which much of the literature paints in a negative light leading to outcomes such as stress (Chesley, 2005; Shih *et al.*, 2013; Walz, 2012). Ultimately, the negative spillover is suggested to lead to WLC which, as already discussed, has been linked to stress and exhaustion (Salaff, 2002). However, it should not be assumed that this is the case for every employee, and it would be interesting to understand the current practices of CTU in the workplace for those that work more closely with technology or in a digital role to better understand their feelings and attitudes towards technologies in the workplace. Studying a group such as this would help to create learnings and best practice that could be shared across industries. Much uncertainty still exists about the relationship between technology as a boundary management tool to support or hinder individuals' goals to achieve WLB.

2.4.2 Disconnecting as a form of boundary management

Another approach to managing boundaries with the use of technology is the idea of disconnecting. To avoid the distractions and notifications that technology produces, practices have been noted in the literature such as turning off communications entirely or, allowing the interruptions but consciously make decisions on how to respond to said interruptions (Grandhi and Jones, 2010). The downside to this however is that desired or unknown but important notifications may be missed. Much of the disconnecting literature focuses on large scale strategies such as taking a digital detox or practices of switching off and unplugging for periods of time, even extreme cases such as digital suicide (Bittman, 2008; Foot, 2014; Gretzel, 2014; Lay, 2014; Pathak, 2016; Portwood-Stacer, 2012; Roberts and Koliska, 2014; White, 2013). Shaw and Black (2008) discuss that the best strategy for some people to manage their

technology consumption is to impose a ban on themselves. As early as 1999, Young noted that "more aggressive intervention is required when time management alone will not correct pathological Internet use" (p. 28) recommending management techniques such as 'setting goals' or 'abstinence'. These disconnecting practices could be described as macro refusals of technology use, whereas Ribak and Rosenthal (2015) call attention to "small scale preferences" or "micro-resistances" like "content filtering, screen-time limitation and social media rejection" (p. 7) which appears to be a very under-researched area, especially those that may be creating disconnecting practices in the workplace possibly as a form of segmenting their boundaries. It highlights a gap in the literature of whether, and how, employees are using technology to create (disconnecting) practices to aid their boundary control.

Helsper and Reisdorf (2016) identify that reasons for being non-users of the web and technology are different from non-users of the past; the reasons for digital disengagement are changing all the time, "conclusions about the nature of digital exclusions and their origin need to be contextualized." (p. 28). Kvasny and Keil (2005) support this noting, "even with the best intentions, digital divide initiatives will have limited success if they ignore the context." (p. 8). Previously people have avoided technology because they lacked the capital (Hilbert, 2010), lacked the access (Warschauer, 2003), did not have the appropriate skill set (Hargittai, 2002), the quality of their access was poor (Livingstone and Helsper, 2007) or they simply had no interest (Selwyn, 2004). Many of these reasons still exist however, more recently we are seeing an increase in feelings of addiction to digital communication technologies emerging as the common reason for wanting to unplug (Roberts and Koliska, 2014) and need to recover from the overwhelming demands of life. Bittman (2008) wrote in a New York Times article called 'I need a virtual break. No, really' about discovering a 'movement to unplug' over a decade ago and it is still a widely discussed topic in the literature today of how users are periodically or permanently abstaining from some or all Web use (Foot, 2014; Roberts and Koliska, 2014; Portwood-Stacer, 2012). Nonetheless, the relationship between disconnecting as a form of segmenting to support WLB has yet to be explored.

The concept behind the motivation for wanting to switch off for recovery existed long before technology such as smartphones existed. Sonnentag and Zijlstra's (2006) study identifies the need for recovery highlighting how individuals express the desire to "recharge [their] batteries" (p. 331) in everyday situations, as well as from the workplace. They talk about

taking a break to improve or repair ones' well-being from work and many other studies have noted how taking a break or holiday to rest or seeking to escape can lead to increased productivity, better wellbeing, improved fatigue and avoid burnout (de Bloom, 2011; Etzion, 2003; Pearce, 1993; Sonnentag and Zijlstra, 2006). Interestingly, there is an argument that relaxing or taking time off work can be detrimental to some people's health (Van Heck and Vingerhoets, 2007) due to struggling to switch off which they state can be dependent on how high a degree of commitment to their work they have (Burwell and Chen, 2002). This lack of switching off from work frequently can cause some employees to suffer from 'leisure sickness' so when they finally take time off, they actually become ill (Van Heck and Vingerhoets, 2007), Cooper (2002) echoes this idea stating, "Relaxing can be very stressful for a lot of people… because the day is unstructured, people have to re-establish relationships and spend time with their families." Could this be another reason why a blanket, one rule for all, put in place by Governments is not a suitable recommendation to deal with the issue of burnout in the workplace?

Cook (2015) avows that "intentional rest from communication technology is important to personal and planetary well-being" (p. 18) and Ugur and Koc (2015) concur as they discuss the misuse of mobile technology declaring that it is time for a digital detox. Dickinson *et al's.* (2016) paper focuses on digital (dis)connection, and the desire to remain connected or disconnect within a tourism setting. Their findings showed that their participants enjoyed switching off and saw it as a way to manage digital intrusion. The particular group they studied were camping tourists and this particular setting was chosen as it represents a place where many people choose to disconnect and "to engage with a simpler 'past time', that is devoid of the technological devices that proliferate in their day-to-day lives" (p. 195). This experience allowed guests to connect with nature and bond socially without the distractions found with regular technology use whilst having a break from any work demands. It is not just from work where a break is sought after, but also leisure occasions, Connelly (2014) mentions in Marketing Magazine the acronym JOMO (joy of missing out), which is a term used to confess relief from taking time and being glad to have missed certain social events, be more present, and in-the-moment, rather than feeling FOMO from what can be seen on others social media news feeds. Once again supporting a growing trend of switching off as a means for better wellbeing and rejecting the idea of the 'always on' culture.

The growing popularity in the terms 'digital detox' (Lay, 2014) and 'digital switch off' (Gretzel, 2014), reflect a retreat away from the 'always on' digital lifestyle by turning off or leaving behind technological devices that connect us to others. Thomas *et al.* (2016) highlight one benefit from unplugging discussed by their participants which were being able to engage in 'me time', a time for "self-reflection, solitude, and an opportunity to engage in pleasurable pursuits by themselves" (p. 547). White (2013) investigated three studies that explored digital detoxing. Across all studies, he noticed that participants were experiencing:

> "withdrawal symptoms when asked to stay offline for up to 24 hours. Participants in the studies reported 'shaking, tremors, and headaches,' as well as feeling 'upset and lonely' – classic physical and emotional symptoms of addiction, similar to those reported by smokers and coffee drinkers trying to quit their habits" (p. 415).

Explanations for the 'withdrawal symptoms' could be described to those similar to that of an addict or a lesser extreme view could be attributing that mobiles phones are now seen as an extension of one's self (Belk, 2013) so understandably someone would feel rather perturbed to have this removed from arm's length. Other studies that have tried to measure technology addiction by getting participants to hand over their mobile devices or ask them to try not to use any technology for a period of time left them feeling annoyed, agitated, insecure and experiencing some form of separation anxiety (Cheever *et al.*, 2014; Kamibeppu and Sugiura, 2005; Kins, Soenens and Beyers, 2013; Skierkowski and Wood, 2012), however, it must be noted these studies failed to have participants who wanted to willingly give up their technology for the research. Following White's (2013) research into existing studies, he continued his research by conduct a digital detox study himself. This detox involved students leaving all devices at home, to participate in only a ten-hour period without their phones. This study prompted a more positive outcome; with participants describing the ten-hour phone-free experience as 'liberating' and 'nice without the leash' (White, 2013, p. 421). Johansson *et al.* (2016) identify issues with sleeping when people use their phone just before going to bed, they suggest improving sleep habits by keeping mobile phones out of reach from the bed, even out of the room. However, a previous study by Black *et al.* (1999) showed that one-third of participants that had tried to cut back on their computer usage observed that it made them more anxious. With such mixed results, it is still undefined whether a break from technological devices improves personal wellbeing or not, which is why more research in this

area would be beneficial. These findings also show a disparity in feelings from disconnecting from technology, but could also suggest that shorter, perhaps temporary, breaks from technology may be viewed as more beneficial than previous longer separation periods.

Other studies that monitored participants who were required to switch off from technology said that they would have found it easier, or did find it easier when being allowed to notify friends and family that they were doing this activity (Roberts and Koliska, 2014; Thomas *et al.*, 2016). It is the feeling of *expecting* to always be connected that troubles them, even when they identify and recognise the negative effects of their dependence on technology, therefore the announcement of going off the grid to others alleviated feelings of anxiety from disconnection. What these studies neglected to consider is that these participants may have a preference for more integrated domains, therefore separating them from their devices meant they were unable to manage multiple demands causing them to experience WLC and the symptoms listed above. Existing research recognises the critical role played by disconnecting from technology as a form of recovery from the workplace and other stressful symptoms caused by constant connectivity, what is less clear is how individuals who do not have the luxury of switching off for long periods of time, or have no desire to disconnect, avoid burnout. Therefore, the motivations behind individual user disengagement and management of technology consumption need to be explored further.

Lawyers have been targeted in the literature as a group that have poor technology management and recommended to switch off more (Southward, 2014) or take a digital detox (Golding, 2014). This has been suggested because as a particular career group, they are apparently more prone to becoming burnt out from allowing domain overlap with their work infiltrating their leisure time due to demanding clients and an "overdeveloped need for instantaneous gratification" (Golding, 2014, p. 1) which is not just receiving replies but sending them too. It starts the debate of whether some certain careers or industries could be more susceptible to burnout because of reasons such as demanding clients and the need to be constantly connected. Lee *et al.* (2016) identify that some users of SNS might have difficulties managing their communication more than other users causing one user to feel more fatigued than another. This insinuates that certain users might be more susceptible to digital fatigue, and perhaps also burnout than others. What is still not understood is if there are strategies that one can put in place using technology to help avoid burnout.

One strategy put forward by Colbert, Yee and George (2016) was suggesting to condition individuals to use technology more consciously, which puts the responsibility of a disrupted WLB in the hands of the user changing their behaviours, but what if technology was designed differently, to be less intrusive. Mark Weiser (1993) coined the term 'ubiquitous computing' whilst working on a project at Xerox PARC he defines the term as:

> "[the] next-generation computing environment in which each person is continually interacting with hundreds of nearby wirelessly connected computers. The point is to achieve the most effective kind of technology, that which is essentially invisible to the user … I call this future world Ubiquitous Computing" (p. 12).

Weiser (1991) believed the answer to overcoming the problem of information overload was ubiquitous computing. He was a very forward-thinking academic who argued *for* computers. However, he also made a strong case that computers should not be obtrusive or interrupting, stating the best kind of technologies are those that disappear and are almost indistinguishable from everyday life.

> "By pushing computers into the background, embodied virtuality will make individuals more aware of the people on the other ends of their computer links. This development may reverse the unhealthy centripetal forces that conventional personal computers have introduced into life and the workplace. (p. 104)"

Thinking back to the mental and physical health issues that have been documented in the literature from those that have suffered from technostress and burnout (Brillhart, 2004; Champion, 1988; Harper, 2000; Rosch, 1994; Salanova *et al.*, 2013; Tu, Wang and Shu, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2015), it could be said that this kind of stress-induced through technology use is imposing a worrying impact on our daily lives and strengthens the literature's argument that switching off from technology and segmenting domains is better for overall WLB.

2.5 Chapter summary

To summarise, I have outlined the main concepts that makeup boundary theory and brought attention to how it is very much intertwined with WLB literature. It has also been made clear how the literature depicts technology as mostly having a negative impact on WLB being listed numerous times as a cause of WLC. The current literature also focuses on the segmentation of

domains and role tasks as a more positive route to WLB, with many studies positing a negative slant about domain spillover. Previous research has noted that the current view of WLB is limiting as it assumes there are certain ideal quantities of work and life to be achieved (Roberts, 2008), however, work by Fonner and Stache (2012) builds on this and reveals that it is possible there is no 'ideal' level of balance between work and life. Not everyone wants to work the traditional nine to five hours, Monday to Friday, and technology has been seen as a way in which workers can blur their boundaries. In fact, having a positive attitude toward communication technologies was predicted to decrease WLC (Wright *et al.*, 2014). There is much research that echoes work-life enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) but what is missing from the literature is what role technology may play in this as the online medium brings its own idiosyncrasies and we are yet to see research that discusses technology use and boundary preference.

Current literature describes digital devices and analogue boundaries as more of an organisational tool, to help manage the flow of demands from other roles or step into (transition across) one role from another. The literature postulates that technology makes boundaries more permeable and therefore is a cause of unwanted intrusions, interruptions, boundary violations and WLC. These transitions forced by technology have been described as having the switching cost of being cognitively effortful which is a cause of stress for the user. As established previously, the symptoms and withdrawal issues from spending such a significant time online have been associated with many negative outcomes and yet the digital workforce is ever increasing. Much of the literature implies technology is integrated into all workplaces and its intrusive nature blurs boundaries which the literature has depicted as stress and cause for WLC. Little research has investigated whether ubiquitous stress from technology is actually the case for all concerned, and how these, for example with sophisticated digital skills, manage their WLB in a constantly connected landscape.

The literature also has an abundance of research of those that are using technology excessively, even categorising some users as internet and technology addicts, and how this time spent online has a negative impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. What it fails to cover are those that need to use technology extensively for work, such as those in the digital industry with digital virtual jobs. If the literature about heavy online users is black and white, then all those working in digitally extensive roles should be suffering from techno-burnout or be classified as internet addicts. How is this growing industry maintaining their WLB, if they

are? Are they all on the brink of burnout? Or does this highly skilled group develop strategies for effectively managing technology and its impact on WLB?

Following the literature just discussed, brings me to my first of two research questions of this study:

1. How are digital tools affecting SMPs preferred boundary preferences?

It has been understood that one size does not fit all and that many companies do not even have a policy in place for attaining or being mindful of WLB. Boundary preference has also been shown to sometimes conflict with workers' WLB so discussing attitudes behind technology use and maintaining boundary preference may potentially bring to light similar findings across individuals that can be helpful for companies creating bespoke WLB policies or generally just better understanding the needs of their employees. Is it still as black and white as positioning ourselves in such a regimented manner at either end of Nippert-Eng's (1996a; 1996b) continuum or, with the infiltration of digital tools in our everyday life, is this affecting boundary preferences?

Much of the literature suggests implementing strategies (Fuglseth and Sørebø, 2014; Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017; Hirschi *et al.*, 2019) to cope with technostress, avoid burnout and help manage WLB. However, the literature has yet to evidence the exact ways this should be done. Therefore, I propose the second of my two research questions:

2. What strategies are SMPs implementing with technology to manage their work and non-work boundaries and roles?

Finding the answers to these questions will be important because by studying a group such SMPs that use technology extensively for work we can perhaps learn from their practices and these could be disseminated to those in less digitally extensive roles to help them avoid burnout. In the next chapter, I turn to discuss how I explored these research questions in terms of methodological design.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter first describes the epistemological lens followed by a justification of the sample chosen and the selection process. The research approach is introduced including data collection in the form of in-depth interviews and shadowing, including with an overview of the ethnographic location. Subsequently, an explanation on how the data was organised and analysed is addressed. Then finally, ethical considerations are regarded, comprising a brief explanation of my role as the researcher, reflexivity and what actions were taken to ensure this data is as valid and reliable as possible.

Social constructivists argue that individuals co-construct, manage and negotiate boundaries around their roles through social interactions (McKinley, 2015). As Kreiner *et al.* (2009) point out, boundary theory offers a valuable lens to study work-home boundaries within the social-constructivist approach. Therefore, I selected constructivist grounded theory (CGT) as the most pertinent qualitative methodology for this study because it offers a systematic and rigorous approach to data collection and analysis that allows for the construction of a theory that is grounded in participants' views and experiences (Charmaz, 2000; 2006; 2008). It is also a subjective ontology and is interpretivist in its epistemology, whilst adopting a qualitative methodology which is ideal for this study as I do not seek to measure impact or causality but understand the feelings and attitudes that SMPs have in the role technology plays in their boundary management strategies.

Adopting an interpretive qualitative approach based on social constructivism asserts that reality is socially constructed and that single events have 'multiple realities' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) or multiple social realities (Charmaz, 2003; Charmaz, 2006). It is assumed that each individual constructs multiple realities because of their own different interactions with the same social phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Rather than searching for one overarching concern, constructivist research, therefore, allows for multiple truths to be perceived because of the emphasis on capturing multiple participant perspectives. This study does not seek to generalise findings or test hypotheses but focuses on providing and collecting thick descriptions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) which this approach is most suitable for.

In contrast to classic grounded theory (GT), CGT is rooted in pragmatism and relativist epistemology and whilst CGT adopts GT guidelines as tools, it does not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions in its earlier formulations (Charmaz, 2008). It assumes that neither data nor theories are discovered but are constructed by the researcher as a result of their interactions with the field and its participants. CGT places priority on the studied phenomenon over the methods of studying it, uses original GT strategies as tools, not as prescriptions, and acknowledges the researcher's role in interpreting data and creating categories (Charmaz, 2003; Charmaz, 2014).

The researcher cannot be purged from data collection and analysis as both are "created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 239). Therefore, there is an understanding that by taking a CGT approach, before conducting my fieldwork I had prepared research questions and was familiar with the theoretical perspective. Specific to my study, the social constructivism lens facilitates the analysis of how a career in the digital/virtual industry and the social contexts are intertwined (Cohen, Duberley, and Mallon, 2004) and a CGT approach "recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510), which has been used successfully in past boundary research (Gardner and McCutcheon, 2015; Kreiner *et al.*, 2009; Murphy and Kreiner, 2020).

This research intends to build upon already existing boundary theory by exploring the use of digital tools and the digital landscape in more depth. The research questions of this study are reiterated along with how the methodology has been designed to allow the aim to be addressed. The questions were to investigate:

1. How are digital tools affecting SMPs preferred boundary preferences?
2. What strategies are SMPs implementing with technology to manage their work and non-work boundaries and roles?

A quantitative methodology was considered for this study, but a qualitative style of data collection can provide much more detailed information than what is provided through other data collection methods, such as surveys. A qualitative approach was chosen over a quantitative one because this study does not determine what needs to be 'found out' from reviewing existing scientific knowledge nor did it aim to solve a problem through particular

scientific theories and concepts (Silverman, 2016). According to Tewksbury (2009) a quantitative methodology "is typically considered to be the more 'scientific' approach. The focus is on using specific definitions and carefully operationalizing what particular concepts and variables mean", whereas a qualitative methodology provides "more emphasis on interpretation and providing consumers with complete views, looking at contexts, environmental immersions and a depth of understanding of concepts" (p. 39). The author's dual representation of both methodologies draws clear attention to why a qualitative approach was more appropriate for this study. Furthermore, they allow the researcher to gain an insight into participants' experiences, perceptions and/or attitudes towards a research topic (Grunig, 1990; Hennessy and Heary, 2005).

Qualitative methods are useful for exploring a person's thoughts and behaviours and investigating new issues in depth. It can be more subjective, based on smaller, targeted sample sizes and is more concerned with 'how' and 'why' questions (Saffer, 2010). Qualitative methods also allow for a more fluid, evolving and dynamic style of data collection unlike the structured designs of quantitative methods (Corbin, 2015). As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state, "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena, in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). This is a more appropriate method for this research as the aims and questions require an understanding of the nature and make-up of the area being researched, rather than to measure the size and shape of it (Birn *et al.*, 1990). Bauer and Gaskell (2000) state that "the real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue" (p. 41). This notion is supported by Hennink *et al.* (2011) who state that this approach "allows you to identify issues from the perspective of your study participants, and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events or objects." (p. 9).

CGT "attends to gathering detailed data and treats both data and data collection as located in temporal, spatial, social and situational conditions. Constructivists also take into account both researchers' and research participants' starting point and standpoints and remain alert to how and when these shift during inquiry" (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011, p. 298). What this reminds us is that what we define as the data we collect using this method is a shared construction between researcher and participant, and is attuned to subjectivity (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011). An interpretive approach was the most appropriate for this study as Crotty (1998) explained people engage in social interaction whilst presupposing reality and meaning is then

created. As a qualitative researcher interested in exploring and describing how people construct meaning through their worlds and trying to understand how they interpret their experiences and attribute meaning to those experiences (Merriam, 2002) adopting an interpretive approach was clearly the most suitable choice.

3.2 Participants and Recruitment Process

As research into working professionals' online social networking practices is exploratory at this time it was decided to focus this research on one professional group: social media practitioners. The choice of the sample was motivated by communication and marketing professionals' familiarity and extensive use of digital and social media in a work domain. Eyrich, Padman and Sweester (2008) found that communication professionals employ a wider variety of social media than any other category of corporate and government employees. The research involved two phases of data collection; 1) interviews and 2) shadowing, with social media practitioners being the selected group for both phases because these roles sit in a digital/virtual space and this area and job role has yet to be explored in boundary theory literature. Also, like priests (Kreiner *et al.*, 2009), distinguished professors (Beigi *et al.*, 2019), the Canadian legal industry (Boiarintseva and Richardson, 2019) and NGO employees (Siegert and Löwstedt, 2019), I argue that SM practitioners are a "special case". These authors argue, using an extreme case is "often tremendously helpful for building or elaborating theory, since their dynamics tend to be highly visible, bringing into sharper focus the processes that can exist in other contexts" (Kreiner *et al.*, 2009, p. 707).

As it is impractical and uneconomical to collect or attempt to collect data from every person in a whole population, a sample of the chosen population had to be selected for my research (Bowling, 2002). The participants had to meet certain criteria that were that they: owned a smartphone, worked as a social media practitioner and had social media accounts for both work and personal use.

The selection of the interviewees was based on an initial convenience sampling followed by snowball sampling. Contact with some participants was achieved via my industry contacts and others obtained through colleagues and participants who circulated the study information in a call for participants (see Appendix A). The participants were recruited with the aim to try having a varied spread of ages and gender split to see if the data highlights a

skew towards one gender and to measure if there are common traits between generations within this study. Unfortunately, the use of non-probability snowball sampling likely influenced the disproportionate number of female respondents in the sample and the majority of participants were aged in their 20s and 30s apart from a couple of anomalies. See Table 1 below for information about the participants that have been interviewed. Participants have been given pseudonyms using a website called www.babynamewizard.com/voyager which provides popular baby names around the year the participants were born.

Table 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Industry	Location	How	Minutes
Payton	Female	22	Music	Southampton	F2F	39:58
Jeremy	Male	29	Higher Ed	Southampton	F2F	55:23
Edna	Female	55	NPO	Midlands	Phone / Skype	40:41
Elizabeth	Female	24	Higher Ed	Southampton	F2F	39:16
Stephanie	Female	28	Higher Ed	Southampton	F2F	38:14
Sierra	Female	26	Higher Ed	London	F2F	52:49
Luke	Male	23	Sports	London	F2F	32:17
Brooke	Female	30	Charity	London	F2F	44:22
Miranda	Female	25	Media	London	F2F	39:06
Crystal	Female	23	Charity	London	F2F	48:25
Kelsey	Female	29	Travel	London	F2F	41:02
Amber	Female	27	Arts	London	F2F	30:17
Veronica	Female	27	Arts	London	F2F	47:56
Dustin	Male	29	Cars	Winchester	F2F	48:31
Lauren	Female	21	Cars	Winchester	Phone / Skype	29:17
Austin	Male	25	Charity	London	F2F	41:22
Maria	Female	28	Hospitality	Bournemouth	F2F	57:51
Matthew	Male	21	Hospitality	Bournemouth	F2F	43:06
Gloria	Female	48	Arts	Southampton	F2F	47:39

Scott	Male	28	Charity	London	F2F	51:06
Ariel	Female	30	Gaming	London	F2F	37:10
Ashley	Female	27	Charity	London	Phone / Skype	28:14
Logan	Male	32	Consultancy	Southampton	Phone / Skype	65:20
Ryan	Male	29	Finance	London	F2F	40:21
Molly	Female	28	Charity	Southampton	Phone / Skype	32:33
Brandi	Female	24	Higher Ed	Southampton	F2F	34:43
Shawn	Male	36	Music	Southampton	F2F	73:30
Jason	Male	33	Arts	Southampton	F2F	42:02
Kimberly	Female	32	Media	Southampton	Phone / Skype	29:45
Eric	Male	39	Media	Southampton	F2F	46:32
David	Male	33	Media	London	Phone / Skype	41:45

Table 1 – Participant information for interviews

For the ethnography, the participants that were observed needed to meet the same criteria as the interviewees so comparisons could be made from the observation data versus the self-reported data. Participants for shadowing were chosen based on the ethnography site that was selected due to my connection to and employment at the agency and that they have a social team. A team of social media account managers were considered to be most knowledgeable about the culture of technology use in boundary management and they were able and willing to act as representatives in revealing and interpreting that culture. This study adopted non-probability sampling, more specifically purposive sampling for this part of the study. This method of sampling was most suitable because there were specific selection criteria that needed to be met and this study does not seek to generalise but explore the lived experiences with a view to producing thick descriptions from which a deep understanding of these experiences can then be gained (Creswell, 2007; 2009; Thompson *et al.*, 1989). Therefore, this group form the sampling frame and purposive sampling was implemented for this phase of the study. See Table 2 below for information about the participants that have been observed. Participants have been given pseudonyms.

Table 2

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Industry	Location
Stacy	Female	30	PR	London
Oscar	Male	24	PR	London
Brian	Male	20	PR	London
Emma	Female	25	PR	London
Brittney	Female	26	PR	London

Table 2 – Participant information for shadowing

The selected participants are not a sample that will represent the population but a selection of participants that aim to gain a wider variety of experiences through varying demographic characteristics (Bryman, 2008). Not only does this study focus on one particular profession but I recognise that there are also people in rural, remote or poor areas of the country that do not live in the same digitally connected world. Therefore, it is understood that they are not representative of the experience of all social media practitioners.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection included two different phases; in-depth interviews and ethnography. First, 31 semi-structured interviews were carried out with SMPs between April-May 2019 across a variety of industries and second, an ethnography made up of different participants from a social media team at the agency, Matter, were observed during the month of August 2019. An interpretive ethnographic approach allowed for the simultaneous collection of data through participant observation and field note generation and in-depth interviews (O'Reilly, 2012) deeming these methods appropriate for gaining a better understanding of how boundaries and role identities are managed in the online realms and digital/virtual jobs.

Charmaz and Bryant (2011) state that "Constructivist GTM emphasises choosing data collection methods that fit the research question and gathering sufficient data to construct credible analysis to fulfil the research goals." (p. 298). Given my background in a similar role and the industry, I believe CGT aided me to stay as close to the meanings as possible and help the participants open up about potential issues they had in their roles like I was 'one of them'. Adopting CGT I was able to make links and develop and advance themes from the meanings the participants gave to their experiences.

3.3.1 Interviews

The first qualitative method selected for this study were interviews as they attempt "to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations." (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1). They're especially suitable when exploring everyday practices that are not well understood and for unearthing potential new connections that had not been considered before. Alternative primary research methods such as focus groups and questionnaires were considered, but the ability of semi-structured interviews to "obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 11) made it undoubtedly the most appropriate research method to adopt for this study. Focus groups are usually used after considerable research on a topic has already been completed (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956) which is not in line with this study where the key data will derive from the initial fieldwork. In addition, this research required the collection of individual stories and experiences without the group influence factor as well as using probing or laddering techniques as part of the data collection process, which requires a direct correspondence of specific findings to specific participants; this can be difficult to perform in a group setting. Focus groups tend to be more useful when consensus or debate is required to explore disparate views or when you want people to work in teams which this study does not need (Blumer, 1969; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Patton, 2002).

A semi-structured interview approach was used as this allowed for a more detailed temporal narrative, but still be loosely based around a previously devised set of themes (Bartlett and Milligan, 2015). This style of interview structure was chosen for this study as it allowed "much more space for interviewees to answer on their own terms than structured interviews" (Edwards and Holland, 2013, p. 29) and allowed each respondent to elaborate upon issues they deemed as being important (May, 2001). However, it also provided enough structure that comparisons could be drawn across interviews by encouraging the sample to bring forward their insights voluntarily. As stated above, this method created opportunities to probe and engage respondents in projective techniques - enabling me to tap into the sample's deep motivations, beliefs, attitudes and values.

Semi-structured interviews usually use a 'guide' (see Appendix B) comprising of questions and topics that should be covered during the conversation (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). This

question guide complemented the research as it allowed me to casually structure questions (Cohen *et al.*, 2007), listen attentively to the discussion, prompt participants (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) and encourage participants to talk freely (Newton, 2010). This allowed for flexibility to stray from the guide when felt it was appropriate, in order to follow the topical trajectories that emerged from participants' responses (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) enabling the researcher to investigate further relevant points of inquiry that arose. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, allowed for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent to the researcher (Gill *et al.*, 2014). The more unstructured the approach, the more likely the information gathered is from the perspective of the participant, whereas the more structured the interview, the more likely this is to reveal information from the perspective of the researcher (Steen and Roberts, 2011).

Interviews took place face-to-face to take advantage of social cues, such as voice, intonation, body language etc. of the interviewee which can help aid further probing into a particular answer (Opdenakker, 2006). Face-to-face interviewing also creates the advantage of synchronous communication so that the answer of the interviewee is more spontaneous, without an extended reflection and the interviewer can react instantly to ask for more detail or elaboration on an answer. It also allowed for the interviewee to demonstrate actions normally done on their technological devices when needed. These enacted scenes can provide a quick virtual ethnography of how they navigate and use their devices (James *et al.*, 2016). Detailed descriptions of their experiences were encouraged and in an attempt to assure that issues are generated by the participants themselves and how they explore and represent their own worlds. Care was taken to avoid leading questions or the introduction of new topics which participants may not otherwise bring up (Berent, 1966). For instance, I had to be careful not to presume their boundary preferences by asking questions such as how it made them feel if they received work notifications outside of working hours instead of assuming that if they had not switched them off or put their phone away they clearly did not mind having integrated boundaries.

3.3.2 Ethnography: shadowing

To delve into the lifestyles of participants and how their current attitudes and beliefs tie into larger cultural boundary constructs, the second phase of this study performed the practice of ethnography. Ethnography employs methods of observation and richly describes activities

and norms situated in social and cultural contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Ng *et al.*, 2013). Ethnography is a research tool that comes from the discipline of cultural anthropology and is based on the simple premise that to truly understand human behaviour you need to witness it first-hand. Ethnography allows for thick, detailed description of actual behaviour (Geertz, 1973), and is, therefore, one of the most informative approaches in learning 'how things work' within a particular culture (Van Maanen, 2011a; Watson, 2011), furthermore, the embeddedness of a researcher allows for more "rounded, holistic explanations" (Goulding, 2005, p. 303). Van Maanen (2011b) describes ethnography as an interpretive methodology and "the practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others" (2011b, p. xiii); to uncover the deeper structures that guide a culture it is necessary to live among the participants. According to Charmaz, Thornberg and Keane (2008) "Constructivist grounded theory involves establishing intimate familiarity with the setting(s) and the events occurring within it – as well as with the research participants" (p. 419), thus only by living among them is it possible to learn what people do versus what they say they do and the why; any underlying motivation behind people's actual behaviour. Ethnographic field work, therefore, involves going into people's natural settings versus studying people in a controlled environment (Murchison, 2010; O'Reilly, 2009; Silverman, 2016; Scott and Garner, 2013).

An ethnography allowed for observation of the participants' relationship with mobile technology whilst in the workplace. An ethnographic approach not only helped to see practices informants might not identify in interviews but also make abstractions concrete by locating them in particular contexts. This method made it possible to take account of all incidents as well as in the context in which they occur and therefore gain a better understanding of the lived experience of the participant. With this type of methodology, a running dialogue between participant and myself was applied throughout the data collection to ask how the participants felt they manage their boundaries and technology use as well as discuss observations made during the ethnographic process. Analysis for ethnographic data varies from most data collection methods in that the stages of data collection, analysis and writing up within ethnography are inextricably linked (Ezzy, 2002; O'Reilly, 2012). Becker (1970, p. 27, cited in O'Reilly, 2012, p. 182) calls analysis for this type of method sequential, "important parts of the analysis being made while the researcher is still gathering his [sic] data." The beginning of analysis started in the diary kept and amongst field notes, another

layer of analysis came from the interrelationship between me, the data itself and the research participants (Charmaz, 2008). Taking the field notes and informal analyses back to the participants to ask for feedback helped develop the analysis through their comments making the whole process iterative-inductive (O'Reilly, 2012). By fitting observations to categories, when new observations arose, choices were made as to whether to retain, revise, or discard particular categories or category sets. On a particular occasion of observation, a Google chat box appeared with the name of someone else in the office which was unusual as the office used Slack for internal messaging, I simply observed that they used a different messaging service but the participant corrected me and said that it was for her real work pals and non-work chat which they used to use a different platform but now the office was using Google Suite she was more likely to see these messages. Had I not pointed out the G chat notification I would not have understood the use of this service for an inner work circle domain.

