DISSERTATION

WORKPLACE TRANSITIONS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND BOUNDARY

MANAGEMENT

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

WORKPLACE TRANSITIONS:

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

Previous literature has examined the workplace transition and its implications for the organization and its members. However, minimal studies have been conducted on how social media may influence the increasingly common occurrence of workplace transitions. This study explores the boundaries that individuals create and negotiate when using social media in the process of organizational transitions. Through twenty-five interviews with individuals who recently changed workplaces, this project highlights experiences of social media boundary management practices as participants navigated their assimilation to and from workplaces. This research project asked what strategies of boundary management employees utilize on social media across multiple assimilation phases. Eight boundary management strategies emerged from the data. The findings of this study expand knowledge of the assimilation process during a job transition and how privacy is managed during the multiple phases, providing insight into the implications of rule violations on organizational membership and the way that privacy rules are communicated between organizational members.

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Chapter One: Introduction

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), employees of all ages in the United States change jobs at an average rate of about once every 4.2 years, with those younger than 35 changing jobs more frequently. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, in which 37% of the American workforce changed or lost their jobs in 2020 (Boskamp, 2022), about 55% of people in the workforce indicated that they were likely to look for a new job within the next year as of the summer of 2021 (Reinicke, 2021). It is clear that workplace transitions were prevalent in the average American's life despite the economic harms of the pandemic and are even more so today. In addition, as digital technologies have risen in popularity, they have further permeated workplaces and provided new opportunities for communicating and connecting with others in the workplace. Social media is one technology that allows for people to combine their personal and professional lives into one digital context and as individuals do so, they may face a unique balance of navigating multiple relationships through digital boundaries (Fieseler et al., 2015). Using social media may be even more difficult during a job transition when an individual balances connecting with members from an organization they are leaving and an organization they are joining. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how workplace transitions occur in an era marked by the prevalence of social media. This project seeks to examine how boundaries are enacted on social media in the assimilation process of workplace transitions.

Workplace transitions are complex in that they require a re-negotiation of workplace relationships (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Hancock et al., 2013). When an employee enters an organization, they undergo a process of relational development and information collection with their supervisors that serves to determine what type of relationships will occur, how they can

help each other, and what their combined role-making process entails (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The impressions employees make on their supervisors during the period in which they enter a new organization can influence those supervisors' perceptions of the incoming employee's personal reputation (Foste & Botero, 2012), making impression management an imperative task of the employee's when entering a new organization. However, it is not just supervisors, but also coworkers, whom the employees need to navigate these tensions with. Upon exit, employees find themselves in the delicate balance between managing privacy and information boundaries, such as choosing whether or not to disclose a personal reason for exiting an organization to coworkers and/or supervisors (Gordon, 2011). As a result, it is important to better understand the simultaneous phenomenon of organizational entry and exit.

In addition to the complex relationships being negotiated during workplace transitions, today's professionals find themselves in a workplace that is more connected than ever. The boom of computer-mediated communication, mobile communication, and social media have given individuals the opportunity to connect with each other every moment of the day, in unique ways. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, have grown in such popularity that in 2022, Facebook alone had 179,000,000 American users (Statista, 2022). With the American population at 331.4 million people (*Population Clock*, 2022), it could be deduced that over half of the American people have at least Facebook.

Social media platforms are used to digitally connect individuals and foster relationships, including workplace relationships. Workplace relationships have been found to define one's career path (Gersick et al., 2000), increase departmental identification in positive situations (Bartels et al., 2019), and influence general well-being and self-esteem through supportive friendships (Craig & Kuykendall, 2019). Since the late 1990s, when email had a significant

impact on workplaces (D'Urso & Pierce, 2009), individuals have become more digitally tied to their organizations, and fellow organizational members, than ever (Neeley, 2021; Palfrey & Gasser, 2016). The digital connections individuals have today present opportunities for new behaviors that might have been previously impossible (Treem & Leonardi, 2013).

The relational and privacy boundaries that professionals may have tacitly written into their lives regarding the process of leaving one workplace and entering another may have changed due to increased digital connections (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). In other words, prior to social media's popularity, it can be assumed that an employee could leave one workplace and join another without facing the unique issues of digital sociality individuals have today, such as publicly announcing their job transition to their entire Facebook friends list. Whereas today, one might face new dynamics of impression management given that they may be connecting with multiple audiences, such as coworkers from their old and new workplaces, on social media.

As previously mentioned, social media is inextricably tied to an assumed 1 in 3 people's relational and professional lives (Statista, 2022), which leads to blurred lines between private and work lives that individuals need to navigate. One individual may greatly differ with another on what boundaries they choose to hold between their work-life social media relations, yet it is common practice to allow the two to intermingle (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). In addition, age may be a factor to why individuals hold distinct perceptions of boundaries on social media. Millennials may hold boundaries that differ from other generations given that they grew up in a digital era, whereas older generations may have taken longer to adopt new technology such as social media (Abril et al., 2012). People's disparate social media practices have led researchers to question how individuals negotiate boundaries of identity building (Abril et al., 2012), information and privacy management (Boczkowski et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2015), and time-

management (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014) between work and life and why individuals choose to do so. Despite social media's extreme popularity, organizational communication scholars have yet to understand how individuals choose to navigate opportunities and challenges of the workplace transition in the context of social media connections.

Studies on social media in the professional context have surged recently (Bartels et al., 2019; Treem & Leonardi, 2013; van Zoonen et al., 2016), yet less is known about how boundaries are managed on social media within workplace transitions. Understanding this phenomenon is imperative for organizations and employees alike. For this project, the term boundary is conceptualized as a metaphor used to describe the mental fences one might erect to delineate their personal and professional identities and regulate how/when/and who gains access to either realm of their life (Petronio, 2002). Organizations can better understand the boundary management practices of employees who are undergoing often-times emotionally strenuous workplace transition. When organizations understand these behaviors, they may be able to better facilitate the process of assimilation by providing clear communication for workplace norms and culture regarding social media use. At the individual level, an employee may be able to better understand the practices, costs, and rewards of social media use during job transitions such as information seeking, uncertainty, and perceived social costs (Benedict, 2020). When an individual understands their own and other's practices of social media boundary management in a job transition, they may feel some relief of the tensions caused by simultaneous entry and exit. Individuals may be able to feel confident in the clear boundaries they wish to draw once they leave one workplace and join another. As a result, it is important for organizational communication scholars to explore the role of social media in workplace transitions given its implications for employees' boundary creation and management. Doing so would allow

organizations to more carefully consider their facilitation of transitions for incoming and exiting individuals and aid in their understanding of the when/how/and why behind an employee's enacted autonomy over the information of their transition.

Identifying how social media is used in the assimilation process has the potential to expand research agendas to include an examination of social media's role in boundary management. Organizational communication scholars have identified the plethora of outcomes that the assimilation process has on organizational members, such as feeling accepted, developing relationships, and integrating oneself with the culture of the organization (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010). However, the assimilation process has been commonly studied within one specific phase, such as examining a person joining an organization or leaving an organization, rather than observing the phenomena within a synchronized transition, such as leaving one organization while entering another. Additionally, researchers lack an understanding of what individual employee's social media use entails as part of their own efforts to assimilate into and out of organizations (DiMicco et al., 2008; Gonzalez et al., 2015).

This dissertation project made multiple contributions to the following areas of research and also affirmed and expanded previous findings in communication privacy management theory (Petronio, 1991, 2002; Zerubavel, 1991) and organizational membership research (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010). In addition, this project probed the gap in the literature of the simultaneous process of socializing into one workplace and out of another and how social media is used to facilitate that process. Next, this project used the widely studied process of organizational assimilation but expanded previous research by probing workplace transitions in combination with social media. Finally, much of the previous research on the organizational assimilation process takes a post-positivist lens, using survey methods to measure self-reported attitudes and

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behaviors (e.g., Kowtha, 2018; Madlock & Chory, 2014; Perrot et al., 2014). Few take an interpretive lens, and of those that do, other methods such as case studies have been employed (e.g., Gonzalez et al., 2015). This project expanded the literature with an interpretive lens using interview methods. This interpretive lens provided a view of the boundary practices directly from individuals' perspectives and discovered through their own rich description, which would be missing if a different methodology was used (Scotland, 2012).

The next chapter reviews the pertinent literature for the study including the assimilation process, social media in the workplace, and boundary management, connecting each to the project's research questions. Chapter three reviews the methods used in the study, provides rationale for a qualitative research design, previews the researcher's positionality and the states the criterion for participants. Chapter four presents the findings, using the participants' discourse. Lastly, in chapter five, the interpretations of the findings, its implications for theory, and the limitations of this study in combination with directions for future research are discussed. The following is a key to operational definitions used in this paper:

Anticipatory phase – before an individual begins work in an organization (Kramer, 2010).

Boundary – a metaphor used to describe how individuals and groups regulate access to private information (Petronio, 2002).

Boundary management – The process of managing the different roles individuals occupy and the mental fences they shape around the different roles in their lives as a way of ordering those environments (Ashforth et al., 2000; Michaelsen, 1997; Zerubavel, 1991).

Entry phase – when a new member first joins an organization (Kramer, 2010).

Exit phase – when an organizational member leaves the organization (Kramer, 2010).

Organizational assimilation – The process of integrating new employees into the culture and norms of the workplace, whether that be on behalf of the organization or by efforts of the employee (Jablin, 2001).

Organizational socialization – The organization's efforts to socialize the employee into the workplace by changing the employee to meet the organization's needs (Jablin, 2001).

Organizational transition – The process of leaving one workplace, or job, while simultaneously joining another organization, or workplace.

Simultaneous phase – when an individual is assimilating out of one organization and into another organization at the same time, exiting the old workplace and entering the new workplace.

Social media – For this project, social media are defined as publicly available online networking and socializing platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study examines the enactment of boundaries within the simultaneous process of an individual entering one organization and leaving another. The literature review consists of three sections. The first describes the organizational assimilation process including its definition, stages, and gaps in the literature. The second section defines social media and how the study of identity performance applies to social media. Finally, this chapter previews the literature of privacy and information boundaries in the workplace and its implications for social media's role in the assimilation process.

Organizational Assimilation

Organizational assimilation is the process by which individuals join, participate in, and leave organizations (Kramer, 2010). Assimilation includes two parts: socialization and individualization. Socialization occurs when an organization attempts to influence and change members to meet their needs, and individualization occurs when a member attempts to influence and change an organization to meet their needs (Kramer, 2010). Scholars use the terms assimilation and socialization interchangeably to describe "the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). Most often, organizational assimilation has been studied as the point in which a person enters an organization (crossing the boundary from outside to inside). However, assimilation/socialization is an ongoing phenomenon that organizational members can experience as they are hired, promoted, or even moved within an organization, whether that be movement among roles or physical space (Kramer & Noland, 1999).

Scholars have proposed a variety of organizational assimilation models (Feldman, 1981; Jablin, 1987, 2001; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Most models of assimilation have three phases in common: a time period prior entering an organization, a participation period called encounter or entry, and a period in which an individual feels as if they are an established member called metamorphosis (Kramer, 2010). Jablin (1987) labels the stages as anticipatory, encounter, metamorphosis, and includes a fourth, exit. This project utilizes Jablin's (1987) model to underline the assimilation process of organizational transitions that include both anticipatory socialization, encounter/entry, and exit within separate organizations, which is referred to as the "simultaneous" phase.

Anticipatory Socialization

The first stage, anticipatory socialization, occurs before an individual begins work in their organization. As people enter organizations, or a new level of their organization, it is necessary that they become familiar with that new space (its processes, people, and culture) through a means of acquiring social knowledge. Typically, the search for knowledge begins prior to joining the organization. This anticipatory information search can be done by talking to already-assimilated members either online or in person (Mak, 2013), or doing an online search of the company (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Waldeck et al., 2004). Within the anticipatory stage, there are two subcategories: vocational anticipatory socialization and organizational anticipatory socialization (Jablin, 2001).

Vocational Anticipatory Socialization. Vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) is the process of selecting an occupation or career (Jablin, 2001), while anticipatory socialization is the life-long process of developing expectations for a specific role/career (Kramer, 2010). In the Euro-American context, VAS is thought to be influenced by family, education, peers, previous

organizational experience, and the media (Jablin, 2001). Educational institutions, parents, and media are each found to be significant sources of influential messages that shape one's perceptions of their career (Gunn et al., 2020). Mothers, teachers/professors, and friends have been found to be the top three most influential sources of VAS (Powers & Myers, 2017). The cumulative influence shapes an individual's expectations and attitudes towards specific work or jobs. Individuals receive information from these institutions (e.g., family, education, media) about how they might perceive the nature and value of specific occupations.

A sixth source of VAS information, the internet, has become an essential medium through which individuals seek career and organizational information (Levine & Aley, 2020). The internet, in this way, serves as an information technology that informs job searches, selection and recruitment practices, and career decisions. (Levine & Aley, 2020). However, rather than focusing on internet use solely as an information seeking tool, this project examines how employees use social media in the assimilation process as they connect/disconnect with coworkers and supervisors and negotiate boundaries of information and privacy during a workplace transition.

Organizational Anticipatory Socialization. Not only does an individual decide what role to pursue in their career by means of VAS, but also, they undergo a process of choosing an organization. Organizational anticipatory socialization is a mutual process of recruitment and selection between individuals and organizations (Kramer, 2010). The recruitment process involves efforts of both parties to seek and provide information about each other. The selection process includes active participation in interviews and decisions in which one will choose to join an organization, and/or an organization will choose to ask an individual to join. These various interactions that occur prior to joining an organization can lead individuals to identify with and

negotiate membership with the organization they are joining, prior to actually doing so (Stephens & Dailey, 2012).

Similarly, some employees may undergo yet another anticipatory assimilation/socialization process when they move spaces, whether that be virtual or physical, within the same organization. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many workplaces made the transition to work-from-home or remote work environments to protect their employees' well-being, some of which decided to make these changes permanent or at least a permanent option for workers (Leonardi, 2021). Employees with organizations that have moved workers from a once physical environment to a remote environment have employees that are faced with a new assimilation process in which they no longer can meet coworkers or supervisors face-to-face in offices to seek information. As such, the process of assimilation in which one learns new norms may be continuous even without a workplace transition.

When an individual undergoes a workplace transition, they might be asked to assimilate into both a new organization and a new occupation at the same time (Kramer, 2010). In other words, an individual may be balancing both organizational anticipatory socialization and vocational anticipatory socialization. If an individual has prior work experience in a specific occupation and joins a new organization in which to perform that occupation, they are less likely to leave the organization voluntarily in the short-term (Carr et al., 2006). Therefore, changing both one's occupation and one's organization can be a more difficult balance during a workplace transition for both an individual and an organization (Carr et al., 2006). Not only is this a complicated process, but also understanding social media's role in workplace transitions might represent a step toward enriching what the assimilation process entails.

Encounter

The second stage, encounter (also known as entry), is when a new member first joins the organization. During this stage, a newcomer depends on information from others in the organization to better understand the workplace and their place within it. Upon entry, newcomers discover more about the language used on the job, politics in the organization, people in the organization, organizational goals/values, and organizational history (Chao et al., 1994). The encounter phase is the most researched of the assimilation process, and much of the past research has focused on strategies of socialization used by the organization, the individual's uncertainty management and sensemaking, and the interactive role negotiation process (Kramer et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Miller & Jablin, 1991; C. Scott & Myers, 2010).

When socializing new members, organizations commonly choose from a variety strategies (e.g., strategically providing individual versus group trainings or formal versus informal trainings, strategically choosing how new tasks are trained in terms of time or order, strategically choosing whether or not to assign someone to train a newcomer (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979)). Other methods of socialization include divestiture strategies, which are when the organization attempts to strip away the unique and individual characteristics of the newcomer, investiture strategies are when the organization appreciates and reaffirms the individual's uniqueness (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), and indirect guidance strategies in which the newcomer seeks information through informal interactions (Mornata & Cassar, 2018). The research on socialization strategies in the encounter phase often centralizes the efforts of the organization and leaves out the efforts of the individual (Kramer, 2010). As a result, other scholars have chosen to focus on newcomer proactive behaviors in the encounter process, such as befriending and flattering others (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2012).

As part of the encounter phase, newcomers undergo a process of information seeking to manage uncertainty and making sense of their experiences (Kramer, 2010). The act of information seeking might include, but is not limited to, overt tactics such as asking peers, supervisors, or other organizational members about their workplaces, or covert tactics such as consulting written materials, manuals, or watching their colleagues (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Additionally, individuals may resort to using less overt questioning and more observation to find information when they believe that the act of information gathering is more costly in comparison to the information gained (Benedict, 2020). Though technology's role has been examined in the process of a newcomer's information seeking and in terms of an organization providing a company-owned social media platform as part of the organization's assimilation efforts (Flanagin & Waldeck, 2004), publicly available social media has yet to be examined.

When an employee enters their new organization, a "successful" process of information seeking can produce benefits for both the organization and the employee. Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) seminal research identified that there are long-lasting effects that an organization's socialization efforts have on newcomers such as less role conflict, role ambiguity, and turnover. Successful socialization upon entry has been found to be a strong predictor of organizational commitment and job involvement (Madlock & Chory, 2014; Madlock & Horan, 2009). As the newcomer adjusts to the socialization tactics in the encounter phase, they may positively experience three specific socialization outcomes—learning the job, learning work-group norms, and role innovation (Perrot et al., 2014). Assimilating into a new organization is a dynamic and communicative process involving interpersonal, group, and organizational levels (Scott & Myers, 2010). The ongoing process of socialization makes it difficult to determine

exactly when an individual moves from the encounter phase to the metamorphosis phase (Kramer, 2010), but there have been a variety of ways this shift has been examined in the past.

Metamorphosis

Following encounter is the metamorphosis stage, in which the newcomer accepts and changes their own behaviors or values to meet that of the organization's expectations or finds ways to change the organization to meet their own needs (Kramer, 2010). By doing this, that individual will no longer feel like a newcomer but will feel part of the organization. The transition from newcomer to insider has been demarcated by experiences such as being given more responsibility, having access to inside information, or becoming a source of information for others (Louis, 1980).

The metamorphosis phase has also largely been studied in terms of measuring successful socialization. Successful organizational socialization has been conceptualized by measuring benefits such as job satisfaction (Jablin, 1982), organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Filstad, 2011; Laker & Steffy, 1995) and longevity in an organization (Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009; Morrison, 1993). More recent studies have indicated that successful socialization outcomes are more complex than simple indications of job satisfaction and can include aspects such as familiarity with coworkers, familiarity with supervisors, acculturation, recognition, involvement, job competency, and role negotiation (Gailliard et al., 2010). The outcomes of socialization that result in an employee feeling positively as part of the organization can be beneficial for both the employee and the organization.

The process of metamorphosis can include individualization, where the individual changing the organization to meet their own needs (Kramer, 2010). In assimilation research,

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there seems to be far more focus on how organizations influence individuals as they socialize individuals rather than how individuals influence organizations in the process, whether it be through resistance or personalization (Kramer, 2010). When an individual perceives their organization's socialization support as lacking, which ultimately hinders their ability to feel part of the organization, they proactively seek indirect guidance through engaging in informal interactions with insiders (Mornata & Cassar, 2018). It is possible that individuals may turn to social media platforms to connect with organizational members proactively and digitally when they feel that their organization's efforts in making them feel part of the workplace are inadequate or missing, thus participating in their own efforts of socialization.