Organisational ethnography has recently attracted a lot of interest because it has the capacity to uncover aspects of mundane everyday organisational life that otherwise might remain hidden (Kunda, 2013; Rouleau *et al.*, 2014; Van Maanen, 2011b; Vesa and Vaara, 2014; Watson, 2011). In general, organisational ethnography refers to studying the experiences of people working in a given organisation, intending to understand their experience and offering detailed accounts of organisational life. Shadowing is a type of ethnography that has been described as "observation on the move" (Czarniawska, 2014, p. 43) where researchers follow their target participant as they go about their everyday business. Quinlan (2008) describes shadowing as a useful data collection technique for institutional ethnography and McDonald (2005) concludes that this is an under-utilised method in the study of organisations but it can provide "unique insights into the day-to-day workings of an organization because of its emphasis on the direct study of contextualized actions" (p. 470) making it an ideal methodology for the second phase of this research. As stated in Beigi and Shirmohammadi's (2017) review of qualitative research on the work-family in the management field, "participant observation and life history interviewing were rarely used as prominent methods of data collection" (p. 31) and also grounded theory has been neglected to theoretically study work-family areas too. Therefore, by choosing this unique angle to approach data collection in this field I have untapped potential new evidence that has been neglected in the current literature and can hopefully provide new insights.

Bøe *et al.*'s (2017) study showed how fruitful shadowing is in providing thick descriptions because of its intimate and exhausting nature of data collection. Echoing why this strategy of

observation is advantageous is McDonald (2005) who identified that shadowing can produce detailed, first-hand data which participants may normally find hard to articulate in an interview if they do not think the researcher is interested in the trivial or mundane. It also allows elements to be noticed that may have become routine for the participants which again may not have been revealed in an interview (Patton, 1990) which is especially relevant for technology use.

This type of observation methodology has been perceived to yield a variety of data and different insights similar to that of using interview techniques (McDonald and Simpson, 2014), which makes this an ideal methodology to complement phase one. Other advantages of this methodology and why it was suitable for this study is because "the unit of analysis is not the individual, but the social relation; positions are explored within a complex of inter-related tasks" (Quinlan, 2008, p. 1,482) and shadowing has the ability to capture the interrupted nature of organisational life (Weick, 1974) therefore not only can the participant's actions be observed but how they interact with others and their environment which is beneficial to better understanding boundary management in the workplace.

In order to formulate a clear guide for the interviews which asked an unambiguous set of questions, and therefore would be capable of collecting rich data, a pilot study was necessary (Kothari, 2004). Pilot studies are a crucial element of a strong study design. Although conducting a pilot study does not guarantee the success of the overall study, it does, however, improve the likelihood with increased validity (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). The pilot study consisted of 4 interviews, using members from the target sample increases the probability that the final study would be successful (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002) and it was decided that few changes were needed once the interviews were played back. Changes involved reordering the questions to create a better flow and interview experience for the next participants that made the questioning feel more natural. Also, making sub-questions into main ones such as "What are your thoughts on the 'always on' culture?" because whether or not a participant was part of the 'always on' culture, the topic always provided a fruitful response and naturally was always touched upon in some way. When asking participants to describe an average day or weekend I added "From the moment you get up, to the moment you go to sleep" as in the first few interviews respondents would start from the moment they got to work and I was interested in the moments before they entered the work domain. It was also important to say "sleep" and not "bed" as respondents would sometimes describe behaviours they did when they had gone to bed but not yet gone to sleep. Adjusting some

questions to have a specific technological angle so the answers were more focussed and tailored to the online realms that this study is exploring was necessary as it was found in the first four interviews that sometimes the participant would digress, making it difficult to return to the interview topics and breaking up the flow of the discussion.

All of the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and the length of the interview varied from 28 to 67 minutes. The location of the interviews took place wherever was most suitable, convenient and comfortable for the interviewee, this included their homes, coffee shops near they worked, in the cafeteria of their workplace, in spare meeting rooms at their workplace or over the phone or Skype.

The results began to reach saturation and common themes had appeared after conducting 28 interviews, with another few already scheduled I interviewed 3 more to bring the total to 31 to ensure now new categories were emerging. The "subsequent data incidents that [were] examined provide[d] no new information" (Locke, 2001, p. 53) and this idea of continuing until no new information is forthcoming or nothing new is heard is supported by Ezzy (2002), Higginbotham *et al.* (2001) and Patton (2002). Marshall *et al.* (2013) found that once a study's saturation point is reached, the quality of the data begins to diminish.

The ethnography study was conducted within a single site, Matter, a digital marketing and PR agency in London during August 2019. To keep in line with the sample interviewed in phase one, 5 members of the social team at this organisation were the focus of this phase and observed for 2 full working days. Participant observation provided the opportunity to undertake research in a familiar social environment, being immersed in the lived, human experience whilst focusing on local interpretation (Geertz, 1973). I was able to observe day-to-day working activity and interactions between the social team and the rest of their office colleagues. Verbal consent was obtained daily for researcher participant observation and written consent was obtained prior to the first day of the observation study. Collection of data for ethnography is a process of observing and taking field notes and/ or a diary. Data for ethnography can be fleeting making it essential to record first-hand information and observations before it disappears or dissipates. (Murchison, 2010).

Several devices were used to record and manage field information. A combination of several notebooks, a diary, my laptop computer, a desktop computer in the office, and my smartphone was utilised in different circumstances, depending on the type of activity under observation. During the ethnographic data collection, the tape recorder was not in use the

whole time with the aim to be as unobtrusive as possible in their working environment, however, as Gill *et al.* (2014) stipulate, it is impossible to be invisible for a shadowing researcher. When I was unable, or it was unsuitable to be on a mobile device I would use Schultze's (2000) system of taking head notes, this required storing any conversations or exchanges that were noteworthy and when an opportunity arose making short notes where possible. For example, often in the office, I would be able to make notes on my computer, both general notes relating to the premises or events of the day as well as more quickly typed, real-time notes as conversations occurred or as work was being carried out. In meetings, I often made hand-written notes on notepads or an app on my smartphone, as this was the norm for these situations. When conducting informal interviews or chatting in the pub after work, I would make brief audio or written notes on my smartphone for review and expansion the following evening or morning. The first time this happened, I had not noticed that although at a social occasion I was still in 'researcher' mode and before I wrote any notes down, I waited for a lull in the conversation to ask my colleagues if they could give me consent to do so. After that first moment, being on my phone to take notes whilst at a social event appeared as normal as anyone else is on their phone. Notes would then be reviewed, compiled and structured by type of activity and diary format (Malinowski, 1967). As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note: "many of the initial field notes that ethnographers take are jottings, snatched in the course of observed action…even if it proves possible to make fairly extensive notes in the field, they - like brief jottings - will need to be worked up, expanded on, and developed" (p. 143). The writing and development of field notes could be managed in line with the existing patterns and rhythms of work at the research site (Atkinson, 1992).

As stated by McDonald (2005) shadowing can be carried out over consecutive or non-consecutive days. Due to this study taking place over the summer period employees of the organisation selected to observe had many holidays booked therefore I made the executive decision to carry out the shadowing over non-consecutive days. Following one member of the team at a time, but being aware of the rest of the team, either by spending half a day or a full day with them the shadower obtains insight into a focused and specific experience that is relevant to a particular expert role. Whilst observation is being carried out, shadowing is a technique that allows for the researcher to be close to the participant and create a continuous conversation that can aid reflection on the shared experiences occurring throughout the shadowing period (Gill *et al.*, 2014; McDonald and Simpson, 2014). "The commentary provided is the opinion and perspective of an expert rather than a novice." (McDonald, 2005,

p. 457). Shadowing group members provided me with an in-depth understanding of how these people spent their time at work. It was a rather exhaustive process, especially if a participant works on several projects at once and sometimes it felt hard to keep up with note-taking and observing them switch between screens, and apps and digital conversations but this in itself felt like an insight into the transitional process SMPs make.

3.3.2.1 A Brief History of the shadowing location: "Matter"

"Matter" is a small digital creative and PR agency operating in the UK film, TV and entertainment industry. The company name and any employees referenced are pseudonyms. "Matter" was formed in 2003; founded by their Director who had a passion for film and the entertainment industry and wanted to not only create content but strategically deliver it in the most optimal way. The company originally located itself in an area of Central London, where rent prices were very low so they could be close to their competition and clients. The structure was very split with a small PR team and a very large design team. It was not until 2010 that they first brought in an individual to solely look after their own social channels as well as the accounts for the clients they promoted, previously PR executives were in charge of copy writing and managing the social channels for any campaign they were working on, or this job was given to an intern when one was available. In 2014, due to price, they were forced to move to East London to a smaller space, however, with a decreased employee size this suited them well. The design team was reduced drastically, and PR, project management and the social team began to grow. Their Director moved out to LA to increase their global reach and expand their client portfolio.

By 2019, teams were growing and there was a need for change (not only because their lease was up) so they moved to new, bigger offices that have views looking out onto the Thames. This listed building with six floors amply accommodates the growing company of around 50 employees now encompassing New Business, Strategy, Planning, PR, Project Management, Design, Social and Insights.

3.3.2.2 Location

I was situated in their London Offices during which time the agency had a move from East London to further South. They were not based near any competition as the rent was too high for zone 1 premises and an agency their size. Their new site though, unlike their previous one,

is in a building that housed many other companies and start-ups and had much more break-out space for meetings and brain storming. However, being positioned out of central London meant more travel time when attending client meetings.

3.3.2.3 People

The organisation had a fairly young demographic; the Directors and some more senior members of staff are aged around 35-45, whereas the majority of the PR team, designers and project managers were under 30. The social team's eldest member was 30 and this was the Social Lead. Many of the employees were a little younger than me (I was 30 by the end of my time there) but had similar life experiences to me in terms of upbringing, interests, education, political views and cultural reference points.

3.3.2.4 Timescales

My temporary employment with the agency to cover maternity leave in the Project Management team began in May 2019 and ended in September the same year. My research took place over the month of August 2019. I did not conduct my fieldwork when I started initially because I needed to learn the responsibilities and requirements of my role until I was comfortable with that, did I feel I could also shadow the social team whilst also successfully completing my workload. The final month of my employment allowed me to refine and further explore the data gathered during the fieldwork period.

3.3.3 Limitations

In terms of potential limitations, Proctor (2005) emphasises the importance of being aware of any so they can be addressed where possible. Pollio *et al.* (1997) advocate that respondents taking part in interviews have a tendency to distort their internal representations when transforming them into linguistic form therefore concludes the self-description obtained can be inaccurate. This requirement for retrospective accounts of activity acknowledges the possibility for individuals to over or underestimate reporting how the participants actually felt or what they experienced. Byrne (2004) agrees that we are not told a direct account of an interviewee's experience and that it is rare to "get inside someone's head" (p. 182) but an interview produces a representation and/or an account of a participant's views or opinions. "People bring meanings to situations, and use these meanings to understand their world and influence their behaviour" (Punch 2014, p. 31), it is how they choose to construct these social

worlds and the language they choose to use that is of interest and is an integral component of qualitative research (Snape and Spencer, 2003) and particularly CGT.

Although methods have been used to reduce the bias towards the selection of individuals with similar backgrounds and demographics, this research recognises that there is the possibility that some individuals may not have been represented, such as those outside the age group of 20- and 30-year olds. This method could have been executed poorly if a researcher is lacking in skills such as the ability to establish rapport, using motivational probes, being able to listen and react to interviewees (Hennink *et al.*, 2011) however I have completed moderator training for qualitative research so I was experienced in making an interviewee feel comfortable so they are more willing to open up, usually having a quick chat with them prior to the interview and offering them a beverage if we were located in a coffee shop. I knew when I should stay silent and allow the participant to tell their story when to pull them back to the topic if they began to digress and also when I should ask follow-up questions to delve deeper.

The main disadvantage to an ethnographic approach is that it is very time-consuming and demanding of a researcher's time, especially when the research is restricted to one particular group or individual. The research is reliant upon the observations of just one or a few people, therefore the conclusions about what the subjects are doing, saying and/or feeling could be altered by the observers' cultural bias or ignorance. It is often dependent upon the skill and rigour of the researcher to overcome these limitations. As mentioned previously, I felt that I have had similar life experiences to the participants and therefore I felt very aware of the participants' cultural reference points, anything that I did not understand I would note down to follow up with the participant later so I could fully comprehend the context of their actions or dialogue.

For shadowing, it is a technique that delivers an overwhelming amount of data therefore it is unsurprising that the analysis requires considerable time and effort. There is also the issue of observer effects (Patton, 1990) which is the case that the participant might behave differently because they are aware they are being observed which requires the researcher to be as conscious as possible of how their presence may impact the study (Peshkin, 1988). Another disadvantage that might be overlooked is that for the participant that it can disrupt the normal flow of activities at the location they're being observed (Quinlan, 2008). I was lucky enough

that my desk was very close to where the social team sat, and I sat directly opposite the social lead of the team. This meant that I was able to observe without being too intrusive and if I wanted to ask questions on certain actions I had observed or conversations I had heard I would wait until tea breaks or lunch time to do so.

All of the data was collected in the UK. The results and especially the perception of work might differ across countries. Moreover, the results might also differ if other specific occupational groups were the focus. It could also be said this research is limited because the sample includes different industries within social media community management.

3.4 Data Organisation and Analysis

I used professional transcribing services to transcribe the interviews, which resulted in 352 pages of text (font size 10, single-spaced). Although saving a significant amount of time, not transcribing the interviews myself means that I lost an opportunity of repeated analysis of the participants' responses (Bryman, 2008). However, to overcome this issue, before coding, I listened to each interview whilst reading over the transcripts to familiarise myself with the data again and this also helped in catching some inaudible parts of the recordings or correcting spellings of platforms such as 'Slap' to 'Slack'. I took an iterative, inductive and constant comparative approach to data generation and analysis (Charmaz, 2006), whereby data analysis was embedded within the data collection process. Triangulation of data, and an iterative process of coding and grouping of themes, informed subsequent sampling and observational activity which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Following Charmaz's (2014) CGT framework for analysis, I used a two-staged process, which began with an initial phase, followed by a focused phase. Charmaz (2008) states that "Coding is standard ground theory practice – line by line, active, immediate, short. Focus on defining action, explicating implicit assumptions, and seeing processes." (p. 216). Codes are short-hand terms (such as "switching off," "connected," and "blurred" in my study) that are used to categorize units of texts. CGT is known as a comparative method where the research must compare "data with data, data with categories, and category with category" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 217). Identifying the patterns of thought, speech or action, repeated in various ways and with various individuals and groups, are a means of ensuring reliability (Fetterman, 2010). This process provided a framework for the coding and analysis of data and identification of emerging key concepts.

Coding data in the qualitative sense is different to that of a quantitative method because it is not about reducing it to numbers rather it is a means of indexing the data by producing themes and recognising patterns. "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3). It also differs from quantitative coding in that I did not use a set of preconceived categories of codes to the data (Charmaz, 2014).

CGT is looked upon as an interactive method, "you enter an analytic space that pulls you deeper into the data and keeps you involved with them" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 115). By entering this space with a CGT approach, when coding we repeat interactions with participants over and over again which can lead to new analytic questions and therefore our codes can shift or transform. It is also the results of the researcher's actions and understandings that help shape and construct the codes from the data again reiterating that a CGT approach to coding is interactive.

The coding process was carried out on both the interview verbatim and the ethnographic quotes and field notes. As stated earlier, the shadowing period was conducted over non-consecutive days with different members of the social team at the ethnographic site. Not only is this a characteristic of the shadowing methodology, but it also allows for a more iterative nature of the ethnography that aligns with the CGT process. I was able to delve further into areas that had come from the interviews as well as change focus, depending on what the data was highlighting, with each day of shadowing by analysing the data as it was collected, rather than wait until the end of the data collection period. This also allowed for a depth understanding of the simultaneous iterations in multiple work domains that are managed by SMPs. Towards the end of the shadowing period, I was already beginning to see the clear groups as defined in my typology within this team.

The initial phase of coding involves "naming each word, line or segment of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). I chose to opt for line-by-line coding as it helped me to remain open to the data, aided me in taking the data of events apart analyse what creates them and discover ideas that I could build on (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). First, I read and independently coded each transcript. The process of coding involved dividing the data into manageable segments and begins with labelling to work towards more abstract analytical categories as it progresses. On the creation of these 'labels' which can then be applied to data in order to develop data into meaningful categories to be analysed and interpreted. I then linked the

codes from the data to the idea and back to other data. Qualitative coding proceeds based on linking diverse observations, statements and words connected by common themes and patterns that enable all the particular data points to be drawn together. "Qualitative codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story, that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity (a pattern), they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections." (Saldaña, 2013, p. 8).

The second phase of coding is focused, this is a "selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). I was required to decide which initial codes made the most analytic sense to categorise the data. Sections of transcripts/texts may contain multiple codes; if one code has been assigned to a piece of text this does not prevent the researcher from adding another code to it. A list of codes is often referred to as a coding frame. Categories can change, if this occurs the researcher has the option to 'uncode', merge categories or split them into different ones. Categories were refined using the constant comparison method. (Charmaz, 2014). For instance, in the first round of analysis I used the code 'boundary management strategy', on my second phase I realised these strategies were either analogue or digital so I split the strategies again. On further analysis, I was able to define what kind of strategy each was; prevent oneself, prevent others, privacy, intention to integrate.

Classification schemes or typologies have been used to consider patterns and relationships across several areas and aid in "bringing order out of chaos" (Bailey, 1994, p. 33). By utilising a typology to present one's data, they allow for the development of frameworks and understanding in which phenomenon functions (DeMers, 2000). They are not necessarily an explanation of processes as such, rather typologies are "an attempt to systemize classification in aid of explanation" (Marcuse, 1997, p. 248). Whilst coding the data, I made a typology to help classify practices by identifying key categories (see Findings chapters) which Bailey (1994) argues, "without classification, there could be no advanced conceptualisation" (p. 1).

During the analysis of the data, the process of writing about categories/pattern codes in a memo is used. This helped me to informally write down my own thoughts and reflections on the information gathered. "Memo-writing constitutes a crucial method in grounded theory because it prompts you to analyse your data and codes early in the research process." (Charmaz, 2014, p. 163). The more extensive and detailed the memos are, the more they can form concrete theories. They provide space to make comparisons and they also encourage you "to stop focus, take your codes and data apart, compare them, and define links between them.

Stop and catch meanings and actions." (Charmaz, 2014, p. 164). My short memos were usually overall reflections on how each interview went and what I thought about why that participant had that boundary preference and management style. This helped develop the findings where I was able to define different digital boundary preference groups.

All the data collected was sorted using Nvivo 12, a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International. According to Bazeley and Jackson (2013), there are 5 principal ways in which NVivo supports analysis of qualitative data which are; managing the data, managing ideas, querying the data, graphically modelling the data and lastly reporting from the data. I used this software program to enter and tag all codes, facilitate coding links, perform text searches, and find instances and intersections of codes during analysis. Bazeley and Jackson (2013) champion sorting data through this software, "The computer's capacity for recording, sorting, matching and linking can be harnessed by the researcher to assist in answering their research questions from the data, without losing access to the source data or context from which the data have come" (p. 2). Therefore, it can help quickly sort and code to help find categories, concepts and possibly different dimensions of the subjects and to make comparisons to the transcripts of the interviews conducted. Bazeley and Jackson (2013) also said that using a computer could mean a more rigorous analysis and "ensures a more complete set of data for interpretation than might occur when working manually." (p. 3)

The study's findings are divided into four chapters, all of which reflect on the data through a boundary theory lens (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000; Clark, 2000). Findings on WLB research has previously been presented through the lens of boundary theory and I have also chosen this perspective because of the notion that technology blurs boundaries causing domains to integrate, which the literature has depicted as having a negative impact on WLB (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017) and causing inter-role conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Duxbury *et al.,* 2008). The literature describes aspects of our life, in particular work and home, falling into this concept of 'domains' (Nippert-Eng, 1996b), however, the focus of the WLB debate is not about how we act within each of these domains or the domains themselves. Rather the focus is on how and why we move between them, how we manage our preference for transitioning across them and the management of demands that require our attention from the different roles we embody spilling over into them, and how all this affects our WLB.

In the following four chapters, I first present my findings on conceptualising online boundary management, then I outline my updated names and definitions of Kossek and Lautsch's (2008; 2012) preference groups (integrator, separators and cyclers) to include digital behaviours for managing users' boundaries, followed by a summary chapter featuring a table that illustrates each category's traits. In doing so this recognises the role modern technology has on maintaining WLB and boundary preference. Throughout these chapters, I present the technological tactics used by my sample to manage their digital boundaries that help in maintaining their WLB preference. I consider in greater detail how internal and external factors affect participants' boundary preferences, the role digital devices as tools play in maintaining these preferences, and what impact this has on SMPs' WLB. From the similarities in descriptions of these practices, how closely these corresponded to desired boundary preferences, and accounts of how useful, or not, digital devices and tools were to maintain these preferences, I was able to categorise these into a typology of digital boundary preference, before selecting "powerful examples that can be used to make [my] generalizations come alive" (Hatch, 2002, p. 159). I organised the data into three categories; 1) *Constant Connectors* – those you will find always-on and set tools to aid blurred boundaries, recognise the idea and need to take breaks but rarely take them, 2) *Partial (Dis)connectors* – switch between their preference for integration and segmentation regularly, recognise the idea and need to take breaks and regularly take them, 3) *Wannabe Segmentors* – ideally prefer to keep domains separated but due to the need to be connected digitally find exceptions where they allow for blurred boundaries. With technology and the digital virtual world being a constantly changing landscape, not only should this typology be looked upon as a 'descriptive tool' (Bailey, 1994, p. 12), not prescriptive, it should also be recognised that the classifications for this typology might only be sufficient for this moment in time. Nevertheless, I hope these categories can be built upon in the future (Nind and Lewthwaite, 2019) as attitudes and practices evolve.

In my findings, I also illustrate how my research extends the work of Kreiner *et al.* (2009). They created a table of boundary work tactics and under behavioural, they list 'leveraging technology'. Not only is the definition superficial to technology only available at that time but technological tactics play a much larger role and therefore do not sit simply under behavioural; they have a place under each behavioural, temporal, physical and communicative tactics. To my knowledge, there has not been a thorough exploration of digital boundary management strategies documented in the current literature.

To present my data, I have selected quotes that could be described as particularly rich excerpts, to act as representatives of the characteristics and attitudes of each of the three categories presented here for the typology. In doing this, I do not seek to claim definitive findings (Atkins, 2017; Leonard *et al.,* 2020) but rather use Lakoff's (2008) idea of a typical case, meaning that members of any category can be related to an abstract prototype of that category. Using a typical case is a helpful aid in presenting data by taking the most representative of the category and illustrating the key conceptual themes found (Kluge, 2000; Steiner *et al.,* 2010). Themes emerged around sensemaking or constraints from inner influences (e.g. personality traits, emotions) and outside influences (e.g. work expectations, family), and these were easily separated from the contrasting stories described by participants on what they preferred to do versus what they actually did. From my findings, I am better able to understand the management of boundary preference through transitions in the digital realm which has not been thoroughly explored before. Taking what we already know about transitioning from one role to another in an analogue sense, as explained before, the observation analysis aimed to complement the interview data and, as such I will use my findings to apply this to the online world. Data presented in the following chapters are extracts from interview transcripts and field notes addressing the focus of this thesis.

3.5 Ethics

To ensure that this study was conducted ethically, before any fieldwork was conducted, first ethics approval was obtained by the Ethics Research Governance Online (ERGO) board at the University of Southampton, this delineates that approval was granted to record or observe, take notes and for the participants' signed consent for participation in the study (see Appendix D). Approval was sought by providing the participants with a consent form and participation information sheet, with a risk assessment, ethics form and data protection assessment plan also being submitted to make sure this study adhered to the University of Southampton's Ethics Policy and to ensure confidentiality in the storage and use of the data.

Prior to starting the fieldwork participants were given appropriate and necessary information that clearly explained the purpose, methods, intended uses of the research and details of what their participation in the research entailed. This information was presented to them within an

information sheet (see Appendix C). Their agreement was sought before including them in the research process by initialling and signing a consent form (see Appendix D). Both the information sheet and consent form informed participants in advance that the discussion was being audio recorded or that notes would be taken during observation, in order to meet ethical guidelines. By reading the initial blurb containing a detailed description of the study's objectives and continuing with the process, respondents consented to participate in the study. In order to guarantee anonymity of the respondents, each participant's name has been kept entirely anonymous by creating pseudonyms for them and only specifying gender, age, and the industry in which they work instead of the company name.

Furthermore, before fieldwork took place, it was stated that if a participant found any of the questions either intrusive or upsetting then the interview or observation would be terminated by myself in order to prioritise the participant's wellbeing throughout. The participant was given the choice of carrying on with the research, continuing at a later date or ultimately, no longer being part of the research if preferred. This was in the hope of creating a relaxed, low-pressured environment in order to allow the participants to feel at ease when discussing sensitive issues with me.

There was a particular interview (See Appendix E) where a participant was clearly going through a stressful time in their life and made reference to the interview being similar to that of a therapy session. As the researcher, I asked if they felt this was a bad time we could always reschedule, and when the participant wanted to continue making sure to remind the participant this interview was for a research study and not a counselling session by constantly bringing them back to the topic of the interview when they digressed. This interview in particular created an ethical dilemma, but I believe that I adhered to the ethical standards expected of the University of Southampton's policies by checking if the participant was still comfortable to proceed and reminding them that we could terminate the interview at any point.

3.6 Evaluation of research design

As opposed to quantitative researchers who focus on validity and reliability, qualitative researchers are mostly concerned about reflexivity and trustworthiness (Agar, 1986; Krefting, 1991; Given and Saumure, 2008), criterion that ensure quality in qualitative research.

Reflexivity is the ability of a researcher to critically reflect on themselves in order to avoid twisting research data and making biased interpretations (Ruby, 1980; O'Reilly, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985; 1986) expanded the notion of trustworthiness into a measurement framework, to parallel the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability and refined it into 5 criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity. Trustworthiness, therefore, refers to how rigorous and believable a study's findings are (Morgan and Ravitch, 2018).

Kincheloe and McLaren (1998 cited by Briggs *et al.*, 2012) argued that looking at validity is "unhelpful for critical qualitative research" (p. 82). Whereas testing the trustworthiness would consider the aspect of stability and consistency over time. Highlighting the question of:

> "If the same instrument were given to the same people, under the same circumstances, but at a different time, to what extent would they get the same scores?" (Punch, 2014, p. 237).

For this study, data may have differed slightly to the days of the week the study took place on, as well as the time of year. Influencing factors such as workload and social demand may affect the outcome. Although this could be seen as untrustworthy, for this exploration it was not feasible to consider and incorporate solutions for all situations. They are a homogeneous group, similar in age and job role, in the future to strengthen the validity of this sample it could be that the criteria also require participants to be full-time workers, looking after accounts with 500+ followers and/or in a team of X no. of people. For my study I focused on fulfilling the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability and authenticity.

3.6.1 Credibility

To state a study is credible one must establish confidence that the results, from the perspective of the participants, are true, credible and believable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; 1986). The technique of triangulation was used to improve the probability that the data collected, and interpretation is credible (Denzin, 1978). By using different methods, in this case, interviews and shadowing, Webb *et al.* (1996) conclude that:

> "Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes. If a proposition can survive

the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures, with all their irrelevant error, confidence should be placed in it." (p. 3).

By taking a dual method approach and comparing the data with other kinds of evidence on the same point creates triangulation which helps strengthen the validity of this study. Taking findings from the interviews and comparing those experiences with behaviours I observed asserted credibility in the data through the use of an iterative process. Where the data analysis was embedded in the data collection and I was able to constantly reflect on my findings with my participants.

3.6.2 Dependability

To ensure my data was dependable, I repeatedly reviewed the interview transcripts and fieldwork notes so that my interpretation of the data did not change over time (Tolley et al. 2016).

3.6.3 Confirmability and the Researchers' role

In order for research to be confirmable, researchers interviewing individuals from different backgrounds have to be critical of their assumptions (Dunbar Jr. *et al.,* 2001). I was aware that I was studying a topic where I related to the participants of this study in multiple ways. First, I have worked as a social media practitioner for several companies and brands, so I am familiar with the requirements and skills of this role. Second, not only have I previously been employed as a social media community manager at the ethnography site, but I worked there in a different capacity during the ethnography data collection to familiarise myself with the current culture of the digital industry. Finally, I conducted a literature review on boundary theory, work life balance and the role technology has previously played in these areas to gain an overview of these subjects. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the chosen methodological approach of CGT places priority on the studied phenomenon over the methods of studying it therefore acknowledging the researcher's role in interpreting data (Charmaz, 2003; Charmaz, 2014). My subjectivity in this case could not be avoided, but I took this into consideration and ensured not to interfere in any way that would push the subjects to answer a certain way (Korstjens and Moser 2018). Additionally, considering the interpretivist approach, subjectivity is not seen as problematic, as it does not impede the quality or value of the findings (Krefting 1991; Bhattacharya 2008). To monitor perceptions about the phenomenon of digital boundary

management during the research process, I kept a reflexive journal, which will be discussed next.

3.6.4 Authenticity

I fulfilled this criterion by providing raw quotes and fieldwork descriptions in the findings section to faithfully display a range of different realities and convey the feelings, tones and emotions of participants during interviews and show sample transparency (Polit and Beck 2012; Cope 2014).

3.7 Reflexivity

Taking a CGT approach to this research Charmaz, and Bryant (2011) postulate how "Engaging in reflexivity and assuming relativity aids us in recognizing multiple realities, positions, and standpoints- and how they shift during the research process for both the researcher and the research participants" (p. 417). Therefore, I kept a reflexive journal (see Appendix E for excerpts), updating it after each interview, as a means to document the research process, my observations, my interactions with the participants, and my reflections. By co-constructing the data, as the author I am also a key element in the process (Mruck and Breuer, 2003) and therefore it is important that my voice is acknowledged as it shows and talks about the research area (Charmaz and Mitchell, 1996). This is also considered a strategy by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to maintain trustworthiness. Doing so enabled me to be more aware of my research journey, my positionality, and the potential biases I brought to the data collection and analysis.

Reay (2007) describes reflexivity as "giving as full and honest an account of the research process as possible, in particular explicating the position of the researcher in relation to the research." (p. 611). Reflexivity differs from self-analysis as it entails self-awareness of actions, values, feelings and perceptions, a certain level of consciousness and a continuous process of self-reflection (Anderson 2010; Lambert, Jomeen and McSheery, 2010; Ortlipp, 2008; Probst and Berenson, 2014). It also involves thinking about factors that influence the way the researcher thinks and thus changing the way in which they reach decisions (Anderson, 2010; Johnson and Duberley, 2003). It is needed to establish criteria of rigour, which increases the confidence, congruency and credibility of findings and avoids assumptions (Bishop and

Holmes, 2013; Clancy, 2013). Without it, Finlay (2003) asserts there is a substantial risk of producing research that is dominated by personal characteristics, prejudice and bias.

To understand ones' role in the research process one must understand one's positionality (based on class, beliefs, sex, race, ethnicity etc.) also known as insider/outside status (Couture *et al.*, 2012; Cousin, 2009). Addressing positionality acknowledges that researchers bring their history, social standing and cultural background into such tasks as the research process (Rhoads, 1997). An insider is best defined as someone who shares a similar positionality as their participants such as social identity, age, characteristics, roles, and/or experiences (Dwyer and Buckle 2009; Jootun *et al.*, 2009). Being an 'insider' is useful as it can improve bonding and rapport with participants as it allowed me to share an identity, language and common professional base (Asselin, 2003). However, it can also have its problems if the researcher makes assumptions about roles, organisations or processes that they think they know well or if the participants skip over important aspects or details because they assume the researcher has full knowledge over a phenomenon (Field, 1991; Simmons, 2007). To understand my positionality as a researcher I thought about how I might have been perceived to my participants; female, student but with a previous similar occupation to those being interviewed and observed, mixed race, working-middle class, all of these traits positioned me to be somewhat 'like' my participants, although only three were of non-white heritage. This I believe made my participants feel more at ease and comfortable to talk about personal traits and also open up more about previous work issues because they felt I could relate having worked in the industry before. However, on several occasions during casual discussion before or after interviews, or in passing during observation, participants would remark on my intelligence making the assumption that because I have pursued a PhD I must be "really smart" or "super clever". This concerned me because it felt as though I was being 'put on a pedestal' and that they regarded me as smarter than them, which I feared would perhaps change how they answered questions. To overcome this issue, whenever this topic was brought up, I would make it clear that it has not been an easy journey and a PhD is more about being patient and allowing yourself to dedicate five years to a single project than being so-called "smart". This was usually received well with laughter which I feel relaxed them and hopefully broke any ideas of superiority.

Additionally, "with ethnography, insider and outsider views combine to provide deeper insights than would be possible by the "native" alone. This two-sided view produces a third

dimension that rounds off the ethnographic picture, which is a theoretical explanation of the phenomena under study" (Goulding, 2005, p. 303). As mentioned earlier, I have worked with the organisation being observed before, but not only has there been a complete turnover of employees in the social team, ways of working and technology have advanced since then making the site an ideal location for observation and therefore I was able to bring an outsider perspective that helped examine the experiences of my participants (Patton, 2002). Within the literature, having experience in the field one is studying has been seen as a paradox (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011; Holloway and Biley, 2011) because although it could enhance the study through knowledge of contextual awareness it can be limited by being fixed around interpersonal relationships, personal experience and a subjective viewpoint.

Ethnographic fieldwork typically involves the development of close relationships between the researcher and those being researched (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) in order to fully understand the culture from their perspective (Van Maanen, 2011a). Ethnography seeks to make the strange familiar, however, due to having previously worked at this particular agency in the team I am observing I recognised that I would need to 'make the familiar strange' (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 20). As a researcher within my own culture, strangeness was not a given but an achievement (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009). I addressed this by self-reflection and 'deconstructing my taken-for-granted understandings' (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 111) of everyday working life. I was given a contract of employment throughout the research process which allowed for ease of access as a project manager in a different team. Having not worked at the agency for more than three years prior to data collection and having never worked with any of the members of the current social team, this three-year gap and new faces were factors that enabled me to reflexively 'make the familiar strange' (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 20) and 'deconstruct my taken-for-granted understandings' (Ybema and Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 111) within the social team.

One of the practical recommendations for shadowers put forward by McDonald (2005) is to never go in cold, so for this study, I worked at the location of study prior to conducting their research which allowed for important time getting to know the environment and the individuals that would be shadowed, to give the initial notes more meaning. However, in order to avoid being too intimate and maintain an outsider perspective, it is recommended that shadowing should be carried out for short periods of time. Not only can this maintain the balance between insider and outsider perspective but also help prevent the development of a

close personal relationship with the participants which could complicate the professional nature of interaction and exacerbate the ethical challenges of conducting this type of research (Czarniawska, 2014; Gill *et al.*, 2014).

Palaganas *et al.* (2017) state, "The concept of reflexivity challenges the assumption that there can be a privileged position where the researcher can study social reality objectively, that is, independent from it through value-free inquiry" (p. 432) therefore putting an emphasis on the importance of subjectivity. It is vital to address that subjectivity can affect the collection of data, analysis and interpretation (Finlay and Ballinger, 2006). By understanding, subjectivity in research can add credibility, limit bias and enhance the accuracy and ethical quality (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011; Finlay and Ballinger, 2006; Jootun *et al.*, 2009; McCabe and Holmes, 2009).

Finlay and Ballinger (2006) highlight that reflexivity can help researchers' understand their influence on their relationships with participants and how this can affect the research process and results as interpreting participants' accounts from a personal perspective can never be fully escaped (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). To overcome this issue Jootun *et al.* (2009) stress that any findings are the product of the researcher's interpretation and that they must recognise they are part of the social world that they study (Morse, 1991; Shaffir and Stebbins, 1990). Therefore, reflexivity helps the researcher become aware of their contribution throughout the research process through the construction of meanings and of lived experiences. Even as a study without a hypothesis most researchers, like myself, may try to guess what the data will reveal and looking back through my reflexive diary I was able to see growth in my approach to this research but also myself as a researcher. Other than noticing a rise in articles in the press about burnout and many "How to's" on taking a digital detox, a personal reason for my pursuit in undertaking this research has been my own struggle with managing my boundaries whilst working in digital reliant roles. I have a background in marketing and when I myself worked in a media agency or as a social media practitioner I noticed I was becoming a bit of a slave to my emails and the notifications pinging from my personal as well as professional social accounts. It began to bother me, and I felt I was 'on' all the time, so I went into this research with the thought that I may end up interviewing like-minded frustrated-with-technology workers. However, during my initial research and before my data collection I started to understand this concept of boundaries more and clearly see that I had been poorly managing mine when I was in these roles, it was obvious then that I just had not lined my preference up with my boundary management style. I still thought I

would come across others struggling with their WLB but what I found was quite the opposite, and this changed my outlook on technology being problematic, to it not being the problem. I think this change in perspective enriched my data even more because my fascination at how these participants had managed to navigate the notification minefield without the feelings of WLC and symptoms, made me delve deeper during questioning to feed my curiosity.

I was able to interview and observe my participants without the bias line of thinking that 'technology is bad for WLB' and set aside my past, personal experience of poor boundary management. By employing reflexivity, I was able to determine my own stance in relation to the work of other researchers and factors that would need to be addressed in my research.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This methodology chapter outlined the process of data collection undertaken for this thesis, whilst also justifying the selected methodological choices. I also outlined the epistemological stance that informed this study; although CGT is rarely used traditionally with boundary theory and WLB I have explained why it is appropriate for this study and how it will provide a unique view on this field of research. The next four chapters will present my findings and discussion by first introducing how I conceptualised online boundary management followed by a typology of digital boundary preferences.

4 Conceptualising Online Boundary Management: Digital Virtual Boundaries

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned previously, three groups have been identified and categorised into a typology from my data collection that incorporate digital behaviours into boundary preference. Before delving into detail of my typology categories in chapters 5-7, below is a brief overview to each group which is essential to better understand the online boundary management landscape that will be introduced here in this chapter.

The first group to be introduced in the typology are *Constant connectors*. They have a preference to have integrated boundaries and to do so remain connected over multiple devices, platforms, and within digital virtual spaces. As per each group proposed I detail characteristics and motivations of the make-up of a typical member of this group, which for a *Constant connector* includes traits such as avoiding feelings of guilt by being readily available or a need to impress so being responsive at all times of the day. I also highlight the strategies they implement using digital tools that enable them to have their preferred integrated boundaries. Examples such as not disconnecting or making time to switch off and managing multiple demands from varying domains concurrently.

The next group to be introduced are the *Partial (dis)connectors*. This group sits between the other groups identified because of their nature to flex between preferring integrated or segmented domains. Paradoxically, through the use of digital tools *Partial (dis)connectors* have the ability to temporarily unplug or separate from just a few digital virtual spaces in order to give domain centrality to the area of their lives that requires more focus and attention for that moment in time.

The final group in the typology are the *Wannabe segmentors*. Their characteristics and motivations are mostly true to traditional segmentors, except now with the integration of digital tools in their lives they understand and accept that occasionally they need to allow exceptions to their preference, as long as it occurs on their terms and in short bursts. Many in this group have previously reported WLC from past behaviours and have since either changed preference or adapted their strategies to better suit their needs.

In the following chapter I will first explain how I have conceptualised boundary management in the digital landscape and how this challenges what the literature tells us about navigating social media and other digital spaces. This is followed by introducing the new term, digital virtual boundaries, and detailing the characteristics of how these differ from traditional analogue boundaries. Understanding the key traits of online boundary management and digital virtual boundaries helps set the scene for the environment the new groups in my typology need to comprehend so as to manage their boundaries in the digital world to achieve their ideal WLB.

4.2 Conceptualising online boundary management

Some of my participants found themselves "neither one thing nor the other, or maybe both; or neither here nor there; or maybe nowhere" (Turner, 1967, p. 97; Ibarra and Obodaru, 2016) when it came to their 'roles'. This meant whilst they were engaged with digital technologies, they could perform tasks for multiple roles simultaneously and this concept of being in one defined role at times vanished, allowing for more than what might be described as having integrated boundaries, it created a feeling of boundarylessness which for the *Constant Connectors* was vital, occasionally utilised by the *Partial (Dis)connectors* and rarely by the *Wannabe Segmentors* so they were able to meet the demands of their multiple domains at once.

To capture the unique instance in which an event is no longer exclusively bound to work or nonwork, where it instead can include instances when two domains with divergent expectations for behaviour are combined into a singular experience (Acker, 1990) I propose building on and developing Clark's (2000) notion of a borderland. The temporary state provided by the borderland when using digital virtual spaces, such as social media platforms or message threads within these platforms, is where a user is never fully immersed in a singular role but many. If the demands of a role are so great that they require domain centrality focus and my participant wished to fully immerse themselves in that one singular domain, they would need to exit the borderland by creating thicker boundaries around said domain (see sections 6.3 and 7.3 for such strategies).

I see digital virtual spaces (e.g. social media, email etc.) functioning as a betwixt state of blending between work and nonwork within Clark's (2000) "borderland". Clark describes the point in which we cross between these domains and change over roles as a "borderland". However, my research has found that the "borderland" is not just about a space in which

participants switch over roles, but a place in which participants can embody several roles at once using digital virtual spaces. This perfectly captures the notion of Clark's (2000) borderland when applied to the digital realm.

After observing Stacy working and managing brand accounts on multiple social media platforms, whilst interchangeably replying to personal messages and sourcing information to answer some of these messages elsewhere, I probed her on how she felt this multitasking affected their WLB.

> *"Let's be honest, in this role you're never truly on social media just for work anymore or just on your own accounts unless you had a super-private one, I guess. I would say I have a great WLB because I can access work whilst browsing my personal feeds and answering messages from friends and family whilst uploading content or checking how well a post did. It doesn't matter where you are and I don't think anyone minds because we all do it, right? A bit here and a bit there, we make up for it... like if a mate was having a crisis I can be there for them and support them by quickly responding without having to leave the office – that's just an extreme example... I just don't think I would manage if I was only allowed to do work in the day and life admin in the evenings." – Stacy, Constant connector*

When accessing apps, social media platforms, emails and more we can embody a different role than that to which we are physically present, for instance, being on a mobile phone answering the messages of a family member whilst sitting in the office at work. Furthermore, within these digital virtual spaces, my participants can have access to their multiple roles at once meaning they can embody being 'the working mother' or 'the professional friend' or 'the studious, part-time worker' at a single time instead of having to fragment the different parts of themselves. This allows them to manage and juggle the demands of several roles and this access can make them feel that they have better WLB than they would if they had to only focus on one particular aspect all the time. This contradicts previous literature mentioned before that claims technology's permeability allows for intrusions from multiple role demands causing WLC and stress (Chesley, 2005; Shih *et al.*, 2013; Walz, 2012). It must not be forgotten that apps, social media platforms and email accounts are each their own individual digital virtual space too and within these, individuals create rules to whether they access multiple roles (integrate) or utilise it for just one (segment). This can be because some digital spaces will be more aligned with users' roles for instance using LinkedIn and a work email address that is only shared with those in their professional network or a private Twitter handle only

shared with friends and family would sit in your personal domain, so only a select few have access versus having open, public settings which sit across all domains.

> *"I go on my newsfeed when I feel like it, but I'm usually on somebody else's newsfeed and I'm making money by doing it. I find enjoyment out of it because I get 17 different outlooks of the world. Do you ever find that you're looking through your newsfeed and you're just seeing the same shit over and over? I get 17 newsfeeds to look at, so I've got 17 different views to go to. Yes, I'm always on, but it's exciting and you get a different look at things. I might learn about a piece of news from one of my accounts and not see it on any other of my accounts, so I'm on in kind of the best possible way I think." – Maria, Constant connector*

Maria has 17 different clients of whose multiple social media accounts they manage. For them, entering a digital space on any of those shared platforms means they are able to manage demands from 17 different clients at one time. As you can see, she is very happy with her lifestyle and role, it does not come across as causing her stress whatsoever. In this case, the Facebook newsfeed acts as the digital virtual space that they can enter and enact the voice of various brands they look after. It could be said that any stress she has is alleviated through the use of multitasking and keeping all her clients and communities happy.

This challenges what we already know about navigating social media and other digital spaces because the literature has led us to think that although the online world creates the ability to multitask it is usually associated with being at a cost of being cognitively effortful and a cause for WLC (Hamilton *et al.*, 2011; Leroy, 2009). It has also been previously said that meeting the demands from several roles at once creates a conflict for users too (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2006) which can lead to negative outcomes on WLB (Maier *et al.,* 2015; Oh and Park, 2016; Turel *et al.,* 2011).

The findings and arguments in this thesis differ from the work of Ollier-Malaterre *et al.,* (2013) who also discuss online boundary management. They primarily focus on identity negotiation in cyberspace whereas my focus is how online boundary management affects work life balance. McFarland and Ployhart's (2015) contextual framework in which they present a continuum of interaction/communication ranging from physical (non-digital) to digital (social media) differs again because I do not see the offline and online along a continuum in

which we slide from one to the other. By utilising Clark's (2000) borderland we can better understand how users actualise many of their identities and roles in one experience, through the management of and accessibility to multiple tasks, examples of which will be shared for each group in the following three chapters.

4.3 Introducing Digital Virtual Boundaries (DVBs)

I would like to propose a new term to better encapsulate the crossing of boundaries in the digital realm; digital virtual boundaries (DVBs). These can be defined as intangible borders we cross whilst remaining physically in one place whilst using a digital tool, so we are able to become available for demands in a new domain by transitioning across a digital virtual space. You can also cross a DVB within the borderland, where you cross between or within digital virtual spaces, for instance, to embody multiple roles whilst remaining in a digital virtual space e.g. moving from a family group chat in WhatsApp to a workgroup chat. In the following chapters, I will provide excerpts from field notes and interviews that describe the unique characteristics of DVBs and support the proposal of this new term. First, I will describe the main factors that highlight how DVBs differ from crossing analogue boundaries such as answering a personal call at your office desk or reading work documents whilst at home.

4.3.1 Boundarylessness

The first key feature of crossing a DVB is that the transition may feel seamless because apart from using the technological device there is not a strenuous tangible or analogue action, you simply 'tap' or 'click' into the new desired role or domain. Previously, work could only be done in the office domain so to transition to the work role one would need to physically commute or change uniform, that is no longer necessary if the work domain requires attention and one is located in a different domain, they can quickly respond via an instant message or email to a colleague. Amber, who has learnt that separate boundaries are more preferable for her and therefore built strategies to avoid blurring her boundaries, comments on the ease of transitions that technology allows.

> *"Because obviously it's so easy just to pick up the phone and click on something and suddenly you're there." – Amber, Wannabe segmentor*

Ashley also describes how through the use of her smartphone she is able to have a conversation with her manager about work whilst also discussing plans with friends within the same platform, Whatsapp. She also notes whilst using Instagram for work she is able to

see notifications from her personal domain too so without even tapping or clicking in a glance she is able to see and meet demands from multiple domains.

> *"So, if I'm talking to my manager on WhatsApp trying to organise something and a friend's message comes through, then it is very easy to just click on it, and look at it, and reply. Similarly, with Instagram, if I'm on it, posting something or checking the messages, I still get notifications coming down at the top when I'm on the app about messages or notifications from my personal account…"* – Ashley, Partial (dis)connector

It was said previously that transitions took a lot of cognitive effort and that frequent transitions can cause employees to experience increased WFC (Matthews *et al.*, 2010; Smit *et al.*, 2016). However, in my research participants did not report psychological difficulty with this movement across domains as per the previous literature. This could be because participants were able to have conversations with others from a number of their domains simultaneously, moving between conversations and embodying roles at such speed it feels boundaryless. This notion of 'boundarylessness' has been previously put forward by Kossek (2016), however she stated this idea that workers are readily available 24/7 therefore it feels like work without boundaries because technology has made work more portable. I have already put forward the idea that when participants want to enact multiple roles at once, whether that takes place within or across digital virtual spaces they are taking place in the "borderland" which in turn could be considered one all encumbering space, explaining my version of the boundarylessness feeling. This idea is supported by the work of Delanoeije *et al.* (2019) whose results show how role transitions can serve as a resource to facilitate the combination of multiple roles to aid response to a domain's demands and therefore relate to less WLC. Jeremy explains how he intertwined himself into the voice of the company he works for therefore it was very natural and easy for him to switch between domains on social accounts.

> *"…it used to be that was really tricky because I was writing in a style that I just thought, "I would never speak like this, and, also, I don't want our audience to speak like this either." And, as with many other things, we're transitioning into this style of, actually, it's okay to inject your own voice into it. As I said, nobody should ever feel like they're talking to a building. They should feel like they're talking to one person or a small team of people who are really passionate about what they do because they work here, and it's perfectly*

acceptable to have a unique style and tone and make it really almost like, oh, there's a person
sitting behind this account, as long as it's, you know, it's still relatively on-brand, so to
speak." – Jeremy, Constant Connector

None of my participants voiced a current struggle or conflict about switching accounts and tones to suit the online communications of their roles now. However, when they first started in a new professional role some would say, in the beginning, they would have to take a moment to get into the headspace of say the brand voice and transition out of it again. This finding echoes the work of Winkel and Clayton (2010) and Monsell (2003) and their results that the frequency of transitioning made switching between roles easier over time, therefore causing little to no conflict, so from my findings we can postulate that a similar outcome happens across DVBs too.

4.3.2 Embodying multiple roles

SMPs manage an online community for an account that is not their own as well as managing their own personal accounts. It became apparent through interviews and then confirmed by the observation that many of my participants would switch between these accounts throughout the day, so I asked about their experience of what it was like to specifically transition between these digital virtual spaces and roles. As we have established, workers are able to embody multiple roles in one domain using technology and entering the "borderland" (Clark, 2000). After shadowing Brittney for two days I asked about how she juggles her multiple demands noticing that she receives lots of notifications throughout the day.

"… it's not a case of whether I can do this OR that, like, I- I don't have to decide anymore.
I'll be on the train in or walking home from work on my phone - I know I really should be
more careful in London – and on my phone, I can just be replying to all sorts. Like that,
wearing many hats thing, I prefer to be wearing all the hats at once and it's easy too, quick
reply here, open this and check that, it's not hard to just bounce between chats or apps. I'm
making myself sound really popular here [laughs] but I honestly am a bit helpless without
my phone and I can get so much done if I'm responding all the time to everyone and I don't
feel like that's work me, done for the day, now to put on the other hat…" – Brittney,
Constant connector

What this participant shared was echoed by many participants who were categorised as a member of this group. It was not a case of having different roles and managing demands from each of them. They saw themselves as one individual wearing 'all the hats' and their mobile phone was the tool and space they used to manage multiple demands, thereby justifying this notion of technology being the "borderland" and enacting multiple roles at once.

4.3.3 Language and digital imagery transitions

Fonner and Stache (2012) noted that work equipment such as laptops and phones were used as symbolic rites of passage to transition between work and home roles, in particular being connected to their work network and communicating their availability with other colleagues helped facilitate transitions and segment work from home life. My sample also uses language and digital imagery as symbolic rites of passage when transitioning between their roles and DVBs whilst remaining in one digital virtual space, particularly when they are posting content on behalf of the brand they work for compared to their own, they can simply change roles by implementing a different tone of voice or with the use of digital imagery only assigned to one role. In the following examples, Stephanie and Ashley express how they use language, emojis and a different tone of voice to make the clear distinction between when they are posting online from a personal perspective versus a professional brand account.

> *"Yeah, so, again, I think it's that kind of difference between work and personal. So, for example, I mean, again, there's a level of professional on my personal Twitter account because I would be very different how I would do that to how I would use my personal Facebook. I would never, ever swear on Twitter. I probably wouldn't put LOL. I occasionally use emojis but, again, mostly on mine. I try to make it quite formal on the network account. And again, sometimes it's like occasionally slightly cheeky but it's all very like vanilla, well-behaved. I would never say anything controversial…Equally, I probably wouldn't put on something like, "Oh, I think this is cool". Like, again, if I saw something that I just thought was really neat from a like geeky Sami perspective, I would definitely put that on mine. And my Twitter is more full of "I", personal, "me," whereas network, it's "We AI3SD," "We as a network," because they're definitely not seen like one person and like a joint entity. And again, we're a research network. We're there to be professional, to bring people together." – Stephanie, Constant connector*

"I think if I was going to post a status, I haven't posted it, this is on my personal Facebook but if I was going to I would definitely type differently on that for work just like even simple things like language like you wouldn't swear, I would never swear on the Facebook groups obviously or on my work Facebook or anything but like if I was messaging one of my friends on Messenger I would but I would never swear to a [client] on Messenger because I just think that professional line is…" – Ashley, Partial (dis)connector

Becoming the voice of the brand, as was the case for many, either because they had created it or they feel the voice is 'them' from months and years of experience, have helped my participants find it easy to switch between roles and domains, therefore my research contradicts that of previous studies that report psychological difficulty with transitions across domains (Hamilton *et al.*, 2011; Leroy, 2009; Matthews *et al.*, 2010; Smit *et al.*, 2016).

"But, with [COMPANY] the brand allows you – if I am not being informative and when we were a bit more creative as a team, when we were looking for things to jump on, trends and be really relatable to customers, you actually didn't need to switch your tone of voice because they want to be a bit more personal and relatable to anyone else anyway. So, if it was a different company and they had a more serious tone of voice, then yes. But here, they do the heartfelt tone of voice, or they do the cheeky witty tone of voice and that is kind of me anyway, so it just works." – Scott, Partial (dis)connector

"I've got a more, like, silly, playful tone of voice. For me, it's kind of on par with my own style … so I don't have any issues with switching between the two." – David, Partial (dis)connector

It could be said then that familiarity and experience of the different tone of voices across these digital virtual spaces for this group, made crossing DVBs easier for them and is why they did not report conflict with switching. Their own identity overlaps so much with this online brand persona they have created for the account they manage; the roles feel as if they are blurred, making switching easier for them.

In the next three chapters I will introduce a typology updating the preference groups previously proposed by Kossek and Lautsch (2008; 2012), see table 3 below for a brief description of each group. From the total 36 participants in my research, 13 were identified as

Constant connectors, 13 as *Partial (dis)connectors* and 10 as *Wannabe segmentors,* at the beginning of each category findings chapter I have created smaller tables that provide a more detailed breakdown of which participant was assigned to which group. Each chapter is dedicated to one group and through quotes and shadowing field notes I will first detail the characteristics and motivations that are the makeup of this group, then I will illustrate the tactics used by them with the use of digital tools and that support their preference. It is imperative that these groups are updated to consider digital usage not only because of how ingrained digital technologies have become in everyday life, but also, digital technologies are changing and shaping our behaviours which will have an effect on *how* we manage role demands and cross our boundaries. Throughout each of these chapters I will demonstrate how the behaviours and attitudes towards managing and transitioning across boundaries with the use of digital tools differ from what the literature has previously stated, and also why understanding the difference between managing and crossing analogue boundaries versus a DVB is valuable to users and their WLB. The work presented here provides one of the first investigations into how notions of connectivity and unplugging are closely linked to boundary preference too.

Table 3

Category	Description
Constant Connectors	Those who not only have a preference for integrated boundaries, but they want to enact multiple roles simultaneously. By being constantly connected, this group use digital technologies to be readily available and because being contactable 24/7 gives them peace of mind. Technology allows them to feel practically boundaryless and they speedily switch in answering the demands from multiple roles and domains.
Partial (Dis)connectors	This group have no set preference and will use digital technologies to regularly switch between having blurred boundaries or separated ones. They understand the need to switch off and will take frequent breaks. Interestingly, this group will use technology to partially disconnect and temporarily either integrate or segment their boundaries whilst remaining altogether connected; a filtered connectivity state one might call it.
Wannabe Segmentors	With a preference to keep their domains separated and regular practice of switching off this group uses digital technologies to manage the flow of incoming demands. However, under the right circumstances, they will allow for blurred boundaries only in short bursts and on their terms, which helps avoid WLC.

Table 3 – Typology group descriptions

5 Constant Connectors

5.1 Introduction

As mentioned before, I propose a typology consisting of three new boundary preference groups that encapsulate connectivity practices and the use of technology for boundary management. For each of the next three chapters I will first describe the characteristics and motivations identified with this boundary preference group which will support in answering my first research question, 'How are digital tools affecting SMPs preferred boundary preferences?'. This will then be followed by another section that explores the strategies and technological tools that were shared by my participants to enable them to enact their preferred preference which will answer research question two, 'What strategies are SMPs implementing with technology to manage their work and non-work boundaries and roles?'.

Constant connectors are those for whom being and staying connected is vital to meet their multiple role demands. They have a preference for integrated boundaries which they achieve through the use of digital technologies. By remaining 'always-on' not only did members of this group report it was better for their well-being, but their overall WLB too. Nearly all skewed towards being work central meaning they held work as their domain centrality for the majority of the time. By holding their work role to a higher priority above all aspects and roles in their life and with how they identify, meant when work matters arose – either from push notifications or simply an urge to check-in themselves – this would not bother them, in fact, it put their mind at ease because they felt more in control and less guilt by being available to others (Black *et al.,* 1999; Roberts and Koliska, 2014; Thomas *et al.,* 2016). See table 4 to see which participants fit into the category of *Constant connectors.*

Table 4

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Industry	Parent	Preference Group
Jeremy	Male	29	Higher Ed	No	Constant Connector
Stephanie	Female	28	Higher Ed	No	Constant Connector
Miranda	Female	25	Media	No	Constant Connector
Kelsey	Female	29	Travel	No	Constant Connector
Dustin	Male	29	Cars	No	Constant Connector
Maria	Female	28	Hospitality	No	Constant Connector

Matthew	Male	21	Hospitality	Yes	Constant Connector
Ariel	Female	30	Gaming	No	Constant Connector
Ryan	Male	29	Finance	No	Constant Connector
Jason	Male	33	Arts	No	Constant Connector
Oscar	Male	24	PR	No	Constant Connector
Stacy	Female	30	PR	No	Constant Connector
Brittney	Female	26	PR	No	Constant Connector

Table 4: Constant connectors participant breakdown

5.2 Characteristics and Motivations to preference
5.2.1 Passionate for their Work

A prominent theme among participants' responses in this group was their passion for work. Many stated that you must love this role to do it because "social never sleeps" (Jermey, *Constant connector*) implying there is no rest from work. In response to questions about the reason why they willingly spent long hours on work or how they felt about their role, all participants either directly expressed their great passion for working in the social media industry or provided descriptions that could be interpreted as passion. This group are aware that although they are either contracted to or put aside a certain amount of hours for work, the type of work they do can sometimes feel like they are always on because social media does not really switch off and have set contact hours like a traditional business phone line would.

> *"Probably that when it's going at its absolute best, I don't see a distinction between the two [work and non-work domains] because I'm really enjoying the element of it that I'm doing, so it doesn't matter that the work has bled into the life because I'm enjoying it, and I consider that to be life." – Jeremy, Constant Connector*

> *"In order to work outside of hours you've got to be happy and you've got to have a passion or otherwise there's no point in doing it." – Brittney, Constant Connector*

> *"I mean we're all on social media ourselves and then you're catching up with sort of what friends are up to and the other side of social media because I think it's impossible to work in social media and not have an active interest in it out of work as well so, yeah, when I'm not at work I'm usually talking to other people and sort of seeing what they're up to so,*

yeah, my sort of work channels often get mixed in with my own." – Oscar, Constant Connector

"Yes. To be honest, I would ... like my main thing is to find ... if you're doing shit like this it HAS to be something you like because if not it will like take over your life and you'll hate it, and because it's just so ... the problem with it, the good and the bad thing about it, is it's so constant. And it's so sort of like ... it's instant as well, it's like you can do something now and it's online now, there's not like a massive sort of gap in between things and that's good because you get content on but it's also bad because you don't have a minute to yourself and if you don't like your job that becomes incredibly frustrating so I would just say before you say yes to doing it try it out first to see if it's for you because it's 100% not for a lot of people, because it's just like you're constantly on your phone, you're constantly dealing with like ... you don't really switch off, that's the thing, and so if you're not ready to do that don't do it, so I would say make sure it's something that you like and also make sure it's something that you want to do because the idea of doing social media is a lot, like it's fairly similar to what you actually end up doing but you don't account for how much time it takes, because you're like 'oh, it'll take five minutes to do an Instagram' and you're ... like it doesn't actually, it takes a bit, yeah." - Jason, Constant Connector

This passion is important because it is the reason most participants justify working extra hours, longer days and even picking up work during their personal time and other domains. They are happy to "overwork" because their passion for their job makes the work so enjoyable.

5.2.2 Feelings of Guilt

Another reason this group prefers to be constantly connected is because of their inner conflict at the idea of switching off. They confess that if they are not able to instantly respond or be available to fellow colleagues or people in their community, they experience feelings of guilt. Below this feeling is perfectly captured by Stacy, who I questioned when they returned to the office when it became clear they were still responding to emails whilst on holiday abroad.

"I just had to, you know? I know I wasn't meant to be checking my emails but all I was doing was sitting around and chillin' and I get a notification when I get an email anyway so I was browsing through – that way I don't have a mad amount of emails to sort when

I'm back – and there I was reading and thought well I know the answer to this so if I just reply now then they can get on with that task whilst I'm away instead of having to wait a week till I return. I'd feel guilty because they KNOW I saw it because I'd already answered some other bits here and there, not everything but enough to say I'm checking my inbox, you know? I just feel better for being connected." – Stacy, Constant Connector

Technology gives them the tools to quickly respond to demands regardless of location. Many of my participants voiced that they experienced feelings of guilt if they were not available to instantly respond to demands, therefore the idea of the borderland provides an ideal space in which they can be accessible to the multiple facets of their life at once and technology supports them. In this case, accessing multiple roles allows them to do that by staying connected and checking in without being fully immersed physically.

Facebook would provide insights that were publicly visible on the 'response rate' of a company's page, which was measured in a percentage based on how quickly organisations would respond to a message. It could be said that this technology function only encouraged feelings of guilt and the need to instantly respond with Matthew, a student who looked after a local hotel account.

"I mean it's at 90-something % at the moment so that's where I want it to be. I tend to get to most things within about 15 or 20 minutes unless I sort of gauge when I see the notification come in how urgent it is, how… if I'm in the middle of something else do I need to go and jump straight to that and reply, or if it's something that I may need to confer with someone else then I'll perhaps leave it a little longer so I know exactly what the response needs to be… It can… especially in a situation where I've had no… if I haven't been able to respond to what I've seen – a response has come in after I've had no signal, my phone's been off, or for whatever reason you sort of feel a little bit anxious that you've let this person just either sit there unanswered for however long it might be and what they are now thinking of the business, whether that's impacting their opinions; that sort of thing."
– Matthew, Constant connector

"I suppose that's one thing I haven't mentioned as well is like if I had a WhatsApp message and it was all about work at the weekend that I didn't see for like an hour I would feel quite guilty… Because I'd know that it was someone who was looking for some help. Because

they have a problem. That's usually the only reason somebody would send a message. And I would feel quite guilty the fact that that I didn't see that straight away, but at the same time logically I know that it's reasonable to have not looked at my phone for an hour… Yeah, so I think, yeah, that's a bit of a downside but … because I'm terrible as well that if I see that I've got a message I have to look at it. You know, I don't just have the unread message symbol sitting there like that. I have to just double-check." – Ryan, Constant connector

Both participants here reflect on feelings of anxiety and guilt at not being able to respond instantly because they are concerned about the idea of letting the person who has reached out feel they are being ignored (Black *et al.*, 1999; *Roberts* and Koliska, 2014; Thomas *et al.*, 2016). All their concerns about the response rate show how much they care about their organisations' needs and how this channel of communication will reflect on the business. By allowing notification alerts and checking in regularly regardless of what domain they are situated in helps abolish any feelings of guilt and anxiety for this group.

5.2.3 Little to No Need for Recovery

According to Piszczek (2017) technology prevents post-work recovery by increasing the overall time spent working plus working in non-work domains. However, as noted above and below here by one of my participants, this group does not necessarily feel the need for recovery.

"I know there is a lot of talk about burning out, especially amongst the [SMP] community, like, others will always be sharing things on wellbeing and mindfulness when you work in an industry like this, I mean, everyone knows how toxic social media can be when the keyboard warriors come out. But, honestly, I just don't get stressed with it all, I don't let those hiding behind a screen get to me and I like being reachable – is that a word? – anyway, reachable all the time, helps me stay in control, you know, and keep on top of things when I'm out of the office." – Oscar, Constant connector

Oscar was aided by the help of technology and staying connected whilst at home and therefore he was able to continue on working after hours which made them feel less stressed similar to the work of Van Heck and Vingerhoets (2007) and Burwell and Chen (2002). The

scenario Oscar is describing he is actually on annual leave but still working, by choice, rather than taking a break the literature describes is essential to avoid burning out (Cook, 2015).

5.2.4 Staying Connected Gives Peace of Mind

Although this group voiced that their preference is to stay connected, they also described that their lifestyle and choice not to switch off might be considered by others as an unhealthy WLB, reflecting an awareness of prevailing discourses, not that they necessarily felt that way.

"I think probably unhealthy at the moment because I am always switched on with work. It has got a bit better, it is working out how to manage it… I made it a little bit more flexible for myself, but I probably do spend more time than I should on my phones… So, it just gives me more peace of mind actually being across it, rather than not, because I would probably feel more anxious not knowing what is going on at all." – Kelsey, Constant connector

It is interesting how Kelsey positions herself within dominant discourses of what could be called "too much time online" equating to views of "unhealthy" WLB as this would appear to not fit with this group. However, the way in which she describes it this idea is how she believes others view her WLB, whereas she finds that being connected gives her more flexibility and peace of mind, preventing her from experiencing anxiety and WLC. Ariel considers having boundaries because she does not take her laptop home with her every day. However, she acknowledges that she will be doing work on her laptop even when she is off sick and meant to be resting, it is only whilst being interviewed that they reflect on this behaviour.

"I try and obviously have boundaries in terms of… like I try not to bring my laptop home to do kind of reports or other stuff that I should be doing, obviously if it's an emergency but I've always been quite conscious of that because I've been in other roles that were, believe it or not, even busier and more demanding than this one and I was always conscious of that creeping up so I've always been quite good at going… I'll have my phone but I'm not going to be taking my laptop to do a lot of extra stuff if I'm not around. But having said that, when I'm off sick I can't help it even when I'm off sick I'm like literally like on my laptop then doing work like that I think is the only way that it kind of has because I just can't even switch off when I'm off sick like there's been a few times where I'm like off three days and

I'm there like checking emails and trying to do stuff and sending stuff to people like it's a control thing, I don't know…. Oh, I'm terrible like, no, this is another one, no, on holiday I'm awful like I just done it now just came back from Dubai and I should have been on the beach sunbathing but I saw a few emails that were like oh I need to respond and then my exec was going, 'Just go on holiday like just go back to sunbathing, stop responding', I can't help it like I just I can't, if I see something pressing I'll just… I've always been like that, I know it's not good, but I always check my emails, always." – Ariel, Constant connector

As described above, by staying connected and conducting work whilst in the non-work domain, even whilst unwell or sunning on a beach on holiday in Dubai, technology has enabled Ariel to keep her boundaries blurred allowing her to feel in control and have peace of mind which is similar to findings in the literature regarding correlations between control and wellbeing (Cropley and Millward, 2009; Kossek *et al.*, 2006; Langer, 1983).

5.2.5 Flexibility is Key

Below, Maria accepted that the mobile nature of their phone gives them the ability to do their work anywhere, at any time and they point out that they can be with friends socialising or even being interviewed for this thesis whilst still keeping on top of their work.