Exit

Finally, is the exit stage where an organizational member leaves the organization. This phenomenon can be referred to as exit, disengagement, or turnover (Kramer, 2010). At some point, all individuals will leave their organizations, either by means of a voluntary exit or an involuntary exit. Voluntary turnover is described as an employee-initiated transition out of an organization, while involuntary describes an instance in which an organization prohibits an individual from returning to work or is eliminated from employment on behalf of the organization (Klotz et al., 2021). Voluntary exit occurs when an individual plans their leave from an organization either for the purpose of a career change (Tan, 2008), jarring events that result in quitting or searching for other work (e.g., feeling unfairly bypassed for promotion), planned retirement (Lindbo & Shultz, 1998), or as a result of "gradual disenchantment" from their workplace as a result of increased dissatisfaction (Kramer, 2010). Involuntary exit can be a result of large-scale organizational changes or centralized employee dismissal (Kramer, 2010).

Within involuntary exit research, studies have examined how "survivors" (those who remain in the organization) communicate after an employee's dismissal (Benedict, 2020), how dismissals may influence intent to leave by others (Scott et al., 1999), and how a planned dismissal may influence perceptions of satisfaction and control (Lewis & Russ, 2012). Scholars have also emphasized that post-exit experiences do not only impact the person who left, but also those who remain in the organization (Ebaugh, 1988). Social media has been identified as a way in which an organization might share information about a member's dismissal (Benedict, 2020), and therefore requires a closer examination of the variety of ways it may be used upon exit.

Exiting an organization is a process that involves three sub-phases: pre-announcement, announcement/actual exit, and post-exit (Jablin, 2001). Pre-announcement includes cues from the person exiting that may be communicated actively and intentionally or passively and unintentionally (Ferris & Mitchell, 1987). Announcement/actual exit includes a process in which the individual might publicly announce a statement of their intent to leave as well as the actual event of leaving. The process of announcing leave might include a formally written statement of intent to leave or an informal announcement made to specific individuals (Jablin, 2001). In some situations, actual exit may also be marked by rites and rituals such as office parties (Kramer, 1989). The post-exit phase emphasizes the communication that occurs once the individual has left the organization and entails communication by those who remain and the individual themself (Jablin, 2001). Previous research on the exit phase has not examined how social media provides new opportunities for these dynamics of exit, such as new ways to announce one's exit to others on a wide scale, like through social media platform.

The phenomenon of job transitions is important to understand as employees experience a delicate balance of breaking ties with one organization while also building ties with another

(Kramer, 2010), leaving the employee in a liminal state of building and ending a workplace identity and relationships at the same time. As noted above, the internet has been explored as an information source when individuals are in the anticipatory socialization phase, which emphasizes the organization's socialization efforts. Social media use helps individuals gain an understanding of multiple dynamics within organization life, such as culture, role clarity, and self-efficacy (Gonzalez et al., 2015). Yet, an understanding of how an individual uses social media throughout their own assimilation is missing. This project was interested in one facet of digital communication, social media, and how boundaries of information seeking and privacy management are created and negotiated during the employee's own assimilation efforts.

Social Media

Social media is a generalized term often used to describe blogging websites, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds, and collaborative projects (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Most social media platforms are curated to facilitate connection between their users with a variety of purposes, including socializing with friends and family, romance, job seeking and professional networking, interacting with companies and brands, and doing business (Aichner et al., 2021). Social networking sites (SNS) can be slightly differentiated from social media in that SNS allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile, curate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and compare their list of connections with others within the SNS system (boyd & Ellison, 2007). While social media generally hold similar functions, SNS more commonly include sharing important life events, photos, and the status updates that reinforces one's in-person encounters (Aichner et al., 2021). For the purposes of this research project, social media are defined as popularly used and publicly available SNS that facilitate connection with friends and family, doing business, and include professional

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networking functions (Aichner et al., 2021). Social media platforms are used to share and learn

information about others and the world and to write their everyday lives into a digital and social

context (van Dijck, 2013) which translates into the act of identity performance.

Identity Performance

In order to exist in mediated spaces such as social media, people engage in explicit acts

of writing their identities into digital being. Most social media platforms ask for individuals to

write biographies, status updates, image captions, and more—sharing bits of one's self along the

way (boyd & Ellison, 2007). People perform their identities in their everyday lives as if they are

actors on a stage, playing themselves for an audience (Goffman, 1959). Individuals have many

motives for controlling the impressions they provide for others, and so they function as if they

are performers on a stage attempting to do so. People also enact their identity as performances in

the digital context (boyd, 2008). Online audiences can include a wide range of people for a single

individual, or user. Some of which may be close friends, acquaintances, previous romantic

partners, coworkers, supervisors, family members, and many more (boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The process of digital identity performance requires a tactful ability to perform a

"networked self," or a cohesive online identity, which includes the fashioning of "polysemic"

presentations that make sense to multiple audiences without compromising one's own sense of

self (Papacharissi, 2010). When individuals engage with others on social media, they undergo a

process of negotiating visibility, which is the extent to which a self-presentation may be seen by

others (Duffy & Hund, 2019). Some social media users may even engage in "visibility labor", in

which they devote energy to making their self-presentations noticeable and positively prominent

to prospective employers, clients, and followers (Abidin, 2016). Yet, in addition to being visible,

users also are expected to be "authentic" in their performances (Abidin, 2016). Even though one

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audience may vastly differ from another, social media users are expected to perform a cohesive

identity that caters to multiple audiences and remains authentic to the user's identity.

When an individual performs their identity online, they are faced with challenges unique

to the digital context, such as navigating multiple audiences through digital boundaries.

Describing what they coined "context collapse," Wesch (2009) offers the example of the

computer webcam and the YouTube vlogger. In the single moment of recording a vlog, an

infinite number of contexts collapses upon one another. Everything captured within the given

video can be transported to any place on the planet, presumably preserved for all time, and for

potentially anyone to view. "The space in front of the webcam becomes at once the most public

spaces on the new planet in the most private space imaginable (one's home)" (Wesch, 2009, p.

25). In terms of social media, context collapse occurs when public and private boundaries

converge (Wesch, 2009). One may connect with both a close family member and a new

coworker on the same social media platform and attempt to present performances or manage

impressions as Goffman (1959) would explain, that appeal to both audiences. Navigating

performing one's identity to multiple audiences through digital boundaries may be a challenging

endeavor for individuals, even more so during a job transition when an individual balances

connecting with members from an organization they are leaving and an organization there are

joining.

Boundary Management and Social Media in the Workplace

Once more, the term "boundary" is used as a metaphor to describe the way in which one

might differentiate their personal and professional identities and regulate how/when/and who

gains access to either realm of their life. Managing the boundaries of multiple identities is a

common challenge for organizational members. Boundary theory explores the different roles

individuals occupy and the mental fences they shape around those different roles in their lives as a way of ordering those environments (Ashforth et al., 2000; Michaelsen, 1997; Zerubavel, 1991). Employees have relied on boundaries to delineate their professional and personal lives and avoid the intermingle of the two for decades (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). However, the collision of personal and professional identities in the online environment creates a new dynamic of blurred boundaries for individuals to navigate (Fieseler et al., 2015).

Creating boundaries between professional and private identities is an on-going and active process (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Maintaining these privacy or personal information boundaries is a more fluid task when it includes digital barriers, such as social media platforms, and not physical barriers, such as the walls of the workplace. Building identities for multiple audiences in the mediated context has made the boundary management process more complicated due to the nature of balancing several social contexts (or audiences) at once (Lampinen et al., 2009). As a result, employees might navigate personal and professional identities separately, keeping their personal information private within the workplace walls as a way to enhance their professional relationships (Phillips et al., 2009). The balance is onerous in that employees who perform personal identities in the workplace may be seen as inappropriate, yet others may appreciate seeing the personal self-disclosure of their professional contacts (Collins & Miller, 1994). Thus, employees might feel they need to enact a balance between the two to share personal disclosures without violating professionalism standards in their workplaces. Thus, in the online context, the physical boundaries of the workplace are extended as individuals invite their coworkers to connect with them digitally, outside of the walls that hold their work identities. Professional identities that were once held within the bounds of the workplace are now being written into online spaces as well.

Therefore, in order to balance their personal and professional identities, employees may engage in a variety of boundary management practices as they enact their digital identities into being. Four archetypical sets of online boundary management behaviors arise when people negotiate their work and non-work identities: open, audience, content, and hybrid (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Open behaviors include publicly searchable profiles with publicly available posts and pictures, and the act of disclosing positive and negative information in both the professional and personal domains. Audience behaviors include utilizing private profile functions, being selective about who one might allow to connect on specific platforms (e.g., Facebook is for personal contacts and LinkedIn is for professional contacts), and utilizing nicknames or other tactics to prevent one from searching for a personal profile. Content behaviors include disclosing information that is flattering or glamorous, keeping posts noncontroversial (e.g., free from politics, religion, or sexual orientation, and controlling the photos, posts, or comments that appear on the individual's profile). Hybrid behaviors include behaviors such as creating and maintaining lists of contacts that allow one to manage what content a specific audience may access, cleaning up one's profile when transition from one life or career stage to another, and educating connections to recognize the various boundaries that person would like to maintain on their profile (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

In combination with these strategies, individuals may use either segmentation or integration-oriented practices. Employees who desire more segmentation between their work and nonwork identities are more likely to be attentive to classifying the domain in which each type of audience belongs, inserting separation between work and nonwork groups in their online spaces (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Such segmentation allows organizational members to avoid any psychological discomfort that may result from performing a personal identity in a space in which

a professional contact might view it, and vice versa (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). On the other hand, organizational members who do not wish to segment might not manage their online audiences as closely and are more likely to pool their audiences of professional and personal contacts together (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013).

Other boundary management and online identity building behaviors have been recognized in relation to organizational commitment and identification. Working individuals tend to combine their professional and personal domains under one online persona, and they express confidence in using social media in workplace contexts when they have higher organizational identification (Fieseler et al., 2015). When individuals feel positively about connecting with their colleagues on Facebook, they express more commitment to the organizational department, and when they connect with a colleague on Facebook who holds power within an organization, they express greater commitment to the overall organization (Bartels et al., 2019). As a result, depending on the type of boundary management one performs and the outcomes they experience from connecting with coworkers and supervisors on social media, employees can experience a variety of implications such as higher commitment to the organization, higher confidence in their social media skills, and higher organizational identification.

These boundary management acts are used as a method of controlling one's private information. Communication privacy management (CPM) (formerly titled communication boundary management theory) is closely tied to boundary management in that people enact strategic decisions of privacy management in order to maintain control of their boundaries (Petronio, 2002). CPM posits that because individuals inherently desire some type of privacy, and they often seek to regulate the dialectical tension between privacy and disclosure by

managing the boundaries around their information (Petronio, 1991). Essentially, individuals

perceive ownership over their private information and assume control over it through the use of

boundaries (Petronio, 2002).

CPM assumes three axioms to managing privacy (Petronio, 2002). First, people exercise

control through implementing privacy rules that manage revealing and concealing information to

others. There are times when individuals might need to develop new rules, learn preexisting

rules, or negotiate rules that manage privacy boundaries. The criteria for these rules are based

upon culture, gender, motivations, context, and a risk-benefit ratio (Petronio, 2002).

These criteria are foregrounded in the act of rule formation, during which individuals will

consider core and catalyst criteria. Core criteria constitute the choices made when managing

private information across situations while catalyst criteria include outside or context-dependent

influences that can change criteria (Petronio & Durham, 2015). People are motivated to make

their privacy managing decisions based on core and catalyst criteria. Culture, a core criteria,

influences privacy rules in that culture orders individuals' expectations, and sense-making

abilities and therefore influences one's decisions concerning private information (Benn & Gaus,

1983). It is known that each culture has a unique degree to which they hope to regulate privacy

(Altman, 1977). In the context of the workplace, organizational culture has been found to be used

by members as a decision-making criteria for privacy management (Petronio & Durham, 2015).

Similar to culture, gender may influence one's privacy rule development as previous

research suggests that men and women use different sets of criteria to define their ownership and

control of private information (Petronio et al., 1984). Motivations may also impact boundaries as

people negotiate the rewards and costs or revealing or concealing private information (e.g., the

act of disclosure can feel rewarding and fulfilling) (Delreg & Grzelak, 1979). Context shapes the

way privacy rules are established (e.g., therapeutic situations would invite more open revealing to reach the goals of therapy), and people may aim to modify their control over private information depending on the context at hand (Petronio, 2002; Petronio & Durham, 2015).

Finally, people may consider a risk-benefit ratio criterion (Petronio, 2002). One of the main reasons people erect boundaries around private information in the first place includes calculating the risk. Considerations such as social validation (e.g., asking people to affirm one's views or values), relationship development (e.g., enhancing relationships by revealing private information), and social control (e.g., telling someone an opinion to control how they consider a topic) are just a few one might experience when using this criterion (Petronio, 2002). In the workplace, there are a variety of risks one might experience such as face risks (e.g., relational embarrassment with coworkers), relational risks (e.g., complaining about a lack of support from one's supervisor), and role risk (e.g., jeopardizing how someone is viewed as a supervisor due to the information shared) (Petronio, 2002). Rule development, therefore, depends on these various criteria.

The second axiom to managing privacy is that people assume co-ownership of private information when it is shared with others and therefore participate in coordinating their collectively owned boundaries (Petronio, 2002). As individuals self-disclose information to others, they actively decide who, what, when, and where it is revealed (Petronio, 2002). When self-disclosure occurs, three management operations are used to negotiate privacy boundaries: boundary linkages, boundary permeability, boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002).

Boundaries are coordinated by rules that allow linkages to occur, through which the confidant becomes co-responsible for maintaining the private information (Petronio, 2002). The process of a linkage then transforms the boundary from a personal to a collective. However,

boundary linkages also include two major issues such as proportionality (e.g., depending on the

number of contributions people make, one may feel their private information shared was

disproportional to another's) and strength of ties (e.g., those who have weak ties, such as

strangers, are less likely to comply to the rules of privacy management) (Petronio, 2010).

Boundaries are also coordinated through rules that allow degrees of permeability to

regulate access to and protection of the information (Petronio, 2002). Permeability includes how

open or closed the collective boundaries are (Petronio, 2002). Boundaries may be thick or thin,

regulating high or low levels of access to and protection of the private information at hand

(Petronio, 2002). Once a linkage is formed and the information is then co-owned, the people who

share the information need to decide who can know the information, how they should be told,

and when they can know, thus resulting in a collective degree of permeability to be managed

(Petronio, 2002).

Permeable boundaries allow one to perform both work and nonwork identities within one

domain (e.g., calling a coworker while waiting to pick up children from school (Ashforth et al.,

2000)). High role integration includes low boundary permeability, in which there is no

distinction between home or work identities (Nippert-Eng, 1996). In contrast, high role

segmentation includes high permeability in which the two domains, work and nonwork, are

treated as entirely separate (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Communication technologies, such as social

media, provide new opportunities for creating and maintaining these boundaries between work

and nonwork identities (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006).

Finally, boundaries are coordinated through rules that communicate boundary ownership,

which identifies who has responsibility for the information and isolates the borders of an

individual or collective boundary (Petronio, 2002). Who owns the information and who has

control over it determines the boundary border definitions. When private information is shared with others, people might strongly believe that it still remains uniquely in their own control, and others may share in that claim. However, although both may be true, neither may happen. There are times in which people might fail to understand how sharing information then puts it in others' control, and thus lose the power to set parameters around the information (Petronio, 2002). Therefore, when individuals communicate private information, they might aim to use clear privacy markers such as "don't tell John, but," or even leaning in and whispering to another to conceal the information being shared from others around (Petronio, 2002).

Lastly, the third axiom to managing privacy includes the complexity and intimacy of privacy dynamics. There are times when boundary management fails and results in boundary turbulence. Petronio (2002) identifies six different factors that lead to boundary turbulence which include (a) intentional rule violations (e.g., a betrayal, spying), (b) boundary rule mistakes (having poor timing or judgement), (c) fuzzy boundaries (experiencing ambiguity in who owns or co-owns the information), (d) dissimilar boundary orientations (perceiving the necessity for boundaries differently), (e) boundary definition predicaments (sharing private information in public space), and (f) privacy dilemmas (knowing private information that could cause problems if not shared).

Ultimately, the consideration of privacy control, ownership, and turbulence are three main principles that guide how people regulate access and protection of their private information (Petronio, 2002). Individuals are required to navigate CPM dynamics as they choose to disclose to and protect private information from others as a means of managing their relationships (Petronio, 2010). When an individual experiences situations of boundary turbulence, they are met with the difficult task of coping with the outcomes such as anger, fear, sadness, and

relational withdrawal (Aloia, 2018). Post-boundary turbulence experiences are also challenging

in that they sometimes may include forgiveness and/or recalibration of privacy boundaries

(Steuber & McLaren, 2015). The process of managing private information and the boundaries

enacted to control it is already ambiguous and difficult to navigate; taking these practices of

boundary management into online spaces is no easier (Abril et al., 2012; Fieseler et al., 2015;

Ryan et al., 2020).

Part of the boundary work that individuals might partake in manifests as negotiation of

integration and segmentation, or in other words, choosing to integrate their work and non-work

lives, allowing them to intertwine, or choosing to segment them, keeping them separate

(Ashforth et al., 2000). Those who desire their work and non-work lives to intermingle may

choose to integrate, which could include allowing social media connections with coworkers and

performing a non-work centered digital identity (Abril et al., 2012). Those who desire to segment

their work and non-work lives may either choose to not allow coworkers to connect on social

media whatsoever, or they may engage in some privacy and information management work on

social media, controlling their content to show only parts of themselves that they would feel

comfortable sharing with work-related individuals (Abril et al., 2012).

Individuals actively partake in a new type of collective privacy boundaries when they

create and engage in social media platforms, especially ones like Facebook and Instagram that

encourage users to share private information through "About Me" pages such as one's job, where

they live, if they are married, and so forth, or through the act of creating and sharing status

updates and images. When people partake in these features of social media platforms, they

actively convert their information into a co-owned, collective boundary (Child & Petronio,

2011). An individual's desire for privacy/information boundaries may be in direct relationship to

the visibility they attempt to manage that retains those boundaries (Treem et al., 2020). Those who seek to maintain high visibility, allowing themselves and their communication online to be highly available to others, thus may have more open and permeable boundaries. It is evident that the way people navigate their online personas contributes to their formulated boundary management strategies and practices. Consequently, the way social media has been studied in the organizational context provides small glimpses into this dynamic of online being and boundary management.

Social Media in the Organizational Context

There are two types of social media used in the workplace, internal and external. Internal, or enterprise, social media are platforms provided by the organization as an informal organizational socialization tool (Leidner et al., 2018). External social media platforms are those that are used outside of the organization and are publicly available, like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Internal social media platforms can produce knowledge sharing (Leonardi, 2018; Neeley & Leonardi, 2018) and shape organizational identity (Madsen, 2016; Madsen & Verhoeven, 2016). External social media platforms have been found to facilitate both positive and negative opportunities for connections among coworkers that can improve relationships (McCarthy et al., 2008), produce cyberbullying (Oksanen et al., 2020), and provide organizational support (Schmidt et al., 2016).

It is clear that social media can influence the workplace assimilation process (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Although there is ample literature that examines the assimilation process on its own, social media provides an opportunity for behaviors that might not have been possible to experience before (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). For example, social media's use by organizational members provides new avenues for widespread informal communication, such as instant

messaging, which may undermine the formal socialization efforts of the organization and give newcomers access to more assimilation strategies that include their new coworkers' informal efforts. Therefore, this research paves the way to better understand how social media's prevalence in our lives penetrates the workplace transition process.