"The thing is because I run my business from my phone, you'll find that you could be sat with your friend for dinner and they pick up their phone and answer a text message, you don't know that I'm answering a business text message, so people don't tend to notice. I think because people our age are on their phones all the time, you wouldn't actually know that I'm working … I'll just answer things ad hoc as and when they come in. I don't think you would notice that I was working, most people don't. My phone is going off right now and this is all work. There's 14 notifications since I last checked it, that's all work, but to you, that's just Instagram… if I was sat having a coffee with my mate, if they complained that I was on my phone I'd be like, 'You're on your phone too'. Say we were sat at dinner, I would expect someone to not be on their phone anyway, so I just do it in the times that society says it's all right to be on your phone. It's not like I'm pulling out files and a laptop, I don't need my laptop. I ran my business from my phone for two years without even buying a laptop." – Maria, Constant connector

The discretion combined with what is considered socially acceptable whilst using a mobile phone enables Maria to subtly answer work demands in her personal time. Her phone and its

affordances allow her to have the ability to reply to several notifications from different domains across apps or within one app whilst physically in another and so her company are blissfully unaware that she is answering demands from another domain. It is also important of course for this group to blur their boundaries as they please and in this type of role, some of my sample found technology easily assisted them to do so. I observed Brittney switching regularly between work and personal social pages and asked how she felt about receiving personal notifications whilst at work.

"… because social media is like always going to be part of someone's social life and work life if you work in that area. Because I don't think there is anyone out there that works in social media and doesn't use it themselves, so the lines do get blurred a bit, because when I am at work I will obviously check my personal one, like in breaks and stuff like that, and just sitting at my desk if I get a notification I will check it, and then it is like I am on my personal at the same time as the work one, and it is like, that is a lot of social media!" – Brittney, Constant connector

Brittney found it easy to move between work and life domains constantly because of the nature of social media and expected to do so because of their role with no WLC. Although technology has been criticised for making boundaries more permeable (Duxbury *et al.,* 2014; Wajcman *et al.,* 2008), the following participant, Ryan, made it clear that it is the users' choice of whether they wish to blur their boundaries or not.

"I – initially, I tried to keep them separate initially but then I realised I was fine with mixing, it wasn't a massive sort of thing, and I think it's because … especially with the [brand] stuff, it's not like … it's never been like ' you have to do this' it's always like 'if you get a minute, do that or if you don't it's fine' so I think that's why it's very like you have the flexibility to do what you want anyway so if you wanted to keep it massively separate you 100% could, but if you don't that's also okay, it's doable, it's not like … it doesn't intrude on your life, it's sort of like if you choose to let it in or not." – Ryan, Constant connector

Although Ryan started with intentions to make a conscious effort to keep domains and demands separate, he soon found integrating with technology a more suitable preference as it allowed the flexibility he desired. After observing Stacy doing non-work tasks in the office,

I asked her a few questions about her actions and attitudes to dealing with personal admin during a workday.

"Oh yeah, it totally goes both ways, probably why I don't mind picking up the odd work thing at home or working late here and there because – maybe don't tell [my boss], although I'm sure she'd be cool with it – because I easily take chunks of the day where I'm sorting out personal tasks. The other day for instance, yes, I was on Facebook for work but I was also on it organising a hen do for my friend via messenger. So, whilst getting quotes for activities, answering questions of the other hens plus a separate chat for the bridesmaids, all the while I was sort of monitoring accounts but that's fine, right, because I worked a bit later or sometimes I eat lunch 'al desko'." – Stacy, Constant connector

Clearly illustrated in this quote, it shows how Stacy will give all their domains equal attention and she justifies this behaviour, that the current literature would label 'cyber-loafing' (Farivar and Richardson, 2020; Gkearslan *et al.*, 2016; Lang, 2001; Ugrin and Pearson, 2013), as being acceptable because she allows boundaries to blur bi-directionally, giving her personal time to work as well as using some of her work time to personal tasks, this helped her achieve WLB. The following participant, Maria, had the youngest child, still primary school age, of all the participants and considered themselves a freelancer although she was in the beginning stages of starting up her own business. When asked about their WLB they replied:

"Yeah, I love it, especially now I live with a freelancer as well. I've got someone to bounce ideas off at home, and then when [child] comes home it's just a different dynamic in the same room. I love my job, I love my life. I'm very lucky, considering I speak to other mums on the school run and they're just stressed and trying to work out who's going to have who at half term. I had four kids on one day at half term because none of them had anyone to look after their kids, and I was like, 'It's fine, I'm at home, have them over'. They're all playing in one room and I'm sat at the desk working, so yeah, I think I'm really lucky." – Maria, Constant connector

Not only does her lifestyle of flexible and fragmented working suit her well, but she also finds that technology enables them to enact their ideal boundary preference. Maria is able to look after her child and others whilst working at home on her phone and laptop blurring the lines between her domains; she only sees the positive of using technology as a tool to blur the spatial domains between work and personal.

"… but I guess my business hours do blur huge lines. Also, there's a benefit to that, because if I said I'm going to work from 12 'til four today if something came up between 12 'til four, that would blow it all out of the water and I would be missing work hours, whereas I pick and choose where to do it. Say I had a meeting after you right now and I had a 20-minute gap, I would think, 'I've got 20 minutes, use that time to work'. Most people if they were in allotted time would then have been behind, whereas I get myself ahead by picking those moments." – Maria, Constant connector

The other participants interviewed that are also parents (albeit three in total) were much older than Maria and either no longer had children living at home or they were much older and independent. In fact, the other two parents interviewed are both *Wannabe Segmentors*, it could be said, that parents with older children did not feel the need to be available and flexible with their boundaries as they expected less demands from their family domain compared to that of younger parents like Maria, although this would need to be explored with a larger sample.

5.2.6 Not Effortful to Answer 'Interruptions'

Like Maria, many others also did not see it as an issue to answer demands from one domain whilst in another if it does not require a significant amount of effort.

"So, like he'll [her boss] post, so I guess I was on holiday and I saw that he posted something and he would tag us in it, I'd just go and hit the retweet button because that takes me like two seconds, just like if he emailed me on holiday and said, "I really need a response to this," I probably would respond. But equally, I do set… I guess because I set my out-of-office emails, people know I'm away." – Stephanie, Constant connector

Even with an automatic out of office reply, Stephanie still would receive notifications from her boss via email and from the social channels she manages, which they did not see as a problem even though they were on holiday, because as she described it did not require much effort to reply. It was clear that Stephanie had tried to create impermeable DVBs with those that might email her whilst away, but with her boss, she had chosen not to turn off notifications allowing her boss to still contact her. It is perhaps because what could be described as an 'intrusion' was in their control (Cropley and Millward, 2009; Langer, 1983) that they did not report a negative impact. Stephanie was a self-confessed workaholic and reported having a very good relationship with her line manager, allowing her flexibility in

her work schedule such as leaving 30 minutes early to attend sports classes occasionally or booking last minute annual leave. One could argue she felt obliged to answer work demands in her personal time as a way of repaying her boss.

5.2.7 Non-dependent Lifestyle

Once again, this group challenges the notion of susceptibility to burnout and connectivity (Schick *et al.*, 1990; Small and Vorgan, 2008) when discussing different life stages and styles with my participants.

> *"I am literally always on. I don't think it is sustainable, and I wouldn't want to do it for a long period of time. I have always said because we are looking to start a family, I wouldn't be able to do that, I would want to switch off, go home and not have to worry about it, and spend time with my family. Whereas at this point, [wife] is doing a PhD and is really flexible at home, I don't have any commitments in that sense, I can just dip in and out of it, because she will be dipping in and out of her work anyway, and that works for us. However, I wouldn't want to do it for more than five years maybe, even less than that."* – Kelsey, Constant connector

> *"Oh yeah. I mean I don't do work work on the weekend but it's only if something has happened that I get a call to let me know what's happened. So, I can get a text at any point and have to do work. So, my Director has my phone number… So, usually, we get a heads-up if we know there's going to be a broadcast treaty over the weekend; that's okay because sometimes the government announces something you have to act, and we do that. And it works alright with me because of my lifestyle… I don't have kids, I don't have that sort of responsibilities, I can react; even if I'm say in a pub or doing something I can always just do it on my own so it's not too hard for me. I can imagine that can be quite distracting for people potentially."* – Ryan, Constant connector

Above, the first quote is from Kelsey describing her plans to start a family in the future and how this life event may make her change her work behaviours and attitudes towards being 'always on'. The second quote, from Ryan, has similar themes that if they had dependents or someone they were responsible for, they might find being readily available to work during personal time difficult. However, both respondents do not have kids currently and feel that

the lifestyle they have allows them the flexibility to be constantly connected and have blurred boundaries when either domain requests it. It is as though they are suggesting the role has an expiry date. This opens the debate of whether it is viable to work in an extensive digitally facing role for a long period of time spanning over several life stages like having children or if this type of role has a shelf life. It nods to an explanation as to why the majority of those interviewed happened to be in their twenties and early thirties.

5.2.8 Need to Impress

Earlier, I highlighted the literature of some employees' desire to "stay on top" (Oulasvirta *et al.*, 2012; Sarker *et al.*, 2012) which could be linked to the notion of not switching off and being readily available in order to help them progress in their career or appear ambitious and driven. One participant attributed this culture to the marketing industry.

> *"For instance, there are loads of people: "My work hours are between nine to five and I have half an hour to an hour lunch. The half an hour at lunch no one talks to me about work. Nine to five they can talk to me about work; as soon as it's five o'clock I'm out of the door". I don't understand that but some people that is their life. But I reckon marketing… if you work in the marketing industry it doesn't exist; that nine to five doesn't exist; because everybody wants more." – Dustin, Constant connector*

In this quote, Dustin describes his incomprehension at those who can have very separated domains and are able to switch off at the end of the working day. He believes that those who work in marketing have a desire for "more" which is why he feels the need to be constantly connected. Kelsey is not new to the social media industry, but she is new to a managerial role and having a large team to manage.

> *"I think when I have more confidence in my managerial skills that I put everything in place where they know who to go to if they need things or what to do, but we weren't managed very well before that, so it was very much fend for yourself and it was a very new team, so everyone knew how to fend for themselves. I think as the team has expanded, they have become more of a number rather than individuals so don't take responsibility and so, they need to be spoon-fed a bit more, and I don't know whether that is my fault as a manager! For actually spoon-feeding them! I think yes as I get more confident as a manager, I would be able to delegate and just be like you guys can do it, I trust you, and I don't have to worry*

about you. Whereas ... it might never change, I might just be like that all the time and always worry and always be switched on, it could be just part and parcel of being a manager and caring about the work that you do, I guess." – Kelsey, Constant connector

This quote draws attention to themes of control (Cropley and Millward, 2009; Langer, 1983), by being switched on all the time they can be more in control of the workload and output of their team. She reflects that perhaps as she grows with time, she may be able to delegate more which will allow her not to be switched on all the time. However, for now, to appear as an efficient manager she feels the need to be always-on. Later in Chapter 7, I discuss how *Wannabe Segmentors* who have been in their role for a significant amount of time at their organisation no longer feel the need to impress which enables them to switch off more and have the separate domains they desire. Nevertheless, Miranda who was new to a role as an SMP discloses her feelings of inexperience and the need to be switched on.

"But, I think with more experience I would probably switch off a bit more and have more confidence in myself to be like no it was fine, you scheduled it for the right time, and then you wouldn't need to check. And, my view would be that if you use separate phones and then when you go home, just switch off the other phone and then probably just be realistic and realise that if you work in social media throughout the day, you are going to have to sacrifice some time at home as well, because it would just be too much... Probably just that I am a bad example of what you should and shouldn't do! But, it is my first job doing it and no one really tells you what the boundaries should be or what you should or shouldn't do, so I guess I just have to work it out on the way, and I don't know if it would be helpful if there were rules but not everybody would stick to them, but I guess it would just take time to realise what the balance should be." – Miranda, Constant connector

There is potential scope for future work to do a comparison study on boundary preferences for new starters versus experienced workers. Jason felt so invested in their work and how it reflected on them and their output, and additionally linked it to the communications industry for why they felt the need to be constantly switched on.

"It's not expected to work after hours but it's kind of what comms officers do, comms managers do, you just do it. You don't even know you're doing it, you just do it because, as I say, after a while it becomes your personal reputation. It's not the [brand] it's you. So

if you want to do a good job in whatever job you're doing you kind of push yourself to put the extra hour in or … it's a weird thing… Because you do spend so many hours with it and it's such an integral part of you as an individual. I probably set my own rules really. I'm not expected to but I'll expect myself to do it." - Jason, Constant connector

This reasoning overlaps with the characteristic of being passionate about their work and again is closely linked with Oulasvirta *et al.*'s (2012) and Sarker *et al.*'s (2012) research. Overall, this group did reveal that they recognised the benefits of separation via strategies or having multiple devices, however, for many participants the perk of a separate phone for work simply meant annoyingly carrying around two devices all day, because on the whole being constantly connected works best for them.

Kossek (2016) defines integrators as those with a high frequency of interruption behaviours both work to nonwork and nonwork to work. This is the idea that this group prefer to blend their domains and manage demands of one domain whilst situated in another. She splits integrators into two types, fusion lover and reactors based on whether they enjoy integrating or if it is simply a preference to deal with their constant role demands. Kossek (2016) posited that individuals who highly identify with their career face the challenge of their organisations consuming their personal time. However, I did not find that in my participants, their main issue was mostly a conflict in themselves and lack of willingness to switch off. None of them described tasks from other domains as 'interruptions' because they did not view them in a negative light. They used technology to enable more permeable and blurred boundaries because this group not only enjoy integrating their domains but in doing so helps them manage the constant role demands which they see as positive rather than negative, similar to reactors. Kossek (2016) tends to focus on the negative outcomes of blurred boundaries and from her research, it would suggest the overlapping of domains is out of the hands of the employees, whereas my participants have created strategies with digital tools and communicated expectations with others to deliberately want and need integration, to be always available and contactable, even when they are away from the office, mostly because they love what they do so much. This suggests that their feelings towards technology in maintaining their WLB is a positive one. In the next section I examine research question two and describe strategies shared by my participants to enable their preferred boundaries.

5.3 Strategies and technological tools to enact preference

The examples provided in Kreiner *et al.* (2009) only focus on how to use technology to keep domains segmented, but my data has revealed that technology is used to manage and control boundary integration too. Current literature mostly describes technology as having an intrusive nature that creates conflict to workers' WLB (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017; Oh and Park, 2016). My research challenges this by highlighting ways in which my participants use technology to purposely allow for those intrusions in order to integrate their domains and meet multiple role demands.

5.3.1 Not Disconnecting or Switching Off

As previously discussed, motivations for preferences vary in context and can be very individualist. Below I share some of the reasons my participants wanted blurred boundaries and how technology enabled them to do this. Sometimes it was to keep up with demands as they go, so they can keep on top of work rather than separate domains and return to find a backlog of demands waiting for them.

> *"But, yeah, it's… I don't know, you feel like you don't want to fully disconnect because who's going to pick up the slack but, yeah." – Ryan, Constant connector*

Ryan hates the idea of segmenting his domains as that means sometimes putting pressure on his colleagues to pick up his workload when he takes annual leave. If he stays connected, he is able to complete some of the tasks in his own time and keep on top of his workload. When asking Kelsey if and how she switches off she replied,

> *"… Not – well they [mobile phones] are always near me, because I know that I have to be contacted in case of emergency. Unless I do have [colleague] on who is my number two, then I can put my phone away, but I don't. But, I just don't feel the need to answer or do anything, I just leave them be. Yes, it would just be like putting it on silent or putting it on vibrate close by and not needing to look at it. But, then again it is my method of contact if anyone is going to WhatsApp me anyway, so I will always be near it. I don't think I ever switch off other than – well you say go to bed but then it is on loud anyway!" – Kelsey, Constant connector*

Kelsey is aware that even when their second in command is in control or when they sleep, she does not really switch off from work. Her justification for this behaviour

appears to use the idea that they might need to be contacted and therefore she has no choice in the matter but to be always available. They also said that even whilst on holiday they would take both their phones and work laptop *"to see if everything is okay and something hasn't gone terribly wrong!"* which alludes to it being more that they get peace of mind to check in when they want and also in case there is an emergency they can rest assured they will be contactable.

5.3.2 Allowing Push Notifications and Staying Logged In

Nearly all my participants voiced a love for their work and role, and I believe it is this passion for their work that drives them to make sure everything is running smoothly and simply not want to switch off.

> *"…there have been a lot of times where I have taken more than a week off and I've just been like so curious or so concerned that I have just like, you know, checked in. I also- when you're looking after, like social media specifically, you know, I have the notifications turned on so I know when we've tweeted and I know when we've put posts out which means, you know, I can visibly see the work that's happening and if there's something I'm like, well, why did we do that? And I like to just follow it up very quickly because I care about it if that makes sense?"- Jeremy, Constant connector*

Jeremy not only stays connected but he has set up alerts when posts go out on their social channels so he can be notified, allowing him to check everything was posted correctly and to check on the work of others in his team.

5.3.3 Integrating Apps / Accounts on Multiple Devices

Not only is this group happy to receive push notifications from accounts they manage out of office hours, but they also use technology to assist in keeping them constantly connected so they can integrate their domains and manage demands from their multiple roles.

> *"So, I have said to my team if it is urgent then give me a call so that I don't have to keep checking it. I have my work WhatsApp on my personal phone, so I can consistently see if they are asking questions about anything and my phone's photo reel is full of just screenshots of people asking what do I do with this message or can we do something nice for this person or who do I escalate this to within the business, and so on and so forth. So yes, there is a good few hours out of my personal time where I will probably be helping the*

*team, and that is part and parcel of being a manager and me wanting to make sure
everything is okay, so I do tell them to contact me whenever you need, and they do that
literally so! … Sometimes, it is fine, because you are not doing much and you are just at
home and … it just is interesting seeing what things they escalate. Sometimes it is pretty
much just me going back and saying look here, and that is fine and next time they don't
have to ask, because we have got quite a few new people on my team, I will do that quite
often. And, I would rather them do that to be fair because it will make me feel better – I
would rather not have mistakes." – Kelsey, Constant connector*

Noteworthy here is how Kelsey not only blurred her domains by downloading
communication apps on both her devices, but she communicated her availability too. This
also ties back in with those personality traits of 'feeling guilty' and 'staying connected gives
peace of mind'. There is a clear desire for Kelsey to be available to her team at any time,
including her personal time, which could stem from the fact that she disclosed she is new to
the senior managerial role of the team. Anyhow, allowing integrated communication channels
across her domains and devices put Kelsey at ease and allowed her to manage work role
demands flexibly, therefore reporting no WLC when technology enabled her to blur their
boundaries.

*"Twitter you can have both, so I will have it on both. And, I will find myself checking
sometimes, but I don't know why I need to have it on both, I just do…I do have internal
apps that I have got on my personal phone if I ever need to check rosters or a document for
any particular reason, it just works better on my phone. Equally, I use my work phone to
take photos because it is better on my work phone! ... It is kind of useful for me [using
Whatsapp for both personal and work communication], it is a tool that everything goes into
so most of my communication goes through WhatsApp now because people don't read texts
anymore, so all the messages go through there unless it is the odd Facebook Messenger, so
it is just easy because if I am looking at my personal stuff, then I can quickly flick through
work and see if there is anything, rather than having to pick up loads of devices or go into
loads of different apps to check things." – Kelsey, Constant connector*

Kelsey manages a large team who work 24/7 on a rotating shift pattern. Part is that they feel
an obligation to be available to their team members, it being her first year in this senior role,
and part is simply that technology gives her the flexibility to have permeable boundaries and
ease in which to easily access and switch between role demands. She didn't report technology

as an intrusion or hindering her boundary management (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017), rather the opposite.

Many participants were guilty of keeping their emails switched on over the weekend because they said they feel a responsibility to their clients. Below Oscar addresses the idea of needing to switch off but it is clear talking with him that he does not practice what he preaches.

> *"So I'm quite connected in that, I would respond to email over the weekend if I felt the need, or if necessary. If it was just a general query that I thought could wait until Monday then I would leave it until Monday, but if it's something that they are looking for an answer immediately, then because I have my email switched on both my work and my personal phone, I have been available to be, to do that, and I think because obviously, we work in social media and again I am active on the various platforms that my clients are active on … I would really love to kind of, you know, not do, just because it's so easily, you know, so easy to kind of to check it, you find yourself doing it almost unconsciously, so, you know, I do do it, I don't particularly have a problem with it, but again it is that always-on, connected that, you know any calls or whatever down the line, but right now I haven't quite, you know, been affected by anything, you know, untoward just yet, but of course I know this is a major thing that, you know, you almost owe it to yourself to switch off when you can or when you should, you know, so I'll probably just, I know I've got to make a real conscious effort to do that. But it's also like, you know, being connected like that when you're not in work time, also sometimes, you know, not often but sometimes it does bring opportunities that you could then like, affects us or your clients, so for example if something had to happen over the weekend or one of our clients is either affected by it or there is an opportunity for a story or an angle, those are the kind of things you almost need to be on top of so that you can present that to the company, you know, which then helps with the (inaudible 00:15:28) business or relationships or whatever the case is, so just having that as an option is, it has its benefits but it has its negatives as well." – Oscar, Constant connector*

Part of Oscar's justification for responding to work emails on the weekend is that it is simply an occupational hazard of being an SMP, but it also ties in with the characteristics of someone in this group of staying connecting for peace of mind and it not being effortful to answer 'interruptions' from another domain. It could be said that if they had not received this technology intrusion in the form of an email from the client on the weekend then they would

not have had a domain overlap. However, it was this Oscar's choice to set email alerts on both their personal and professional devices over the weekend as well as admitting they regularly would check-in anyway as a form of wanting to stay on top and appear ambitious to their organisation (Oulasvirta *et al.*, 2012; Sarker *et al.*, 2012), giving them peace of mind and better WLB.

It is also the 'passionate about their job' characteristic that finds them in roles that align with their interests and when they are also interested in the brand they represent, they find a natural blur of boundaries because they follow relevant content to their brand on their own personal channels.

> *"Yes, so I do have that [Slack] on my personal phone. I have the work Slack space on my personal phone. And that is because if I'm browsing my personal Twitter account quite a lot of what we share to Slack as a team is tweets that are relevant or just funny on Twitter. So, it makes it easier to do that on my personal Twitter account to take to Slack and I look at Slack for fun as well as just work." – Ryan, Constant connector*

Having work apps and being logged into the work accounts on Ryan's personal phone allows him to access content that could be suitable for work whilst in his personal domains and the affordances of his phone allow him to quickly cross over domains to share the content with his team on a work communication channel. All the strategies highlighted above of how my participants integrated their domains by blurring their DVBs enabled them to maintain their boundary preference of integrating which in turn helped maintain their ideal WLB.

5.3.4 Managing Multiple Domains Concurrently

Whilst shadowing, I noticed that Stacy would have several Google (G) chats happening simultaneously and again whilst using WhatsApp's web browser version. They explained that even at work they had many sub-groups, there was a social team chat, senior leaders chat, a chat for their closest friends in the office. The use of these different chats helps Stacy define the lines of her work sub-domains. Sub-domains are separate groups that can be found within domains, for instance, family and siblings, colleagues and direct team, friends and closest friends. For Stacy there is work, and there is also work-work. Similar to how we have family, and immediate family. She wanted to converse more casually with a particular circle within one domain, she also did not want to discuss managerial topics with more junior members of the office. These separate digital virtual spaces allowed for her to not only have sub-domain

groups but gave her the ability to answer demands from each sub-domain easily at the same time.

The practice of switching over a DVB is so fast, easy and frequent, that my participants did not feel any WLC which echoes the work of Monsell (2003) who reported that developing a script from frequent transitions would reduce switching costs. Below, Miranda describes how she jumps about apps that she uses to communicate with their boss so at the same time they can talk about work in one app and other topics on another app.

> *"so the way we've kind of split it is that if it's work-related it's on Slack and if it's not it's on WhatsApp, and that's the way we've kind of like separated, it so if it's me being like 'oh, you should try this restaurant' it's on like WhatsApp or Instagram or something, and then if it's anything else then it's on Slack, like if it's scheduling, so we try and sort it out, but to be honest there's not many boundaries between like the work and not work, just because I think like the nature of it … even if you're not actively doing anything you're just like low key aware of it, that's the no boundary bit … now it's that I go anywhere and I'm like 'oh that's good for our Instagram' and it's the same sort of like you don't have to act on it but it's like it's just always there. You can tune it out but it's just like it's always in the background." – Miranda, Constant connector*

WhatsApp for her is associated with her personal domains and any conversations that took place on there were about non-work topics such as a new restaurant one of them had tried and wanted to recommend to the other. When the conversation steered towards work, they created a new conversation thread by using additional apps such as Slack or move to an email thread, associated with their work domains all the while remaining line and connected. What stops Miranda from being a *Wannabe Segmentor* is that they do not feel that their worlds are separated, nor did they state that is their preference. She sees them as blurring together and really having different platforms to discuss separate domain topics is more of an organisational tool for them than anything.

> *"Yeah, so we … so [boss] will email, well, talk on several different platforms all at different times and sometimes she's like WhatsApp'ing me and is then like 'wait, wait, wait, I'm going to swap to work' and then messages me on Slack instead and then we will be having three different conversations on three different like platforms and that's fully happened before but generally like work-work ones are email or Slack, but [other part-time company]*

stuff is always email like they have WhatsApp groups but it's very easy to do…" –
Miranda, Constant connector

In this case, the effortlessness of jumping across DVBs and the use of multiple technological platforms allowed for Miranda to balance her work and personal domains with ease on one device by connecting them to specific digital virtual spaces. Another point to raise from Miranda's quote is that the community they manage and works for specialises in health, fitness and wellbeing, all areas that strongly align with her own interests. This is another reason that transitioning between roles across DVBs was easy for her because she did not see a wide, clear distinction between her roles and domains. As noted already, Maria preferred her boundaries to be blurred, so much so she has friends that are clients, but like Miranda, found technology a useful organisational tool to separate their personal and work conversations.

> *"I have a separate email address for my business, which comes under my agency's name, or they can just text me or call me. Like I said, a lot of my clients are my friends, so yeah, I'm quite accessible. For example, my business card doesn't have my phone number on it, because then I can field people. It literally just has my email address, so I don't have to communicate with people if I don't want to. A lot of it comes through email. I've made sure that all my content comes through email now because my phone was just filling up with pictures of tacos and tequilas and burgers, and it was getting ridiculous. My phone is still full of these things because I work from my phone, so I have very recently separated it all. I've got my personal email address and my business email address, and now all my content goes into the business one and then I can add it to the drive." – Maria, Constant connector*

She also shared how not only did she now have different email addresses, which she accesses on the same phone, to split her work and personal emails but some of her clients only talk about work on one platform and "*friends stuff*" on a different platform. This is another great example of how Clark's (2000) borderland can be accessed via technology to be available to the demands of multiple domains at one time, within one mobile device but multiple platforms. She went on to say how splitting conversations in this way gives her a sense of control over how people talk to her which challenges the literature mentioned previously that suggests that extensive users of technology and the web tend to have addictive tendencies (Bianchi and Phillips, 2005; Griffiths, 1995; 1999; 2000; Guedes *et al.*, 2016) and therefore no

control over their use of technology and that technology is only a hindrance in their life (Monideepa *et al.*, 2007). She nods to the affordances of the search function that some of the platforms allow which opens up an interesting line of inquiry into the use of specific digital affordances for boundary management too. When probed about why this Maria was considering getting a separate business phone, even though she had clear characteristics of a *Constant connector*, I thought perhaps they were leaning towards a new strategy of trying to segment their domains in the future.

> *"I think I probably should differentiate my time. Well, other people say I should, but I don't… Also, the main reason, it's a very sad reason, Instagram can only have five accounts on it. You can't have more than five accounts logged into Instagram at the same time; I have 17 clients. I have to log out and log in, I have to remember 17 Instagram passwords alone, and also you find that the five that are logged in you actually spend more time on. A lot of social media managers, I specialise in organic growth, so the more you interact with other people on an Instagram account, the more engagement you'll get … The bonus about it being on my personal phone is instead of scrolling through my own shit news feed, I actually spend that five minutes that probably you sit on your own newsfeed, on somebody else's and it's making me money, or I make time to do that I guess. The five that are logged in, I spend more time doing that on those because it's easier than just logging out and logging back in all the time. You know that moment when you just pick up your phone to kill two minutes and you scroll? I'll do that on the ones that already exist on there, but a two-minute job is not involving logging out, getting a password, logging back in and then doing it, it's a bit more hard work. If I had two phones, I could be logged into ten, that's pretty much the only reason why. Then I guess I would turn it into a personal and business, but then business would still be on my personal phone, so I don't know. I don't really want to pay for two phone contracts, that's the problem." – Maria, Constant connector*

As you can see, Maria wanted more technological devices to enable them to be logged in to more work domains at once. Later I describe the strategy of logging out of accounts used by the other groups as a barrier to entry and aid to help them segment their domains, which Maria has identified and is trying to overcome through the notion of obtaining a second mobile phone so she can be logged in to an additional five Instagram accounts. This strategy allows her to access multiple clients' newsfeeds and therefore multiple work domains at once.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has explained the concurrent use of multiple digital virtual spaces and utilised Clark's (2000) concept of the "borderland" as a digital realm in which my participants can enact multiple roles to meet the demands from more than one domain at a time, supporting them in maintaining their WLB. This contradicts what the literature has previously told us about multitasking and meeting multiple demands from several roles being cognitively effortful and a cause of conflict (Hamilton *et al.*, 2011; Leroy, 2009). It also contradicts the idea of regular need for recovery and digital detoxes to prevent burnout (Coklar and Sahin, 2011; Cook, 2015; Ugur and Koc, 2015) by this group demonstrating their constant connectivity to multiple domains actually assists them in maintaining their WLB and not being connected would be a cause of stress for them. In relation to my research questions it is clear here that SMPs who fit into the group of *Constant connectors* feel positively towards technology and its ability to assist them in maintaining their preferred boundary preference of integration and connectivity. The strategies listed above in section 5.3 discussed the various ways in which this group utilised digital tools to assist them in blurring their work and non-work domains, so they could be readily available to simultaneously address the demands from multiple roles, which for this group was an important factor in maintaining WLB.

6 Partial (Dis)connectors

6.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces my second group, *Partial (Dis)connectors.* This group have a preference to keep switching between having integrated and segmented boundaries which they achieve through the use of digital tools. Whether it is partially switching off for a temporary amount of time, or remaining connected but partially disconnecting from some digital virtual spaces associated with one domain so they can focus on another domain temporarily, this group will regularly switch between blurred and separated boundaries as often as every twenty minutes to allow them to meet the demands from their multiple roles. Context and task are what could be said to drive the need to switch between integrated and segmented boundaries, but the key commonality between this group's members is how digital tools allow them the ability to shift from one end of Nippert-Eng's (1996a; 1996b) continuum to the other several times throughout the day.

Once again, the next section in this chapter will begin to answer my first research question. By exploring the characteristics that help users identify with this group and by understanding their motivations towards this preference will help answer how they feel about their use of technology whilst maintaining their boundary preferences. The following section, 6.3 will not only answer research question one but address research question two, 'What strategies are SMPs implementing with technology to manage their work and non-work boundaries and roles?' as well.

The approaches to manage DVBs differ from traditional boundaries because usually the solutions are only temporary and, in a way, we remain connected still but only to the roles that require domain centrality. For total segmentation from the digital virtual spaces of one domain, one must use the extreme strategy of completely physically detaching themselves, switching off or unplugging from their devices, which as discussed is not always possible. What has also been uncovered is the unusual paradox of using digital tools and functions to manage DVBs and to filter information coming from digital sources. The following two chapters discuss how strategies created to support my sample in segmenting their DVBs used technology to do so.

The biggest difference from Kossek and Lautsch's (2008; 2012; Kossek, 2016) previous work is the new group I have proposed named *Partial (Dis)connectors* and they differ from previously referenced middle ground types for the following reasons. Cycler types (Kossek, 2016) focus on the peaks and troughs throughout a year relating to the type of role someone may have, and their preference, therefore, varies based on when that role has busy periods, such as teachers with more marking during exam periods or parents that share custody over particular holidays. My proposed group differs as they are more in control of when their preference varies, which can be several times in one day. They use technology to help them create thick boundaries for temporary periods, throughout the day, when domain centrality is required from a particular aspect of their life. In fact, it could be said they are mostly happy to integrate and this constant switching between preference centrality makes them dual centric. *Partial (dis)connectors* also differ from the group Hybrid Firsters (Kossek, 2016) put forward in the literature because as stated they do not hold one domain centrality at all times, instead their domain centrality is what volleys depending on the context and task at hand. It is because of SMPs extensive use of technology in their role and from my participants' lack of having one domain centrality that meant they were well-practised in responding to so-called 'interruptions', and having the ability to meet those demands concluded that they did not feel a great WLC as previous literature has stated (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017; Oh and Park, 2016). See table 5 to see which participants fit into the category of *Partial (dis)connectors.*

Table 5

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Industry	Parent	Preference Group
Payton	Female	22	Music	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Brooke	Female	30	Charity	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Crystal	Female	23	Charity	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Veronica	Female	27	Arts	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Austin	Male	25	Charity	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Scott	Male	28	Charity	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Ashley	Female	27	Charity	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Molly	Female	28	Charity	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Shawn	Male	36	Music	No	Partial (Dis)connector

Kimberly	Female	32	Media	No	Partial (Dis)connector
David	Male	33	Media	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Emma	Female	25	PR	No	Partial (Dis)connector
Brian	Male	20	PR	No	Partial (Dis)connector

Table 5: Partial (dis)connectors participant breakdown

6.2 Characteristics and Motivations to preference

6.2.1 Frequent Switching

As mentioned above, this group could be considered as dual centric; meaning that they do not highly identify with one domain above another, but instead, treat all aspects and roles with equal importance when enacting said roles. This leads to a need to regularly change domain centrality and switch between boundary preference throughout the day. Whilst probing Emma about how they feel about their own WLB after observing her switch domain tasks regularly throughout the day she shared,

> *"I wouldn't really say I have a preference… no, well, I don't know, I guess… okay so if I'm at work and a group chat is popping off but I have to get this thing done [for work] by a deadline I would find a way to make sure my sole focus is on work for that task and when it's done I can join in on the chat again. I simply just ignore the chat by muting it or turning my phone over."*
> *– Emma, Partial (dis)connector*

As described, Emma will swap domain focus when needed throughout the day depending on the task at hand. Emma's workload would fluctuate depending on content that the client would send to them without warning and expect a very quick turnaround, which explains the need to occasionally focus and strengthen her boundaries, but there were also many moments she appeared to not have much to do and it was in these moments she happily blurred her boundaries. Payton, who worked part-time as a social media intern and therefore worked remotely shared similar sentiments about easily switching between domains depending on the role demands that occurred and needed attention.

> *"So, I would go in with the focus purely of the social media management, and all the tasks that I had to do within that, but if a personal task did come up in that time, depending on what it was, I think, in some cases, I would let that take priority for a certain period of time." – Payton, Partial (dis)connector*

By switching domain and role priorities, allowed these participants to manage their demands with ease and support their WLB. Another participant, David, shared the following metaphor whilst discussing their own work life demands.

> *"I think it is about setting those boundaries and giving yourself time away from it to relax and not worry that you are missing stuff, because you are going to and it is impossible to keep across everything all the time. I think an old boss told me once, 'It is about juggling, you are always juggling, but just knowing which is the ball marked ten, in terms of the most important, and just making sure you are never dropping the ball marked ten, and that one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, let them all go. Just keep juggling the ten, and if you do that you will be alright'. And, you just get the experience of knowing what the ten is."*
> *– David, Partial (dis)connector*

We have heard balance described as a juggling act before (Emslie and Hunt, 2009; Roche, 2015) and it can also be applied here and when one ball is bigger and requires more effort to be kept up, David suggests letting the others go and just focusing on that one when you need to.

6.2.2 Taking Regular Breaks to Avoid Burnout

As documented in the current literature, there is a growing concern of extensive online use leading to burnout (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Small and Vorgan, 2008; Ter Hoeven *et al.*, 2016). Similar to *Constant Connectors*, this group are also very aware of the increasing worry of becoming burnt out, and it is because of this knowledge they take temporary periods to unplug when they can or sometimes not unplug but scale back connectivity. Brian below describes that their phone has a tracking feature that they used to see how long they were spending on certain apps.

> *"I think I was just like reading more about like this kind of thing [burnout] and how especially like checking a phone late at night is really bad for you and being constantly distracted by notifications is super like not great. I was especially interested in ways of tracking how long you have apps open for so like another feature it has is that it tells you, you know, you've been using Twitter for one hour/two hours however many today and then you can also turn on like limits for those. So, I was like okay what I'll do is I'll limit my Twitter time every day to like 15 minutes and it turns out that was like nowhere near enough but just for my like personal time I need it like an hour or something, I don't know, it's crazy but then also like for work so like if I'm doing like an Instagram story or something that means a lot of, you know, having the app open and working in there and that takes up*

a lot of time as well so, yeah, that's where I sort of started caring about it just a sort of broader concern for my wellbeing I guess." – Brian, Partial (dis)connector

After doing some research on their own device/app usage they felt they needed a change and decided scaling back their technology use would be better for their wellbeing. Their awareness of how long they were spending on their device was curbing their use of it and what motivated this change in behaviour and take more control of their usage so they could avoid becoming burnt out.

"… there is a lot of discussion about how people will overwork themselves and will work more than is required and it- particularly it happens to people who work in the [third] sector, people who work in the voluntary sector, and it particularly happens, you know, when you're emotionally connected to the cause or the organisation that you're working for you tend to overwork and there's, yeah, just a lot of discussion about people kind of work themselves into exhaustion and I've started spotting that I might have a tendency to do that and just being conscious that I don't want to get into that way because I have a very long commute into work as well, I don't have that many hours left in the day … you kind of have to dial it back a bit." – Veronica, Partial (dis)connector

Veronica had a moment of realisation when she kept returning home at the same time as her partner, who works as a solicitor and is expected to work much longer hours. That made her worry if she would work herself into being burnt out and eventually, she made the decision to take more regular breaks. Kimberly discussed a shift in how people are talking about mental health and wellbeing in relation to media use, with an understanding of needing to take more breaks and switch off occasionally.

"There has been a lot more talk recently around people's mental health, even Jeremy Kyle being taken off air today, you know right to the point where people are committing suicide off the back of television programmes for fuck's sake. I think there has been a bit of a shift in culture over the last few months where people are kind of looking at boundaries more and not just work/life balance around I suppose the media and your mental health and having that space to chill out and relax and turn off, and I think people themselves are getting better at it." – Kimberly, Partial (dis)connector

It has been noted there is growing popularity of taking a more extreme method of the occasional break to manage the issue of burnout, a digital detox (Bittman, 2008; Foot, 2014; Gretzel, 2014; Lay, 2014; Pathak, 2016; Portwood-Stacer, 2012; Roberts and Koliska, 2014; White, 2013). However, the role of SMPs means that the idea of taking a digital detox or social media break is near impossible because their job requires being accessible and present on social media platforms. Taking a small break occasionally is treated as a compromise so this group can maintain their WLB that is skewed towards being constantly connected.

6.3 Strategies and technological tools to enact preference

The literature describes technology as though it is intrusive by nature, that there is this constant bombardment of notifications which are overwhelming and this can lead to users feeling stressed or worse, end up burnt out (Ahuja *et al.*, 2007; Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006). By using the affordances of their technological devices to segment their domains, my sample was able to manage and control their role demands when a domain required domain centrality.

6.3.1 Using Temporary Technology Solutions

Technology is known for making boundaries more permeable (Duxbury *et al.*, 2014; Wajcman *et al.,* 2008), therefore those in digital facing roles or extensive users of the web such as my sample find that even if they prefer to keep their roles and domains separated, they are still usually connected in some way. Consequently, the idea of taking a digital detox, which previously highlighted help avoids symptoms of burnout (Cook, 2015), is not possible for this group of users and if they wish to unplug, they have to find fewer extreme methods of doing so. The notion of switching off has been redefined for the always-on user. In order to segment digital virtual spaces from one domain, my participants would use digital tools and affordances to manage the permeability and thickness of their DVBs such as by temporarily disconnecting, using app blockers, chatting in private threads/ groups/ channels, setting auto-replies or using the mute function.

6.3.1.1 App Blockers

This group acknowledged that it is near impossible to completely switch off considering the role that they do, so instead, they use methods such as content filtering (Ribak and Rosenthal,

2015) and temporary blockers to give themselves short periods of recovery or when they need to change their domain centrality focus.

> *"I use an app that locks my phone, I forgot to mention it earlier, when I'm working, the same kind of thing like somebody take my phone from me, I'll use an app that grows a tree, so I'll set a set amount of time and then if I touch my phone my tree dies, and then I leave it and that's been really useful…Sometimes I just need a little thing just to lock my phone, and it could be sat on my desk and I'm like well I can't kill my tree now, I need that one thing in place, that just, will make me stop for a second because I normally mindlessly pick up my phone and check it when I'm not even thinking." – Crystal, Partial (dis)connector*

Crystal discusses her use of a gamified app blocker to help her focus on a task at hand and prevent her from using her phone, otherwise, her virtual tree will die which is the motivation she needs to prevent her from using her phone. As well as app blockers there are web browser blockers and app trackers that have the same desired effect.

6.3.1.2 Muting Conversation Threads

Brooke uses the mute function on group chats because although the topic of most of the messages is not of interest to her, she does not want to fully disconnect from the group chat. This way she is able to stay connected but have control over when she wants to engage in the conversation of that domain rather than have a large number of notifications that would only distract her.

> *"Well, I have my workgroup chat and I have a group chat with the girls I work with/worked with and then there's a big group chat with like the current and the previous [colleagues] from [colleague]'s wedding and then we just turned it into a, just a group chat. I have that permanently muted because it's either about [company] or finances or Brexit and I don't want to hear about any of those all the time so I just quietly mute it and like sometimes I'll check in if I'm like scrolling but I don't have it coming up all the time. Even just because sometimes the names of people like will just make you think about work so I just don't want it on there and the girls' group chat is literally just showing each other pictures of the clothes that we've ordered and stuff so there's like no work talk at all so there's not really a need for it, yeah." – Brooke, Partial (dis)connector*

Throughout the day she switches from being integrated and allowing their domains to overlap, to partially separating aspects and channels in which she can be contacted depending on the context, all the while being connected online. Both Crystal's app blocker strategy and Brooke's muting a conversation thread strategy provide opposing methods of control; one allows the user to choose when they want to receive any incoming information, whilst the other supports the user by preventing them from being distracted from their habitual ways of browsing mindlessly when they feel they should have one domain focus.

6.3.1.3 Using the "Do Not Disturb" Feature

Control over notifications can come in other forms too. Austin used their phone settings to turn off several notifications. Similar to turning off notifications of particular apps but allowing some to still push through is the 'Do Not Disturb' feature that is a common feature on today's smartphones. Austin finds it as a useful tool when ones' domain's demands require more of his attention and he can then focus solely on that domain's tasks.

> *"So, my laptop has a "Do not disturb" button which can block out notifications, and the same for my phone and my watch; if I know that there's something I need to get done before a certain time I will turn everything onto "Do not disturb" and block; so, I've blocked out personal notifications … I tend to be quite ruthless in that if there's an app on my phone that sends me notifications that I'm not interested in the chances are I know I'm never going to be interested in this so I will turn the notifications off completely. So, on my utility apps and on certain games I would just turn all the notifications off so if I do get a notification it's only something that's important I need to respond to." – Austin, Partial (dis)connector*

In doing so, Austin prevented undesirable notifications from coming through and any alerts he did receive he could remain confident that these were important enough to disturb the task at hand and focal domain. It could also be a control method to prevent the user from sending out notifications or habitually scrolling, not just incoming distractions. This strategy is extremely helpful in aiding those that want to remain connected but switch off certain demands of their life. It also gives control back to the user and makes technology appear far less intrusive than the current literature suggests.

6.3.1.4 Using Aeroplane Mode

Ashley also uses technology to manage their DVBs when they need to focus on the 'aeroplane mode' feature. Staying connected overall, but partially disconnecting by reducing incoming notifications temporarily.

> *"I'll never have a smartwatch or something because people are like "look you can have your e-mails on it and this" I don't want them, and if I don't want them, I'll look at them if I want I find them distracting. When I'm at work or I'm trying to concentrate on something I just stick my phone on aeroplane mode or I turn it off completely because it can be on sound, vibrate or no, no notifications so they still come through but it's up to me when I check them rather than it buzzing and me choosing to ignore it because I can't." Ashley - Partial (dis)connector*

Ashley states how her lack of self-control means she finds it difficult to ignore the buzzing of her device and therefore by implementing aeroplane mode she is able to control any incoming notifications. This empowers her to choose when she wants to receive the information from others and allows domain centrality when a task at hand has higher priority over demands from other domains.

6.3.1.5 Setting an Autoreply When Unavailable

Managing expectations was listed in Kreiner *et al.*'s (2009) table under Communicative tactics. My participants would manage expectations too by informing others that they would be enhancing their DVBs via technology by using features such as auto-reply on Facebook, similar to auto-replies on emails when you might set an out of office message or putting working hours in an email signature if not full-time.

> *"I'll set a reminder to turn on the "Away" message so that when people send the messages, they know that they are not going to get a response until the morning … Yes, so it's an automatic reply that just stays on until I then turn it off again; which I turn on overnight but I can't set it automatically so I have to go on and turn it on myself and then off myself. But I say something along the lines of, "Between ten and nine don't expect any messages"."*
> *– Molly, Partial (dis)connector*

> *"So, if I am away for the week – if I've got a day off we will put a status on our Facebook account being like, "I am away for this day; if you need to contact us either contact someone else in the team or our team emails". I don't think I would specifically say, "I've turned this off", to a colleague or anything; no… And again it probably won't be seen as a problem.*

So, I would just put a Facebook status: "Away for the weekend", and then if I do have any messages while I'm away I would like, say - "Sorry for the late response, I had the day off", or something like that. So, I would make it really clear that that's why they're getting a late response and it's not just because I've been slow in replying to them." – Crystal, Partial (dis)connector

An automatic reply notifies the recipient that they will not be getting an instant response which is usually an expectation for those using online communication (Perlow and Porter (2009; Turel *et al.*, 2011) as stated by my participants. By activating this feature, it allows users to manage the expectations of others and demands of one domain to a later time. This supports their WLB because it prevents members from one domain from becoming frustrated as they are more informed of when said user will be able to meet their demand causing less stress and presumption that they are being ignored.

The next strategies put forward in this chapter are not technological design features of the digital devices that my sample utilised to help their WLB such as the ones just described, but rather boundary management behaviours my sample have created on their own to help their WLB.

6.3.2 Temporarily Deleting / Adding Apps
The next strategy could be used to both manage oneself and manage the flow of information from others, it all depends on the motive of the user.

"No, I don't turn off my phone because my business and my personal are on the same phone. I am planning on getting separate phones, but I think I'm a bit scared about turning my phone off, the business phone, but I just ignore it. I text and Messenger my friends, and then I WhatsApp business people. I can ignore WhatsApp, or if I'm really tempted, I just delete the app and it just saves all the messages on it when I want to reinstall it…" – Kimberly, Partial (dis)connector

Kimberly provides another example of how they strengthen her DVBs between work and non-work is by first using different platforms to segment her domain and also temporarily deleting WhatsApp. When she is ready to step back into that role again, she simply reinstalls the app.

When Brooke goes away on holiday, she will temporarily delete any applications too and remove herself from digital virtual spaces that are associated with her work domain.

> *"On my way to the airport, I'm logging out everything on my phone, I'm uninstalling Slack, getting rid of everything. I'm leaving all the groups I'm in on WhatsApp to do with work, and all my colleagues are really clear on that. That's a very clear boundary actually when I'm on holiday, I'll look at, it will turn up in my feed, I'll see what [company]'s up to, but I've got nothing to do with it professionally." – Brooke, Partial (dis)connector*

There is the small exception that some of their work interests are aligned with their own so in their personal Twitter feed they will see some posts that may trigger something cognitively with them about work, but otherwise deleting for a short time period allows Brooke to prevent herself from checking in on her work domain and stops her work colleagues from reaching her, ergo temporarily segmenting her domains. Both techniques were reported to give them temporary relief from one domain when required and helped them maintain their WLB, without the need to fully switch off their devices. Crystal discusses how she does the opposite and temporarily adds her work email to her personal phone.

> *"So, on an event weekend I'll make sure I'm logged into my work, I would like get the Outlook app or whatever but I don't do that during the week because I just think you can get like obsessed with it can't you just checking it when you don't need to, stressing yourself out. But I can just flip between my work Facebook so on the Facebook app so I'll just log out of my personal one and jump onto the work one if I know there's something going on like an event at the weekend or something like that." – Crystal, Partial (dis)connector*

Crystal highlights an interesting point of view on what digital virtual spaces she considers to be more problematic to her WLB, in this case, she views email as having potential addictive tendencies but does not feel the same way with the social media platform Facebook. She also limits herself to installing and keeping the Outlook email app on her personal device when there is a work event occurring on the weekend that she needs to attend. Another way to temporarily disconnect for the following participant, Scott, was to turn off notifications on social media platforms for 24 hours which is an affordance they have utilised in the past to strengthen their DVBs and make their boundaries impermeable.

"… If I've been on holiday depending on where I am – so, I don't have a signal so they don't have a way of contacting me or they have actually – and I know my old Manager used to do this as well: delete his Outlook and Facebook and stuff of my phone until I get back so they can't bother me… No, I would delete it off my phone. Sorry, I said my Manager had also done that to them when they've gone away in the past as well. Yes, so that's probably in terms of if I genuinely want to get away. And again you can… depending on what I'm doing I will just turn off Facebook messages; so, there are ways of turning off notifications for 24 hours or something, which I have done in the past." – Scott, Partial (dis)connector

Then when the 24 hours are up, he can easily reconnect with that digital virtual space and other domain by allowing notifications through and the boundary to be permeable again. Scott did also admit he would obviously never do this strategy on a week day when he had work. In all the above cases, it is the limited nature of temporality that allows the user to maintain their WLB.

6.3.3 Using Timers and Having Reward Breaks

In order to motivate themself to segment from their phone and concentrate on their work domain, Brooke sets a timer and when the time is up, they reward themself with a couple of minutes on their phone to meet personal demands where they can transition out of the work domain temporarily. Brooke confesses how hard they are finding it to concentrate for long periods of time now and this is clearly why they have had to create a reward system that not only stops them from being on their phone for long periods of time when they are meant to be working but also makes using their phone a treat for staying focused on a work task.

"So, on the side, I do the script consultancy. And if the script is not super compelling… anyway, I do find that I'm sort of reaching to my phone a bit more, for no reason whatsoever, there's been nothing, no updated, nothing going on. So, what I've started doing is literally setting an alarm, like a timer on my phone being like, the timer's going to go off in 20 minutes. I'm going to work on this for 20 minutes and when the timer goes off, then I can reward myself, with like two minutes of looking at my phone, and then I will start it all over again. Because it's really bad like trying to…if I try and read a book now, I get really tired. It's just really hard [laughing]." – Brooke, Partial (dis)connector

Brooke designates set periods of time to focus on her work and then rewarding herself with screen time on her phone. This behavioural tactic leverages technology as it stops the habitual

checking and scrolling of phones and apps, even when no notification has been pushed through. The phone in this instance is considered Brooke's connection to her personal domain so setting a timer and putting the device aside is her not only disconnecting from technology but segmenting from her personal domain.

6.3.4 Switching Between Separate Browsers for Different Domains

A few participants mentioned the use of two or more separate web browsers as a form of segmenting their online work activities from non-work.

> *"Yeah, so I set my kind of, my setup at work, especially on my laptop, up in that I use one browser. So, Google Chrome, for example, to manage all that work-related stuff on there, so like I'm finding all my like, my clients', you know, their social channels, and all my work-related stuff is done through Google Chrome and kind of email apps, whereas all my personal stuff is then in on like Safari, for example. So, at any given time, I could switch between, but like I said, I don't really check my personal stuff during the day, so, like Safari, if I wanted to check in I could open that and have a quick browse, but other than that I'm very much like, focused on kind of the work and the task at hand, which is then like all through like Google Chrome, for example. So, I do have the option for, like I said, I don't kind of check-in too often. It's normally if I'm on the go-between like, you know, a couple of meetings, or if I'm walking from one side of the building to another, I'll probably just use the apps on my phone just to quickly check-in and see what's going on. But other than that, it's not like I'm sitting for, you know, minutes on hand, just like running through random Twitter, or whatever the case is, you know. I'm focused on the job." – David, Partial (dis)connector*

It is clear from David's statement he wants to focus on his job but when he gets a chance, he will log into the other browser he uses for personal tasks. It is the technology that assists him in maintaining this balance. He also does not describe any sort of conflict whilst switching between the two domains and the various digital virtual spaces, once again reinforcing the idea that switching between DVBs is not cognitively effortful.

6.3.5 Logging into Other Domain Accounts to Curb Notifications

Another way to stop push notifications as mentioned by some participants coming through is simply logging out of one account, temporarily, this strengthens the DVB around one domain by only allowing notifications to come through from only the domain they wish at that time. Certain digital virtual platforms, such as Instagram, only allow you to receive notifications to

the account you are primarily logged in to, so when Payton wants to address the notifications from either their work or personal account they will log in as necessary.

> *"My normal account is mostly my personal account so I get notifications on mine, like most of the time, and then I log on and I swap it over and I'm like 'okay, cool, this is all the stuff I need to either like deal with or reply to or ignore or like whatever'." – Payton, Partial (dis)connector*

In the social media industry and the role such as theirs, it is easy to feel switched on all the time, because from my participants' stories social media is described as not being the traditional 9-5 role. Payton also works various part-time roles and is studying so has a fragmented working pattern. The way in which they designate their working time is simply by logging in when they want to work and logging out when they are done.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described how *Partial (dis)connectors* use technology to cycle between integrating and separating their domains with a high frequency within a day depending on the task at hand. As explained earlier this differs from the middle ground groups defined by Kossek (2016; Kossek and Lautch, 2008). Their use of technology to enable them to both integrate and temporarily separate supports them in maintaining their WLB and once again contradicts what the literature has previously told us about being a negative tool for WLB. It is clear then, in regards to the research questions, that this group view technology positively as a tool that helps to maintain their boundary preference and as detailed above they provided various examples of strategies they implement to manage their work and non-work boundaries and roles.

7 Wannabe Segmentors

7.1 Introduction

This is the last of the typology groups to be introduced and as per the other findings' chapters it will follow a similar structure of first, explaining the characteristics and motivations identified with this boundary preference group and then, the strategies and technological tools that were used by my participants to enable them to enact their preferred preference.

Wannabe segmentors in short prefer to keep their domains as separate as possible and switch off from technology regularly. However, living in the digital world we do today this group understand and accept this is not always possible. Each with their own personal concession, they will allow for a breach in their preference when it has been decided to occur on their terms. This prevents them from experiencing WLC. Once again, this group will also use digital tools to assist in switching off the demands from one domain and therefore allowing them to remain connected still, albeit at a limited capacity that suits them.

Wannabe segmentors are similar to separators (Kosseck and Lautsch, 2008), however, my participants acknowledge it is near impossible to keep one's domains completely separated in this connected world. Although their preference is to keep aspects of their life apart for reasons from avoiding procrastination to recovery, each participant would have exceptions to their rules depending on what they deemed as an acceptable overlap. *Wannabe segmentors* are also similar to Kossek's (2016) separators in that they skew towards the 'dividers' type because this preference is a choice for the reasons I will provide below. As it is an active decision from the participant to separate domains, this makes them differ from being similar to Kossek's (2016) second type of separator, a captive, which is usually when forced segmentation occurs due to top-down rules and guidelines from organisations that forces them to preclude from integrating. See table 6 to see which participants fit into the category of *Wannabe Segmentors.*

Table 6

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Industry	Parent	Preference Group
Edna	Female	55	NPO	Yes	Wannabe Segmentor
Eric	Male	39	Media	No	Wannabe Segmentor
Luke	Male	23	Sports	No	Wannabe Segmentor

Amber	Female	27	Arts	No	Wannabe Segmentor
Lauren	Female	21	Cars	No	Wannabe Segmentor
Gloria	Female	48	Arts	Yes	Wannabe Segmentor
Sierra	Female	26	Higher Ed	No	Wannabe Segmentor
Elizabeth	Female	24	Higher Ed	No	Wannabe Segmentor
Logan	Male	32	Consultancy	No	Wannabe Segmentor
Brandi	Female	24	Higher Ed	No	Wannabe Segmentor

Table 6: Wannabe Segmentors participant breakdown

7.2 Characteristics and Motivations to preference
7.2.1 Work to Live, Not Live to Work

Lauren, who it must be noted was moving jobs a matter of days after our scheduled interview, did not see her job as an important part of her life, but her boss, also interviewed, was very much the opposite and categorised as a *Constant connector*. Lauren noted their boss' behaviours and by comparing them to her own it was clear they were opposites.

> *"I do tell him all the time, "You need to relax" because we have weekends off, we work shorter days than everyone else but he would never leave until six-thirty, seven, and I'm off at five-thirty – that's it, I'm gone – because that's when I get paid until, so in my eyes, I'm gone: "This is my day done". But he'll stay and do the extra work and I think that's really good because if there's work that needs doing then obviously you stay behind and you do finish it, but he'll always take his phone calls outside of work when he's home and he won't take holidays – like he hasn't been able to take a holiday in so many months – and I think I just wouldn't do that. I feel like you work to live don't live to work; I'm work to live, I feel like he's very much live to work. And that's the difference. That's what I'll never be; I'll never put myself under all that strain for a job. But that's just me because I feel like I know what work can do if it stresses you too much, it can make you unwell, and I would just never put myself in that situation." – Lauren, Wannabe Segmentor*

Throughout Lauren's interview, she referenced the importance of her partner and pets several times, and she also commented on her disdain for her current role suggesting a lack of attachment to her job. Therefore, this allowed her to easily switch off from work at the end of the day.

7.2.2 Confidence and Experience Has Changed Their Preference

Another similar trait for many that were classified as *Wannabe segmentors* was that it is due to their experience that they now felt more comfortable not being always on. This first quote is from Amber who currently worked for a popular tourist destination and therefore could receive thousands of notifications a day. Having worked in social media roles for some time she has learnt how to create many strategies to try to keep her life separate from her work.

> *"Yeah. I was doing social media at my previous job as well so I have been working in social media for quite a while now, and I guess when you start your career you really want to do your best and go above and beyond and you do check all the time what's happening and check all the comments, all the likes, everything constantly; and that is counter-productive and I think that's something that you realise with experience that you can't keep doing this all the time, you will burn out. So, I think gradually you realise that it won't improve your work in any way to keep checking mentions or comments. You do need to keep an eye on them to make sure that nothing went wrong but it becomes more normalised as you carry on with your career… Now I know that this doesn't make any sense but then when you are in the earlier stages of your career you really want to do your best and you kind of forget what's important and you don't realise that actually that's not the right thing to do, and you need to talk to your Manager and say that, "That's not realistic; I can't meet this deadline", or something like that." – Amber, Wannebe Segmentor*

Edna, below, picks up on that trait of feeling guilty that a *Constant connector* has from not instantly replying to messages, but explains how she no longer feels that way and has implemented strategies by communicating to others her boundaries, which is why she has been categorised in this group instead.

> *"It used to make me feel guilty that I wasn't answering it. I would beat myself up about the fact that I hadn't replied … because I knew they wanted to know the answer. But I also then, in the back of my mind, knew that it wasn't doing me any good either. Just doing it all the time … you can't, you know… I could have been doing that pretty much every day, answering questions that people were putting out. So I think I felt guilty because as a parent I think, well actually I'd probably want to know the answer to that too. But equally, they've got other people that could have answered the question. So, you know, we had four*

[brand] leaders. I wasn't the only one. There's two or three [one team] leaders, there's three [other team] leaders – so any of them could've answered any of those questions. But I always felt that it should be me, and I think that's just part of me. I always think that I ... I need to be doing the right thing. And I guess I thought that the right thing was answering all the time. But then it hit me all of a sudden that actually, they're taking over, you know, everything I wasn't sort of spending a lot of time doing myself. So, that's why I sent the email saying I won't be doing it during the school day and I won't be doing it all weekend. And if something comes through, you'll just have to wait or wait for someone else to answer. So yeah, that's what happens." – Edna, Wannabe Segmentor

Originally, both of these participants would be classified as a *Constant connector* when they first started their roles in social media management, but time and experience have taught them that kind of lifestyle are not sustainable for them and they feel less pressure to please (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007 Oulasvirta *et al.*, 2012; Sarker *et al.*, 2012) by overworking, so they changed their boundary preference behaviours to avoid getting 'burnt out'. This shows that no position is fixed and may shift over one's life course and career. Previous experience also taught this participant that they perform better at work the next day if they switch off and recover (Piszczek, 2017).

"I don't check it when I'm at home. I used to do that when I started working and I had notifications on and all these things, but I've stopped doing that because basically, it means that you're working on stuff if you do that... I think that it's important to switch off when you go home because then you can perform better when you are actually at work. Yeah, so I was getting a lot of notifications and because the [work account] has so many followers it meant that the notifications were constant so you were just checking your phone the whole time, so it did intervene with my personal life I guess so I had to turn them off." – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor

Once again, another participant like Eric recognised how notifications were previously problematic in his personal life and so adjusted their technology affordances to switch off alerts which prevented them from being tempted to check their phone constantly and also allow for post-work recovery. It is interesting to note here that both Eric and Amber work for very large organisations that are well known and receive several notifications which could be said to be one of the reasons they implemented new strategies. Number of notifications and

size of social following against boundary preference was not measured in this study but could explored in future work.

7.2.3 Switches Off with Ease

The *Constant connector* group really struggled with the idea of switching off or separating their domains for a number of reasons such as feeling guilty and it gave them peace of mind to always be available and contactable in case an emergency happens. Participants were categorised as *Wannabe segmentors* because they did not have these issues with unplugging, quite the opposite, they were able to easily switch off.

> *"I keep my work very separate from my home life. Like when I'm at work I'm like, "I'm at work", and that's fine but then it hits five-thirty and I'm gone; and I find it really good because a lot of people can't – like [boss] he really struggles to switch off but I'll literally just shut off work; if I've had a bad day and I haven't got something done I know it might sound bad but I just cut that off and I will go home and that's my home, and I'll worry about it at half-eight tomorrow… I just get in my car, the music's on, and I'll go home and I'll clean the house, obviously the animals, and I'll cook; just day to day life. But I find it really easy; as soon as I leave I'll go home and the stresses of work… I find it really easy to just go home and I'm home then, which is nice." – Lauren, Wannabe Segmentor*

It is with ease that Lauren could transition from one role into another and switch off from any role demands that may be waiting for her in the other domain. For some, it was easier to switch off because they had set their devices to not allow alerts or notifications through. Gloria, one of the older participants I interviewed, was very traditional in the sense that work stayed in the four walls of the office. She describes how easily she found it to shut off from work when she had physically got home.

> *"I would just never click into the account ever when I was at home, ever! And, it was like I didn't even see the notifications. Do you know the little numbers that I mean, that pop – I wouldn't even notice them, it wouldn't even cross my mind! I don't even click on them, I just wouldn't think about it… Yes, I am trying to see if I can show you … okay, so it would be like this [shows the interviewer the small red alert bubble attached to apps], it would be there, and then it would appear like this and then it would be the same as Twitter, there would be a little number, but when I am at home it is … because I am still in the area, it is*

like maybe I will just see, maybe something important is happening or how many likes do I have on that picture, but when I am at home for some reason I wouldn't even think to click on that, because I just for some reason as soon as I am home I am like I don't care!" – Gloria, Wannabe Segmentor

The physical separation for this participant changed their psychological mindset and helped them to separate themselves from their work role, and what is interesting to note here is that even with their phone subtly alerting them to new alerts in their work apps, they easily could switch off from this role and did not feel WLC. Earlier, I described how even when on holiday *Constant connectors* would find themselves picking up the odd work demand, but Amber does not feel the same about her holiday time.

"Yeah. So, when I'm on holiday I don't have that expectation that I will respond to things. So, I would've told people already; someone else on the social team will have picked stuff up. I just won't check anything. Yeah, I just like, "Okay, I'm on holiday now". I can see if it's something absolutely vital, urgent, but most of the time they'll message me and I'll say, "Oh, by the way, I'm on holiday; you need to contact so and so". So, yeah, for me that's easy for me to switch off. There is sometimes a little bit of guilt around turning off completely and the amount of work the other two people in my team will have to do because I'm not there, but that's the only thing I battle with." Amber, Wannabe Segmentor

She is more than happy to remind colleagues, that try to intrude on her holiday time, with ease that she is not able to meet that demand right now. Surprisingly she did not complain about this intrusion as they found it very easy to reject the boundary violation and switch off, even though as she admitted she felt partly guilty for leaving the team a person down, but not guilty about not responding as did the *Constant connectors*.

7.2.4 Avoiding Cyberloafing

Luke was another participant who preferred to keep his professional and personal life separate. He explained these actions and this preference was due to past actions of procrastinating during his university days which he wanted to avoid repeating in his new professional life.

"When I studied at university I would sort of keep my phone on, yeah I'd reply to things when I was working and things like that, and it would get distracted so perhaps it's something I've recognised and now with work sort of separate, but I wouldn't have said I necessarily separated them before… it was something I recognised from when studying and it could become a distraction, it could remove my focus from work and I feel I work better when I have time to sit down and dedicate to something. Whatever task that is, when I am solely focused on that I do it quicker, I do it better. So, I think noticing that with studying, and through making mistakes and through messing things up, you realise the need to keep that separate." – Luke, Wannabe Segmentor

Aware of how technology could be a distraction, Luke proactively decided to keep his domains separate so he could appear as a focused employee and avoid previous bad habits.

7.2.5 Exceptions to their Preference

The key difference of *Wannabe Segmentors* to previously stated separator preference groups are the exceptions to the rule that this group will happily integrate their domains for. What is important to note is these exceptions happen on their terms, meaning they were in control when their boundary preference would alter.

7.2.5.1 Occupational hazard

The idea of how separate or integrated you prefer your boundaries is not mutually exclusive to being connected to the web. Although *Wannabe Segmentors* much prefer to keep their domains separate, they are aware that it is not always possible to fully disconnect, whether in the technological or psychological sense and in particular Amber attributes this to acceptance to the marketing industry in which SMPs are in.