Connecting with organizational members on publicly available platforms is a unique experience that newcomers carefully and strategically consider upon entry. Lee and colleagues (2019) found that incoming employees considered Facebook friends more personal and only added coworkers on Facebook after they became relationally closer to them through working together for long periods of time. Additionally, "entry-level employees were more hesitant to make such personal connections with their supervisors due to their positional power" (Lee et al., 2019, p. 252). Consequently, incoming employees seem to carry preconceived boundaries about their public social media connections that influence how initial digital connections may or may not take place. It is possible that a workplace transition may further complicate this process of boundary making by causing an employee to simultaneously balance breaking and making ties with two different organizations and their members.

There are also negotiations of professionalism and uncertainty that employees face when socializing into organizations as they choose to take part in connecting with/friending colleagues on external social media. Organizational members focus on their own professional impression management rather than sharing personal information to assist in the uncertainty management process within the anticipatory and encounter stages (Kramer et al., 2018). As a result, in order to manage their impressions, when members join organizations, they may be hesitant to open privacy boundaries that will reveal their own personal information. Yet, the assimilation phenomenon as a two-way process involving both the newcomer and the established

organizational members, both of which are not bound to interactions within the workplace context but can fluidly take part in interactions in digital spaces as well. When interacting with coworkers on Facebook, employees highlight their newcomer status through chitchat, while other times they engage "like a core member of the community," (Mak, 2013, p. 10) highlighting the back-and-forth, fluid process of assimilation into the workplace. This view of digital interactions with coworkers makes it clear that employees may choose to use social media spaces as a way of engaging with coworkers outside of the workplace, but in such a way that may influence their feelings organizational membership and integration.

It is imperative to examine social media's relationship to the assimilation process because digital connections such as connecting with coworkers on social media may have introduced new dynamics into the classic organizational communication theories and processes that have been previously examined (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Increased digital connections may result in individuals becoming progressively reliant on digital forms of communication (like social media) to make assessments of their peers and their workplaces (Treem, 2015), influencing their assimilation experience. Given the popularity of social media in people's everyday lives, it is important for organizational communication scholars to examine how our understanding of organizational behaviors and processes are made different by a social media platform. The previously mentioned studies also leave out an examination of the exit and simultaneous phases of assimilation, and the boundary management process individuals may enact and negotiate while assimilating into and out of workplaces. The exiting individual has a unique set private information to consider in terms of sharing the circumstances in which they are exiting the organization and information about where they are going/why (Klatzke, 2016). Thus, understanding the negotiation of boundaries in the exiting process provides a more holistic view

of a workplace transition and may help organizations understand the multiple information sharing considerations an exiting employee undergoes.

Therefore, organizations and organizational scholars should explore the negotiation of online boundary management practices and the organizational transition experience given its potential influence for assimilation processes. Once more, according to the U.S. bureau of labor statistics, workplace transitions are common (2020) and can influence an employee's career path based on the impressions that they manage in the process (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Hancock et al., 2013). For this reason, this project centered its focus on the boundary management practices that occur when using social media during simultaneous assimilation from one workplace to another. Past research has examined the influence of work-related social media use and its implications for boundary management (van Zoonen et al., 2016), leaving the influence of non-work related social media use understudied. Other research has examined social media as a means of information seeking, professional boundary managing, and uncertainty managing in the assimilation/socialization process (Benedict, 2020; Fieseler et al., 2015; M. Kramer et al., 2018), yet left the transitional nature of changing organizational membership as a gap. The aforementioned gaps in the literature thus shape the following research questions:

RQ1: What strategies of boundary management do employees utilize on social media in the simultaneous process of a workplace transition?

RQ2: What strategies of boundary management do employees utilize on social media in the anticipatory/entry phase of the assimilation process?

RQ3: What strategies of boundary management do employees utilize on social media in the exit phase of the assimilation process?

Chapter Three: Methods

Research Design

This research project examined the boundary work performed on social media in workplace transitions, specifically when an individual undergoes simultaneous assimilation/socialization processes of entry and exit. This study asked what boundaries what strategies of boundary management employees utilize on social media within the simultaneous (RQ1), the anticipatory/entry (RQ2), and exit (RQ3) phases of assimilation. To examine these research questions, this dissertation took a qualitative approach using interviews to probe how individual employees use social media during career transitions. Individual interviews are best used when the goal is to learn about each person through extended narrative (Fern, 1982). Thus, the goal of this project was to capture the experience of individuals who use social media and explore how they negotiate boundaries of connection with coworkers and supervisors as they transition from one workplace to another.

Studying the assimilation phases of entry and exit, specifically, aids in understanding how social media boundaries might be influenced by a workplace transition in which an employee may experience both phases at the same time, within two different organizations. While at some point during their assimilation, employees may experience metamorphosis, a phase in which they feel fully integrated into the workplace (Jablin, 2001), this dissertation does not centralize metamorphosis as an individual phase to be examined in the boundary management process. Although the assimilation marker of metamorphosis is valuable, as noted in the literature review, it is hard to capture and can be experienced multiple times within one's membership in an organization (Kramer, 2010). In addition, metamorphosis is more likely to

occur after some time in the organization (Kramer, 2010), and might not be within the temporal dimensions of a workplace transition. Examining the entry and exit assimilation experiences within workplace transitions provides an understanding of the delicate balance of simultaneously building ties with one organization while breaking ties with another (Kramer, 2010), to which this study adds the dimension of social media boundary management during such transitions.

Participants

Participants ($N = 25$) ranged from 20-37 years of age ($M = 27.32$, $SD = 3.98$). The majority of the participants identified as white/Caucasian ($n = 16$, 64%); other racial and/or ethnic identities included Black or African American ($n = 4$, 16%), Hispanic or Latinx ($n = 2$, 8%), Asian Pacific Islander or Filipino ($n = 2$, 8%). One participant (4%) indicated multiple racial identities. 13 participants (52%) identified with she/her pronouns and 10 (40%) with he/him pronouns. 2 participants (8%) chose not to disclose their pronouns, in which case they/them pronouns were assigned during data analysis and reporting. Participants came from a wide range of job types, including construction, maintenance, childcare, and domestics workers to graphic designer, data analyst, accountant, marketing, and higher education staff and faculty. See Appendix A for a breakdown of participant pseudonyms, ages, pronouns, races/ethnicities, and self-identified roles.

In the demographic screening survey (see Appendix B), participants were asked what social media platforms they used in general, not just to connect with coworkers. 84% ($n = 21$) of participants used Facebook, 76% ($n = 19$) Instagram, 68% ($n = 17$) LinkedIn, 44% ($n = 11$) Twitter, 32% ($n = 8$) TikTok, and 32% ($n = 8$) Snapchat. Others included single instance mentions of YouTube and VSCO, and two mentions of BeReal (8%).

Well-crafted recruitment was vital to the success of data collection (Morgan, 1997). When analyzing a selected phenomenon, purposeful criteria-based sampling is an appropriate method of identifying subjects (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). As a result, a set of criterion were used to recruit participants. Criteria to participate included: (a) participants must have experience engaging with social media and (b) participants must have undergone a workplace transition within the past year to ensure adequate recall of recent experiences in which they changed organizational membership from one workplace to another. Anyone who expressed interest in an interview was sent a demographic data collection survey that probed participant's email, age, preferred pseudonym, criteria, preferred medium for the interview, preferred date/time range, and which social media platforms they used (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2016). These criteria were set to ensure that participants could provide insight into boundary management practices on social media within a recently made workplace transition. Those who did not meet the criteria were not asked to participate in the study. Those who met the criteria were sent an additional email to schedule the interview.

Following Colorado State University's (CSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, data collection began by using my own personal and professional networks for potential participants utilizing the method of snowball sampling from there. Snowball sampling is a process of asking participants to refer other potential participants who met the criterion (Lindlof, 2002). Recruitment materials (see Appendix C) were posted on my own LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook pages. Friends and fellow colleagues were encouraged to share the recruitment materials on their own social media pages. The original posts received about six shares combined. Lastly, the CSU Communication Studies department Instagram page shared a recruitment post. An email (see Appendix D) was sent to those who reached out with desire to

participate or were referred by another participant, which explained the purpose of the study, information about participant requirements, and details regarding how to be part of an interview. All participants were compensated with a $15 Amazon gift card.

Procedures

Because I aimed to gather a wide variety of perspectives, participants were given the option to take part in an interview virtually via Zoom or phone call. Including these two options provided more flexibility in terms of time, geographical boundaries, and health/safety precautions. Conducting online, synchronous video interviews allowed participants the option to be in the comfort of their own homes. Individuals were given the option to participate in a phone call instead of a video chat to circumvent the increasing accounts of videoconferencing fatigue (Ramachandran, 2021), though all participants chose to partake in a Zoom call. A videoconferencing platform, like Zoom, presented opportunities for more rapport building versus phone calls (because of opportunities to see nonverbal cues), convenience, and user-friendliness (Archibald et al., 2019). Additionally, despite its issues of access, reliability, and privacy, videoconferencing like Zoom is preferred among research participants compared to in-person, telephone, or other video conferencing (Archibald et al., 2019). I made it clear to participants upon the start of the interview that they could choose to leave their camera on or off. 32% ($n = 8$) participants choose to have their camera on, and the rest chose to leave the camera off, to which I did as well only once I saw their choice.

A semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix E) was used to allow for a conversational and flexible tone between the researcher and the participant (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2018). The semi-structured interview process allowed for rapport building, an intimate view of the perspective of the participant, and a co-construction of the environment between the

researcher and the participant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participants initially were asked to respond to rapport building questions regarding their previous and current workplaces (e.g., "Tell me about your previous workplace, what was your role, how long were you there, what were the social dynamics between you and your coworkers/supervisors"). Participants were asked about their use of publicly available social media platforms in the two stages of assimilation, how they may have negotiated boundaries, and how boundary management fluctuated throughout the process (e.g., "What boundaries do you have around connecting with your coworkers and supervisors on social media"). In the final part of the interview, participants were asked to open and share one social media platform of their choosing that they use to connect with both coworkers and others. They were asked to scroll through their own profile feed and discuss the thought-process they underwent as they crafted specific posts or shared specific material and describe what that content included (e.g., "Tell me about the decisions you made regarding two or three different posts and how you might have balanced sharing personal information for both your workplace members and those outside of your workplace"). This portion of the interview took approximately 15 minutes and provided a glimpse of boundary management strategies that participants enacted while crafting content on their social media pages.

Once I reached about the twentieth interviewee, participants began to repeat similar insights and experiences as previous participants which indicated that I reached saturation. The longest interview was 52 minutes and 35 seconds, the shortest interview was 17 minutes and 27 seconds, with the average length being 31 minutes and 57 seconds. Transcripts were generated through Zoom's transcription function, converted to a NotePad document. Following, each transcript was reviewed to check for accuracy (Tracy, 2010),and then uploaded into MAXQDA. During transcription, participant's pauses were illustrated with ellipses (. . .) and instances in

which a section of the transcript was skipped were illustrated with a period, followed by ellipses (. …).

Any identifiable information was replaced with pseudonyms to ensure the participant's anonymity. Participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym. Most provided a preferred pseudonym. Those who did not were given a pseudonym to closely match their demographic makeup. I thoughtfully chose pseudonyms that reflected the culture and gender background of the participants' identities to balance the tension between maintaining confidentiality and providing context to the participant's experiences (Allen & Wiles, 2016).

Data Analysis

Transcripts from the twenty-five interviews resulted in 197 single-spaced pages. Data analysis began using Tracy's (2018) phronetic iterative approach. The phronetic iterative approach combines inductive and deductive reasoning and alternates between considering existing theory and research questions while also considering the significance of the emergent qualitative data (Tracy, 2018; Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). This approach allowed me to utilize the existing literature on social media and boundary management, and on the assimilation process to guide my analysis of the data, while allowing the identified themes to both emerge and expand the previous literature (Tracy, 2018).

Data analysis took place in multiple stages and utilized the qualitative data analysis software system, MAXQDA. As part of the phronetic iterative approach, descriptive primary-cycle coding, what others may call "open coding" (Charmaz, 2014), began in the first stage of data analysis (Tracy, 2018). Rather than allowing past theory or predetermined concepts to drive this process, only the empirical materials were used in this phase (Tracy, 2018). I closely analyzed the material and then assigned words or brief phrases (codes) that captured the essence

of that portion of the data (Tracy, 2018). To do this, I utilized the coding system within MAXQDA. Primary-cycle coding resulted in 1173 coded segments within 128 initial codes. Examples of codes that emerged were: removing content, minimizing visibility, only allowing specific audiences to connect, and catering content for specific audiences. Following the first stage of data analysis, I reexamined if subsequent interviews need to be conducted to achieve saturation. No additional interviews were needed given that participants began repeating similar ideas and experiences as others, indicating saturation had been reached (Saunders et al., 2018).

Second-cycle coding occurred next. This is when researchers begin to interpret, organize, and synthesize codes (Tracy, 2013). This process included a combination of interpretation, theoretical considerations, and synthesis (Tracy, 2018). During both first and second stage coding, I utilized analytical memos within MAXQDA's memoing system to take note of what information seemed pertinent to the research questions. This phronetic iterative process resulted in codes that reflected and expanded the current literature on assimilation, social media, and boundary management in the unique process of a job transition.

Following, I utilized MAXQDA's MAXMaps function and took all codes that I perceived as related to each other and lumped them into large categories (or maps) that could then be further clarified. Some examples of large categories that were developed in MAXMaps are: violations, communicating connection norms, and crafting content boundaries. This process resulted in 14 code maps. Appendix F provides an example of how the MAXQDA Hierarchical Code-Subcodes Model in MAXMaps was used to develop the *boundaries that are platform-specific* preliminary strategy. As I synthesized the data, I further memoed within MAXQDA to track by analysis process in which I found topics interesting or related to previous literature, resulting in 48 total memos. A preliminary code book was created to aid in the identification and

organization of the data (see Appendix G). This preliminary code book included preliminary

themes and definitions, the labels of the secondary codes included within those, and some

example quotes. I organized and reorganized these codes within MAXMaps a few times,

bringing in the literature during my analysis to make sense of the coding maps which eventually

resulted in eight "themes" of boundary management strategies. Criteria for theme development

included Owen's (1984) thematic analysis principles of recurrence (e.g. when at least two

transcripts include the same thread of meaning), repetition (e.g., an explicit repeated use of the

same wording), and forcefulness (e.g., expressions of meaning provided nonverbally).

In reporting the data, I used thick description and concrete detail to adhere to the criteria

for excellent qualitative research and to provide rich descriptions of the participant's responses

(Tracy, 2010). In order to establish validity, I used member reflections with four participants to

provide an opportunity for reflexive elaboration (providing participant's the opportunity for

comment or correction), rather than to bolster the claims made in the discussion (Clarke &

Braun, 2013). These member reflections invited participants to provide input on the findings

which allowed "for sharing and dialoguing with participants about the study's findings,

providing opportunities for questions, critique, feedback, affirmation, and even collaboration"

(Tracy, 2010, p. 844).

With five participants' quotes, I wanted to allow opportunity for reflexive elaboration in

order to understand if I captured the context surrounding their experiences accurately. I reached

out via email to five participants and invited them to reflect on how I wrote about their

experiences in the findings via phone or Zoom call. Four out of the five participants participated

in the opportunity, in which I read them their quote, the context that I gave it in my writing, and

how I assigned it to the given boundary management strategy. Following, I allowed them to

provide any feedback and clarity. Each participant agreed that I accurately described their experiences and its context, which concluded the brief conversations.

Researcher Positionality

Within this project, it was important to reflect on my own positionality as the primary researcher. Positionality refers to an individual's worldview (Bahari, 2010; Grix, 2018; Scotland, 2012; Sikes, 2004) and perspective of a research project within its social and political context (Rowe, 2014; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Within research, individuals perceive the social world in a way that depends upon our position within it, which impacts research studies (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

As a White-passing Chicana and cishet woman born in the late 1990s, I must recognize that although this research project did not centralize race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, or even generational identities in its analysis, these identities would influence the research process and my own understanding, interpretation, and acceptance of the findings. As part of the research, I paid particular attention to my multiple identities and how they might have positioned myself as an insider or outsider to the research community and setting. I also recognized that my positionality is not fixed and may change over the duration of this project. Most importantly, I was close in age to many of the participants and felt as if they saw me as someone who could relate to their experiences, thus positioning me as an insider within the research setting.

My research interests are a direct reflection of my personal career experiences. In my own professional experiences, I underwent a process of boundary management as I connected with my own colleagues and supervisors on social media. As the data collector and analyst, I acknowledged that my personal experiences should be clear and continuously reflected upon as I practiced self-awareness throughout the project in order to recognize if the data began to

represent personal views rather than those of the participant. During participant interviews, I aimed to acknowledge my inherent subjectivity in this qualitative project. I aimed to have active and ongoing awareness on my own influence within the project using memoing to reflect back on the previous literature, on why I was interested in particular datasets, and how I could equally privilege each participant's voice (Bucholtz, 2000; Creswell, 2014).

Ultimately, the research process in this project taught me the critical nature of thoughtful planning and tracking during the data analysis process. At times, data analysis felt overwhelming given that there was so much fruitful data to utilize. However, the MAXMaps system in MAXQDA helped me visualize and organize my codes in the most helpful way possible. Instead of trying to make sense of codes while looking at them within a list, I was able to group my codes within hierarchical subsets in the MAXMaps system which allows me to relate specific codes to each other and to previous literature. Utilizing the data analysis system to its fullest capabilities in this way aided my process to its utmost abilities. The following section overviews the eight themes that resulted from this process, situates them in the context of participant experiences, and relates them to the workplace transition.

Chapter Four: Findings

People who undergo workplace transitions find themselves consistently negotiating boundaries. Through 25 interviews, individuals who recently underwent workplace transitions highlighted experiences of boundary management as they navigated workplace and role changes. This research project asked what strategies of boundary management employees utilize on social media within the simultaneous (RQ1), the anticipatory/entry (RQ2), and exit (RQ3) phases of assimilation. Eight boundary strategies spanning across the given phases of assimilation emerged from the data and are defined and summarized in Table 1. These strategies include: (a) *connecting with peers close in age*, (b) *drawing platform-specific audience and content boundaries*, (c) *"feeling out" boundary norms*, (d) *crafting content boundaries*, (e) *tightening boundaries in a role transition*, (f) *controlling transition related content,* (g) *rewriting boundaries upon exit*, and (h) *redrawing boundaries upon violation*.

In the following section, each boundary management strategy is discussed utilizing the participants' discourse and analyzed in relationship to the relevant assimilation phase(s). The boundary work performed in these strategies is not limited to any specific assimilation phase, yet some were primarily used in specific moments during a transition. Although strategies could not be plainly mapped onto a specific phase in each instance, this dissertation aims to draw some connections between strategies and the phase in which they were most closely linked to, based on participants' experiences. Strategies a-c are most typically enacted in the anticipatory/entry stages of assimilation, strategies d-f are most typically enacted in the simultaneous phase of assimilation, and strategies g and h are most typically enacted within both the entry and exit phases of assimilation. However, when applicable, the ways in which participants utilize these

strategies in multiple stages of assimilation, and how doing so marks the strategy differently is presented. In addition, it is important to note that these boundaries can be used in tandem with one another and are not mutually exclusive.

Table 1.

Strategies of Boundary Management.