"I think it's more just the nature of the work like when you're in marketing, you know, there's always stuff to check, there's always stuff to follow up on and I guess the outcome of what you're doing isn't tied to like the 9.00 am to 5.00 pm structure, you know if there's like a social media storm brewing that won't stop on the dot, unfortunately, you know, you end up sort of being dragged into something. But my company's very good at like at least telling you to respect those boundaries, they will always tell us, you know, don't have Slack on your phone, you know, if you're off, be off, don't look at emails and stuff but, no, I always worry that that's just like more lip service than genuine concern if that makes sense?… It's just encouraged, even at like senior-level like our CEO tells us, you know, he was on holiday

for two weeks and uninstalled email and Slack and it was amazing and then like that sounds great, like I wish I could do that. Like I was off on Tuesday this week so a really bad thing to do like taking one day off in the middle of the week but when I came back I had like, you know, just been tagged in loads of stuff on the day and I had to do on Wednesday instead but at least I wasn't looking at it but in the back of my mind I knew that stuff was going on so I was kind of like not fully disconnected." – Amber, Wannabe Segmentor

Even with positive external factors such as the organisation's culture of encouraging their employees to switch off from work when taking annual leave, some participants such as Amber still struggled to feel "fully disconnected" on their days off. However, Amber still did not report WLC due to technology, rather in this instance they were simply thinking about the work they would be returning to because they had booked a holiday day midweek and knew their colleagues would simply wait until they returned rather than cover their workload. Amber also acknowledged that this was all part of the job description for someone in their industry and role. Elizabeth felt the same as they describe how the certain blurring of boundaries are bound to occur and only natural in the type of role an SMP is.

"So, I think people in my line of work have to be prepared for the idea that you can never truly switch off, or, at the very least, you'll have to make a concerted effort. It's not just a given that you'll be able to do it. You need to organise your work around the idea that you need time to switch off and, kind of, recharge. So, I think, you know, it's a blessing and a curse because the fact that people, kind of, expect that immediate response a lot of the time, it can sometimes be a really positive thing because, you know, from a consumer perspective, it's a little bit… You know, what you're doing on social media should always come across like… There's a mantra that I picked up at a conference a few weeks ago, and the guy, basically, said, like, nobody should ever feel like they're communicating with a building. They should always feel like they're communicating with somebody who works at that organisation and is really passionate about what the company does and what they do within it. And in the same respect, like, I think our social media channel should be, you know, a little bit more human and personable, and authentic, and the upshot of that is that sometimes we will be online after hours, and I think that's just, kind of, an occupational hazard and there's no way around it, like, the expectation's already been set and we can't put that back in the box now." – Elizabeth, Wannabe Segmentor

Elizabeth also did not report being irritable with what she describes as *"an occupational hazard"*, instead she has simply accepted that to do the role they enjoy they must sacrifice their

boundary preference occasionally, as long as they also make a planned effort to switch off. In Eric's organisation, it is also encouraged to switch off where possible and make that separation from work, but once again, there is this belief that in the social media industry that working extended hours and during your personal time is expected with these roles.

> *"…our company encourages us, our boss especially encourages us to switch off when we can, and make sure we're getting home at reasonable hours, or whatever the case is, but, if the time requires, or the needs arise, and we need to kind of put in a bit of extra work or work on a weekend, then that is expected, and I think in our industry especially I think that comes with the territory." – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor*

7.2.5.2 Getting Time Paid Back

When describing a typical day, Logan notes how he will come in later than his official hours that he is contracted to. However, he sees no issue with this because he allows for work to blur into his personal domain in the evenings and sees the later start in the mornings as compensation for time paid back. It is for this reason why he does not report any problem with his WLB even though he has previously stated he prefers to have his domains quite separate.

> *"So, realistically, like, 9.30/9.45, I amble into the office. A couple of hours in the morning to schedule social. For the same reason, I try not to book meetings in that period because it needs to be in the morning, like, that's, kind of, a key time. And then, yeah, the rest of the hours of the day will be meetings, checking infrequently. I'll, sort of, be doing that on mobile if I can't be at my computer, and then I'll finish at 5.00, but part of the reason I'm able to come in later in the morning is because there's an understanding that social never sleeps and I might need to keep an eye on stuff after work hours, as well. So, in principle, I finish at 5.00, but, you know, I'll probably spend an additional, over the course of one evening, an additional hour's worth of time checking in and just keeping things, kind of, updated."*
> *– Logan, Wannabe Segmentor*

Eric echoes this feeling and even admits to working extended hours, however, the flexibility that technology allows him to start his day earlier but spend less time in the office works well for him.

> *"I like, at the minute, I go in when I want, I come home when I want, and but, for example, I'll get up in the morning, I know you asked me this earlier, say about what I do in my day to day life…But I'll get up in the morning and the first thing I do is check my phone. I'll*

check the notifications and then I'll post something to Instagram or Twitter. So that is me starting work technically. But that gives me more freedom to kind of go, "Right, I'm going to in a little bit later today, I'm going to take the dog for a nice long walk," and then I can sort of, basically they don't watch my hours so much because they trust me because they can see what I'm doing. It's like in plain sight all the work that I'm doing. So I'd say I do way more hours than I'm supposed to but those hours are how I want to do them. So it works quite well. Yeah. So flexible, definitely" – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor

This challenges the idea that using communication technologies after hours can mean "lowered affective commitment because of a feeling of frustration or burnout" Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007: 603). Instead, there is a silent agreement between organisations and employees that is understood to allow flexibility. Amber does not have a silent agreement, but instead a policy in which those that volunteer their time to work and cover the social media accounts over the weekend will get TOIL (time off in lieu).

"I largely will have a normal weekend where I'm not going to say I don't engage with work at all, but I'm not- anything, responsible for doing anything. With work accounts. We have a voluntary rota so all of those say 16 people, I'm not sure of the exact number, who are responsible for looking after or contributing content to the channels, we also have a weekday rota for the person who's monitoring it. Erm so, it'll be a different person monitoring each day. And then at the weekends, we have, and for Bank Holidays, we have a voluntary rota. So, people will volunteer to cover a certain day and look after it and monitor messages just coming into the accounts. Sometimes it's a bit tricky to get volunteers to do the voluntary basis, and they do that on a kind of people get TOIL, time off in lieu, for doing that… Yeah, I've done it, it's been done various different ways in different jobs I've had. I think this way in theory it works very well but it's just sometimes tricky particularly when it comes to the holidays to get people to volunteer and fill that rota which is something we're trying to do today because it's the Easter weekend." – Amber, Wannabe Segmentor

This option of allowing to use personal time for work could be looked upon as very unfavourably but this participant describes how it is a voluntary option that her organisation has set up and in return employees receive time back in the form of TOIL. An issue of course is trying to make sure there is always cover because, from the description of how their team

works, there must always be someone monitoring the work social accounts over the weekend period which as they mention can be tricky when it comes to more popular times to take time off such as national holidays. However, TOIL allows for flexibility in working, which is a useful work policy in a role that for some feels like they could be always-on.

> *"So, in theory, I think I'm contracted so I'm usually in the office by about 9.15 am and I leave the office on a normal day to get my train at 5.45 pm. That would like a normal day. There are some days when I stay later so last night, for instance, we did one of our live broadcasts here so that, we do that after normal working hours when the [company]'s closed, so that's, we have to stay a bit longer to do that. But usually, I'd kind of maybe take half an hour or an hour TOIL to kind of makeup for that." Amber, Wannabe Segmentor*

Amber tried to keep her domains quite separate and avoided overworking where possible, even admitted that she personally very rarely volunteers to work on the weekend herself so they could draw that boundary. Nevertheless, the use of TOIL in their role made working on personal days or overworking into personal time feel less disruptive to their WLB because they knew they would be getting that time back.

> *"So, if I took half an hour to deal with someone's problems I probably wouldn't claim it as TOIL but my Manager and my team are really sympathetic to the nature of the job so are always fine if I'm like, "Oh actually, I ended up having to deal with this thing last night; do you mind if I leave at half-past four rather than five?" or something. So, it's less of an official system and again there's just so much trust I don't really have to prove it; if I'm just like, "Oh, I had to deal with this person who was messaging me on my personal Facebook", they are always like, "Yeah, you know how long that took you; take that back whenever you need to take that back"." – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor*

Even with a TOIL policy in place, Sierra did not feel that they should claim back their time when it was only 30 minutes but with encouragement from their team, they feel more comfortable leaving early on another day. It could be said that this type of policy in the workplace would make working out of hours, whether it is planned or unexpected, easier on *Wannabe segmentors'* WLB.

7.2.5.3 Little to No Effort Intrusions

I probed Lauren on her organisation's and colleague's expectations and if there was an expectation for her to pick up communication outside of official office hours.

Interviewer: *Is there an expectancy to have to reply?*

Respondent: *I don't think so. If it's urgent then yeah, but I mean I always reply anyway because I'm always on my phone; as in my phone is always on loud, I'm always good with my responses; but if I didn't reply then maybe. I've never had the situation where I haven't replied so I don't know. – Lauren, Wannabe Segmentor*

Already situated in a digital virtual space, when Lauren received a work demand whilst in her personal domain the effort to transition across a DVB briefly was minimal. From her statement about receiving the text, she was tolerable of any overlap into her personal domain because it was no hassle for her to reply as she was on her phone already. Perhaps if she used her phone less outside of work time, she may have felt differently about receiving communication from work.

7.2.5.4 Helping Family Members

Although Luke has pointedly said they like to keep their domains very separate, halfway into his interview he shared the exceptions to his rules. One was addressing a personal matter whilst at work.

"Erm, I mean on occasion sometimes I would deal with pressing things, so, my brother is quite strongly autistic and is in an enormous school that has special supervision there, so my mum will need help a lot of the time, sometimes, with his personal documentation that needs to be submitted to local authorities and schools, and so that's you know, proofreading and making sure that what is there is accurate and correct, and that sometimes will be done whilst at work. Because it needs to be submitted and it needs to be done, yeah, I don't want my mum to sort of stress out about it, so. Apart from that, I do very much keep things separate. My phone goes in my pocket in my coat, on the back of my chair." – Luke, Wannabe Segmentor

7.2.5.5 Anticipated Overlap

The other was a planned disruption of another domain by being available to deal with a work issue on the weekend:

> *"Well, there have been occasions. So, I worked for the company now just over a year. And in that time, I can point to about two or three instances where I've turned my phone on to receive work emails because I've left the office that Friday and known someone's going to call me over the weekend about something. I wouldn't say I know that that call is coming, but there's been a problem on Friday, and I know the only time I'm going to follow it up is the Saturday, because of deadlines and etc for the following week. So, yeah I wouldn't say that's necessarily disrupted personal things going on, so if I've been out to dinner, or doing something, I've dealt with that very quickly when it has gone off, in those cases and then I've unlinked the emails and just carried on. So, I've still kept that separation, but still been mindful of instances where I may need to allow them to get in touch." – Luke, Wannabe Segmentor*

As you can see, not only does technology enable him to segment his domains, but it also enables him to allow for particular intrusions that he deems fit, especially if they are planned so he can mentally prepare for them. Luke also did not have a particular domain that he put above the other at all times, the exceptions were bi-directional (Matthews *et al.*, 2010), and when he was working normal office hours, work was more important and when he clocked off his personal domain became more important. Another similar trait of those in this category is that to maintain their separation they had to manage expectations of others, as we saw this participant had let their mother know they were available during working hours to contact to help mediate their stress. This resonates with the work by Trefalt (2013) who explored interpersonal relationships with boundary work and how because of the importance this participant has associated with this relationship he has sacrificed his boundary preference (albeit temporarily) to help his mother achieve her goals.

7.3 Strategies and technological tools to enact preference

The current literature argues that technology is mostly intrusive (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017; Oh and Park, 2016), however, my research challenges this idea because even the group of people in my sample that preferred to segment their domains utilised technology so it benefitted them, their ideal WLB and managed the demands from their multiple domains to suit their

preference. The literature also puts forward the idea that those who use technology for a significant amount of time could have addictive tendencies (Goodin, 2018; Lee *et al.*, 2014) and that technology makes users feel they have a loss of control (Monideepa *et al.*, 2007), due to living in a world of constant connectivity and the pervasiveness of modern technological devices, which causes stress (Monideepa *et al.*, 2007). I argue that this is not the case and my participants were not only empowered by technology, but it gave them back control over the management of their boundaries.

7.3.1 Communicating Preference to Colleagues and Friends

Similar to Kreiner *et al.*'s (2009) work, Lauren uses the tactic of communicating their preference to others after responding to a work task outside of her normal working hours.

> *"We had a phone call, I think it was the next day; we are doing mystery shops and we just spoke to kind of chat about how they'd gone because we weren't in the office. I made a joke and said, "Oh, maybe next time don't text me when I'm half asleep in bed", and I don't think it was taken too well. But from his point of view he was thinking about it then and then that was what needed to be done so he just texted me to make sure neither of us forgot kind of thing, but that was all." – Lauren, Wannabe segmentor*

After experiencing an unwanted intrusion on her personal domain Lauren voiced her displeasure to her colleague to prevent the behaviour from recurring and maintain her preferred WLB. Unlike, many other participants interviewed, Lauren was quite unattached to their job, not just because they were about to leave but they clearly disliked their work environment, perhaps in another role she was more passionate about, she may be classified under a different boundary preference. Luke's friends have had to adjust to the fact that he does not want to deal with personal matters during his work hours:

> *"Yeah, so I've had friends complain, 'oh, [participant] is at work again, you know, poor us', or, 'he can't talk to us', or in chats, if I'm not on, it's, 'oh, you know we need to wait for [participant] to get on his lunch to reply to us'… It has drawbacks, but my friends understand why I do that, to have those separate, and you know, it's part of the person I am I guess, in that they sort of won't get grumpy about it, and not exclude me from the plans and thank you for my patient friends." – Luke, Wannabe Segmentor*

Communicating their preference to his friends and telling them when he is most likely to respond to messages manages everyone's expectations. Due to switching their new email alert notifications off the next participant communicated to colleagues a way for them to reach them if it was an urgent request.

"Well, I check it when I get to work. So, I check it at 9 am. To me, that's very much just a work channel and there isn't… if someone wants me urgently, they can get me on other channels. So, I'll always say to people, "Don't speak to me outside of hours; don't send me an email", because email doesn't give me a notification. And I'll get loads of random emails about things and stuff that aren't urgent. So, I know if someone sends me a message on WhatsApp it's urgent it needs to be done. I don't want to… yeah, I don't want to work outside of work hours if I don't have to. I know some people might on Sunday night go through their work emails and see, "What do I need to do on Monday?" and actually that chills them out and relaxes them; to me, that would just stress me out. I like to go in completely oblivious. Yeah, I keep that separate really." – Logan, Wannabe Segmentor

In this case, we can see how Logan felt overwhelmed before with work demands during their personal time and was probably experiencing WLC prior to switching off their email alerts. Understanding that he may still need to be contactable if an urgent matter has to be dealt with due to the type of role they are in, he communicated a different channel that colleagues could reach them on that would cut straight through to their personal domain. By implementing the strategy of switching off email notifications and communicating a by-pass channel for urgent matters, Logan was able to keep his domains mostly separate except in the form of which they had set up their terms to be contacted, making for a more ideal WLB for them. Brandi has a separate Facebook profile for her work role. As established, the nature of social media can sometimes feel like you are always accessible, so to counter this she would make it clear to her contacts via a Facebook status the reason why she was working to a new schedule that made her available in what was normally her personal time.

"And then because I work in events a lot my hours aren't really nine to five. So, ideally, that's how a day will happen and then at five pm that's it, but quite often I will be out of the office or on trains heading to an event or whatever but I always post a Facebook status if I'm not going to be around because I really don't want people to… if I respond to a message I don't anyone to think that that's a normal thing. So, for example, on Monday I

went to Bath and I was working so I was on the train at about 10 pm and I responded to someone's messages and we had a conversation but I always try and post a Facebook status beforehand to be like, "Oh, I'm working a bit late tonight because I'm going to Bath", or whatever so people don't build up the expectation that I will respond to messages whenever. And then try and stick to nine to five times and then, if I can work in around that later, do things that aren't outward-facing so people don't expect me to be available all the time." – Brandi, Wannabe Segmentor

By communicating this change in working pattern, it highlighted to Brandi's contacts that this behaviour and being accessible at this time was not to be always expected. Once again, a digital affordance has allowed her to better manage her boundaries.

7.3.2 Having Different Devices for Each Domain

Many of my participants were given a separate work phone. As mentioned in the previous chapters, some found that they would use both their phones interchangeably which assisted them in managing demands from their multiple domains at the same time. For *Wannabe Segmentors*, having two separate devices aided them in keeping their domains, and therefore demands, separate.

"Mm, well, you know, first of all carrying two phones around was a pain but, you know, got a free iPhone that's great. I found that was actually quite useful, yeah, for like separating those two areas, it meant that you could kind of not… you know, literally I'd put my work phone in the drawer or in my bag or whatever at the end of the day and then I knew I was like unreachable." – Amber, Wannabe Segmentor

"I only use my phone for my personal social media and I only use my computer for my work social media so I think having those like physical boundaries of like one device is for this and one is for that helps to like keep that separate, yeah, I wouldn't add my work social media back onto my phone, yeah, that's really just how I manage it."- Edna, Wannabe Segmentor

"…so the first, most important thing is to have a work phone which is separate from my personal phone, so, from a security perspective, that's a really good thing because it means that I'm logged into all the [COMPANY] stuff on here. If my personal phone gets stolen, or whatever, they don't suddenly have access to the [COMPANY]'s Twitter account. So,

having that separation just in terms of hardware is really, really valuable and, again, that's something I'm very fortunate to have. Most people don't have that luxury. So, that's the first step, because it means I can take this out of my pocket, leave it in another room. I'm not tempted to then check in on… because social media is inherently addictive, it's built to be. So, having that physical separation really helps to keep that at bay because it means that if I'm giving in to the temptation, then at least I'm doing it on my personal ones, not constantly monitoring the [COMPANY] ones when I shouldn't be." – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor

By designating a different domain to each phone allowed all of the above participants to easily separate and disconnect their domains, aiding in better WLB for them. A fear that was echoed by many of my participants, which is no doubt very niche to their job role, is accidentally posting from the wrong account. To avoid this and the added benefit of keeping domains separate, Sierra describes why she does not have any of her work accounts signed in on her personal phone.

"So I don't have, I'm not logged into Twitter, Facebook … Twitter or Instagram [company] accounts on my personal phone and I don't have the [company]'s Facebook pages attached to my personal Facebook profile. I have a work, I have a separate work Facebook page that I use for those. It's partly for … partly for security reasons … So I, yeah, I have everything on the work phone and we have two other shared devices where everything is also on. But people don't login on their … and then they're a third party so the management tool we have is, part of the reason for having that again is security because people have their own that they just login to that phone. That gives them access to everything without them having the password. I also don't like the possibility of accidentally posting something to the wrong account." – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor

Sierra has the luxury of having a separate work phone, which other participants have argued is sometimes more nuisance than helpful because it usually requires them to keep two phones on their person all day and making sure both are suitably charged too. However, some have also said how the use of two devices aids separation and keeping applications or accounts for one domain off the phone belonging to the other domain also minimises the worry of accidentally posting content from a personal domain to a work domain. Elizabeth echoes the

feelings of the participants above of the usefulness they find having two devices as a way to separate their domains and role demands.

> *"Yeah. I would say you … it's tempting and it's more tempting than you'd expect it to be to check work stuff out of hours, especially a bit of social media and you're used to a-, of-, like opening Twitter and looking at Tweets and things, looking at messages, replying. You can do that in your personal life so it becomes very tempting to just look at the work account as well… Which is why having it on a separate device is quite nice because at least you can like put that down or not getting that out of my bag unless, you know, if I get a WhatsApp on this phone, my personal phone, then I know I need to get this one out of my bag and look at it but the rest of the time it can stay in there and I don't have to worry about it. Yeah."*
> *– Elizabeth, Wannabe Segmentor*

Elizabeth shares her concern of the practice of habitually checking her phone and the apps within it (DOSE, 2018; Samaha and Hawi, 2016) and how this could be an issue to blur boundaries when she prefers segmented domains. However, she successfully uses the strategy of having two devices assigned to different domains as well as keeping one device out of sight when not in that domain. Nevertheless, similar to *Constant connectors*, the hassle of having two devices at all times is still a frustration to this group too and Amber hopes for a change in the future.

> *"It's annoying to have to carry a second phone around, from a like physical perspective, just like just having to carry and charge because it means it needs a proper charging cable to add to all my other stuff. A separate device. So, it would be nice to be able to do that within one device but to have some sort of very definite switching mechanism between like using my phone as a work phone and using my phone as a personal phone." – Amber, Wannabe Segmentor*

7.3.3 Creating Barriers to Entry

Below, Eric describes his methods for segmenting his DVBs through the use of two mobile phones, one for work and another personal one, and how he has made the conscious decision not to download certain applications onto his personal phone.

> *"I don't have email on my personal phone, and you can, and some of the guys at work have put the work email on their personal phones so they can switch between accounts, and I said to them before they did it, 'Look, think about this because that is your personal phone,*

you know it's very tempting just to switch inboxes and then get wound up by something
from work'. So, I deliberately haven't. I don't have Facebook, or the work Facebook, on my
personal phone, and I don't have any of the kind of internal [BRAND] apps on my personal
phone, and I don't have like I say the WhatsApp groups are slightly separate in terms of
where they are…" Eric, Wannabe Segmentor

In doing this, Eric has prevented notifications about work from the work social accounts and
their work email from being able to come through on his personal device. However, Eric also
admitted not always leaving his work phone at work so although the devices and their
applications are separated, both devices still remain on his person most of the time. This
means they can control when they choose to address notifications from either domain, instead
of being pulled into a different role unexpectantly when using a device they have specified
for a particular domain. It is also interesting how Eric tells his co-workers, as if to warn them,
of the consequences of blurring their domains that he has clearly learnt from past experience.

Staying logged out of accounts is not only a barrier to entry segment themselves from digital
virtual spaces and prevent them from looking at incoming notifications, but it is also a
technique to stop them mindlessly scrolling.

"Because obviously it's so easy just to pick up the phone and click on something and
suddenly you're there and then I think once you're on it, even if you're say on Twitter your
app will still have the various other accounts that you manage linked to it. And I think
once you go through one you end up, it's just like, you know, it just becomes like a … I
don't know, you just, you get a little bit hooked on it and you just want to check another
feed then check another one then you end up like cycling back and then checking the first
one again. And you could be there forever. I was trying to make a point of just logging out
of all of them as I left the app so that one I was going back on I was having to start the
thing, put a password in, and it was almost like a barrier to entry. So, yeah, I hope that I
wouldn't like as mindlessly just keep accessing those things. I'd go into it with a purpose.
That was, yeah, so that would be like on my phone during the evenings and weekends just
to try and be more productive with other stuff." – Logan, Wannabe Segmentor

Logan found that he really struggled with scrolling with no purpose through the various
platforms he had accounts with. This habitual behaviour (DOSE, 2018) caused by the design
experience of technology had become an issue and he decided to take control of this habit by

creating the barrier of logging out of the accounts once he was done with them. The process of having to enter their login details instead of being able to simply click themselves back into those digital virtual spaces created an obstacle and gave him a moment to pause, to choose not to transition. This freed up more time for him in the evenings and weekends so he could put his focus elsewhere and be 'productive' instead. Another example mentioned by some of my participants was not staying signed into their work emails on their personal phone when they were not in their work domain which meant having to open a browser and manually log in, which again acted as a barrier to entry and prevented them from constantly checking their email and therefore transitioning across domains.

"… when I'm at work I won't go on Facebook other than incognito mode because then I have to make the effort to type in my email address, to type in my password I can't just like go on it and it appears and then I can spend two hours on it. Erm, which I know sounds really stupid but that extra 30 seconds makes it I think more difficult just to be like I'm just gonna check something which I really don't need to erm yeah which is why often I keep my phone on aeroplane mode because I can pick it up and think I can just check Twitter and it's well actually you can't because you're on aeroplane mode and then you have to, well its an extra one swipe or something to turn it on but it, its still, I put the barriers in place to stop me procrastinating" – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor

"I haven't put my email on my phone at all; I just haven't looked into it. And it's quite a small thing but when I need my email I will go onto the internet – my browser on my phone – and then log in from that way so that I can close it immediately, and I refuse to download the app. And I'm not sure why but it just feels more… if I have an app then it feels more permanent and easier to check than if I have to load up safari or whatever and find it. I don't put anything onto my Facebook. On my personal laptop, I have never logged into anything I need to. The only reason I put it on my phone is because, for when we're travelling for events, I'll need it immediately. And then I try not to take my work laptop home unless I'm doing it because it just becomes too easy." - Brandi, Wannabe Segmentor

Above, Sierra discusses how she uses aeroplane mode to aid her focusing on a particular task at hand and also she mentioned in her interview the use of separate browsers and how not being logged into certain digital virtual spaces they associate with a different domain prevents them from procrastinating and is helpful for segmenting. Brandi also has a barrier to entry by

not downloading the app for work emails on her phone. Another way in which my participants would prevent themselves from integrating their domains as a barrier to entry is to not keep certain apps associated with one domain on their devices.

> *"…we use a management tool to respond to things and it is certain information and data*
> *in there that I don't access on my … it is not optimised for mobile and there is no app for*
> *it so I would have to log into my [work] laptop to have a look if someone has put a note on*
> *something." – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor*

Sierra's workplace has a specific tool they cannot access on their mobile devices which prevents her from quickly transitioning into her work domain. Like Logan, Sierra has a barrier to entry and if they want to access this tool, they must get their laptop and log in to that, which they describe as more effortful than on their phone. Once again, it gives them this moment of reflection and stops them from crossing over into their work domain unnecessarily during their personal time which might not have been the case if the tool was available on their mobile device.

7.3.4 Separating Domains via Different Digital Virtual Spaces

Gloria did not have the advantage of having a separate work phone, but she had found her own unique system of segmenting work within her personal device by using the organisational affordances that smartphones allow.

> *"…basically I've got a little box where it's called work and there's a separate email account*
> *in there with my bus ticket and everything's in there…" – Gloria, Wannabe Segmentor*

Smartphones usually allow users to create folder boxes on their screens as a tool to organise apps into groups, commons ones could be games, social media, travel etc. By having a separate folder for all apps that Gloria associated with her work domain, she is able to cognitively ignore work notifications that come through and in a way, physically separate herself, giving her the power to engage with the digital virtual spaces of her work domain when she chooses. Another way of segmenting digital virtual spaces that Brandi was required to do at her workplace was to set up compulsory separate Facebook profiles that were work facing only.

> *"I had to create a [company] work profile to be on admin on the pages, they wouldn't let*
> *you be an admin from your personal page. And, then you are only supposed to share stuff*
> *to that work [company] page, so if you wanted to communicate with students by Facebook,*
> *you would have to have a work … with like a [company] profile picture… So, basically*

there will be the [company] page, and then to be an admin of that you would need a normal profile, and they wouldn't let you have access to that page from a personal page, it would have to be from a [company] account… I think probably just so you don't blur the lines or maybe get confused and post to like thousands of people about something you are not supposed to!" – Brandi, Wannabe Segmentor

With Brandi's organisation policy to create a separate profile, this comes across as encouraging staff to keep work and home domains segmented. The reason behind this was unclear to her but she could see the benefits. The social communities that she manages have an audience of over 10k and throughout the interview Brandi had a few moments of realisation that having a separate profile was very beneficial as it allowed her to switch off those voices in the evenings and on weekends, especially when there had been crisis' and members outside the communities got involved and the notifications increased heavily. Even if she was still somewhat cognitively involved, the technological reminder could be silenced which she saw as a positive feature for her WLB.

I have discussed how technology has been commented on as making boundaries more permeable (Duxbury *et al.*, 2014; Wajcman *et al.,* 2008) and this being cause for concern to enforce blurred boundaries when perhaps boundary preference is the opposite. I have also stipulated how DVBs allow for users to simply 'click' or 'tap' into another domain making users feel almost boundaryless. Below a participant describes their experience of using separate digital virtual spaces within one technological device (smartphone) to create the mental divide between their work and personal domain on social media platforms, and how consciously thinking about that 'click' onto a separate app works as a barrier to entry for them to "*mentally divide*" their domains.

"Things like Facebook and Facebook Messenger are quite easy to keep separate now they've split it into separate apps on my phone, and also you can use them as separate websites now, which I find quite good. So, if I'm using the Facebook page for [brand], it is, again, that conscious decision of clicking onto it, which makes it a lot easier to actually mentally divide it, even though it's not that much of a physical change. So, yeah, I haven't talked to anyone else from work on Facebook, or anything, either very much, only for social things and not for work."

These separate digital virtual spaces allow for this group to partition their domains where they could have easily been blurred, allowing them to maintain an ideal WLB.

7.3.5 Controlling What Content Domain Members Have Access To / See

Another interesting form of segmentation that was discussed was how users wanted to create impermeable DVBs within digital virtual spaces by using features that restricted who could view content they were sharing. This came up several times during data collection where participants said they segmented their boundaries as a form of privacy. Below Elizabeth describes how she uses the 'Close Friends' feature on Instagram which allows for users to post content on their 'Stories' that only those who have been selected as their 'Close Friends' can view.

> *"Another thing I do to create barriers - I use the close friends feature on Instagram a lot. So, the personal things I talk about tend to go to a much smaller circle" – Elizabeth, Wannabe Segmentor*

Instead of having to have a whole separate account, Elizabeth can continue using her normal Instagram account, but tailor certain content to be available to a reduced group of her followers, a sub-domain of personal friends. This allows her to share a more intimate version of herself with a select group of followers. It appears to be a paradox, where respondents use digital tools to create thick DVBs between digital virtual spaces. Take Eric, they work for a well-known brand where anything an employee posts online on their personal accounts is considered a reflection of that brand's image too. People in his organisation have been fired from the company previously for posting inappropriate content or content that does not align with the brand's values on their personal accounts before, so they have set up a separate Twitter account that is set to private and has a small group of friends and family where they can voice their opinions, even moan about their job, without repercussions.

> *"We've been told, you know, if you do a dodgy tweet that reflects on the [company] so you need to watch what you do on your own personal accounts… Well, I've got my private Twitter account with all my friends, but I post whatever I want… For example, I'll post about workdays or whatever but then I've got my public one which is a work-related one and from that I tweet things that I think are appropriate." – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor*

Having a totally separate private Twitter account that Eric has allowed only a select few followers allows him to be more open and freer with what he wants to post, with no impact or backlash from his work about the content. Having private accounts allows for users to restrict members from one domain entering the digital virtual space that a user associates with another role, for example, not letting work colleagues or bosses access information only shared to a personal domain.

> *"So, I feel like my Facebook is very much my private – like I won't mention him but someone from here very high up tried to add me on Facebook and I didn't decline, didn't accept, because I just thought, "That's my personal Facebook". I want to be able to share what I like without having to think, "Well, no, because I don't want people from work seeing it". And I don't think that went down very well that I didn't accept, but I think that's my personal Facebook and I shouldn't have to accept just to not annoy someone at work … But I just think it's my… I've literally got minimum friends on my Facebook account – people I've gone to school with, people I am genuinely friends with – and that's how I'd like to keep it because I put personal stuff on there – you do, don't you? I've got my family on there and I don't really want to mix it up with work." – Lauren, Wannabe Segmentor*

Lauren has a similar mindset as Eric in that they want to have a particular digital virtual space designated to one domain, in this case, their personal Facebook. By not accepting a senior colleague's Facebook friend request they are able to strengthen that DVB surrounding their personal domain. Elizabeth had an issue akin to Lauren, but in their case, they wanted to keep members of their personal domain out of their work domain.

> *"I don't think I would ever… I probably wouldn't accept a family member or something on my work Facebook account. If someone was a part of the [censored] – if they were just adding it solely because they knew me and not because they had anything to do with the [censored], in general, I wouldn't accept it because I would just tell them to add my personal one instead, and vice versa: if they added me on my personal Facebook and it was only actually a work connection I probably would just ignore it." – Elizabeth, Wannabe Segmentor*

Elizabeth has a professional facing Facebook account. In order to make her DVBs impermeable, she adopted the same technique as Lauren by not accepting friend requests if

she does not feel that person is appropriate to have access to that digital virtual space she associates with a certain domain. If she felt that request would be better suited elsewhere, she addressed the issue by steering them towards the correct domain, therefore stopping her from having to defend unwanted attempts to cross certain DVBs. The issue with social media accounts as discussed by my participants is that it is difficult to refuse others to follow you and see the content you post, so by having functions within each of these digital virtual spaces that allow for a smaller, sometimes secret, network allows users to share content freely and comfortably without the fear of judgement or retribution.

7.3.6 Deleting Digital Traces of Other Domains

Logan worked across several clients and used his personal phone regularly for work, this meant storing images that he would need to post or had posted. He found that viewing images he had saved in his personal phone for work content would psychologically transport him into his work domain so he started to delete the items as soon as he could to prevent this transition from happening in the future.

> *"And do you know it's something that I will do, this is an odd thing, but maybe there's something to this, if I'm using my phone, and I use my personal phone for most of the work that I do, kind of social media stuff and that on my phone. So if I'm putting say an image onto a social media account, so I might be using it say for Instagram, I want to get it out of my photo library like quicker than I would normally want anything out. Like there's something about it that just feels like, "Oh no, that shouldn't be there," so I'll delete it and then I'll delete it from the like the deleted items and make sure it's gone. And even if I've taken photos with my phone and it's something related to work, I'm much quicker at wanting to get it uploaded to the computer and then like taken out of the gallery. I don't know why that is. It's just I think it is, it's just kind of like to … I don't know. I think it's just, I guess it's the reminder, a bit like I was saying before with like the notifications when you see those things come up on the screen. I think if you see it there, if you're kind of like scrolling through and you kind of like, I don't know, you switched off for the day and you're just doing whatever you do socially and it hits you, it's just, it's like kind of like a reminder of, "Oh yeah, I'm this person as well" (laughter) "I have to do this," and I don't know, I can't imagine there's many jobs that you would have or that I might have in my career where I feel entirely comfortable with that mix of work-related stuff and personal…*
>
> *You know, if I wasn't deleting the things from my phone but I was still scrolling past them and each time I sort of scrolled past them and things I had that feeling of anxiety, that*

would be a bad thing because it would mean that I wasn't aware of what was causing it. I think I'm very aware of the potential for it to cause it and I think that's the most you can do really, isn't it? It's just to just try and manage it in your own way." – Logan, Wannabe Segmentor

Deleting these images on his phone helped to stop cognitively crossing over into the work domain when he was in his personal domain. He did not want the reminder of work after he had chosen to switch off for the day, so he strengthened his DVBs by removing work items, in this case, images they had used as content on their work accounts, from their personal device. Later in the interview Logan reflected on his actions of deleting these images to avoid transitioning roles, as seen in the latter part of the quote above, and it is interesting how he noted the importance of being aware of what was causing him anxiety and putting this strategy in place to help support him in maintaining his ideal WLB.

7.3.7 Physically Removing Phone from Eyeline

I have already established how for extensive users of the web such as SMPs it is near impossible for them to take a digital detox from technology because of their work and their lifestyle. The only time they might totally switch off their devices and be completely disconnected is if they turned their phone off overnight as they slept. However, the boundaries between a digital virtual space and non-digital contexts should not be assumed to be entirely permeable (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000), as described in the following paragraphs my participants found ways to create thicker and more impermeable boundaries. Similar to how they would create thick DVBs, to create thick boundaries between digital virtual spaces and analogue domains, my participants had to physically remove the technology from their person or eye line.

"Erm, I think living closer to where I work has been nice. It's really close and when I'm walking home I just keep my phone in my pocket and listen to music, I don't spend the whole time like checking emails, looking at tweets and things, and saying, 'oh has this person replied to that yet?'. And so, I've got that period of walking to chill out and then by the time I get home I don't look at any of that, because it's not really been in my head. And because I live closer to work, it's like, oh I've got a whole extra hour to do whatever. So, before that was like a whole extra hour to just scroll through the same four apps. But now, I'll do a boxing class, or, I don't know, watch lots of Drag Race, or catch up with a friend or something, rather than just be really…that's so what I used to be like when I lived further

out in Tooting and, yeah, the whole, I have the whole wi-fi on the underground using my phone all the time. It wasn't good. So, the walk has been really helpful. It's not just physically good for me, but like mentally, I'm physically removing myself from the space, I can't check my phone because it would get stolen if I just had it out, which happens a lot. And it is like, the worst because it was during that period when I was still like, 'I need to be able to check work all the time', and not having my phone out I was like, 'this is the worst'. But yeah. I have found that has been really really helpful, just an environment change and a change in my routine has been so good." – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor

By physically putting their phone away into their pocket Sierra was able to segment herself from the digital virtual spaces that she would previously be engaged in still on her old commute home. To transition, she would not only move the phone away from her eye line and hands, but she would listen to music, perhaps as a distraction to prevent habitually checking her device. Yet again, this is another participant that has created strategies that help her segment her domains but still remain connected. This next quote is from Elizabeth who mentioned how she makes an extra special effort to always leave the building at lunchtime now, so she can get out of her office space.

"Because I used to not get out of the office at the beginning of the year, I would either eat in the office and that turned into me just not taking lunch like I would just take a working lunch where I'd be sat at my desk and I'd be eating but I'm still doing work and like I started to get quite stressed around like November at work so like lots of different things happening and I felt I need to like get out of the building to make sure that I'm actually taking lunch but also so like a headspace thing so now I get out of the building and it's really helped to like come back in. And also, I think it like gives you more motivation for the rest of the day because like you have left and then you're coming back as opposed to like working all the way through." – Elizabeth, Wannabe Segmentor

By physically removing herself from her computer screen she is able to distance herself from the technology she associated with her work domain and switch off for her lunch period, which as she notes helps her feel more motivated for the rest of the day.

7.3.8 Switching off Notifications

For *Wannabe Segmentors,* they did not report WLC even though the ease of crossing a DVB into an unwanted domain was much easier than crossing analogue boundaries, however, their

strategies could be said to appear more extreme, such as having to physically remove their device from arm's reach. In fact, the behaviour of clicking is so easy to switch roles, that when some participants wanted thicker DVBs they would simply just avoid physically clicking so they could avoid transitioning so easily into another role.

> "…otherwise I will just be tempted to click on the notifications and just get sucked into it instead of doing what I'm meant to be doing." – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor

This group had to enforce more self-control with their technology in order to maintain their preference and WLB. Similar to the above quote, Elizabeth would find herself habitually checking work notifications in her personal time and after a particularly distressing incident she now uses the setting on her device to turn her notifications off which has helped her match her boundary management with her preference, and as she reports improved her WLB.

> "I used to have my work social media on my phone, my work social media and my work emails, I still have my work emails on but I've turned notifications off so I don't get them when I'm out of the office and I don't have my work social media on my phone anymore. After everything that happened with [X]. Do I need to describe this for the tape? So, yeah, in November [X] tweeted something really controversial and it blew up into national news and for like two weeks we were kind of the subject of that and because [X's] name and my name is [the same as X] a lot of people got us confused online and so I got a lot of like death and rape threats for like two weeks through emails but mostly through social media, like messages but also people just commenting on everything I've ever posted and it just descended into… There was this one comment that was like a really tiny thing but it was just someone that told me that I was fat and it just like broke me and I took my social media off my phone and I haven't put it back on since. But I think that has actually just really helped work/life balance a bit because I would just check the social media all the time because it's just on my phone like on a weekend or whatever just like seeing what's going on and now I don't do that because I don't have it so that's really helpful." – Elizabeth, Wannabe Segmentor

Unfortunately, it took such a drastic incident to occur for Elizabeth to see that having her work notification alerts come through whenever, even during her personal time, was not ideal for her WLB. However, after said incident, she altered her boundary management strategy to make her DVBs more impermeable which has also helped where she had a lack of control

over checking her work notifications before. Note how she still have access to her work emails on her phone rather than completely remove them, but by switching off notifications she is just less inclined to habitually check them. This next quote is from Lauren who I probed about using the same device for both their personal and work tasks.

"Yes. And that can be difficult. So, number one because I've now turned off all the notifications I get from work on my phone so I don't want to see that; I don't want to see that out of hours because that just takes me immediately then… it switches me into work more and I don't want that. Also, on a personal level, it drains the battery so much to do loads of work. And also I feel when I'm at work I'm on my phone constantly: I'm holding my phone, I'm looking at it, checking it, and I think some people may think that I'm slacking but I'm using Instagram – I have to use Instagram the desktop version of Instagram is rubbish so there is that element of… And, yeah, I probably would work at home just to do stuff on and that would create a nice gap. But because it's so ubiquitous, you have to use, you're always using social media checking things, it is probably easier to use some kind of tool you're very familiar with, so your own phone you have your own ways of doing things so it's quite easy to do it like that. But I would only really use it for work out of hours when I absolutely have to. So, I'm not really in the habit of checking up on things." – Lauren, Wannabe Segmentor

Lauren finds using one device helpful for the way she interacts with the platforms and affordances due to familiarity with it. However, due to using one device, she is unable to physically separate work notifications and therefore uses the strategy of turning off notifications as a method to make her DVBs impermeable when outside of work hours. The reason behind this behaviour came from experience with being on her phone all day for work which as you can see from the quote above she finds tiresome, but also they shared how they were previously experiencing WLC in the form of stress at how many incoming notifications they were receiving.

"Yeah. And I couldn't actually reply to the notifications I was getting from friends and family because I was getting so many show up on the screen, so as I went to click one to reply to a new one came in from work I clicked and went through to instead. So, I couldn't actually… And also, the only thing that really stressed me out about that is thinking, "oh, what if I reply from the wrong account or something?" Like if I make an off coloured joke

to my friends and I reply through the official national account. So, yeah, I wouldn't want to make that a real kind of… almost like a transitional period. You know I'm going in, putting on the other hat, now I'm in work mode. I don't want that to be easy like one touch and then I'm there; so, I build a few fail-safes just in case; just in case I'm drunk one night and I reply to someone and I accidentally reply through the wrong account.

Interviewer: Have you got any more fail-safes?

Terror in my head that means I might do it. So, I always check a couple of times. And, yeah, also turning off the notifications; so, that just means that they don't physically show up on the screen, so you don't click one from work by accident, because it's really easy to do. A lot of our accounts have a picture that look the same and they sometimes look similar to my personal picture as well, so it is quite easy to do that." – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor

Once again, experience has helped Eric create a strategy that allows him to have better WLB, that and the fear of posting from the wrong account, which is a fear shared by many respondents.

7.3.9 Denying Other Domain Members Access to Another Domain

Even when participants put their phone out of reach, just because they are not cognitively involved does not mean they are not still connected, this makes it hard for them to truly segment from role demands coming through from digital virtual spaces.

"Yeah, it was conscious to kind of separate it, because you can have a bit of an addictive personality around things [technology] and be constantly checking it. So, it was an enforced… and, actually, I did keep it probably more separate for quite a while but then I think, in terms of where work relationships are and where friendships are, I think at some point when a work colleague becomes a friend, it's almost like they get my friend number (laughter), 'You can message me on this one now,' and I choose like which colleagues go on which phone, like are they someone I would go out for lunch with, or go out for a drink after work with? … So, it is kind of a subtle distinction that helps me again probably separate it slightly. So, if I get a call out of hours on that phone, on a weekend for example, and there is no number on it I probably know it is going to be somebody from work, then I can choose whether to respond or when to respond to it. Whereas I can leave that phone at home and worry about it when I get home, or if you are mowing the lawn out in the garden doing

stuff you just don't have to do it. Whereas, if the other phone beeps, I know it is someone I want to talk to (laughing)." – Eric, Wannabe Segmentor

Even with removing the phone from one's person, messages and demands can still be incoming from external factors. In the case of Eric, he had prevented others from having their number so they cannot contact him at all. This helps prevent him from receiving notifications that would require him to transition into those digital virtual spaces to meet unwanted demands from others in his personal time and disturb his WLB. This example illustrates a tactic Eric has created that stops him from boundary-crossing from analogue domains to digital virtual spaces that might cause negative spillover in his personal time. Amber's workplace made the team set up separate Facebook work profiles, part for security as this stopped them from attaching their personal Facebook accounts to the company's Facebook page which meant less likely to accidentally post something to the wrong account, but also it prevented them from having to add other colleagues as friends to their personal accounts.

"It's largely because I started doing it in my last job because we did a lot with Facebook groups where you have to join a Facebook group as your profile rather than your page and that means that everyone else in the group can see your profile and identify you and it was just a way of kind of just keeping my personal account that I've had for a very long time separate. The groups of people that you may be interacting who work with us [interviewing sister companies]. But they will be colleagues, like they maybe sort of like, you won't necessarily want them to have access to your main Facebook account. So that was the primary reason why I started doing it…" – Amber, Wannabe Segmentor

Sierra brought to my attention one way in which the affordances of Facebook's platform caused an issue for their boundary management. She describes her despair at struggling to have thicker DVBs because of the way in which Facebook forces users to connect with others when managing a 'page' together. Sierra would prefer not to have them as 'friends' on her personal profile but explains how she must so she can provide access to others to manage the work profile page, therefore making her unable to deny other domain members access to another domain.

"I don't want to be friends with the student interns on my Facebook account but because of the way Facebook is and I am the admin person of the page they have to be friends with me in order to communicate with me on it and I really don't like that because they're not

people I choose to be like they're nice enough to work with like they're fine, but I don't know them, I don't want them on my Facebook but they kind of have to be. And then also I don't feel like I can delete them because I'm going to see them, so that stuffs a bit awkward." – Sierra, Wannabe Segmentor

By inviting and accepting them as friends on her personal Facebook account, it has forced Sierra to have a more permeable digital virtual space of which is not their preference in the case of who can see content on what is considered her personal domain. It is possible through Facebook's functions to restrict this group of colleagues from seeing particular content Sierra posts, but this is labour intensive and also there is still much more they have access to than Sierra prefers. This was a rare negative story collected from my fieldwork about how technology hindered a participant in maintaining their boundary management, and as Sierra does not appear to have the usual symptoms of WLC, it is clear that this incident has not disrupted their overall WLB.

7.4 Chapter Summary

What all of the participants' stories in Chapter 7 have illustrated is not only another form of segmenting DVBs, but what technological affordances support users in distinguishing separation of even their sub-domains with digital virtual spaces. Even where some of the participants shared previous WLC they may have had because of technology; they have now developed strategies that help them to maintain their WLB whilst using digital tools. As noted several times in this thesis, SMPs and many other workers have technology ingrained into their work role and therefore find it difficult to completely switch off in the form of the reported beneficial digital detox (Cook, 2015). However, once again, as shown through their many strategies, technology was looked upon favourably for even *Wannabe segmentors* as a means to keep them connected but keep their domains separate. In special circumstances, on the rare occasion they needed to allow the blurring of boundaries to meet the demands of multiple domains, it was technology again that assisted them in this task and therefore they described its role supportive. In the next chapter, I will summarise the key contributions of this thesis.

8 Conclusion

This chapter first summarises the typology discussed in the previous three chapters to present them all together so comparisons and differences can be highlighted, and the key original contributions of this thesis are identified. I summarise the main findings from this thesis and explain how they help answer my research questions. I move on to discuss limitations of this study, and how these were overcome. I conclude with the main contributions of this thesis and directions for future work.

8.1 Research findings summary

Chapter 4 is the first work to my knowledge that has conceptualised online boundary management. By acknowledging the existence of intangible boundaries, coined term *digital virtual boundaries* (DVBs), we can better understand not only how to manage such boundaries but how to transition across them too. Applying the idea of digital virtual spaces to Clark's (2000) "borderland" also helps users comprehend the use of digital tools in managing and crossing their boundaries in the digital landscape.

Chapters 5-7 have introduced and defined new boundary preference groups for those in extensive technology use roles focusing on their digital behaviours to manage WLB. This typology was much needed to update the work of Kossek and Lautsch (2008; 2012) who did not take into account how much modern technology influences boundary preferences. My results also revealed that a preference type is not stagnant, it can vary as frequently as several times in one day depending on the context and demands of my participants' domains and roles. My research also confirmed that WLB is a subjective construct that differs from individual to individual, even those who share many similarities, such as a job role. Therefore, their relationship with technology also differs, and their preference is selected on how best to manage their WLB to avoid burnout.

This typology is descriptive, not prescriptive so I am not insinuating that any of these categories are the 'correct way' to act, they are mutually exclusive and hold an equal position, none being more superior to another (Bailey, 1994). Through self-reflection, individuals can recognise which of the three categories I have identified as most suitable to match their preference and lifestyle. This then allows them to make the appropriate changes in their boundary management system, if needed, in order to best maintain an ideal WLB. Below is a

table that describes the characteristics that help define each group and accompanying strategies that my participants used to assist in enacting their preference to maintain their ideal WLB.

Category	Characteristics	Strategies	Exemplary quotations
Constant Connectors	Passionate for their work Being contactable and feelings of guilt Little to no need for recovery Staying connected gives peace of mind Flexibility is key Not effortful to answer 'interruptions' from another domain More suitable for non-dependant lifestyle? Need to impress	Not disconnecting or switching off Allowing push notifications and staying logged in Integrating Apps / Accounts on Multiple Devices Managing multiple domains concurrently	*"we will be having three different conversations on three different like platforms and that's fully happened before but generally like work-work ones are email or Slack, but [other part-time company] stuff is always email like they have WhatsApp groups but it's very easy to do…"* *"…on holiday I'm awful like I just done it now just came back from Dubai and I should have been on the beach sunbathing but I saw a few emails that were like oh I need to respond and then my exec was going, 'Just go on holiday like just go back to sunbathing, stop responding', I can't help it like I just I can't, if I see something pressing I'll just… I've always been like that…"*
Partial (Dis)connectors	Need to regularly change domain centrality Taking action on the notion that technology is disruptive	Using temporary technology solutions • App blockers • Muting conversation threads • Using the do not disturb feature • Using aeroplane mode • Setting an auto-reply for when unavailable Temporarily deleting/ adding apps Using timers and having reward breaks Switching between separate browsers for different domains Logging into other domain accounts to curb notifications	*"I use an app that locks my phone, I forgot to mention it earlier, when I'm working, the same kind of thing like somebody take my phone from me, I'll use an app that grows a tree, so I'll set a set amount of time and then if I touch my phone my tree dies, and then I leave it and that's been really useful"* *"I've started doing is literally setting an alarm, like a timer on my phone being like, the timer's going to go off in 20 minutes. I'm going to work on this for 20 minutes and when the timer goes off, then I can reward myself, with like two minutes of looking at my phone, and then I will start it all over again."*
Wannabe Segmentors	Work to live, not live to work Confidence and Experience Has Changed Their Preference Switches off with ease Avoiding cyberloafing Exceptions to the rule • Occupational hazard • Getting time paid back • Little to no effort intrusions • Helping family members • Anticipated overlap	Communicating preference to colleagues and friends Having different devices for each domain Creating barriers to entry Separating domains via different digital virtual spaces Controlling what content domain members have access to / see Deleting digital traces of other domain Physically removing the phone from eye line Switching off notifications Denying other domain members access to another domain	*"I only use my phone for my personal social media and I only use my computer for my work social media so I think having those like physical boundaries of like one device is for this and one is for that helps to like keep that separate"* *"I don't have Facebook, or the work Facebook, on my personal phone, and I don't have any of the kind of internal [BRAND] apps on my personal phone, and I don't have like I say the WhatsApp groups are slightly separate in terms of where they are…"*

Table 7 – Typology of new digital boundary preference groups, characteristics and strategies

What my findings chapters highlight is that technology supported my participants' boundary management preferences, whether that be for integration, segmentation or a temporary state of either that moves between both. The current literature describes technology as being mostly seen as a hindrance in the form of intrusions and interruptions, causing boundary violations and WLC (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017), which was not the case in my research. Instead, this group of users already had strategies in place to manage so-called 'intrusions' and had expressed their expectations of whether and when they were okay with being contacted. Therefore, when they were reached out to, they felt prepared and in control with strategies already in place for any potential change in their boundary preference helping maintain their ideal WLB.

Second, these chapters established a variety of strategies created by my participants to manage their DVBs. Previous work on boundary work tactics (Kreiner *et al.*, 2009) had focused on the transitions and management of analogue boundaries, with a small mention of leveraging technology only as a segmenting tool. My research presents the idea that technological tactics not only sits across all tactic areas suggested by Kreiner *et al. (*2009) but that technology is also used to support my participants with integrating their boundaries too. The literature suggests that extensive users of technology and the web tend to have addictive tendencies (Bianchi and Phillips, 2005; Griffiths, 1995; 1999; 2000; Guedes *et al.*, 2016) and therefore no control over their use of technology and that technology is only a hindrance in their life (Monideepa *et al.*, 2007). My research challenges that idea by presenting strategies that my participants created with technology to manage their DVBs and control the flow of information and demands they receive and output. Overall, it could be said this management and control aids their attempts to achieve their ideal WLB. Further studies around technology use and their control versus their preference might provide additional insight into boundary management and WLB.

Burnout has been established as an underlying concern for employers and the literature has been rather over-simplistic in that it appears to say blurred boundaries via technology mean more intrusions (Gaudioso *et al.*, 2017) and these result in negative outcomes, thus suggesting a segmented preference is more ideal to achieve an ideal WLB. However, it is clear from my findings that those using technology extensively have coping mechanisms in place; the burnout threshold is dependent on the individual and there may never be a perfect list of criteria for a person that is more susceptible. It was mentioned how perhaps length of service

to a digitally extensive role may have a part to play in susceptibility to burnout, but this would require a separate study to explore this notion further.

By understanding that digital virtual spaces have intangible borders and the ease in which one can transition across DVBs, it is logical that sometimes my participants felt boundaryless and therefore did not report a conflict with transitioning as previously stated in the literature (Ashforth *et al.*, 2000; Matthews *et al.*, 2010; Smit *et al.*, 2016). In fact, they transitioned at such speed within digital virtual spaces and occasionally had multiple conversations for different roles across platforms, due to the ability to simply 'tap' or 'click' into a new digital virtual space, that this supported the idea of them accessing the "borderland" as a single space to embody multiple roles at once. I also challenged the idea that technology makes boundaries permeable (Duxbury *et al.*, 2014; Wajcman *et al.*, 2008) with examples of how my participants were able to create thicker boundaries from digital virtual spaces and temporarily unplug or filter content they might receive using technology. The idea that extensive users of the web are more likely to suffer from burnout has most certainly been disputed here because as the evidence above shows, this group of participants have little trouble with being heavy online users and multitasking multiple demands from multiple roles. They have used their knowledge of the issue of burnout and created strategies in order to avoid conflict and maintain their WLB.

The motivation behind using the strategies provided as examples in previous chapters extends the work of Kreiner *et al.* (2009) by demonstrating how the use of technology does not fit into just one of their categories, but those technological tactics can be used across all of them. It also showed that using technology as a boundary work tactic can be for more than segmenting domains but also purposely integrating. Many strategies were temporary to fit the context when a domain was required to take over a participant's domain centrality or to quickly deal with demands from another role in the "borderland" without having to fully transition into another domain or role. What this has demonstrated is that although the literature has said technology creates permeable boundaries (Duxbury *et al.*, 2014; Wajcman *et al.*, 2008), this group of extensive users have created manageable strategies to control their transitions between digital virtual spaces and analogue domains. My participants had to physically disengage from their technological devices or prevent incoming information that they knew could easily transport them to other role demands via digital virtual spaces. By preventing any potential negative spillover they were able to maintain their ideal WLB. It

could be said that my participants' experience and awareness of issues surrounding burnout have aided in their creation of strategies to transition out of digital virtual spaces when necessary. Remembering that my participants are extensive users of technology means that all the strategies shared in this thesis can be used as learnings and applied by others to help them manage technology to support their boundary preference needs. This research also challenges current research on heavy web users being more likely to burn out (Schick *et al.*, 1990; Small and Vorgan (2008) because this group of extensive users have voiced their awareness and concern of the issue and to avoid falling victim to it they have introduced and created many preventative strategies. This in turn helps them maintain their ideal WLB whilst remaining connected.

I did contemplate that perhaps certain digital virtual spaces could be more aligned with their non-virtual domains than others. For example, a work email address or LinkedIn account, are normally considered professional digital virtual spaces, so using these at work would be presumed to generate less conflict due to the nature of the content and connections being of a professional nature, therefore less "switching" should be required. In contrast to this, using those professional digital virtual spaces whilst at home having family time or out at dinner with friends is supposed to create a greater conflict. Vice versa, spending time on digital virtual spaces that are normally considered to be aligned with personal tasks and domains such as Facebook during work hours would require shifting attention from work tasks. This mismatch was voiced in one or two examples from the group I studied and may be the case for most casual users of the online world, but as noted my sample are extensive users of the web and use social media platforms for work. By having to use platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, normally associated with personal domains, during work hours, switching to using their own personal accounts on the same platform did not require much if any, cognitive effort. This is most likely why there was little to no conflict at using work platforms in their personal domains too.

In summary, the key contributions from my research are how previously defined boundary preference groups differ with the use of digital tools and how these digital tools are not as disruptive, intrusive, or permeable (causing WLC) as the literature (Chesley, 2005; Salaff, 2002; Shih *et al.*, 2013; Walz, 2012) has previously depicted. This is due to the technology being used within strategies and tactics for all preference types as a means of managing their boundaries and maintaining their WLB.

8.2 Limitations

In addition to the limitations already presented in this thesis, which have been discussed in their corresponding chapters, there are a few additional points that apply to the thesis as a whole. With a qualitative mixed-method approach and the sample size that I had, the findings of this study cannot be generalised beyond my participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, this does not mean the usefulness of my findings is limited as I propose it instead opens the door to opportunities for future work. For instance, if a researcher were to look for a way for this work to be generalised, further research could take the findings I have presented and apply them to a larger scale through the support of quantitative data collection.

It has been recognised that among my participants, females outnumbered males. I focused on the careers of 31 social media practitioners, but only 12 of them were males. I did not find gender differences between the SMPs, but my participants are by no means representative. It also happened that those recruited were in their 20s and 30s except 2. This was purely a coincidence, but it could be because the recruitment process used snowball sampling, meaning that those who were reached out to and volunteered happened to have a similar age to that of myself, the researcher. To explore gender or age differences in this area, I encourage future researchers to have a more balanced participant group where this is the focus of the study.

Another issue is the longevity of the data. Technology is innovating at a rapid speed and employment laws are forever being updated, this constantly changes the way we work as demonstrated by my research. I hope that my study has created the foundations that can be applied to newer technology as it appears, but it might be the case that with changes over time it becomes quickly outdated.

It must also be acknowledged that the data for this research was collected before the global pandemic (COVID-19) began and this altered the way in which many now work, no doubt including my participants. The enforced working-from-home situation may alter opinions and behaviours towards WLB that were shared in this study when workers return to the office in the future.

8.3 Contributions

In this section, I summarise the main contributions from the findings and discussion chapters in relation to my research questions. Together, the individual contributions of each findings chapter build our understanding of how the digital landscape is redefining boundary theory and the management strategies workers implement to maintain their ideal WLB.

The first contribution of this thesis is through the introduction of the new term *digital virtual boundaries* (DVBs) and the recognition of how digital virtual spaces within Clark's (2000) "borderland" can assist role demand management and WLB, therefore extending boundary theory to a virtual environment. The secondary contribution of this thesis is a typology of new digital boundary preference groups that focus on the use of technology in SMPs boundary management, where I define what they are, how they differ from previously noted preference groups, how they can be classified and why they are important. The third contribution is an additional prong of the second contribution, in that this thesis highlights novel technological strategies and tactics, that can support individuals' and organisations' techniques in implementing their preference through boundary management that assists in achieving their ideal WLB. A fourth contribution is the unique data collection method, to the best of my knowledge CGT has not been implemented before to explore WLB. I argue that by answering the research questions proposed for this thesis, my research has contributed to the WLB literature by better understanding how employees in digital facing roles manage their boundaries whilst using technology extensively to maintain their ideal WLB.

Instead of treating spaces such as email and social media platforms as being their own separate virtual domain, I recognise digital virtual spaces as overlapping with existing analogue domains and a difference between online and offline behaviours are discussed. Instead of the idea that each domain is for a designated role, the use of a digital virtual space (and preferred use of digital device or platform within this space) means multiple roles can be enacted at once whilst remaining physically in one place. I believe my research has extended the work of Clark (2000) by utilising the 'borderland' put forward in their model. Instead of looking at it as just a place in which workers enter to transition across or blend just two domains, this research has recognised that the use of technological tools to access digital virtual spaces allows for users to use the 'borderland' as space not just to blend domains but access multiple roles and demands simultaneously. This challenges the idea that integrated domains have mostly a negative effect on workers WLB (Kossek *et al.*, 2006; Salaff, 2002; Tietze

and Musson, 2002) because the ability to manage the demands of multiple roles at once was viewed as a positive outcome of using technology extensively with my sample.

I have proposed and defined the term digital virtual boundaries (DVBs) to identify and explain the difference between crossing boundaries between and within digital virtual spaces. Transitions are one of many key features that define boundary theory, but the current literature has failed to do a thorough investigation that applies the digital landscape to them. The experiences and stories shared by my participants helped identify the features of DVBs and explained how these differed from traditional boundary transitions. It was clear my participants' utilised technology to manage DVBs easily which supported them in maintaining their ideal WLB.

The next contribution of this thesis is a typology of new digital boundary preference groups that updates the work of Kossek and Lautsch (2008; 2012) that takes into consideration how digital behaviours can be applied to managing boundary preferences when using technology extensively. By understanding the characterisations of these groups, workers can identify themselves with a particular group and if they start to feel unaligned with the traits of their group, they can adjust their behaviours to another group to avoid WLC.

In addition, this thesis is the first study that thoroughly explores the different digital strategies implemented by those in digitally facing roles and the motivations behind them. It further developed Kreiner *et al.*'s (2009) boundary work tactics by pushing the use of technology to more than behavioural but across communicative, physical and psychological too. It also acknowledged that technology would be used as a tactic in a variety of segmenting ways, but also to integrate intentionally. This contribution can be applied at a practical level too. By understanding the different technological strategies adopted by my sample to manage their boundaries, these can be used as learnings by other workers. Overall, this challenged the idea that technology mostly has a negative effect on boundary management (Ahuja *et al.*, 2007; Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006; Maier *et al.*, 2015; Ter Hoeven *et al.*) because the use of technology was used as a tool to both integrate and segment domains.

Finally, I used the approach of CGT (Charmaz, 2006) in my data collection and analysis, which to the best of my knowledge this method has been rarely applied to work life literature. In doing so, this offers a unique perspective on this topic as it not only considers multiple

individual realities influenced by context, but by implementing a systematic and rigorous approach to the data collection and analysis allowed for the co-construction of research that is grounded in my participants' views and experiences.

8.4 Avenues for further work

I call for further work to deepen our understanding of how the digital world is affecting boundary preference management and WLB. For instance, a longitudinal study could take into account workers' experience with technology over different life and career stages or length of service in the role. Longer evaluations could provide further insights into the kind of barriers or coping mechanisms users might face over time through particular contextual changes.

Although a total of 36 SMPs were interviewed and observed, the data was not saturated enough by one particular demographic group and therefore I was not able to draw comparisons or similarities between age, gender, ethnicity and more. As noted earlier in the thesis, the life stage could be a factor in changing the preference. It is likely that future research will uncover further that age and life stage are key motivators whilst exploring reasons behind a change in boundary preference.

Another interesting line of inquiry could be to look at the different responsibilities required of an employee's role. Some SMPs looked after much larger communities than others, and some also either managed a large team or were managing a community solo. These variables could have an impact on the data and could again be explanations behind preference choice and boundary group characteristics.

Instead of top-down solutions from governments, further research should investigate solutions from an organisational perspective, looking at tried-and-tested policies and discussing with employees what measures they have found useful for their WLB, to ensure their needs are being truly met.

In addition to deepening the concept, future work should also broaden our current understanding of our use of technology when in the borderland and management of DVBs to go beyond their use by SMPs. Also, to see if the findings of this paper could be generalised, it

would be interesting if this research was applied to other occupations in the digital industry and perhaps further with less extensive users. For example, what other groups could benefit? If the tactics presented here, the use of the borderland space and management of DVBs does not improve their WLB for a particular professional group, why is this and what would help them instead?

Most strategies shared tended to focus on the management of the work domain; this could be skewed because I used an extreme case in terms of a digital work role and that the observation part of the data collection was mostly conducted in the office. Therefore, to further develop the WLB literature, more observation could be done during non-work domains to see if comparisons can be drawn between strategies used for domains.

The current literature does not take into account the new typology that has been put forward from this research. Future work should explore motivations, conflict and enrichment with these three different groups in mind.

Finally, as previous studies have done (Matthews, 2006; Perlow, 1998), conducting this research whilst also interviewing partners, friends or colleagues could aid in further validation of the results and potentially shed more light on motivations behind strategies.

8.5 Implications for individual and organisational practice

I have provided evidence of how boundary strategies can help increase boundary control to suit varying needs. I have also stressed the importance of workers understanding their preferences so as best to choose strategies that work for them based on their context. Thus, to contribute to individual practices, it was important to produce several examples of different characteristics that could help users reflect on their own practices and guide them in choosing a preferred strategy. For instance, noticing if they become more anxious if they switch off would place them as a *Constant connector*, or if they find it helps when they need to regularly switch between domains and/or preferences they are most likely a *Partial (dis)connector,* and finally if they can switch off from any domain with ease and prefer to have one domain centrality at a time they are a *Wannabe segmentor.*

I have tried to show how boundary preferences and connectivity are intertwined, but also, that these preferences are flexible, and workers are open to change depending on shifting

contexts. Although much blame has been given to the mobile devices and platforms and perhaps the way in which they are designed as a cause for disrupting WLB, I have shown that users can utilise the affordances of digital technologies to mould around their needs, no matter their boundary preference. However, it could be that the designers of such technology should make more effort to either make users more aware of these features or create affordances with the varying needs of boundary preferences in mind.

This research may also have policy implications for many organisations and possibly even future employment legislation, which (certainly since the pandemic and enforced working from home) has changed attitudes and behaviours to working patterns including a potential new employment bill in the UK to give workers the 'right to disconnect' (Allegretti, 2021). It was already established that there is no 'one-size fits all' solution, but I believe I have illustrated a clear need to have early open conversations within organisations and between teams to identify different preferred working practices that can be understood and therefore less likely to cause WLC.

Appendices

A) Sample Recruitment Advert

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. [I am reaching out as your colleague/friend recommended you for this study.]

I'm a PhD student from the University of Southampton and I'm looking for participants to interview for my research, in particular social account/community managers. We'll be discussing your technology use and thoughts on work-life balance. The interview would take approximately 1 hour.

I will also happily share any findings I have that could help improve your own or your company's policies on technology use.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,

Chira Tochia

Web Science PhD Researcher

1. **Can we start by me asking about your job? What is your role at work, what does your company do…?**

2. **Can you describe an average day in your life? Try to be as detailed as possible.**

- Let's imagine you're sitting down to work, describe to me how you go about that…

3. Do weekends differ - could you describe a typical weekend in your life? *Try to capture their relationships with friends and family.*

4. How has the pattern of your typical day changed during your professional life? *(e.g. life event first job vs now, promotion, having kids, working on a particular project, moving in with a partner etc.)*

5. Please describe how your professional life has affected your personal life.

- Can you tell me about a particular situation when technology has interfered with your working day?
- Can you tell me about a particular situation when having technology has really benefitted your working day?