Strategy	Assimilation Phase(s)	Definition
Connecting with Peers Close in Age	Entry	Connecting with others close in age given similar interests and life phases
Drawing Platform-specific Audience and Content Boundaries	Entry	Drawing boundaries of connection based on perceptions of how a specific platform should be used, whether by societal norms or by desired intentions
"Feeling Out" Boundary Norms	Entry	Feeling out what others are doing through explicit and implicit social cues/conversations and building boundaries around those organizational norms
Crafting Content Boundaries	Simultaneous/ Entry and Exit	Utilizing boundaries around social media content to keep it "non-controversial," or limited to specific topics
Tightening Boundaries in a Role Transition	Simultaneous/ Entry and Exit	Tightening boundaries of social media connection as one takes on new supervisory responsibilities
Controlling Transition Related Content	Simultaneous/ Entry and Exit	Expressing control over the information of workplace transition, including the who/how/when of the "social media official" post that announces the job transition to online communities
Rewriting Boundaries Upon Exit	Entry and Exit	Rewriting boundaries of social media connection when leaving workplaces
Redrawing Boundaries Upon Violation	Entry and Exit	Redrawing boundaries upon experiencing a boundary violation

Connecting With Peers Close in Age

Making online connections with coworkers who were similar in age felt organic and comfortable for participants, given that those who were close in age were usually in the same life phase and had similar interests. Participants also noted that they believe that older coworkers likely felt the same way about their own peers, making connections between older individuals natural but connections between younger and older individuals unnatural. Participants communicated that this strategy is most often enacted during the anticipatory/entry phase given that these connections, and perceptions of others' connections, were most often established upon entering their organizations. About a third of participants ($n = 9$) enacted this strategy.

The first example of this strategy being utilized can be unpacked through Lucas' discourse of his time in his previous organization. Lucas engaged in marketing work as part of his role in his previous organization. He marked that his social media connection with one of his coworkers was more open due to them being close in age, life phases, and having similar media interests (being part of their job roles). He shared:

> I think for myself and also one coworker that . . . I think also age is a part of it, too. And also, family. Two of the folks on our team had like kids and a family. Whereas myself [and] my other colleague were either single or people in relationships. And so, we felt a little bit more open about connecting with each other on social media exchanging different gif . . . having conversations, mostly using Instagram and I think . . . the fact that we were really connected and very media savvy people and work in the industry of media production . . . really kind of fostered that connection of sharing different gifs and different links to trailers and exchanging jokes.

> So, it's I think it was just based on . . . yeah, the age and also the relationship. And that I wonder, cause I also would kind of talk through what the content would be, cause myself and my coworker who we connect on a lot, would share like what our algorithm looks like in platforms, and we had some similar algorithms, and I think that's due to age as well.

In these two quotes, Lucas not only expressed that his social media connections with his coworker felt comfortable due to their similar interests and close age, but also that they likely

consumed the same content, potentially targeted to their age group through the platform's

algorithms. Thus, them being close in age facilitated a bond over social media content for them.

Similar to Lucas, Cassandra and Bonnie separately shared that they fostered easy

connections with peers close in age to them. Cassandra expressed:

> There [in my previous workplace] I was working with folks that were around my age group. They were also students at the university that I was attending at that time. Very natural friends and relationships. And so, we added each other on Instagram . . . Snapchat. I think Facebook a little bit for some folk. And it was pretty normal and regular.

Here, Cassandra noted that forging connections with people in her age group felt "natural".

Bonnie noted a similar sentiment:

> The other [workers] and I . . . We were all pretty young and pretty young professionals. We all got along really well and definitely connected over social media and hung out outside of work. But there was a pretty big divide between our level, and then just the level even right above us in age and experience, and in pay, and all sorts of different things. So there definitely was a disconnect there.

According to Bonnie, young professionals in her organization connected over social media, but

for those who were a level above them, in terms of the organizational hierarchy, there was a

disconnect, making those connections almost unnatural (to contrast Cassandra's use of the term).

Bonnie later communicated, "I feel like it's so natural for our generation to be on social media.

Like that's just how we keep up with people." Once again, a participant marks generational

interests, or simply just being closer in age to one another, as a reason for feeling more

comfortable and allowing open social media connections. As a result, participants seemed to

hold more open boundaries between coworkers close in age to themselves. In addition,

participants presented these experiences as they were discussing how connections initially

formed in their workplaces, which happened upon their own entry into the organization or when

others would enter the organization, marking it as related to the entry phase.

Drawing Platform-specific Audience and Content Boundaries

About half of the participants ($n = 13$) noted that they enacted platform-specific audience and content boundaries on their social media pages. Boundaries of connection are drawn based on the perceptions of how a specific platform should be used, whether by perceived societal norms or by one's own desired intentions. However, these perceptions of use are widely disparate. For example, several participants had their own unique idea of who they should connect with on Instagram. Bonnie and Jakie felt that Instagram is for friends only. Jakie indicated a clearly drawn boundary between coworkers and friends on Instagram, stating, "So, like on Instagram, I have, like my close friends, it's like nobody that I work with." In contrast, Carter felt that Instagram was for everyone, as he noted, "Yeah, I follow everyone on almost everything. Well, that's why I have almost everyone on Instagram." Other participants delineate further boundaries with coworkers on Instagram. For example, Katie noted that Instagram is a space "where I'll add peers, but not supervisors," and Stevie stated that she "will [connect with coworkers] on like Instagram. … even though it's like opposite of its intentions."

Clearly perceptions of who can connect with someone on a specific platform, like Instagram, can vary greatly between people. Stevie marked that she connected with coworkers on Instagram though the act of doing so is opposite of Instagram's intentions. Thus, one's perceptions of a platform's intended use may not be in line with how they choose to use it. In contrast to Instagram, other platforms such as LinkedIn were marked explicitly for connecting with work-related individuals, given that it is a professional networking social media platform. Therefore, the boundary on LinkedIn is highly permeable for coworkers and supervisors (to an extent, as showcased in subsequent strategies). Steff, when she described how she used her LinkedIn account, noted, "I connect mainly with my colleagues [on LinkedIn]." Greg described

that LinkedIn was a highly permeable space for coworkers as he stated, "I'm usually pretty open to having [coworkers] on not personal social medias like LinkedIn."

Other platforms, some participants communicated, were completely off limits for connecting with coworkers. For example, Mari expressed that she would change her name on specific platforms, to which she did not specify, to avoid any work-related individuals from finding her. Similarly, Carter explained that platforms like VSCO, a photo editing and sharing application, were only for non-work-related people.

Interestingly, there were moments in which the boundaries crafted around perceived intentions of a platform were crossed. Katie illustrated this:

> I recently got connected on TikTok with one of my now former coworkers. … [she] was actually one of my references for this new job. So, we are quite close, but still mostly work friends, and it felt like a big leap to like go from Instagram friends which we've been for a 100 years, and for some reason TikTok felt very different. Like it's like a new level of like friend intimacy when you get connected with someone on TikTok. I have no idea why. But she added me on TikTok, I was like, 'oh my God, like I didn't know that we were there yet.'

Here, Katie perceived TikTok to be what she later described as her "most inner circle" of friends. Thus, having a previous coworker connect with her on TikTok felt like a "big leap" in the friendship and influenced her to reconsider her boundaries around TikTok.

In addition to drawing boundaries around connections based on a platform's perceived intentions, participants perform further boundary work around their content. Thus, a connection may be allowed, however, the participants marked that they further craft their content for specific audiences using platform features. Malfoy noted that he will connect with his supervisors and coworkers on Instagram, but if he chooses to post about himself partaking in recreational marijuana, he utilized the "close friends" feature to limit that content to specific people, hiding that specific content from coworkers and supervisors.

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When participants chose not to utilize these features, they communicated enacting a "you get what you get" approach to their content. Katie explained her approach, noting that she connects with people with similar views to her own. She said, "But then, when I do like [post], if it's something like political or something like that, most of the people that I'm connected with there are in agreement with me." Further, she said, "It's just like well, if you're following me then you know, this is probably gonna be what you see and if you don't like it then you can, you know, mute me, or block me, or whatever."

In these instances, participants clearly communicate that they craft their boundaries of connection based their own perceived intentions of a platforms use. Yet, the boundaries do not stop there. Participants also crafted further boundaries within the platform itself using platform features. Others, instead, communicate that once someone crosses that boundary and forges a social media connection, they get what they get.

Controlling one's content boundaries is something marked by entry into organizations as entry is typically the occasion in which one considers what online connections with others will look like (Lee et al., 2019). In other words, these decisions to connect or not connect are typically established as people first meet others in the organization, upon their own entry or others'. Participants illustrated this by referencing times in which they added coworkers as they were prompted to describe their entrance into the workplace. However, further boundary work can be performed continuously through their time in the organization, as is evident in Malfoy's experience. Finally, Katie's experience makes it clear that even if boundaries are drawn upon entry, later on in one's organizational membership they may be asked to reconsider their boundaries again (given the instance of a coworker adding her on a platform she would have previously deemed off limits to coworkers).

"Feeling Out" Boundary Norms

People "feel out" what others' social media connections look like through explicit and implicit social cues or conversations and build their boundaries around those individual and organizational norms. In other words, the boundaries that they attempt to establish upon entry are re-negotiated and shaped by what others within the organization do. These boundaries are often different between coworkers and supervisors either because of organizational rules or an individual's own desire. Finally, "feeling out" these norms is an act that occurs most often when people are assimilating into new organizations, marking it as strategy used within the entry period of assimilation. About half of the participants ($n = 13$) "felt out" boundary norms upon entry into their organization.

Bonnie discursively situated this strategy as an attempt to "feel it out" as she was prompted to describe her experiences joining her new and old workplaces within the interview. She revealed, "So I think for me, especially when I start a new position. I kind of like feel it out first before I go through and add people on social media." Later, when she discussed her transition from her previous workplace into her new workplace, she shared, "I think I had decided before I even like started the transition that I knew I wasn't going to add new coworkers right away to social media, because I wanted to check out the vibe first." It is evident through these quotes that Bonnie's boundary is set at initially avoiding connections, and then re-shaping that boundary based on the customs of the workplace. "Feeling out" those norms upon entry helped people gauge what others are doing as they perform their own boundary work.

Harper mentioned that whether someone's boundaries invite or avoid connections, communicating those boundaries openly is an appreciated act in the workplace. Harper stated:

> Some people have already communicated that like they don't want any separation. They want to be friends. They don't need to leave work people at work, and then others have

already made it pretty clear that, like they don't really want to hang out with anybody from work outside of work which is really nice that there is a balance and people are kind of honest in that. And then if it changes at some time, there's kind of the environment to share that and be honest. So, I've really enjoyed that so far.

In Harper's organization, the norm is that people explicitly communicate what boundaries they have, and she appreciates the honesty in that communication. Harper also noted that if those boundaries change, it felt comfortable enough in her organization for that change to be communicated at any point, perhaps not just upon entry. Therefore, having the opportunity to "feel it out" through explicit and implicit communication, even continuously throughout one's organizational membership if boundaries later change, is deemed as valuable for Harper.

Katie pointed out that in her organization, the boundaries of connection are communicated both implicitly, through informal social cues and conversations and explicitly, through direct invitations to connect:

> There were definitely a couple just saying like, 'Oh, yeah, I don't know if you saw on my Instagram. But I went paddleboarding this weekend' and. … the subtext is: I could have been seeing that or been welcome to follow them on Instagram if I wasn't already. Or sometimes coworkers would be like 'Oh, my gosh! Like add me on Instagram,' or 'add me on Facebook' like, if I expressed interest in like seeing pictures of their kids or their pets, or something. So, there were a couple one-to-one invitations to connect, but then there were a couple of people in our unit that were like, 'Oh, yeah, I don't do social media with coworkers and stuff.' And that was also totally accepted, like no one felt strangely about that.

In this instance, Katie was able to read the "subtext" or implicit social cues in others' informal conversations that are communicating that their boundaries for connecting with workers on social media remain open. In addition, some people in her workplace invited those connections explicitly, like Harper experienced as well. Notably, Katie also mentioned that no one felt strange about any single individual's boundaries that avoid connections on social media, indicating an appreciation for honest communication of boundaries.

Katie's experiences were unique as she transitioned from an in-person workplace to a fully remote workplace. She reflected on how this influenced her boundary management on social media:

> I do expect that [connecting with coworkers on social media] will come up so, as you know, we are going to. … our [company] retreat next week, and. … everything's explicit at this company like they said, like, this is, we're gonna get work done like we're gonna do stuff but more so like, this is a social connection time for the company. Like we are more successful as a company when people feel connected to each other, and like invested in their relationships. So, like, we will get work done, and it will be a retreat in the sense that like we've got some you know, some days of meetings but more so than that like we want you to be social and like make connections with people. …
>
> I do think that I would be comfortable, adding co-workers, and maybe supervisors to my Instagram, because . . . in a remote environment it feels valuable to maybe like loosen my boundaries a little bit and like let them into that more social place versus . . . I was also like getting some of my workplace social needs met at the last place by the in-person connection.

Katie illustrated that not only did her workplace explicitly state that they wanted the workplace retreat to be a place for coworkers to connect, but also, she hoped to loosen her boundaries to allow for those connections given that the new social dynamics for her remote workplace might lack in fulfilling her social needs that she got through in-person connections at her previous workplace. She expected the retreat to be a "social cue master class" where she would get all of the informal and implicit invitations to connect with her coworkers.

Not only do participants need to "feel out" connections with coworkers, but also with their supervisors. As Bee was "feeling out" the norms for whether or not to connect with her supervisor in the workplace, her supervisor explicitly communicated that she welcomed that connection. Bee stated:

> My boss was like 'Oh, I posted my garden on Facebook,' and I was like, 'oh I don't think I have you on Facebook,' and she's like 'Well just add me' and I was like, 'Okay.' So, then I added her.

Bee's supervisor explicitly welcomed Bee to connect with her on social media through their informal conversation in the workplace. Importantly, she noted that this was later into her assimilation experience and not just within her beginning days within the organization. Yet, it was still an instance in which someone explicitly communicated their own boundaries.

One factor participants considered when it came to seeking connections with supervisors on social media was social pressure. Mari captured the nuances that incoming employees have to consider as she discussed how connections were made between herself and her supervisor. She shared:

> So, I wouldn't be the first person necessarily to befriend [supervisors] but if they are willing to do that before I do, then it's like 'ok . . . well they are making that gesture so I'm just gonna follow along and accept it' . . . but it was personal in a way where I didn't quite know if it would be wise or unwise to request to be a friend and when she did that I actually thought 'oh great I wanted to be Facebook friends with her and she's offering that first so great'. I don't have to go through that awkward phase of me sending a friend request and her declining it and me getting my feelings hurt. So, I think it's a very complex process trying to observe that boundary, but you don't really know what's the move depending on the kinds of relationships there are or if you're unsure of that dynamic.

Here, Mari tended to allow the supervisor to initiate that connection first because doing so herself could come with social risks, thus it felt more comfortable for her to wait for her supervisor to seek that connection first.

Stevie also reflected on how her supervisor sought connections:

> My boss sent me like a friend request on like Instagram. I mean it's like a social networking team so that's not like abnormal. But that's why I had any sort of like social media networking or interactions with my boss. That's not something I opted to . . . I would have [n]ever friend requested her. But it seems like the social structure pressures of it . . . was like . . . not that there's anything wrong with it, she's a lovely person.

Stevie felt like it was normal for her supervisor to add her on social media given that they work in a social media-related role. However, she also noted that she would not have sought that connection and that it felt like there were social pressures to accept that request to connect. Bee

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felt the tension of having a supervisor add her on social media, "He was like super, super active on Facebook and wanted to add me right away. And I was like, okay . . . that's a little bit weird but at the same time, like I'm not gonna not add him." Although Bee probably would not have added him first, she felt like she could not refuse the connection.

Another example of this strategy, given by Jakie, captures the nuances of explicitly and implicitly communicated norms. Jakie noted that her organization had an explicit policy that supervisors should not add their supervisees on social media, but rather, they had to wait until the supervisees sought those connections (added them) first:

> I feel like it had to have existed, written down somewhere. I don't remember seeing it in a handbook so much as like coworkers were talking about it when I was starting . . . So, it was like, oh, okay, so like that's why, my boss is not following me, I have to follow them first.

Jakie never saw this formal policy written down in any form. Instead, her coworkers explicitly and informally communicated it to her upon entry, which helped her make sense of the fact that her boss had not yet connected with her on social media platforms.

These norms of connection between supervisors/supervisees and coworkers that individuals "feel out" in the organization potentially can be as clear as an explicit policy in Jakie's case, yet sometimes the informal communication does a better job at making those norms clear. Thus, although most newcomers have perceptions of what is comfortable for them in terms of connecting with their supervisors and coworkers, this act of feeling out helped them better understand what is comfortable and typical for others in their organization. Through these participant experiences, it is clear that it is not just organizations who hold boundaries around social media connections for their members, but also the members who craft their own individual boundaries and communicate them socially.

Crafting Content Boundaries

One third of participants (*n* = 9) utilized boundaries around their social media content to keep it "non-controversial," "professional," or limited to specific topics. Within the anticipatory/entry phase, participants communicate that keeping their content "safe" or acceptable for current and potential coworkers and supervisors, is useful for maintaining a professional persona online. Some participants communicated that they automatically assume that members of their workplace would see their content as they crafted and posted materials on their social media pages, regardless of whether they were active connections on those pages. Bonnie stated, "Sometimes I think about it like, if my boss saw this, would I be okay with that? I'm usually not one to post anything too controversial or like anything revealing or anything like that." She explained later that she keeps all her social media pages private, only allowing those who initiate requests to befriend her to see her content. However, despite this structural boundary, she still carefully crafted her content with the assumption that her boss or other potential professional references might see it. Similarly, Jakie stated, "when it comes to work . . . I never post anything sensitive enough that I need to censor that necessarily." Instead, she ensures her content is not sensitive and does not require censorship, once more keeping it workplace-safe content as others do.

Other participants conceptualize this boundary around content creation as an act of keeping it professional. Keeping it professional is also framed as a tactic that segments one's personal life and work life in their social media content, yet another way to keep it non-controversial. Phil shared, "I love, you know, keeping my private life private. If we are coworkers . . . you know you can be friends with me. But you know I just like, you know, to keep it . . . you know, professional." Phil expressed that the blending of the personal and private

realms would thus be unprofessional. Therefore, keeping Phil's social media content professional means keeping the two realms of his life segmented.

Of course, what is deemed personal information that is too personal to be "professional" varies between individuals. Steff attempted to capture content that would be too personal: "Certain topics like maybe family issues or something affecting me . . . Personally, I would say like I would just not post it." Selena considered what "non-controversial" content means for her:

> Yeah, so I mean for my social media I don't think I post anything that's like controversial. Like I don't post anything that's like explicit or bad language, anything super political or anything like religious. I don't know. Like my Facebook and my social media are like pretty much, 'hey, like this is what I went on vacation', you know. Or 'here's the kind of stuff I did' or 'oh, we like I don't know. Here's a picture of my dog,' so I don't know. It's nothing super like I don't know, controversial or anything.

However, in contrast, Greg claimed that he is "open to always sharing my faith on any type of platform" as he discussed his thought process behind making social media posts with religious topics. Yet, Greg said that he performed similar content boundary work on his social media pages as he says, "most of the stuff that I post is either sports related or it's just some family stuff . . . I don't share anything that I would be, that I could potentially regret in the future." Greg felt religious topics are in the realm of safe content, but others like Selena viewed religion to be a controversial topic that should be kept off social media.

While the previous strategies tended to take place in the entry phase of assimilation, this strategy is unique to simultaneous phase of assimilation, in which there is a balance of both entry and exit. As participants are on the job market, still in their last workplace but also seeking new job opportunities, they utilized this tactic of engaging in non-controversial content to help them in their job hunt. Cassandra explained that while she was job hunting, "I just became like hyper . . . I think, aware of . . . once I knew that I was planning on leaving and seeking out, actively

seeking out other job opportunities I just became hyper aware of what I was posting online."

Here, Cassandra is consciously aware of her content during her job hunt.

Natalie expanded this idea: "So within that [job transition] window, then I would say the only things that I've posted would be like super non-controversial things." In this instance, Natalie expressed that during her job hunt, she kept her content "non-controversial" as she explained that one of the few posts she made within her job hunt and transition was a photo of her family celebrating a snowy Christmas, deeming it "non-controversial." It is evident that while two individuals can greatly vary on what they consider to be controversial, they still performed this type of boundary work as they crafted their social media content. Both are increasingly aware of their social media content given the multiple audiences they know that may view it during their job transitions.

It is clear that participants like Cassandra and Natalie considered both current and potential audiences (or in other words, current and potential workplaces) when they crafted their online content, which marks this as a strategy used during the simultaneous phase. Mari explained this as well:

> Last year I finally gave in and thought okay, I need to make myself visible [on social media] because I need people to know that I am in the job market, that I need to transition to a new role.

Although Mari made her content more accessible to multiple audiences, she still participated in the act of controlling content boundaries, by opening her boundaries further, and marked it as specific to her transitional/simultaneous phase.

Tightening Boundaries in a Role Transition

A fourth of participants ($n = 6$) noted their choice to tighten boundaries of social media connections as they moved roles in a current or a new organization and took on supervisory

responsibilities. This specific strategy is marked by a unique moment within the assimilation process, the role transition. A few employees noted that either within their previous or current workplace or as they transitioned from one workplace to another, they also changed roles, going from a non-supervisory role to a supervisory role. Within this role transition, participants plainly communicated that they tightened their boundaries of social media connection as they took on new supervisory responsibilities. Interestingly, these boundaries were most often rewritten during a workplace transition, where the participant exited the old organization and joined a new one. Therefore, these boundaries were most often negotiated upon entry into their new organizations.

Malfoy has a unique experience of transitioning departments within one organization, and in doing so, gaining a supervisory role. Malfoy previously supervised students in a higher-education staff role, and as he changed departments, he began supervising professional staff members rather than students. In his previous role, he invited all his student-supervisees to add him on his social media pages. However, moving into his new role, he enacted different boundaries. He shared:

> So, when I was transitioning into the role, I tried to grab coffee, with all five of [my new professional-staff supervisees]. … And one thing I did tell all my supervisees is that I don't friend people on social media, especially people I supervise, and I made that a really clear boundary, just because . . . I do like to get to know my supervisees, and I care about them . . . [but] I still want to maintain a boundary. Like yeah but this is my own life, like I want my life to be separate.

As he assimilated into this new role, he adjusted previous social media boundaries and consciously chose to avoid connections with supervisees. His organization was large enough that simply moving departments in his role transition felt like breaking membership from one organization to another and presented that opportunity for him to change his social media

boundaries. Given this opportunity, he wanted to separate his personal and professional lives more than he previously did.

Cassandra had a similar experience as she moved into a supervisory role within her last organization, thus experiencing only a role transition and not a transition of workplaces or departments. She claimed:

> And as I went, as I moved up in my title [in the organization]. ... I was also friending folks and accepting friend requests from people on social media. But I was a little bit more reserved with that because I was now working with folks who were in different age groups and who I didn't know from anywhere other than work and I . . . yeah. and that's kind of how I started. But . . . I calculated it differently throughout my time there.

Cassanda previously said that her connections with her peers in the workplace felt natural given that they were in similar age groups and had similar life experiences. However, as she gained a new role within her last workplace, moving her up in the organizational hierarchy, her organizational peers became people from disparate ages and life experiences. As such, she felt it necessary to "calculate" her boundaries in a more "reserved" fashion, once more marking the influence of age on boundary management strategies. Importantly, she did not claim to break those connections upon moving up in the organization, but rather she held tighter boundaries when considering new connections.

In summary, when people undergo role transitions in the workplace, they tend to adjust their boundaries of connection and tighten their boundary permeability. It is the moment of transitioning into new workplaces that presents the unique opportunity to change boundaries. Perhaps boundaries are more difficult to tighten when one transitions roles within the same organization given that boundaries might already be established. As a result, moving roles within one organization, to a different department, or to a new organization altogether presents the

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moment in which one can choose to tighten their boundaries, which marks this strategy as specific to the entry phase.

Controlling Transition Related Content

During workplace transitions, it is important for individuals to be able to exercise control over the information of their transition, including the who/how/when of the "social media official" post that announces the job transition to online communities. Controlling transition related content was a strategy used by one-third of participants ($n = 8$) and was most often enacted within the simultaneous entry and exit phases of assimilation, where participants balance relationships with their old and new workplaces while also breaking ties with their old workplaces. Participants illustrated that when they gained membership with a new organization (in other words, get a new job), they were excited to disclose the news with others but did not want to hurt their previous organization and its members in doing so.

There are a few dynamics considered when it came to holding and sharing job transition information, like where and how the information got distributed first. Some participants said that they wanted to personally disclose that information with their old coworkers through face-to-face conversations before the information was revealed in their online spaces. Bonnie wanted to make sure everyone in her organization knew of her exit before it was announced on social media:

> I think I waited until after I had told my boss and like told my coworkers that 'hey, I got a new job like my last day will be this day,' before I posted anything . . . But I definitely waited until everyone that needed to know at my organization knew before I let that go out.

In contrast, other participants preferred for social media to "break the news" to their old coworkers for them. Mari made "an official announcement" on Facebook because "I didn't necessarily want to be the person to kind of break the news, but social media kind of did that for me."

Other participants did not want news of their transition posted online in any form,

specifically to save those coworkers they left from the hurt of seeing the post. Bee shared:

> But I didn't really announce that I had a new job even on LinkedIn like when I made… I put . . . I updated it on LinkedIn, but it said, 'Oh, do you want to share this on your feed' and I was like 'No.' So I don't know. I think that that's partially because I knew how hard it was for me like leaving the last place, and I kind of didn't want to just like rub it in which I don't know. I guess truly like it's because like I really did care about the people I was working with there, and I knew their lives are going to be made a little bit harder by me leaving and because I know the process. Like I had gone through that process with losing other coworkers, and all of that, and that was just like is very difficult. So, I want to . . . I just remembered that.

In this instance, Bee hoped to keep that information private to save her previous coworkers from

the hurt and frustration that she experienced when her previous coworkers left their jobs.

In contrast, Katie disclosed the information of her job transition, yet still expressed

concern for her previous coworkers in doing so. As Katie reflected on her job announcement

post, she said:

> So, it was hard not to be overly demonstrative about [my excitement] because I also knew that, like my current co-workers, might see [my announcement post] and be like dang, it sounds like she really hates us, which is not the case. Like I had beef with the leadership of my unit but not my actual like peers. My peer coworkers are lovely, and so I didn't want them to read into that. That's truly not why I left. I also want to maintain strong relationships with them, both social and professional like . . . I consider them part of like my professional network, like I want to maintain that. So, I didn't want to hurt their feelings by a post.

While Katie wanted to share her excitement for her new job, she feared that she might hurt

previous coworkers in doing so.

Natalie exemplified yet another strategy of sharing the job announcement as she reflected

upon her own job announcement post. She stated:

> So, this was definitely a post that was to show like I'm really happy at this job, both to my coworkers, like I was excited to like tag them and share them, because . . . like look, I have new friends. But then also to show the rest of the world like this was kind of like the only post I'd made saying that I've gotten a new job and to be like, 'hey I'm happy now,' because everybody who knew me knew I was miserable.

As Natalie crafted her job transition announcement post, she did so while tagging her coworkers, hoping to share the excitement with them. Similarly, Bonnie noted that her coworkers interacted with her job transition announcement post, saying, "My previous co-workers interacted with my posting about my new job, and they were like 'we're sad as you go. But we're excited for you,' that kind of thing. And that's like really nice to hear." For Bonnie, having her previous coworkers express that excitement for her new job felt positive.

Despite these varying strategies, the underlying precedent here is that these individuals wanted to hold control over the privacy of their job announcement and sought to craft their announcement (or lack thereof) in a way that suited their personal needs and desires. Bee did not want to share the news because she thought it might be hard for previous workers to see. Other participants posted because they wanted their previous coworkers to be excited for them. Further, some participants were eager to disclose the news with their previous coworkers via social media so they could take part in the excitement.

However, when one's control over the private information of their transition was taken away, it was perceived as a violation. To illustrate this, Natalie's story is expanded as an example. The violation Natalie experienced was during the process of her exiting the previous organization. When she got her new position, she revealed the news of her exit with the president (her supervisor) of the school for which she previously worked. The supervisor told her not to tell anyone about her leaving until he got back from his vacation. However, he took it upon himself to tell people in the organization and also have the school's Facebook page post an announcement that they were looking to fill the newly vacant admissions counselor role. Natalie shared:

It was super shady whenever he was telling me like not to tell people until he got back, and then he went around and told people, and then the school posted it on social media that they were looking for a new admission counselor before I even had a chance to tell teachers, students, families. So yeah, my phone was blowing up. I was in a meeting, and I came out to like 29 missed text messages, and it was like what the heck is going on. So, I thought that made me look really bad because it looked like I was hiding something. when I was deliberately told not to [share the news]. … I felt that it made me look really bad because I wanted to be able to tell people and still support the school. I didn't want it to make the school look bad that their admission counselor was jumping ship during their busiest time, so I was trying . . . I was thinking . . . you know, we needed to post a very positive message to the families, to the community, about that transition . . . So, I didn't want to post on my personal account that I was leaving, because I didn't want to make the school look bad, but I think they did it on their own, but you know, whatever.

To her, it was important to her to protect the school's image as she announced her exit. She wanted to control this information and divulge it in a delicately crafted way that felt positive. However, her supervisor took that information of her exit and communicated it with others and with the general community related to the organization in a way that voided her over any control of the way it was disclosed. Although Natalie experienced such an intimate violation of her privacy boundaries, she claimed that she did not choose to adjust her boundaries of social media connection as she joined her new organization. Natalie's reaction, as will be shown in the following strategies, is unique because violations of this nature tended to cause others to redraw their boundaries, or at least enter into their new organization with the goal of doing so.

Rewriting Boundaries Upon Exit

Another strategy that arose from the data shows that people tend to rewrite their boundaries of social media connection in a variety of ways when they leave their workplaces. Some participants chose to limit others' visibility upon exit, some people chose to avoid connections or invite connections upon exit, and still others expressed that they utilized more segmentation and ended connections upon exit. Just under one third of participants ($n = 7$) utilized this strategy. Significantly, when people communicated that they rewrote their

boundaries to seek more segmentation, or separation, upon exit, they marked that this act of re-

writing was related to them advancing in age and maturity.

Some participants communicated that they did not want to lose connections with previous

coworkers. They wanted to maintain their integrated professional and personal identities in their

online communities. Selena explained that as she left her previous workplace, she debated on

rewriting her social media connections with previous coworkers but that the decision was

difficult. She shared, "It was weird, and I don't wanna like cut off people that I used to work

with, especially if I was friends with them, or even if I wasn't close with them." Steff held an

opposing view, given that she unfriended her previous coworkers. She said, "Yeah, I just don't

know that we are general friends anymore." Katie felt similarly:

> I've unfollowed a couple of people more based . . . There's no way to say this without
> sounding so mean. But like once, we weren't working together I found their stuff very
> boring. So, like, for example, one of my co-workers. … like she and I were roughly the
> same age. Roughly the same like life stage. And so, we got married the same year, and
> then she had her first baby about a year after, and it felt like we had a lot in common as
> work friends. But I don't know that we would have been friends after we didn't work
> together anymore. And so and she posted like all the time. So, her posts were just
> constantly coming up on my feed, and it was kind of like, I didn't ever meet her daughter
> . . . her dogs were like not necessarily, like what I want to see . . . again I feel very mean
> saying that. But it was just like, oh, like now, I'm not having conversations with you
> about this all the time, like you're not in my orbit anymore I'm just gonna mute you. So, I
> muted the posts, but did not unfollow, because I still wanna say connected to her like, it's
> nice to be able to see kind of the big highlight updates, but I don't need to see like every
> single thing that you post anymore.

I attempted to capture this further with Katie by restating her ideas back to her during the

interview. I said, "it's almost like if you're not socially using the information in any way… it

doesn't really interest you" to which Katie responded:

> It gave us a lot to talk about when we were co-workers, and I think that's an important
> part of like building solid working relationships with people that actually allows you to
> get work done is being like 'Oh my, how was that birthday party that you went to over
> the weekend?' like that's just part of like being a pleasant co-worker for me. But it's like,
> 'oh, I actually don't care' once we have literally nothing to talk about with them anymore.

Ultimately, connecting with workers was a socially advantageous act for Katie, and once that online information was not being used to supplement in-person interactions, it did not feel necessary to keep the connections as open as they once were. Katie used the muting function of the platform she was referring to, rather than defriending the previous coworker. In doing so, she kept the coworker as a connection, but limited their visibility. Here, Katie chose to partake in the invisible (one in which the connection would not know took place as compared to defriending her) act of muting because her friend shared too much, which may have been perceived as a violation of norms (Rashidi et al., 2020). It is also possible that Katie considered this friend to be a weak tie, someone who one might know a bit but is not considered a close friend (Haythornthwaite, 2005), making it easier to evoke a further boundary with her on social media through the muting function.

Other participants noted that they only sought connections with others in the organization upon their exit, or in other words they only wanted to seek connections when it no longer meant that doing so would integrate their professional and personal lives. Mari shared, "I personally avoided connecting with my immediate supervisors until I was getting close to leaving the organization." Stevie said that her coworkers and supervisors held that boundary with her. She stated, "and then it was like all of a sudden, like we were like following each other, on Instagram, and like on Facebook and stuff and connecting that way." As Stevie left the organization, suddenly everyone sought to connect with her on social media and she expressed that as feeling strange, specifically that it "stood out" to her. However, regardless of whether one ends or begins connections with their previous coworkers, people clearly mark that they rewrote their boundaries upon exit.

Another way participants rewrote their boundaries when exiting the organization is through tightening their boundaries, seeking more segmentation between their work life and private life. Participants tended to mark this change as being age related; that they held more loose boundaries when they were younger and now as they get older, they aim to have tighter boundaries. Mari expressed:

> During my twenties I be-friended everyone and anyone. So, I would send friend requests to anybody that I knew or that I've met or that I felt like oh we're friends. And then whenever anybody sent me requests on social media I would go ahead and approve I just had a wide array of friendships on social media. But over the years and entering my 30s and now my mid-thirties, I'm recognizing that there's . . . I just hate that I have to filter what I say or what I post . . . So, when I was moving and transitioning into a new job I kind of told myself I want to be careful about requesting friendships or sending friend requests to new people. Just because we're coworkers doesn't mean that we have to be friends on social media. And I want to have some separation between my personal life and my professional life.

Here, Mari marked that her boundaries remained looser in her twenties and now, in her mid-thirties, she aimed to be more careful about how many connections she allowed as she considered developing connections with her new coworkers.

> Katie felt similarly:
>
> I find that in the last few years, as I've gotten older and I'm not old, but like . . . I feel like in college I would be like very overthinking about everything that I put on social media was on Facebook [and] at that point it was a lot bigger, Facebook was like, much more popular at that point, or like Snapchat like . . . I feel like when that was the phase of life I was a lot more intentional, I'll say, or overthinking is probably how I describe it versus now. I think I'm pretty boring on social media in like a positive way, like I post mostly pictures of my dog, or like memes, about you know lately it's been like pumpkin spice season for the millennials out there you know, things like that.

In this instance, Katie noted that she felt very aware of her content in her younger years, but that recently she felt more confident in her boundaries with age. Despite its variety of outcomes, individuals reconsidered the connections they held, or chose not to hold when they left their workplaces.

Katie and Mari claimed that they noticed a change in their boundary management practices as they aged, which upholds previous research on privacy management practices changing with age. Petronio (2002) described the phenomenon of age-related privacy needs, explaining that during the adolescent stage, boundaries expand to accommodate the increasing privacy needs that one develops and as individuals enter adulthood, their boundaries must increase so they are able to control more private information about themselves and others. As privacy boundaries shift throughout the lifespan, tightening with age, people may restrict disclosure in their online spaces as well, as is evident in these two participant experiences (DeGroot & Vik, 2017).

What is unique about this strategy is that although it is related to the act crafting boundaries around age, participants did not choose to change their boundaries of connection as they aged in a single organization. No participants mentioned deciding to change already-made connections with coworkers during their organizational membership as a result of their need to tighten boundaries with age. It is the act of transitioning workplaces that allowed them the opportunity to rewrite their boundaries, prompting them to tighten their boundaries and marking it as an age-related change. Thus, the workplace transition acts as a new beginning for recrafting boundaries of connection.

Redrawing Boundaries Upon Violation

Finally, three out of four participants that experienced boundary violations (an instance in which one's control over their private information is taken away through someone else sharing that private information) marked that they rewrote their boundaries shortly after the violation. In addition, those participants shared that the violations themselves either contributed to their reasons for leaving the organization or happened during the exiting process. Although only three

out of four participants noted enacting this type of strategy, following Owen's (1984) principles

for theme development, the recurrence of the notion that violations were not only made by the

supervisor but also perceived strongly enough to prompt one to redraw their boundaries was

imperative to parse out as its own strategy of boundary management. Essentially, when

participants perceived there to be a violation of some form, it usually contributed to their list of

reasons for leaving the organization and prompted them to redraw their boundaries immediately

after the violation, as well as prompted them to take the newly written boundaries into the new

workplace. Thus, this strategy is marked by both exit and entry phases of assimilation. Because

the nature of violations is so detailed and delicate, all three participants who experienced a

violation individually and marked how the perceived violation prompted the act of rewriting

boundaries are presented.

Cassandra

During her time in her previous organization, Cassandra noted that she connected with

both coworkers and supervisors on a variety of social media platforms. While she was working

for this previous workplace, she experienced an exciting new life phase outside of the workplace;

she got engaged. She shared:

> And I was being very careful about who I was sharing this information with, and I took
> time to call my closest loved ones both, me and my fiancé, and we called our family
> members and our loved ones and then waited a while before we put it on social media.
> And when we did put it on social media, my supervisor had seen it. We were on (an
> organizational, seasonal break) at that time. and when I had returned, I was . . . I found
> out from a phone call from my big boss. So, the CEO of the organization has called me to
> congratulate me about my engagement, and I was caught off guard because I did not
> know that she knew, because I did not have her on social media. So, I knew she would
> have seen it on social media, and I had then found out that my supervisor had seen it on
> social media, and had announced my engagement to the entire office . . . I was excited to
> share and she shared it herself and then, folks who I didn't have a close relationship with
> and I had not had a social media connection with we're now informed about this. So she
> had taken what she knew from our social media relationship and shared it in the

professional place that we shared with people that I don't have relationships with on social media.

She noted that "the relationship changed in a way that I felt like I needed more privacy" as a result of this violation. To get more privacy, Cassandra utilized the functions of the platform. "I did end up . . . I didn't unfriend them or remove them from my following, but I did block them from seeing my stories." Later, as she described why her frequency of posting on Instagram changed, she stated:

> I think it was definitely because I was still hurt, and felt like my privacy had kind of been compromised from that experience, and so I definitely was more reserved with always sharing, I think, very directly on my feed.

This experience showcases how a boundary violation might prompt an individual to change their online behaviors.

As Cassandra entered into her new organization, she claimed that she "was trying to take lessons from my previous employment and like wait to dive in with those social media connections" marking that she was attempting to redraw her boundaries within this job transition. However, she expanded:

> During I think my second week or third week on the job I was in a department meeting…all of our organizers and first team members were there and one of the icebreaker questions was to like 'share your social media handle in the chat.' And so, I was like was very caught off guard by that. But I also wanted to like fit in and I didn't want to come across as being secretive or not having a social media . . . But it was an icebreaker, so I put mine in, and other people put theirs in, and sometimes people found me, and I ended up adding people earlier than I had thought I would have in this new position on social media.