6. Please describe how your personal life has affected your professional life.

- Can you tell me about a particular situation when having technology has interfered with your home/social life?
- Can you tell me about a particular situation when having technology has really benefitted your home/social life?

7. How would you describe the relationship between your work and personal life?

- Do you have any methods in place to keep the different domains of your life separate or to allow flexibility? Can you recall what made/prompted you to start to do these new behaviours?
- What are your thoughts on the 'always on' culture?
- Do you respond to work-related communications (e.g. emails, texts, and phone calls) during your personal time away from work?

- Do you respond to personal communication (e.g. emails, texts, and phone calls) during work?

- What about other things such as Whatsapp, Twitter and Facebook etc?

- Does your organisation expect you to have an online presence?

- Are there expectations that you should be answering emails or texts from clients out of hours?

- How do you think technology supports or challenges managing your boundaries of work and non-work? What functions have you found particularly helpful/hindering?

- What are the notification settings on your phone during a typical workday? Are these the same in your personal time?

8. What advice/recommendation would you give about work-personal (balance?) interaction to a friend, family member or colleague?

- What advice would you give to your line manager or the organisation about this issue?

- Do you think more formal policies are needed? At the organisation level? At the national level?

9. Is there anything you would like to say about your work-personal dynamics that I did not cover?

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Study Title: How the Digital Workforce Has Re-Defined Boundary Management and Perceptions of Technological Tools on Maintaining Work-Life Balance.

Researcher: Chira Tochia   **ERGO number:** ERGO/30309

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I, the researcher, am a postgraduate student at the University of Southampton studying a PhD in Web Science. The research gathered in this study will contribute a PhD thesis to complete the Web Science PhD program. I will be asking questions about participants' technology use in and out of the workplace.

This research is sponsored by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been chosen for this study through opportunity or snowball sampling (e.g. a friend or acquaintance of the researcher or colleague/friend of another participant) and because you meet the specification criteria which is owning a smartphone and being a social media practitioner. Approximately 30 people will be interviewed for this study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

As a participant of this study, you will be interviewed by the researcher once which will take around 1 hour of your time. This interview will take place in a location that is most convenient and comfortable for the participant. The interview will be audio-recorded so they can be transcribed to better help the researcher when analysing. Once interviewed there will be no follow up unless requested by the participant. If you are part of the ethnography you will be observed over a period of one month where the researcher will take notes of your actions and what you say.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant, however, you may benefit knowing you are adding to current knowledge about online identities and potential risks and benefits.

Are there any risks involved?

There are no high risks involved in participating in this research, however, you will be discussing experiences of a personal nature. Although unlikely there is a very low risk that you could get distressed discussing these if you've had bad experiences in the past. You may of course stop the interview at any time.

What data will be collected?

The data that will be collected will be the audio-recorded interviews by myself, the researcher, and notes from the ethnography that can include quotes or descriptions of interactions with others or your own actions. No special category data will be collected as it is not relevant for the purpose of this study.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Consent forms will be kept on the University of Southampton's Highfield campus in a locked filing cabinet. The audio files will be stored on a password protected USB that will be kept at the researcher's home, once transcribed the recordings will be destroyed.

No one else will have access to this data apart from the researcher.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?
You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected.

You can withdraw at any time during the data collection stage, however, once the data has been analysed and the thesis submitted the data will not be possible to remove. Any quotes used from their interview will be anonymised by having no identifiers.

If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.

What will happen to the results of the research?
Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

The results of this research will be written up as part of a PhD thesis for the purpose of the researcher achieving a doctorate in Web Science. If you would like a copy of the results that can be arranged when requested.

As mentioned above, you can withdraw at any time during the data collection stage, however, once the data has been analysed and the thesis submitted the data will not be possible to remove. Any quotes used from their interview will be anonymised by having no identifiers.

Where can I get more information?
If you would like more information or have any questions after reading this information sheet, please feel free to contact other members of the research team; Pauline Leonard (Pauline.Leonard@soton.ac.uk) or Mina Beigi (M.Beigi@soton.ac.uk).

What happens if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.
If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice
The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use

personally identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in the research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal Data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

The data collected in this study will be anonymised – this is when all personal data is deleted and is no longer accessible and therefore the research data cannot be traced back to an individual. Anonymity can only be guaranteed if participants can no longer be singled out from the research data.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

D) Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Study title: How the Digital Workforce Has Re-Defined Boundary Management and Perceptions of Technological Tools on Maintaining Work-Life Balance.

Researcher name: Chira Tochia   **Ethics reference**: ERGO/30309

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected.

I understand that this interview will be recorded and that I may decline to be recorded or for a copy of this interview to be kept at any point.

I am happy to be contacted regarding other unspecified research projects. I therefore consent to the University retaining my personal details on a database, kept separately from the research data detailed above. The 'validity' of my consent is conditional upon the University complying with the Data Protection Act and I understand that I can request my details be removed from this database at any time.

I understand that I can withdraw at any time during the data collection stage, however once the data has been analysed and thesis submitted the data will not be possible to remove. I understand that any quotes used from my interview will be anonymised by having no identifiers.

Name of participant (print name) …………………………………………………

Signature of participant………………………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………………………………….

E) Reflexive Journal Excerpts Diary

Excerpts from my reflection on the 1st interview

It's the 10th of April and I'm about to conduct my first interview. I am a little nervous, worrying if my questions are right, or what if I miss the opportunity to ask them to expand on something they say – I'll kick myself listening back. I have another two today and I'm worried that might be too full on. What if I get tired and distracted that I don't pay enough attention?

I've tried to arrive early and messaged the participant to ask what hot drink they would like so as not to cut into the interview time, however, they're already there and announced to me the restaurant isn't serving any cake. Disaster!

We're doing the interview in a location we're both familiar with on campus. I've mentioned ahead of that that instead of doing it in the restaurant that perhaps we have the interview in the media room which is this fish tank looking room (made completely of glass). I was worried that means we might be disturbed (side note, later we had a mutual friend stare through at us both) and that it might put off the interviewee but they were perfectly understanding of my wanting to do it in that quiet room instead of the restaurant blaring mood music. This was the first time using my new Dictaphone, I tested it on the walk to campus but it is so small I probably looked like I was talking to myself. I've brought along the instruction manual just to be on the safe side

As participant 1 only managed social media part-time, in a time they set for themselves it made me think to ask, "Can you describe yourself and setting as you prepare yourself to do your social media work?" because I was worried the participant kept digressing a tad to other (non-social media) work they had done in the past and I wanted to stay on track to focus on their current role. This question helped keep the participant focused and provided a really interesting answer that I will be making sure to ask my next respondents too.

Also, through the discussion, the topic of constant connectivity naturally occurred and therefore led me to ask one of my extra questions, "what do you think of the 'always on' work culture?" which once again made my participant provide a long response and raise some interesting concepts so I will be adding this question also to my main question set.

Throughout I remembered how difficult it is to be listening and analysing, thinking "Ooo that echoes this theorist" and "that is in line with those concepts" whilst preparing to ask the next question. I made a mental note to bring a pen in future so I can make a note when a participant digresses or mentions two points I'd like to delve into so I don't forget one.

Overall, the experience went well, I feel less nervous about conducting the rest of my interviews and confident I have a good question guide.

Excerpts from my reflection on the 27th interview

This interview was difficult. It certainly taught me that the length of an interview does not always mean better quality.

We met in a coffee shop which from experience has been quite noisy but the interviewee had mentioned that they were doing errands close by so it would be practical for them. I soon realised that the area of social media management this participant did was in their spare time and although hugely passionate about the company they did it for, it was a volunteer role and they didn't get to spend as much time as they would have liked on it.

However, it soon became apparent that the timing of this interview for the participant was perhaps inappropriate. He explained that he had recently broken up with his partner, had to move homes because of that and also his hours at work had been forcefully reduced, on more than one occasion the respondent referred to the interview as "like therapy" or "counselling". It was evident that this participant really wanted to offload which meant that it wasn't hard to get them talking just difficult to keep them on topic. It took a lot of effort and skill to keep bringing them back to the interview topic and gentle reassurance that this was not a therapy session.

I wouldn't say the interview was a complete loss as he echoed similarities with other respondents about finding balance, switching off occasionally and being very passionate about what he does. Awkwardly, after the interview had finished, he wanted to continue chatting so I had to make up a meeting that I needed to get to which meant leaving promptly.

Excerpts from the process of data analysis

It was my first time using NVivo, I've always been a paper and different coloured highlighters researcher. I admit that I spent a good while still on paper making annotated notes before I took the step to move my data analyse digitally. Not that I was sceptical, I just felt that it would take too much time teaching myself to use software (because my diary kept clashing with the software training days) but after a few super helpful Youtube tutorials I was easily able to organise my data, and so quickly too. I don't regret doing the hand annotations as I needed to listen and read over the transcripts after they were transcribed and I find it difficult to read off a screen, but it is so much easier to navigate through the data now.

I've been writing up my Findings chapters and so thankful I moved all my data analysis to NVivo. It really helps with finding the right quotes speedily because I have already coded them all and sub-coded making it simple to pick the one I think best illustrates the point. I thought I would easily remember who said what, but I have never had to manage this many interviews in one go as well as field notes. Sometimes I click on a code to see what quotes I've selected and go in looking for a particular quote to end up using a completely different one because I had forgotten about it and it is much more eloquent in surmising a topic.

F) Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Yes, that's working great. Okay, so can we start by me asking about your job, what's your role at work and what does your company do?

Respondent: So, I am Arco(?) coordinator for British Pathe, news reform archive. A lot of my sort of day to day, involved cataloguing, researching our news reel collection. We have lots of old film and newspaper material from the 20th century and so, most of my job will involve liaising with clients(?) to footage they've got the licence for, so tv programming, etc, the writers who have got the rights, etc, the licence for that. But I do also manage all the social media and the outreach to the public facing side, and public facing enquiries as well, so whilst this sort of a series(?) media licensing business, part is also about historical collections and helping everyday people to utilise the footage as well, so there's a historical curatorial element to it, and that's sort of where I fit it. So…

Interviewer: Awesome. Erm, and then if t's possible can you describe, say, an average day in your life?

Respondent: Yeah, so…

Interviewer: And be as detailed as possible.

Respondent: Erm, yeah so I come to work, I spend some time dealing with enquiries from the public and things, and pointing people to places to get licences from, then I would go through our social feeds. Make sure that- so we post relating to historical anniversaries, so, today we had the sinking of the titanic, so we had a big thing on the sinking of the titanic, we had films on there, and that's all across all our social media channels. So, I'll arrange that, and then go through and monitor and moderate all the YouTube and social media comments, so filtering language, racist comments, that sort of thing. So, yeah. And then afterwards I will dedicate my time to research, to creating these collections for those anniversaries that are coming up in the next couple of weeks, and also creating the marketing newsletter which goes out to newsrooms and the general pubic, which contains a list of those anniversaries for the next month with those collections of films. Yeah, that's pretty much what I do.

Interviewer: Cool, and then what about when you go home in the evenings?

Respondent: I do home in the evening, have something to eat, and yeah, I'll see friends, I will go and see a couple games, sit and read a book, a really quiet evening most of the time.

Interviewer: And what about the weekends, do they differ at all?

Respondent: Erm, a little, yeah. I'd say I spend my weekends travelling home, going to see family, seeing my girlfriend, she'll come to me, we'll catch up, we'll do things in London. Nothing too exciting really, just sort of going around, going to museums, do things in London.

Interviewer: Erm, and, sorry, you mentioned a few of the social media accounts, what ones exactly do you manage?

Respondent: So, for Pathe, I manage Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Interviewer: Erm, could you tell me has the pattern of those days(?) and the kind of, the ones that you've described, have they changed at all throughout your professional life?

Respondent: Erm, we certainly, as a company we're doing more with social media since I've joined. It's not just those anniversaries, but we're also trying to market and get people to engage with British Pathe TV, which is an on demand, video subscription channel we've launched. So, a lot of our marketing has been towards that. So, our posting is, I like to divide it into two categories of some sort of distinction of the posting that is done for marketing purposes, relates to British Pathe TV, and the anniversaries marketing relating to the historical anniversaries.

Interviewer: Cool, how do you find sort of, working…when you're at work, working on these social media accounts, versus your own personal accounts?

Respondent: So, I mean, I do, you definitely have to follow certain rules with work accounts as opposed to your own, but I consider myself quite careful anywhere. I'm not a big poster on my own accounts. I used things just to message and stay in touch with people, I am not someone who posts things like, 'oh, you know, this is what I've done, this is this, this is that'. I'm quite private in that regard. And, then I guess with work, there is a lot more sharing and you have to engage with people and we'll say, you know, if we post something about the first world war, they'll say, you know, 'my grandfather fought in this, do you have this, do you have that', and you're sort of engaging with them on kind of a personal level. So that's quite interesting. But then I have to filter that through the sort of lens of work, and you know, what I can say, what I can't say, the sort of parameters of what I can share, what I can say about the company, and those kinds of rules and restrictions as well, so. Yeah.

Interviewer: And do you only do, like manage those social media accounts, when you're at your desk in the office?

Respondent: Yes, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, so you never look at it like on your phone when you're at home?

Respondent: No, no they're entirely separate so, I'll manage work accounts during my time at work, and my own when at home.

Interviewer: How do you stop that, like getting notifications when you're at home?

Respondent: So, none of the work social media is tied to my own personal devices. All my personal devices are my personal accounts only. So, the work stuff I can only access at work. So, I could access it out of work if I wanted, but I have no need to.

[laughing]

And having done it for a day, I'm sort of like, 'I don't want to do more'.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: That is enough.

[laughing]

Interviewer: When you mentioned personal devices, do you have like a work phone as well, or is it just a work desktop?

Respondent: Just a work desktop.

Interviewer: Right, okay. And could you describe to me any time, like maybe in your professional life has affected your personal life?

Respondent: Yeah, so there are times where I've worked from home, or worked a half day at home because of personal circumstances, (inaudible 0:06:08), that kind of thing. And so, I've done the management of those things in a home space instead, at a desktop. If that's the kind of thing you're looking for, I don't know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah? So, yeah, and just doing essentially those work-related tasks, that I would do at work, in a home setting, in a home space, with my personal accounts up as well. Maybe I shouldn't disclose that, but, yeah. Yeah. So, a bit of both.

Interviewer: How does it feel sometimes when you…the tone of voice that you use in your work accounts, would you say that that is in line with yourself, or?

Respondent: Erm, to an extent. I would say that it's more formal, obviously, than myself. It's professional to an extent, that it needs to be professional. And…but essentially the kind of messages, you know kinds of things that I promote at work, aren't necessarily similar to the kinds of things I'd say in personal accounts. You know, the comments are, perhaps news things going on, political matters, but never sort of shouty, angry sort of rants. So, you know, a calm comment from myself is as I would post from work perhaps, as for private, I don't kind of share that kind of thing on social media myself. And so, the comments are on things that…the engagement I do on my own account, sort of mirrors and reflects the kind of professional detachment that I would perhaps have for work. Erm, whether that's because I manage a work account I don't know, but I have always had that, I don't want people to see too much or don't want to embarrass myself on social media, or, you know. So, no, I'm still guarded with my posts.

Interviewer: Do you have to feel like you have to change your mindset, and like you're trying to voice(?) it down(?) when you post?

Respondent: Erm, yes. So, as I said before, the kind of restrictions and things with work as to what I can and can't say, and obviously with historical anniversaries, some pertain to historical anniversaries that perhaps, like the (inaudible 0:08:13) or, often we have a worldwide scope for our social media and worldwide followers, as opposed to myself(?) which is limited to our work for other countries. You do have to bear in mind the kind of way you phrase those events and talk about those events, which is maybe embarrassing to other people of other nationalities, of knowing not their interpretation of history, maybe it's slightly different to you, you do have to sort of be careful when you're wording things and stay a-political and indicate through the events, this is what happened, rather than, this had this consequence, this is like this. So, that can be difficult. And especially at times where I feel I've been detached. Like, yeah, I've had some sort of reaction on those posts, saying, 'that's not like that, this is like this', so that's quite interesting too.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel when that sort of scenario happens?

Respondent: Erm, well, you know, you understand that other people have other opinions and will have received something from their own kind of background to share ideas of what happened, or what they've been taught. You know, the way that, it's sort of formed an identity. But, it doesn't upset me, but I feel, when I've made an effort to be conscious of other people and be, sort of detached when that happens it's a surprise. But, it makes me feel I haven't done my job very well.

[laughing]

If anything. I'm upset to have upset people, when my intention was not that, even though perhaps I've tried my best not to.

[laughing]

So, I've still done this yet it's not good enough.

Interviewer: And, so, I mean I asked you about how to describe how your professional life can affect your personal life, but to flip the question a bit, so, have you ever had a moment where your personal life has affected your professional life?

Respondent: Erm, with regards social media or?

Interviewer: Yeah? Or separate?

Respondent: Erm [pause] I have previously taken time off for personal things, like doctor's appointments, that kind of thing. I would've have said that it has because of, we have this system where holiday gets taken, you know, pre-planned things. I think only in that regard, do they overlap in that, you know, I'll need (inaudible 0:10:36) to take time, request it, and I'll have to adapt plans and things like that, but outside of that I would've have necessarily have said so.

Interviewer: What about, like if you ever took care of like personal matters during the day, what would you do? What that be the case?

Respondent: Erm, I mean on occasion sometimes I would deal with pressing things, so, my brother is quite strongly autistic and is in an enormous school that has special supervision there, so my mum will need help a lot of the time, sometimes, with his personal documentation that needs to be submitted to local authorities and schools, and so that's you know, proof reading and making sure that what is there is accurate and correct, and that sometimes will be done whilst at work. Because it needs to be submitted and it needs to be done, yeah, I don't want my mum to sort of stress out about it, so. Apart from that, I do very much keep things separate. My phone goes in my pocket in my coat, on the back of my chair-

Interviewer: Wow, really?

Respondent: Yeah, so. Alright, maybe an exception for yourself, but very rare-

[laughing]

Interviewer: Thank you.

Respondent: Generally, it's yeah, very much I'm working, or I'm at work even not working.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you have any other, sort of, I'm going to call it a practice that you do, such as putting your mobile phone away?

Respondent: Erm, yeah, it's funny actually that you say that, you do notice the things you do that are like that. Yeah, you know, I will always go back and then check my personal, I engage with my personal accounts and things during my lunch out of work, and that's very much seen as a bit of indulgent time to look through those emails and reply to those messages that are, you know, looking at your phone and you've got 10, 12 messages, you know, reply to everyone, and that's sort of seen as something quite personal, something I enjoy, and you know, finally lunch in here, I can send that person back that message after they've sent 100 or something, ridiculous. But, yeah, as I say, I have my phone on my pocket, I don't log in or use work accounts out of work, they're not connected to my personal device. If I have to take a call on my personal phone, I will

feel the phone go off if it's a call, and so I will take personal calls at work, and step out of the office to do so. But normally yeah, I sort of have the conversation and say, 'I'm out at 12, 1 whatever, I'll call you back then'. But yeah, generally, I am quite disciplined really with socials(?).

Interviewer: How does you erm, like, what's your companies' policies on all of this? Because it sounds like it's very personal for you to keep it separate?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah and my company doesn't have a policy per say. You know, people, my colleagues check their personal mobile phones etc, personal emails at work, and my boss is completely fine with that, and you know, understand that we have lives as well as working. I think that's just my looking to separate them. I feel I would be distracted if I heard my phone going off all the time, replying to people, conversations rolling, rather than do my work. So, that's for me to put that aside and say, 'I'm working now, this is work, I'm not going to reply to, or talk about, whatever (inaudible 0:13:44)' whoever it's with. Erm-

Interviewer: Would you say that you're quite good at keeping them separate?

Respondent: Yeah, I perhaps like to think so. Yeah, I am quite discipled when it comes to that of being, this is work, this is phone, so I'm not letting them touch.

Interviewer: At home, so you mentioned like, have you ever dealt with a personal matter at work, have you ever had it, I know one day you might work from home, but I feel like that's a separate. Say, you're out at dinner, or a sort of occasion you're doing in the evening, do you ever have moments where you let work come in there?

Respondent: Well, there have been occasions. So, I worked for the company now just over a year. And in that time, I can point to about two or three instances where I've turned my phone on to receive work emails because I've left the office that Friday and known someone's going to call me over the weekend about something. I wouldn't say I know that that call is coming, but there's been a problem on Friday, and I know the only time I'm going to follow it up is the Saturday, because of deadlines and etc for the following week. So, yeah I wouldn't say that's necessarily disrupted personal things going on, so if I've been out to dinner, or doing something, I've dealt with that very quickly when it has gone off, in those cases and then I've linked(?) the emails and just carried on. So, I've still kept that separation, but still been mindful of instances where I may need to allow them to touch.

[laughing]

Interviewer: If you are with people, do you let them know in advance that something might have to happen?

Respondent: Yeah I do. I'm perhaps old fashioned in, I feel it's quite rude, to be sat on my phone (inaudible 0:15:25) erm, and a lot of my interactions with other people are face to face, and then checking my phone afterwards, or you know, ask people, 'is it okay, you know, this is going on, can I just reply to this person?' So, yeah.

Interviewer: I mean, it being a social media account, and obviously you said that you keep them very separate, you don't answer it, does your company have a policy on answering some clients and answering, responding to people outside of maybe your regularly hours?

Respondent: Erm, again, there's no official policy. Erm, so…you can if you wish to and…but generally my boss likes to have this distinction of, you know, your weekend is for you,

work should be for work. And given what I've said and the methods I sort of use to keep that separation, I quite value that, so.

Interviewer: And how do you let the people that follow all these accounts know that, you know, I'm not responding during this time?

Respondent: So, obviously on our website we have what our opening hours, Monday to Friday, the same I think is repeated on our social media, saying we can't message between certain hours, so people understand that when we haven't got back to them it's not because we're ignoring them, or that it's not wanted.

Interviewer: And because you manage so many different accounts, you mentioned earlier about kind of getting used to that tone of voice of like, (inaudible 0:16:42), do you feel like you have to have a different tone of voice across the different mediums?

Respondent: Yeah, so I think something quite interesting for us is that we cross post. So, one thing will go out on multiple channels, which we're perhaps not meant to do. So, we're meant to tailor to audience, but we sort of put everything out across to send messages and normally we're quite simple in our…you know, we're trying got push our audience(?) towards a certain kind of place, whether that's British(?) TV, the website collection address(?), erm…so. Yeah, I wouldn't say we necessarily adopt a different voice for each, perhaps we should.

Interviewer: Mm. Erm, what are your thoughts, I mean, depending on whether you feel like you might have already answered this, but on the concept of work/life balance?

Respondent: Erm, I do believe it's very important. You know, people should have time that they dedicate to work, and work hard at work, and then, the old mantra, work hard, play hard, you know, enjoy time out of work, and decompress, but enjoy time in work, sort of working towards something and achieving something. So, yeah I think work/life balance is very important, and I think part of my methods of separation are to maintain that balance of saying, you know, I'm not letting work interfere, in the instances I've mentioned, I wasn't particularly happy to deal with work on a Saturday when I was out doing something. Erm, and in those instances I've made it then very clear the following Monday that I had to do that, I'd prefer not to do that again to, not only the client, but to my boss to acknowledge, who are very understanding and also really know they are exceptional circumstances, you know, this project or whatever, it's going on. Yeah, so I do think it's very important and I think an effort should be made to keep them separate if possible. Perhaps regrets, would you (inaudible 0:18:29) I sort of get intense(?) and attend to that account, but I could go do (inaudible 0:18:34).

Interviewer: Do you need, on the weekends when you've got, back to talking about this call(?), how do you normally talk to your team, like in and outside of work hours?

Respondent: Erm, so, with emails. So, our company do monitor emails and do have them linked to their personal devices, and so perhaps (inaudible 0:18:56) me not having that, they understand that is just my intent of separation, and essentially the tasks which I would be needed for, can wait until Monday when I'm in the office. Sorry, I'm not sure if that answers your question.

Interviewer: No, no, it does, it was just about kind of how you communicate, so yeah, emails. Text?

Respondent: I would email, I will WhatsApp. I wouldn't necessarily text, I may call if it urgent and I need, to but generally it's emails and WhatsApp.

Interviewer: And, I was just thinking about when you had that incident…it's gone out my head. I'll come back to it. But yeah…what are your thoughts on the 'always(?) on' culture?

Respondent: Yeah, so, as I've said, I think it's very important to have a balance. I, again, the same religiously will turn my phone off an hour before I go to bed and have some time where it's just me and it's my time, I won't communicative, it's switched off time. So, I do think there is somewhat of an 'always on' culture as such, I do think people are, not perhaps addicted to social media, but see it as a big part of their life and a bigger part than I do. And there's nothing wrong with that, of course, but I think it does have an negative impact, perhaps like myself, who manage an account at work, and come home, and the distinctions between those breaking down and not having time to step back and enjoy time face to face with other people, or time decompressed, away from work, and work situations . So, it is sort of integral to work against(?) this 'always on' culture we have and people staying up and finishing things, and taking things home with them, is not perhaps how it to live as it interferes with their family time, and personal time, and your time with other people when you're in relationships.

Interviewer: And you mentioned switching off there, and also I was thinking of, your emails. You have work emails on your phone. So, you mentioned unlinking them at some point, is that what you do at the end of each day?

Respondent: Yeah, so, if I know I will need to check my work emails I will link them to my phone, but generally, they are not linked. So, it's only in those cases I described of you know, knowing someone would perhaps contact me that weekend, or just checking, sadly, if something's happened that I need to respond to, or if I receive, you know, a WhatsApp or a text from a colleague, then I do that, and so that's a very rare occurrence

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you, like, you mentioned all these behaviours, were they ever different? Have you always done it this way? have you always been so, strict?

Respondent: Well, I mean I haven't managed a social media account outside of this job. Erm, but, in general, as I say, not posting a great deal myself, not sort of engaging with social media perhaps as much as other people, I have, as I say, use it less, and perhaps being rigid in keeping those separations, and as I say, you know, having face to face contact with people rather than sitting on my phone, or I consider it rude if I'm with other people say on their phones, or…yeah, and an effort not being made. Yeah, I understand that people are communicating, via a device but in a different way, and that is also fine and it's acceptable and I do that myself but valuing more that personal face to face contact then phones and WhatsApp or whatever.

Interviewer: So, was it as soon as you leave the office, that's it now? Yeah.

Respondent: And that is something I quite like, going back to whether (inaudible 0:22:43) I would, when I studied at university I would sort of keep my phone on, yeah I'd reply to things when I was working and things like that, and it would get distracted so perhaps it's something I've recognised and now with work sort of separate, but I wouldn't have said I necessarily separated them before, so maybe that is something(?) that I learnt, and something I would do to encourage focus.

[laughing]

Interviewer: How does it make you feel overall, the change?

Respondent: Erm, it does make me feel like I'm rigid about it. And perhaps limit social media use to an extent, which can cause frustration with other people I know, and friends and contacts, and you know people trying to make plans and things going on, literally it's

rumbling as I say, and not knowing what's going on and then catching up, can be frustrating. But I think the detachment I have is positive, it's, you know, let's be focused on work when I'm at work, and let be focused on personal life to enjoy it unrestricted. So, I feel like it's the kind of thing of saying there's always (inaudible 0:23:48) of people that keep both together and do both together, yeah I feel the other extreme of, doing nothing together. So, maybe the other extreme is unhealthy and there's sort of a healthy middle ground. There are times I feel disconnected. But on the flip side of that, I feel that disconnection is helpful to not take it too far.

[laughing]

Interviewer: Yeah. Have friends and family noticed a difference?

Respondent: Yeah, so I've had friends complain, 'oh, Louis is at work again, you know, poor(?) us', or, 'he can't talk to us', or in chats if I'm not on, it's, 'oh, you know we need to wait for Louis to get on his lunch to reply to us', or-

Interviewer: Right-

Respondent: It has drawbacks, but my friends understand why I do that, to have those separate, and you know, it's part of the person I am I guess, in that they sort of won't get grumpy about it, and not exclude me from the plans and thank you for my patient friends. But, yeah.

Interviewer: And did you tell them, it sounds like they very much know when you are available and when you're not, did you start telling them or did they just become accustomed to it?

Respondent: Erm, a bit of both. So, they did become accustomed to but, but then there would be instances, you know, two or three o'clock in the afternoon, where there'd be sending(?) messages or whatever and I'd have to say, 'oh sorry guys, at five, you know I was in work, you know, I work between half nine and five, an hour for lunch that may be between these hours, so if you need me to reply it will be then. If you really need me, call me and I'll obviously pick up'. So…

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Erm, what advice or recommendations would you give about work/life dynamics? Maybe to a colleague, you can do it on some personal level, maybe a general level, whatever you feel like?

Respondent: Yeah, I think maybe the turning off an hour before bed is a good one, to have time for yourself, and whatever you choose to spend that doing, reading a book, listening to something, doing something just for you, I feel that's very important. And friends, funnily enough commented on that. I have, a friend of mine who I saw at the weekend and he was saying, 'oh', we were talking about something and he said, 'oh you like your per(?) time anyway', and I make that time for me, and keep that for me regardless. So, it is something that other people recognise. I think having some time for yourself like that is important. And whether you then choose to spend that with other people is fine, but that's your hour, your time that you do something with.

Interviewer: Without technology it sounds?

Respondent: Without it.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there any advice that you would give, to say, your line manager or organisation about this issue(?)?

Respondent: Erm, [pause] not particularly. Maybe there is a case for having some sort of written practice as to, you know, what the rules are with work/life balance, because everyone,

as I said, although my institution does have a different way of managing, and that can in itself cause internal issues, I know if someone needs to talk to someone, if they're not available, things like that. So, perhaps there should be something like that, you know in my institutions, in other institutions, so people are clear of what the ground rules are and follow to stop those things happening. But in general, I think the structure we have is sort of personal freedom and your managing, and people finds their own ways to manage is useful too, because my way of managing, as I say, I accept is weird(?) and people perhaps would not want to manage like that. You know, function like that. So I think there's a case to be made for people managing it on their own terms as well, and whether those sort of, top down things from businesses saying you need to manage like this, need to be informed by people who saying, 'it would run best like that'. Perhaps that's the best way forward.

Interviewer: I can't believe I didn't ask you this earlier, but when you first started working here, did you instantly put in these boundaries?

Respondent: Yes.

[laughing]

Interviewer: Did you?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Why was that?

Respondent: Well then, as I said, it was something I recognised from when studying and it could become a distraction, it could remove my focus from work and I feel I work better when I have time to sit down and dedicate to something. Whatever task that is, when I am solely focused on that I do it quicker, I do it better. So, I think noticing that with studying, and through making mistakes and through messing things up, you realise the need to keep that separate.

Interviewer: Wow, fair enough. Erm, you're very brave.

[laughing]

Okay, so, really I'm on my last question, but is there anything else you'd like to say about work/personal dynamics maybe that I haven't covered?

Respondent: Erm, it's funny how, I think, as I say, it gets picked up by other people, and other people comment on uses of social media in a removed way, and we can be having a conversation, but then someone will say that, 'it's strange that he doesn't reply, we've got to wait for him for this', or you know, 'little things like that', and I think it's interesting that others comment on others' social media usage, even in normal conversation. Even if you think you keep it separate it somehow gets brought up. So, yeah, maybe(?) I'd add that, but yeah, so, I think it's interesting that there is…it's interchanged between them and that people are, in some ways, supplementing interactions for social media and, it works both ways (overspeaking) in people's personal life and professional life there is this, sort of interweaving, of the two. I find that very interesting because of the implications of, not necessarily will one replace the other, but where is the line going to be drawn in 20 years' time, what's acceptable, and how's that going to develop in a way that means we could communicate in different ways, and what do those methods of communication- you know, if this is the problem now, if people are having issues now, what will the new thing in technology bring, and cause? And is that problem its own problem or is that problem sort of a feed on from

what's going on at the moment? I think that's quite interesting, just seeing where it develops and how people respond to it is interesting.

Interviewer: Sorry, I know I said that was the last question, but you mentioned something there that was really interesting, and I was just wondering, do you think technology helps or hinders this?

Respondent: I think my response to this depends on my mood and the day.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, there are times where I am very simple and it hinders, and you know, we get frustrated, you know, people just underline(?) and do this, and you know, why are we sat in the room, we're just sat communicating on phones, or you know. And then there are opposite times where it's wonderful and it's great to have that space and even though you're in a public setting with other people, you can have that personal sort of, whatever you're doing yourself and everyone has that, and obviously the benefits of social media and, you know, we can share, we can engage with other people in different ways, we can share different types of content. So, there are days I think it's wonderful and maybe we should do it all one way and not the other. Erm, so, yeah I think there are…I wouldn't necessarily say that the technological developments themselves hinder us, I think it's the way we manage and incorporate them into our lives, I think that's become the hinderance. It can only also become a hindrance when those behaviours become widespread and when they differ to people's general normal behaviours. As I say, within my institution, there are ways that people manage that cause problems because they are different, so when something becomes a prevailing way of managing a sect of people that perhaps don't manage like that, that also, in the same way. So, yeah, I think my response to that depends on my mood.

[laughing]

And whether I am frustrated with people or not for answering me or having the same sort of interaction(?)-

Interviewer: Fair enough.

Respondent: But, yeah, I think technology and technology developments are a good thing, but I think our way pf managing them socially can cause problems, and those are where problems come from, so yeah. In itself with people may be (inaudible 0:32:04).

[laughing]

Interviewer: I see. Well, thank you very much. That's all I need.

[End of Transcript]

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