As a result, she was attempting to adjust boundaries for her membership within this new organization. Yet, those boundaries failed upon entry when her workplace publicly invited its members to share social media handles with one another in a virtual meeting chat, resulting in a sudden and unexpected social pressure to open those boundaries of connection. Here, Cassandra

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attempted to reclaim ownership over her privacy by tightening her social media connection

boundaries but experienced a privacy ownership violation, which occurs when someone's ability

to exercise ownership and control over their rules for regulating their private information is taken

away (Petronio & Reierson, 2009).

Bee

Bee noted that when she entered into her previous organization, she kept her social media

connections open with both coworkers and supervisors. She said that during her time in her last

organization, her supervisor violated her boundaries on social media when he sparked a heated

conversation during working hours about a social media post she had made. She shared:

> So, I remember he would like I don't know he just wanted to kind of push my buttons a little bit. He knew, I think, that our politics were pretty different from one another as well. And so, he had seen something that I posted on Facebook about . . . it was something about removing like Confederate statues and he brought it up, and he was like, 'you know that's not gonna fix anything right? Like it's not gonna do anything.' And I was like . . . I handled it as professionally as I could in that moment. but I just definitely . . . like that was within the first week or two I had been there, and I was just like that was very unprofessional of him to try and like I don't know bring that up or and so I don't know because it was very like condescending the way that he said it to like that I wasn't educated about the subject at all or I don't know . . . So that like, bring something up from social media. but then to bring it up in a way where he was like kind of attacking my views was like wildly unprofessional.

Here, Bee noted that her boss bringing up her Facebook post, and attempting to combat her

views on the post, within the workplace was a violation of her boundaries. Later, she revealed

how this led her to change those boundaries. She stated:

> But yeah, it was definitely frustrating to know that he was like taking it in all the information that I was posting, and potentially going to use that against me like I just didn't see. So, then I yeah, I didn't post as much after that. Because I was like, 'Okay, I don't wanna give him any more kindling for starting another full discourse at work.' So yeah, I think that . . . that shifted definitely after that.

In this instance, Bee perceived a violation from her supervisor and thus changed her posting

habits as a result, rather than utilizing functions to hide what she was posting, she dwindled the

act of posting itself.

Carter

Carter felt that their boss following them on all of their social media platforms and

interacting with old content was an intimate violation. In their previous workplace, they noted

that they were good friends with their supervisor. They were on summer sports teams together

and they got close through their interests outside of the workplace. They noted:

> So, we got really close through that, and he was like kind of just more like a friend. But
> he followed me on Instagram and TikTok, and he added me on Snapchat. But I blocked
> him from seeing all my stories so [he] couldn't see that. But he just knew that we were
> friends, but he could still see my Instagram posts, or any TikToks that I made, which I
> hated.

I then asked why they blocked him from seeing their stories. They replied, "One, he just doesn't

need to see everything I'm doing outside of the workplace. Like not that I'm doing anything crazy

I just would be not happy if he knew every part of my life a little bit." To which, other

participants would likely agree that they enjoy that work/life segmentation. However, Carter felt

that this supervisor took it too far. As they explained their reasons for blocking him, they stated:

> I could sense there was a something else, maybe underlying, between that . . . and I just
> didn't wanna like post a selfie, or like anything like that that could be misinterpreted, and
> not just didn't want him to see because he ended up making some comments on some of
> my posts . . . Not that he was like upset with me by posting them, but that he like enjoyed
> them maybe a little too much.

Carter's story grows increasingly unique towards the end of the interview. I asked if anyone in

their previous workplace had ever violated their privacy or information boundaries, to which

they took a long pause before responding and then shared:

> That's a hard question. Yes, and no because I mean I am posting this content for people to
> see. So, I know it's out there and you can do your stalking and do all your stuff. But it's

also like I mean I know you're my employer and you want to know who you're dealing with but at the same time, if you're a creepy guy, and you're going through like my VSCO or something like that and like scrolling months and months down making comments about specific posts. Then that's like a little like off-putting, but at the same time like I said, I know I put it out there . . . so . . .

Here, Carter had difficulty labeling this instance with their supervisor as a violation given that they, indeed, chose to broadcast their content to the public space of the internet. However, what they instead observed as a violation was the specific act of going back through old content and also making comments on that old content. In other words, the act of scrolling back over old content itself is not the violation, but commenting on old content is "off-putting," something which other participants mentioned as well as they explained that new workers do not go back and interact with their old content once they enter into social media connections.

Consequently, Carter marked this violation with a supervisor as a reason, if not, the main reason, for exiting the organization. When asked why they left the organization they said, "It was getting a little uncomfortable, even though like I love him. But it's also just like come on we gotta have some boundaries like you can't be acting like that." In this instance, not only did the violation prompt exit, but also another violation occurred during their job seeking. They shared:

I updated my LinkedIn a lot towards the end before I left, and he did start noticing that and called me out on it, which was kind of awkward and I just had to say like 'Oh, I'm just trying to stay up to date for like references and stuff like that.' But like clearly, I was looking for another job which kind of sucks about LinkedIn, unless you're constantly always on and always updating it throughout your professional career, which I wasn't doing the whole time. So, towards the end, I think he started to realize that I was doing that because I wasn't happy. So that's like . . . It got me because I should have just been constantly updating. But also, at the same time like don't be snooping that hard.

Once more, their supervisor "calling them out" on them updating their own content was perceived to be a violation.

Even in the face of each of these violations with their past workplace, Carter did not choose to adjust their boundaries upon entry into their new organization. They expressed that

they connected with their new coworkers on almost every platform. In fact, Carter did not change their boundaries with the previous supervisor who violated these boundaries. The boundaries stayed the same, but they chose to leave the organization. Thus, rather than rewriting their boundaries of social media connections, they chose to leave the organization with members who were violating those boundaries, rewriting their boundaries of organizational membership. Even though each individual's marked violation was of unique and delicate nature, they each felt the need to redraw their boundaries in some way and it was the moment of exit that presented the opportunity to do so.

In conclusion, individuals may enact one or multiple of these eight boundary management strategies as they undergo workplace transitions. Some strategies are utilized more in specific stages of a transition, such as entrance into an organization, and others are utilized more fluidly. The next section considers these findings in light of the previous literature on social media boundary management in the workplace, offers limitations of this study, practical implications, and future directions for research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The goal for this dissertation project was to examine how individuals negotiate and strategically enact boundaries on social media during workplace transitions. It is important to understand the phenomenon of simultaneous organizational entry and exit and how workplace transitions and social media might influence each other given their distinctive implications for organizational membership and employee boundary management behaviors. Through analyzing 25 participant interviews using the phronetic iterative approach (Tracy, 2018), eight strategies that participants utilized within their workplace transitions were identified, including (a) *connecting with peers close in age* (b) *drawing platform-specific audience and content boundaries*, (c) *"feeling out" boundary norms*, (d) *crafting content boundaries*, (e) *tightening boundaries in a role transition*, (f) *controlling transition related content,* (g) *rewriting boundaries upon exit*, and (h) *redrawing boundaries upon violation*. Overall, these results reveal the unique dynamics of boundary management around social media connections between employees and their coworkers and supervisors. The following sections explore the theoretical contributions of the results, practical implications for employees and supervisors, the limitations of the current study, and directions for future research.

Theoretical Contributions

This dissertation has several significant contributions to previous theory. First, findings contribute to communication privacy management (CPM) (Petronio, 2002) by providing an understanding into how organizational culture influences boundary management practices as its own separate boundary management criteria and provides insights into the general privacy rule-making decisions individuals make during workplace entry and exit. Second, the findings make

it clear that privacy management in the workplace context and at the moment of a workplace transition can influence the way individuals perform their identity on social media. Third, the findings show that while renegotiation is found to occur upon violation, in terms of a workplace transition, it is the moment of exit that provides the opportunity for general boundary renegotiation and the act of a violation has significant implications for employee membership. Fourth, the findings provide evidence that boundary management is difficult to delineate within stages of assimilation and that this may be due to the nature of the model of organizational assimilation. Finally, the findings in this dissertation help better explain the delicate nature of the supervisor/supervisee relationship and how boundary violations between the two can have serious consequences for employee retainment.

The Organization's Culture and Context's Influence on Boundary Management

To begin, the findings of this study expand previous research on boundary management. Ashforth et al. (2000) describe the boundaries individuals make as "mental fences" that are established as people choose to segment their work vs. private lives. Their illustration can be applied to the experiences of participants in this project to further capture the nuances of boundary management described in their interviews. Within this project, as participants illustrated the boundaries they enacted when considering connections with coworkers and supervisors, the participants themselves can be compared to the guards that stand at these mental fences, each with their own individual perceptions of the requirements that need to be met in order to cross the boundary or fence. Petronio (2002) explains how CPM theory helps clarify how individuals navigate drawing boundaries, claiming that individuals' base boundaries on a criteria of rules based upon culture, gender, motivations, context, and a risk-benefit ratio.

The present study's findings make it clear that it is the organizational culture and the context of the organization that influences people's boundary management practices. Petronio (2002) conceptualized cultural boundary management in particular to geographical cultures (e.g., United States culture being more moderate in its privacy boundaries compared to Germany or Britain). Later, the culture and context of the organization was considered as a factor of boundary management practices (Child & Petronio, 2011). This study's findings identified that it may be both the organization's culture, considered separately from the previously identified culture criteria, and the context of the workplace in tandem that influence boundary management through the participants' discourses about "feeling out" organizational norms.

The organizational culture, itself, serves as its own criterion for developing privacy management practices. The culture of the workplace can either encourage or discourage the act of sharing private information (Smith & Brunner, 2017) and further, impact the occurrence of informal conversations (Fayard & Weeks, 2007), like ones that might occur through online connections. Organizational privacy culture and privacy management practices impact decisions to friend or not friend colleagues on Facebook, and it is not just the organization's privacy culture that influences decisions, but a combination of the organization's culture and the individual's own system of privacy rules (Frampton & Child, 2013). Therefore, the consideration of organizational culture adds to Petronio's (2002) previously identified boundary criteria.

In addition, the consideration of the organizational culture and the workplace context within social media connection was still left unexamined. Privacy and technology have been considered in combination in the past (Metzger, 2007). It has been assumed that personal disclosures in online spaces are rapidly increasing due to an increased use of communication technologies, such as social media (Wolak, Mitchell, Finkelhor, 2006). CPM assumes that the act

of revealing private information influences a person's sense of security and well-being (Petronio, 2002). This study puts social media's influence within the context of the workplace by affirming previous findings that organizational culture and the context of the organization impact individual privacy management practices on social media platforms (Smith & Brunner, 2017; Watkins Allen et al., 2007).

The current study's findings also expand the understanding of how these organizational cultural privacy practices are communicated within workplaces through social cues and conversations. Even within Jakie's experience, where her workplace had a rule of supervisors not adding supervisees on social media, the privacy management rule was still informally (through conversation) and explicitly (clearly stated) communicated by coworkers. If it were not, Jakie would have been missing out on an important piece of social and digital connection information. Indeed, organizational members rely on the communicative acts from others to determine what is culturally appropriate for connecting with coworkers on social media (when to connect, on what platforms, who friends first, etc.). These rules are based on a combination of the organization's set system of privacy rules.

People also hold their own individual rules for privacy, which may be in tension with the organization's. In Cassandra's experience, it was clear that she aimed to take rewritten privacy rules into her new workplace. However, her organization's culture conflicted with Cassandra's rules. Cassandra was asked to share her Instagram handle in the chat during a virtual meeting, very early on in her assimilation experience. She obliged, which led her to share her private information and open her boundaries before she was ready to do so. The culture of the workplace, and how it was communicated, took away her autonomy to establish her own boundaries. Bonnie experienced a similar tension in which she claimed that she did not wish to

add coworkers on Facebook, yet the culture of her organization made it difficult to keep that boundary in place. She stated:

> It was definitely an informal like 'Everyone's friends on Facebook! Like what are you talking about, you don't add people on Facebook?' like that was just the office culture. So, I did end up adding people just because I was like, Oh, if everyone is added on Facebook, then sure.

Once more, an individual felt influenced by the organizational culture they entered into.

This tension between personal and organizational boundaries is expected by CPM theory (Petronio, 2002). Employees feel increasingly vulnerable when they reveal private information in their organization (Watkins Allen et al., 2007). Those employed in an organization with an open boundary culture will allow coworkers to connect on Facebook more frequently than individuals who work in organizations with a closed boundary culture (Frampton & Child, 2013). In terms of employee surveillance, an employee typically does not complain or question a company's norm for fear of losing their job (Watkins Allen et al., 2007). Although surveillance is different compared to an informal social media connection with a coworker, the incoming employee is at a disadvantage to express their own autonomy and establish closed boundaries in an open boundary organizational culture, and vice versa. How individuals respond to the confliction between individual and organizational boundaries has yet to be studied (Frampton & Child, 2013). Cassandra claimed that she added people "earlier than I thought I would have in this new organization" but she did not cite that as a negative experience. However, it was still a point of tension as the organization's request to share her social media handle challenged the boundaries she wished to establish.

Moreover, the implications organizational culture and context have on individual boundaries is well known (Lindbo & Shultz, 1998; Smith & Brunner, 2017; Watkins Allen et al., 2007). However, this study's findings make it clear that these boundaries are sought, refined, and

established upon entry into the workplace and in some cases, the incoming employee is taking their previous organizational experience and organization's culture into account as they transition into a new organization. Indeed, incoming employees desire to know more about their workplaces upon entry and may seek this information through watching and listening to their colleagues (Chao et al., 1994; Miller & Jablin, 1991). "Feeling out" organizational norms is not a new concept in assimilation research, but this dissertation applies it to the context of social media norms. This study makes it clear that during a workplace transition, an employee is considering their past organizational experiences, such as violations, as they establish boundaries in their new organization.

CPM theory does not make distinctions between current and previously established catalyst criteria. Yet, it is known that previous catalyst criteria continue to influence individual's privacy rules over time (McBride et al., 2020). McBride et al. (2020) argue that catalyst criteria are also additive and call for more research that identifies how previous and current criteria may interact. While this study does not attest to the additive nature of criteria directly, it is possible to deduce from participant experiences that an individual may consider the organizational culture and context of the previous organization they were part of as they re-shape their boundaries upon entrance into a new organization, or at least their experiences in the culture of their previous organization (e.g., in Cassandra's experience where she communicated, "I was trying to take lessons from my previous employment and like wait to dive in with those social media connections").

In addition, this project provides insight into the rules individuals considered in terms of social media privacy management upon entrance into and exit from their workplaces. Upon entrance into workplaces, there were clear social media privacy rules participants held with their

supervisors, supervisees, and peers in the workplace. Although Petronio (2002) previously

identified clear rule-based systems of privacy management, social media rules with these

different hierarchical levels of colleagues in the workplace had not yet been identified as they are

within the findings and mapped out within the Entry Flowchart provided in Appendix H. In

addition, the Exit Flowchart provided in Appendix I clearly identifies the outcomes of rule

turbulence involving the control over transition-related information. Such a rule and rule-

breaking outcome flow had not yet been made clear in privacy management literature, which

therein lies this study's contribution to CPM theory in the context of workplace transitions and

social media boundaries.

Organizational Boundary Management and Identity Performance

The second contribution of this study is that findings support previous research that

identified specific archetypical online boundary management behaviors and puts the act of

privacy management in the workplace into conversation with identity performance literature.

This finding expands previous literature on boundary management behaviors (Ollier-Malaterre et

al., 2013), specifically the strategy of *drawing platform-specific audience and content*

boundaries. Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2013) describe audience boundary management behaviors as

ones in which individuals "set up private profile(s) and ignore or deny connection requests from

certain professional contacts in online social networks deemed as personal" (p. 653). This study

expands the concept of audience boundaries. Not only did individuals perform this boundary

work, but they also perceived their audience boundaries to be influenced by assessments of how

a specific social media platform should be used, whether by societal norms or by the individual's

own desired intentions. In other words, participants based this cultural criteria of connection on a

consideration of what they believe is typical or what others are doing (i.e., what the perceived

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norms for a specific platform are). Lee et al. (2019) found that employees considered Facebook friends more personal, and only added coworkers on Facebook after they became relationally closer to them through working together for long periods of time, which once more makes it clear that boundaries can be platform specific. It can be deduced that those individuals found Facebook a platform where it was appropriate to add close friends and chose to wait until coworkers were deemed close friends before pursuing or allowing that connection. Participants in the current study made it clear that they hold preconceived notions of the norms for specific platforms (e.g., TikTok was for the closest of friends according to Katie), or for what is preferrable for their generation (e.g., Bee believing that individuals of her own generation feel more comfortable connecting with peers on multiple platforms).

It is possible that boundaries are platform-specific due to the unique dynamics of the platforms themselves and how they allow for individuals to perform their identities. Built into social media sites is a logic, or an affordance, that asks individuals to "create plots" or share narratives of ones' identity with others (Georgakopoulou, 2017). In the digital context, people using the same technology may engage in similar or disparate practices given social media platforms' multiple affordances that are shaped by industrial forces, which may account for how participants enact their boundary management strategies. The ways individuals choose to present themselves on social networking sites are shaped by affordances such as persistence, replicability, scalability, and searchability; in other words, an online presentation of the self is difficult to erase completely, easily replicated, available to large known and unknown audiences, and easily searchable (boyd, 2010). As a result, people may choose to strategically utilize specific platforms, carefully craft their performances, and intentionally control their connections so they know who might be seeing their performances for all time, who has the opportunity to

replicate (or share) them, who their audiences are, and who can find their online profile. These unique affordances mapped onto each platform may influence how people perform their identities in those spaces, and thus influence the boundaries they choose to set for what audience may be welcomed there.

Although the scope of this project did not include a direct examination of platform affordances, they still were evident in the boundary management practices of individuals in a workplace transition. For example, Malfoy engaged in the affordance of visibility (how individuals recognize the visible nature of their work behavior afforded by the use of social media and used strategies when presenting themselves to others (Treem & Leonardi, 2013)) when he chose to make his content visible to some audiences and not others by utilizing the "close friends" feature on Instagram. Mari engaged in the affordance of association (which refers to the connections made between "individuals, individuals and content, or between an actor and a presentation" (Treem & Leonardi, 2013, p. 162)) when she utilized the profile name feature of a social media site to present her name differently, ensuring that no work-related individuals might find her on there. Malfoy allows personal and professional audiences to coincide on Instagram, but performs further boundary work, using the features of the platform to engage with the affordance of visibility and perform his identity in a way that suits his need for segmentation. Once more, the features of the platform aid the user's ability to allow multiple audiences within the bounds of one online space.

In addition, the perceptions participants held, and their assumptions of others' perceptions, of what is deemed appropriate use were widely disparate. It is typical that societal norms play a role in guiding acceptable online community behavior (Burnett & Bonnici, 2003). Pham et al. (2019) found that individuals believe others close in age or relationship to themselves

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are using social media in similar ways to them, and that people outside their social circle used social media differently. Even so, there can be a difference between what people perceive to be the norm for social media use among generational cohorts verses the actual differences (Lester et al., 2012). Individuals act as guards at the gate of their mental fences, and they base their boundary permeability on their own assessments (or assumptions about others' assessments) of what the purpose of the platform is, but it can differ greatly from others' actual perceptions. For example, most participants marked LinkedIn as a professional networking site, thus the boundary for that site was be largely permeable for coworkers and supervisors, with Greg citing it as a "not personal social media" in which coworkers are welcome. The gate would be easily opened for those audiences.

Moreover, it is the features of the platform that likely influence the audiences that employees allow to connect and how they choose to perform their identity within. LinkedIn asks users to highlight specific skills and strengths, rather than provide their life story (like Facebook would ask of users) (van Dijck, 2013). However, it was clear that other social media platforms, like Instagram, can have a wide range of perceived purposes and therefore a wide range of set criteria to cross the boundary. Some people marked Instagram as a space for everyone, including professional contacts, and others did not. Thus, it may become difficult for people to understand how and why they get let in one colleague's gate on Instagram and not another's; those two colleagues may hold differing opinions about whether or not Instagram is an online space for coworkers to connect yet assume that the other has the same opinion as them.

Given that there are differing opinions on how people should use these spaces, people are bound to be performing their identities differently as well. The strategies of boundary management that participants enacted affirm Ollier-Malaterre et al.'s (2013) content boundary

management behaviors. Content behaviors include those in which individual might post glamorous or flattering content, noncontroversial content, and/or participate in controlling the pictures and comments that end up on their profiles. The boundary management strategy presented in this study, *crafting content boundaries,* replicates Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2013) findings. Indeed, participants communicated performing content boundary work that was not specific to the perceptions of how a platform should be used.

Participants like Greg and Selena made it evident that what is "noncontroversial" differs from person to person. Topic avoidance refers to the decision to discuss information with one person or group, and not another (Afifi & Guerrero, 1998). Topic avoidance has been closely examined in terms of family (Golish & Caughlin, 2002; Golish, 2000) relationships (Venetis et al., 2014), and friendships (Donovan-Kicken et al., 2013), but has left social media spaces as sites for topic avoidance underexamined. The work of controlling content to avoid "noncontroversial topics" is an act of topic avoidance which can be used in online identity performances as individuals curate their identity for multiple audiences. This might look like choosing to avoid specific "topics" of one's identity in order to cater to the multitude of audiences, which manifests here as avoiding controversial topics.

In the online context, Selena shared that she avoided topics of politics and religion given their controversial nature, yet Greg shared that he specifically enjoyed sharing his religiosity, thus not considering it a topic worthy of avoiding. The topics of politics and religion would be deemed as conflict-inducing taboo topics which are commonly perceived as topics to avoid (Baxter & Wilmot, 1985). Given that the participants in this case would disagree on whether religion is a taboo topic, each person that stands guard at their gates, or mental fences, might

perform their identity within those gates differently than the next person by choosing to engage in or avoid topics in disparate ways.

As people continue to perform identities differently, they may enact hybrid behaviors (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Hybrid behaviors include creating and managing lists of people who can see specific content, which Malfoy described doing in his experience. However not all individuals participate in this kind of boundary work. Katie mentioned that she does not feel the need to control her content on specific platforms because she perceives that the audiences allowed on those platforms should be similar in interest to her, since they have been welcomed into her online circle. Her preference to how she performs her online identity includes less boundary management work. Katie's experience echoes Abril et al. (2012) findings that 21st century employees "expect their work and personal lives to be segregated regardless of their unified and publicly accessible digital identity" (p. 105), and that they are willing to allow others to connect with them online, but they resist being judged by what they share in those online spaces. Therefore, people make the decision whether or not to let people through their social media boundaries, and some perform further boundary work by enacting content and hybrid behaviors. Others, allow people within their gates to see whatever is on those platforms. If they get let in the gate, they get what they get, no further boundary work is performed. Other research situates this act as portraying an identity catered to the "lowest common denominator of content viewers," in terms of identity performance on Facebook (Lankton et al., 2017, p. 152). To further connect the multiple strategies, posting benign (here, non-controversial) information that will not be offensive to the lowest common denominator (widest audience) group is a common strategy on Facebook (Hogan, 2010; Krämer & Haferkamp, 2011) This dissertation finds that such a privacy management strategy can be performed in several social media spaces, not just on

Facebook (given that Malfoy catered to multiple audiences by performing hybrid behaviors on Instagram as well).

These findings might be due to the nature of digital identity performance and how performing an online identity changes the way individuals engage in workplace relationships. Previously, employees could leave their professional identity within the physical walls of the workplace. Now, with the increased use of social media, employees are continuously asked to perform their identities, engaging in an "onlife" that potentially never ends (Floridi, 2014). Rather than leaving the professional identity at work, employees have the opportunity to continuously engage with their colleagues online. This provides a new and interesting aspect to identity performance in the context of workplace transitions. When employees enter and leave their workplaces, they are now considering their potential online engagement with new and old colleagues beyond the bounds of the workplace. Consequently, these findings inform organizational communication scholarship by showing that digital identity performance, in light of workplace identities, is a form of ubiquitous work that can make relationship development with colleagues more complicated.

Renegotiation: The Opportunity Within Exit and Transition

The third contribution of this study is that while renegotiation of boundaries with a violator is found to occur upon violation, in terms of a workplace transition, it is the moment of exit that provides the opportunity for renegotiation of broad social media boundaries with coworkers and supervisors. As previously shared, when employees participate in strategies such as *rewriting boundaries upon exit* and *redrawing boundaries upon violation,* they are taking the experiences of their previous organizations and applying it as they join the new workplace. It is known that individuals revisit, readjust, and renegotiate their privacy rules and expectations after

experiencing boundary violations (Petronio, 2002; Trepte, 2021). However, it is the workplace transition that presents an opportunity for the outgoing employee to feel affirmed in changing their boundary practices, and a chance to broadly do so upon entry into their new workplace. No participant discussed an instance of redrawing broad level boundaries (meaning, not just boundaries with one person but general boundaries of connection) that was not within the workplace transition or specifically due to the nature of the workplace transition. For Carter, blocking a boss on LinkedIn during the job hunt was a rewritten boundary due to the anticipated transition but not yet within the period of exiting the organization. In Cassandra's experience, she aimed to take new boundaries of connection into her new workplace given that she experienced an intimate violation in her last workplace. Both instances indicate that the moment of a transition provides an opportunity for new boundaries to be written.

Therefore, boundary violations have significant implications for workplace membership or employee retention. Online privacy violations on Facebook cause individuals to intentionally change their relationship with the violator due to the lack of trust that developed following the violation (DeGroot & Vik, 2017). Transitions within close relationships are known create the potential for relationships to change, and can result in tumultuous experiences in doing so (Solomon et al., 2010), the workplace transition is likely similar. Although CPM and boundary violations have been applied to online privacy breaches in the past, research has not accounted for its implications for workplace relationships.

This study's current findings put this into the context of the workplace. When a fellow workplace member, whether a coworker or a supervisor, violated privacy boundaries, the person either felt affirmed in their previously made decision to leave the workplace or felt prompted to leave the workplace due to the violation itself. This also upholds what previous research has

found about the process of exiting from organization. Exit, itself, can be a result of "gradual disenchantment" from increased dissatisfaction with a workplace (Kramer, 2010). In this case, violations work to affirm an individual's gradual disenchantment and aid in them choosing to exit the organization (e.g., Carter's supervisor continuously violating her boundaries was cited as the main reason for her decision to leave the organization).

In addition, there are clearly other unique assimilation dynamics during a job transition that influence how privacy is managed during multiple phases, which this study's findings begin to identify. The job transition is a delicate balance of privacy management between two or more parties, the organization(s) and the transitioning employee. When participants transitioned jobs, they clearly desired to maintain control over the information about their transition. However, depending on what phase of assimilation the employee was currently in within their transition, the organization they were previously part of might not yet be an active party in the control of that information. For example, participants expressed that they actively withheld information from their organizations about their desire to seek new employment. Some withheld this information through the act of hiding their LinkedIn pages to keep employers from seeing that they were actively updating it, which was socially perceived as a sign that one was on the job market.

At this point, the employee is within the pre-announcement stage of exit from a new organization, actively seeking information about new organizations through the job search process that is not yet made public (Jablin, 2001) and is managing their private information of their anticipated exit through their own boundaries. Later, the employee makes the decision to share the information about their transition to their workplace which in the case of this project, is assumed to mark the beginning of a simultaneous transition. Typically, participants

communicated that this was only done once things were official with their new job (contracts signed, confirmations made in some way). Here, at least three parties are privy to the information of the transition, the old and new workplace's members who are made are of the transition, and the employee who is transitioning.

In terms of CPM, when the employee announces their exit to their previous employer, the two parties then form a boundary linkage over the private information of the transition (Petronio, 2002). Here, both parties become a joint venture in the information. Yet, participants' discourse about the information of their transition suggests that information was only theirs to share, only under the employee's ownership. They desired to maintain full control over the information of their transition, even once they shared it with their organization, especially in terms of how that information made it onto their social media pages. Some participants wanted to be sure they were the ones to share the information with coworkers before it was announced on social media, others wanted to keep it off of social media altogether to protect their coworkers' feelings, and others want coworkers to be active consumers of the online post announcing their transition. However, this was an implicit rule, not explicitly communicated to the supervisor or the organization. Each decision that participants made regarding the information of their transition was perceived to be within their own control, and not in co-ownership with their organization.

This is especially apparent in the case of Natalie's job transition, where her organization announced the transition on their own Facebook page, without her permission marking a pre-emptive disclosure violation, where private information was disclosed by a party who did not originally own it (DeGroot & Vik, 2017) and resulting in a violation. Research suggests that individuals believe implicit, unspoken privacy rules exist for information sharing online (e.g., "Do not share something on Facebook that has not already been made 'Facebook official' by the

original information owner") (DeGroot & Vik, 2017, p. 357). This rings true for the violated

participants in this study, who communicated that their privacy rules were violated even though

they had never shared an explicitly communicated statement of that rule to the violators.

In addition, the new workplace was not mentioned by any participants as a considered

party of ownership in terms of their job announcement post. In other words, the workplace that

employees were transitioning to was never mentioned as they discussed the announcement of

their job transition. It is possible that this indicates that it is more common for workplaces to

announce when a member is leaving on social media than when a member is joining, or that

participants did not experience an instance in which their new workplaces announced their

joining the organization through online platforms. Transitioning workplaces can be liked to a

relationship status change, which is found to be perceived as an intimate piece of information of

which should only be shared by the individuals in the relationship and can result in a harmed

relationship between the individual who owns the information and the individual who breached

their privacy (DeGroot & Vik, 2017). Therefore, these findings identify that a workplace

transition provides the opportunity for rewriting social media boundaries and a privacy violation

might serve as a stimulus for exiting organizations which expands literature on workplace

transitions and membership.

Understanding the Organizational Assimilation Model in light of Social Media

This study asked what strategies of boundary management employees utilize on social

media within the simultaneous (RQ1), the anticipatory/entry (RQ2), and exit (RQ3) phases of

assimilation. It became apparent early on in data analysis that it was difficult to delineate when

each strategy was used. There were times in which participants clearly stated that they utilized a

given strategy within a specific phase, yet most often participants would speak generally about

the strategies they utilized, not linking them to being enacted within specific phases. Participants would discuss specific boundary management strategies when describing their initial formation of boundaries among coworkers and supervisors, as well as how they might have changed upon exiting the organization. Therefore, this dissertation draws introductory conclusions about when each strategy is used, offering the phase it is mapped to as a suggestion, but recognizes that strategies are not bound to any specific stage. Ultimately, this dissertation identifies boundary management strategies utilized within a broad workplace transition.

It is possible that the challenge of mapping boundary management practices onto specific assimilation stages is due to the nature of social media and how it changes the way individuals engage in workplace relationships. Social media provides new ways to perform one's identity that was not previously possible before the existence thereof (Treem et al., 2020). Social media now complicates the relationships individuals build in the workplace, bringing them into an ongoing, online environment, outside of the physical walls of the organization. As a result, people can experience markers of entry, metamorphosis, and exit differently. For example, participants made it clear that they performed boundary management behaviors, such as audience and content behaviors, continuously throughout their membership within an organization and not just within one stage. As a result, there was not an opportunity to map such behaviors onto a specific assimilation stage. It is possible that this is because social media complicates workplace assimilation in such a way that it can no longer be considered such a linear process that must be moved through, one stage after the other. Individuals might engage in relational development on social media platforms that influence their feelings of assimilation into the organization throughout their entire lifespan within a single organization. Meaning, even years after entering into the workplace, employees might still struggle to reach the phase of metamorphosis due to

the way relational development with colleagues is engaged in the online context. This dynamic expands the literature by providing an understanding that such new technologies complicate knowledge of traditional organizational processes.

The Influence of Supervisor/Supervisee Connections on Boundary Management

This dissertation identifies complexities in the relationship between supervisor and supervisee and its implications for individual boundary management practices. It seemed that participants perceived there to be a power differential between themselves and their own supervisors as they considered making connections on social media. As participants communicated "feeling out" the norms in their organization, many cited allowing their supervisors to initiate connections first. Mari claimed that this was "complex process" in which she might have gotten her feelings hurt if she requested to connect first and the connection was not approved by her supervisor.

Previous research has extensively examined privacy in terms of familial relationships (Child & Westermann, 2013; Golish & Caughlin, 2002; Petronio, 2010; Young & DeGroot, 2021). However, privacy management has been less frequently examined in terms of the supervisor/supervisee relationship (Lankton et al., 2017; Lester et al., 2002; Smith & Brunner, 2017) and even fewer include the context of social media connections (Watkins Allen et al., 2007). 93% of employee recruiters report having intentions of reviewing candidate's social networking profiles as a mean for examining their social networking identity and presence (Acikgoz & Bergman, 2016). Participants seem to be aware of these dynamics given that they mentioned that during anticipated transitions, they will clean up or be more careful of what they post on their social media pages As Bonnie described, "Sometimes I think about it like, if my boss saw this, would I be okay with that?" She marked that she continuously crafted content with

the assumption that her boss might see it, which helped her keep her pages as professional as possible. As such, employees may be wondering if supervisors are continuing to make these judgements about them after entrance into the workplace.

There are relational and privacy dilemma dynamics to consider when adding coworkers and supervisors on social media platforms. Employees note feeling more comfortable at work when they share personal information with supervisors (Smith & Brunner, 2017), which can be done through social media platforms as well. Other employees consider that having a supervisor on social media may invade their privacy in time they wish to keep information from them (e.g., calling in sick from work but posting a photo on social media of themselves out to drinks with friends (Frampton & Child, 2013). Given such instances, employees may consider that their supervisor aims to surveil them by adding them on social media platforms. When employees believe this is their supervisor's intentions, they feel obligated to accept social media connections in order to prevent their supervisor from viewing them as a bad employee (Watkins Allen et al., 2007).

Interestingly, all the violations in which individuals entirely rewrote their boundaries included violations that involved their supervisors. It is possible that violations on behalf of the supervisor are more intimate to the employee given the consistently communicated assumption that there are implied dimensions of confidentiality in the supervisor/supervisee relationship, as made clear in this study's findings and others' (see Smith & Brunner, 2017). Trust is essential in supervisor/employee relationships and can impact the quality of communication between the two (Downs & Adrian, 2004; Kramer, 2017). When supervisors are believed to have violated that trust, they are viewed as agents of the organization who have failed to keep their commitment to

employees which can in turn negatively influence the employee's overall commitment to the organization (Lester et al., 2002; Snyder & Cistulli, 2020).

These various dynamics between the supervisor and their employee have been examined in the past. Yet again, this study's findings include a picture of supervisor/employee privacy violations' impact on social media boundary management, something previously missing in CPM theory and research on organizational membership. Privacy violations between supervisors and their employees, in the context of the workplace and social media, might be so critical that it prompts an employee to feel affirmed in their decision to exit an organization or is cited as a reason for exit. This is seen in the example of Carter's case where the continuous violations of their online privacy were cited as their main reason for exiting the organization.

Each of these findings indicate that people who choose to erect mental fences around their social media connections in the workplace context have a variety of strategies to consider and enact. It is evident that these dynamics effect both people who choose to integrate and segment their work and non-work lives in regard to social media connections. Therefore, it is important to understand the practical implications of social media boundary management during transitions for all members of the workplace.

Practical Implications for Employees & Supervisors

The findings of this dissertation project have a variety of practical implications for organizations, as well as their employees and supervisors. First, organizations and their leadership teams should foster a culture of open communication in which members can freely communicate their social media boundaries. Second, organizations can enact policies that provide more opportunities for newcomers to feel out explicitly communicated norms in the organization. Third, organizations should take extra care in considering how their remote

workers experience opportunities to engage in communicating boundaries around social media connection.

Research about privacy management techniques have found that organizational culture shapes the workplace environment either in favor of, or against, information disclosures and privacy (Smith & Brunner, 2017; Watkins Allen et al., 2007). Disclosure is key to relationship development in organization and is linked to positive employee and organizational effectiveness (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Sias et al., 2002). An organization's culture can influence how openly members communicate with each other (Frampton & Child, 2013), or how often disclosure occurs. If incoming employees feel that disclosure, or in this case, online connections is discouraged as part of the organization's culture, they may feel silenced (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). As a result, it is important to understand that fostering an environment in which employees can choose to partake in communication through online spaces may have implications for these various dynamics of relational development and effectiveness in the workplace.

Some organizations aim to develop policies around their employees' social media connections (e.g., Jakie's workplace having a policy about supervisors and supervisees connecting). When organizations evoke policies about social media connections, the policies influence organizational discourses, boundary perceptions on work/life balance, and workplace behaviors (Nordbäck et al., 2017). Petronio (2002) argued that employees will comply with privacy boundaries set by the organization, especially when they are set through new employee socialization. These policies are often communicated upon entry into the organization, during new employee orientation (Watkins Allen et al., 2007). Newcomers seem to be receiving information about online connections in the entry phase. Therefore, it is important to take great care in the policies developed for the organization, as they will not only influence organizational

culture but also a newcomer's ability to influence the culture and make decisions about their own desires for connection, which again may be established upon entry.

As organizations write social media connection policies, they should consider using a boundary logic framework. This framework can be used to guide social media-related policymaking within organizations. The boundary logic framework offers a "language and conceptual baseline for opening up critical reflection, dialogue, and fruitful negotiation among lawmakers, corporate policymakers, and employed social media users who may experience routine struggles over meaning with respect to defining personal/professional and private/public boundaries" (Banghart et al., 2018, p. 365).

The framework previews four different logics typically evoked by organizations to inform the creation of their own policies and procedures regarding social media boundaries (Banghart et al., 2018). First, an evasive boundary logic is where an organization does not address boundaries at all in their policies (Banghart et al., 2018). Next, an invasive boundary logic occurs when an organization constraints employee speech, self-expression, and relationship engagement in their social media policies and a contradictory boundary logic occurs when organizations issue inconsistent and incommensurate boundary specifications (Banghart et al., 2018). Lastly, a distinct boundary logic is when an organization makes explicit distinctions between social media use occurring inside versus outside of the workplace, and/or on company-owned platforms and technologies (Banghart et al., 2018). Particularly, using this framework can ensure that guidelines are not only specific but also comprehensible, realistic, and consistent enough for employees to follow in practice, especially as they consider where their policies may need to be adjusted if they fall under a given logic (Banghart et al., 2018).

Workplace transitions are often-times emotionally strenuous enough for the transitioning employee, especially during exits in which the leaving employee felt strong organizational identification (Carter & Cook, 1995; Latack et al., 1995). As a result, organizations need to provide as much support as possible for their incoming employees to aid in their assimilation experience. Such support might look like carefully written policies and clear communication thereof, or transparent communication about organizational culture around privacy boundaries. As previously stated, organizational communication scholars have identified the plethora of outcomes that the assimilation process has on organizational members, such as feeling accepted, developing relationships, and integrating oneself with the culture of the organization (Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2010), each of which might even contribute to the employee reaching the metamorphosis phase of assimilation and feeling fully part of the organization. Therefore, providing clear communication about individual and organizational boundaries and norms early on in the assimilation experience would allow for an newcomer to more quickly navigate the boundaries of the organizational environment decide how they would like to establish their own boundaries within it. Clear communication can be either about the organizational culture or about the policies that reflect and influence the organizational culture, Incoming employees undergoing a workplace transition should understand that while they may feel influenced by the organizational culture and policies within the organization they are joining (Smith & Brunner, 2017; Watkins Allen et al., 2007), they must decide for themselves by weighing the risks and benefits of choosing to reveal or conceal private information in the workplace, as the act of disclosure influences relationship development (Tardy & Dindia, 2006).

Second, it is important that both employees and their supervisors understand the power dynamics behind supervisor/supervisee connections. If employees perceive that there is a benefit,

they are more likely to open their privacy boundaries (Stanton & Stam, 2003). Employees also want to be seen as "good" employees who do not challenge their organization's acts of surveillance (Sewell & Barker, 2006). Therefore, whether a supervisor aims to make connections with their supervisees as a means of surveillance, or as a means of relational development, supervisees are likely to accommodate the request to connect. This may pressure the supervisee to set their autonomy to the wayside as they make individual boundary management decisions.

Third, organizations should take extra care in considering how their remote workers experience opportunities to engage in communicating boundaries around social media connection. Social media platforms like Facebook may provide another outlet to enhance coworker connections and continue informal social exchanges for remote workers (Shin et al., 2022). Therefore, organizational efforts to engage remote employees in social support on social media platforms should encourage workers' autonomy and control over their digital connection choices. Employees, individually, can aim to be intentional about making their boundaries clear with others in their remote workplace environment to foster that open communication environment. However, it might be hard for the employee to formulate and decipher norms on their own. Katie's experience of her workplace retreat in addition to her workplace being intentional about fostering social opportunities remotely (e.g., virtual coffee chats scheduled into the workday) allowed her to gain access those social cues that clued her into norms of social media boundaries among coworkers. Adopting weekly coffee chat zoom rooms, or the like, and clearly communicating the existence thereof, may facilitate these social moments that remote employees otherwise would not receive.

Fourth, it is important to understand the implicit rule found in this dissertation; that when an employee is making a workplace transition, the information about their transition is entirely

under their ownership and should not be shared by the organization or their supervisors without consulting the employee. When participants of this study expressed that they felt violated in situations in which the information was shared, they were conceptualizing the experience of a pre-emptive disclosure violation, in which the private information was disclosed by someone who did not originally own it (DeGroot & Vik, 2017). Through these participant experiences, it was clear that they felt the information of their transition was their own to control and disclose, but that the rule behind this was entirely implicit. No participant mentioned making this control they felt an explicitly communicated boundary rule. Petronio (2002) argues that privacy rules are rarely discussed, which emphasizes the importance of creating explicit privacy rules and communicating them with information co-owners. As employees share their intent to leave with their organizations/supervisors, they are making them co-owners of the information of their transition and in doing so, should establish an explicit privacy rule by stating "I'd like to announce the transition on my own terms." Doing so might lessen the chance of a privacy violation occurring during the workplace transition. As such, supervisors/organizations should uphold the transitioning employee's established rule to avoid boundary turbulence.

Lastly, in order to provide a streamlined view of how participants in this project described their decision-making processes behind opening or closing their boundaries, two separate flowcharts are presented in the appendix (See Appendix H for entry and Appendix I for exit). This serves to visualize the questions an employee might consider as they debate making connections upon entrance into a workplace and as they reexamine their connections upon exiting a workplace. Each decision-making outcome is mapped onto a strategy that was identified through participant experiences. While it cannot be assumed that these strategies are

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solely utilized in either the entry or exit phases, some of the participant's discourse made it possible to consider that they are at least often used within entry and exit.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It is important to note that although this study provides unique insights into the boundary management practices of employees undergoing workplaces transitions, there are some limitations to the data. First, this study provided insight into the boundary management strategies enacted by a younger cohort of the workforce, given that the mean age of participants was around twenty-seven years old. It is possible that this limitation was due to the fact that it probed workplace transitions, and that younger individuals tend to change jobs more often early in their career. In fact, Millennials are found to be three times more likely to change jobs within the last year compared to non-Millennials (Binder, 2021). In addition, Millennials have grown up in a digital era which may influence them to engage in social media more often and possibly perform their boundaries in unique ways (Abril et al., 2012). There is a plethora of work on Millennial social media practices, to which this study adds (Abril et al., 2012; Bennett, 2012; Pham et al., 2019). However, older generational cohorts might not engage in social media as often as a strategy of privacy management that keeps their information offline and are therefore important to examine. Another consideration of the mostly Millennial cohort within this study is that the participant sample was gathered using snowball/convenience methods, which likely led to the younger cohort sample given that participants were referring their own acquaintances. As a result of this, future research could probe the boundary management practices of an older generation of the workforce with a purposeful sampling criteria of older individuals who have recently transitioned jobs.

Second, this study relied on a self-reporting research design that asked participants to reflect on previous experiences of their job transitions. While it is evident that participants can adequately recall experiences within the past year (Larsen et al., 2008), it would provide a unique and rich perspective to have employees document their workplace transitions through journal entries during transitions and pre- and post-transition interviews. This would allow for participants to actively reflect on their boundary management practices during an ongoing workplace change. In addition, being able to capture experiences during a transition would aid in providing a clear picture of organizational assimilation during the event. However, because this study relied on retrospective accounts it made it difficult to give a snapshot of online boundary management within singular stages of assimilation.

Third, this project missed the opportunity to link boundary management practices to specific platform types. It was clear that the perceived purpose of social media platforms influenced the boundaries built around them. This study did not ask participants to refer to a narrow frame of social media platforms during interviews. However, doing so might help researchers more distinctly link boundary strategies to specific platforms and their affordances, which has been done in the context of Facebook (Hogan, 2010; Krämer & Haferkamp, 2011; Lankton et al., 2017). Future research can limit participants' reflections of boundary management during a workplace transition to one or two social media platforms. This would provide a more targeted view of how individuals utilize the functions of the given platforms in tandem with its perceived purposes as they (re)construct their boundaries of connection during workplace transitions. However, this study's design was too broad to accomplish this given that platforms were not limited.

Fourth, while this study did not examine how an individuals' social and emotional needs might connect to their boundary management practices, a few participants noted that their need for social connections in the workplace influenced their boundaries to be more open. An employee's feelings of emotional support, social network ties, and inclusion (which is tied to levels of information access) all play a role in promoting positive attitudes and behaviors and can positively influence employee's workplace experiences (Grosser et al., 2022). Future research could quantitatively examine a person's number of connections with coworkers on social media in comparison to their perceived sociability, or their levels of introversion/extroversion to provide insight into how social and emotional needs interact with boundary management. Such research would allow for individuals to be more self-aware of their own social and emotional needs, perhaps allowing them to further understand the how/why behind the privacy rules and boundaries they desire to form around their social media connections.

Lastly, it was difficult to draw conclusions about boundary management practices related to a specific organizational industry. There was not enough participant concentration in any specific industry type to do so. However, two participants, Stevie and Lucas, noted how their workplace industry, marketing, influenced their social media boundaries. As seen in Lucas' experience, he stated "the fact that we were really connected and very media savvy people and work in the industry of media production . . . really kind of fostered that connection of sharing different gifs and different links to trailers and exchanging jokes" indicating that his industry being in marketing might have influences the online connections he made with his coworkers. Therefore, conducting a study that more clearly analyzes the relationship between workplace industry type and online boundary management could provide fruitful insight into how identities within one's workplace industry influences online identity performance. The association between

workplace identity and online identity performance would be fruitful to understand, especially if people who work in social media-related roles might feel more pressure to engage in social media connections with coworkers and supervisors. It is also possible that moving from one industry type to another, or moving workplaces within a single industry type, might influence an individual's online boundaries differently. It is important to further examine the influence of industry on boundary management practices to provide a clear picture of this relationship for workplaces and employees.

In addition to considering workplace industry's influence on boundary management practices, one might consider the influence of work modality. Two participants, Katie and Jake, discussed how their remote work modality influenced their boundary management practices. Katie discussed how she appreciated her workplace fostering moments for "feeling out" boundary norms, such as virtual coffee chats and her in-person company retreat, because she feared she would otherwise lose those moments to parse out the social cues and conversations that would provide invitations to connect. Jake shared that he felt like it was difficult to make connections with his colleagues on social media, noting that he never added any of them, and pointed out that it was because he never really had social conversations with them due to their remote work environment. He stated "I didn't really get to know [my coworkers] that well . . . Maybe it's just cause I'm not good at virtual, just being virtual alone." Later, he added "I didn't friend them on any like social medias besides LinkedIn just because I didn't feel like I knew them because I never met them in person." Therefore, the remote employees in this study are clearly noting how their remote environment influenced their social media connections. It would be fruitful to further examine how remote modalities in the workplace influence privacy management and social media connection with a larger sample size.

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There are also opportunities to further develop theory with an examination of social media's influence on workplace transitions. This study included a focus on boundary management in light of CPM theory, which limits the understanding of the data to privacy management practices in general. There are other theories that could provide different insights on this dataset. For example, expectancy violations theory (EVT) (Burgoon, 1993), which suggests that our expectations of what is considered normal interaction for communicative instances might differ from others, could provide different insight into the boundary violations that participant's experienced. Or, in Katie's case where a coworker added her on TikTok, how a connection on a social media platform might violate one's expectations but become a welcomed boundary shift. In other words, it's important to understand the how and why behind boundary violations, which could be done by analyzing the data using expectancy violations theory. Looking through the lens of EVT would allow future research to consider the potential consequences of disparate expectations behind online connections and privacy rules, to which this project provides only a glimpse of in terms of organizational membership.

In addition, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which suggests that leaders and followers develop unique levels of relational exchanges based on their social connections, could be used to analyze supervisor/supervisee social media connections. Jian and Dalisay (2017) found that high-quality LMX relationships are associated with higher-quality communication (characterized by efficiency, coordination, and accuracy). It is possible that high-quality LMX relationships might influences boundaries between supervisors and their employees to be more permeable. Once again, using a different theory such as EVT or LMX theories present opportunities to further develop understanding of social media's use in the

workplace and its implications for violations and supervisor/supervisee dynamics especially in terms of workplace transitions.

Conclusion

This study successfully made multiple contributions. First, this study investigated the gap in the literature of the process of assimilating into one workplace and out of another simultaneously and how social media might be used during that process. Based on this dissertation's findings, it is clear that a multitude of boundary management techniques may be utilized in the process of workplace transition. Second, this this project used the widely studied process of organizational assimilation but expanded previous research by probing workplace transitions in combination with social media, an imperative and timely topic given the current dynamics in our workforce (i.e., "The Great Resignation" in which large numbers of employees planned to transition out of their workplaces (Fuller & Kerr, 2022; Reinicke, 2021)). Lastly, this project uniquely situated the given research questions in an interpretive lens that utilized interview methods and allowed participants' previous experiences enacted through discourse to inform the topic.

This dissertation sought to understand how employees participate in boundary management during workplace transitions, which is a possibly increasingly common experience among today's workplace with one in four workers indicating that they planned to transition jobs at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic (Binder, 2021). This phenomenon is important given that employees in a workplace transition experience a complicated relational balancing act of building and ending a workplace membership and rewriting workplace relationships at the same time. The findings of this study provide a clear picture of the boundary management strategies that individuals enact across anticipatory/entry, simultaneous, and exit assimilation phases of the

workplace transition. Not only do these findings greatly increase knowledge of the workplace

with its implications for organizations, supervisors, and employees, but also it increases the

application of CPM theory and the assimilation process in general. These participants'

experiences provide insight into how social media connections can influence the workplace

transition experience. Future research on this topic would continue to fruitfully investigate the

influence of social media connection among coworkers and its implications for organizational

membership, assimilation, and boundary management.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT TABLE

Pseudonym	Pronouns	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Self-described Previous Role	Self-described New Role
Adex	He/his	29	white/Caucasian	Construction	Construction
Bee	She/hers	23	white/Caucasian	Marketing - Corporate	Marketing - Higher Ed
Bonnie	She/hers	24	white/Caucasian	Higher Ed - Admissions	Higher Ed - Scholarship Advisor
Bruce	He/his	35	white/Caucasian	Construction	Construction
Carter	Chose to not disclose	24	white/Caucasian	Office Administrator	Community and Engagement Coordinator - Nonprofit
Cassandra	She/hers	24	Hispanic or Latinx	Nonprofit - Childcare Program Coordinator	Nonprofit - Public Affairs Manager
Dee	He/his	20	white/Caucasian	Data Analyst	Data Analyst
EJ	She/hers	21	Black or African American	K-12 Teacher	Clerical Staff
Greg	He/his	26	white/Caucasian	Safety Specialist	Safety Specialist
Hal	He/his	29	white/Caucasian	Maintenance	Maintenance
Harper	She/hers	26	white/Caucasian	Nanny	Community and Engagement Coordinator - Nonprofit
Jake	He/his	27	white/Caucasian	Customer Service Specialist	Nonprofit - Program Coordinator
Jakie	She/hers	30	Two or more races	Community Manager	Client Insight

Katie	She/hers	31	white/Caucasian	Student Conduct - Higher Education	Employee Relations Specialist
Lucas	He/his	27	white/Caucasian	Recruiter - Higher Ed	Marketing - Higher Ed
Phil	He/his	31	Black or African American	Graphic Designer	Graphic Designer
Malfoy	He/his	31	white/Caucasian	Recruiter - Higher Ed	Assistant Recruitment Director - Higher Ed
Mari	She/hers	37	Asian Pacific Islander or Filipino	Higher Ed Instructor	Higher Ed Professor
Natalie	She/hers	29	white/Caucasian	Admission Counselor - High School	Talent Acquisition
Rose	Chose to not disclose	23	Black or African American	Domestics	Accountant
Selena	She/hers	27	Asian Pacific Islander or Filipino	Accountant	Accounting Analyst
Steff	She/hers	28	Hispanic or Latinx	Midwifery	Nursing and Midwifery
Stevie	She/hers	27	white/Caucasian	Marketing - Corporate	Communication Specialist - Higher ed
Troy	He/his	27	Black or African American	Accountant	Accountant
Zoey	She/hers	30	white/Caucasian	Higher Ed Instructor	Higher Ed Professor

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT SCREENING/DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for expressing interest in this research project. This questionnaire serves to collect some information about you to ensure that your experiences reflect the needs of the research project and to facilitate in scheduling your interview. Your name and email will be collected; however, your identity will not be linked to your data when the data is reported and will be destroyed when the study concludes.

1. What is your first and last name?

2. What is your email address?

3. What is your age?

4. What is your gender identity?

5. What is your race/ethnicity?

6. Have you undergone a job transition in the past 3-6 months?

    o Yes (When did you leave your last job, when did you enter your new job?)

    o No (Skip logic to end of survey and thank you)

7. Do you use social media platforms to connect with both coworkers and others (e.g., friends and family)?

    o Yes

    o No (Skip logic to end of survey and thank you)

8. Which social media platforms do you use to connect with both coworkers and others (e.g., friends and family)? Choose all that apply.

    o Facebook

    o Instagram

    o TikTok

- o Twitter

- o Snapchat

- o LinkedIn

- o Other (Please specify)

9. Your anonymity will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms throughout this project. You have the opportunity to choose your own pseudonym. If you do not choose one, one will be assigned to you. Please provide what pseudonym you would like to use below. What pseudonym would you like to use?

10. Would you prefer to be interviewed via Zoom or phone call?

- o Phone

  - o If chosen: Please provide your phone number below.

- o Zoom

- o Either

Please list a few preferred upcoming dates/times during which you can participate in the interview. As a reminder, this interview is expected to last between 45-60 minutes.

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Date

Dear participant,

My name is Emeline Ojeda-Hecht and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the Communication Studies department. We are conducting a research study individuals make boundaries around social media connections during career transitions. The title of our project is *Workplace Transitions: The Role of Social Media and Boundary Management.* The Principal Investigator for this project is Dr. Elizabeth Williams, Communication Studies.

We would like to invite you to participate in an interview about your recent experience changing workplaces and how you created and maintained boundaries on social media in the process. For this project social media are defined as social networking sites in which you connect with friends, family, coworkers, and/or romantic partners for the purposes of sharing important life events, photos/videos, status updates, and/or to participate in professional networking. This interview will take place at the time of your choosing and can be done via Zoom or phone. Those who participate in a Zoom interview will also be asked to share a social media page of your choosing and walk through your decisions regarding specific posts. Those who participate will receive a $15 Amazon gift card. Participation will range from 45-60 minutes.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty. Confidentiality of your data will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms. The principal and co-principal investigator will be the only ones with access to your interview recording. All identifying information will be removed when the audio recordings are transcribed, and then audio recordings will be deleted. Your name and contact information for scheduling and future

participation will be collected but will not be connected to your research responses. You may be contacted again to provide reflection on portions of your own interview transcript, this would be done to ensure the opportunity for elaboration or correction. Additionally, you may be contacted to provide feedback on the findings of the research study. Your information may be stored in order to contact you again for these purposes, but will remain entirely separate from the dataset, and destroyed after the study is complete.

While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on how individuals experience workplace transitions and navigate their own boundaries on social media in the process. Although it is not possible to identify all potential risks of this study, one possible risk is that we may ask you to share information about why you chose to leave a previous workplace that may cause participants to relive emotional moments. Nevertheless, the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize these risks and potential (but unknown) risks.

If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact the co-Principal Investigator, Emeline Ojeda-Hecht at Emeline.hecht@colostate.edu to be sent a participant screening questionnaire. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Sincerely,

Emeline Ojeda-Hecht, MS   Elizabeth Williams, PhD

Doctoral Candidate   Associate Professor

Colorado State University   Colorado State University

Thank you for agreeing to meet and share your experiences with me. I will be asking you a series

of questions and I welcome you to respond in whatever way feels the most comfortable to you.

You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any

reason. During the interview, I will be asking you about your recent workplace transition and

how you created and maintained boundaries on social media in the process. For this project

social media are defined as social networking sites in which you connect with friends, family,

coworkers, and/or romantic partners for the purposes of sharing important life events,

photos/videos, status updates, and/or to participate in professional networking As a reminder,

this interview will be audio recorded. Any given identifying information will be removed from

the data set and all of your information, including what you verbally share today will be kept

anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. As a friendly reminder, your participation in this

project is entirely voluntary and you are welcome to opt out at any time.

Exit Questions

1. Tell me about your previous workplace (What was your role, how long were you there,

    what are the social dynamics of your coworkers/supervisors, etc.).

2. What boundaries do you have around connecting with your coworkers and supervisors on

    social media?

    a. What was your thought process as you chose to connect with these individuals?

        Were there specific platforms you would or would not connect with them on?

        What factors went into these decisions of who and how to connect with people

        from your workplace?

3. What, if any, information did this old workplace share with you about connecting with coworkers/supervisors on social media?

    a. How did you learn how individuals connected with each other on social media in this old workplace? Did people begin to seek out your social media profiles or did you find them on social media?

4. How do you balance the act of posting on social media pages that might include both coworkers and family members, friends, romantic partners, and the like?

    a. What did you choose to share or not share on social media because you may have been balancing these multiple audiences?

5. What did the process of leaving your workplace look like? (Why did you choose to leave your organization and what did that process look like).

6. Tell me about what experiences you had on social media when you were leaving this organization.

7. How did your decisions around connecting with your coworkers/supervisors change while you were in the process of leaving this organization? What tensions might have arose in this process?

8. Do you still connect with these past coworkers and supervisors on social media, why or why not?

9. Did you notice any past coworkers/supervisors change the way they connected with you on social media? What might that have looked like?

Transition Questions

1. How did you use social media to announce about your job transition? Did any tensions arise in that process, if so, what were those?

a.   What other types of social media posts caused tension for you during your job transition?

2. Are there any other moments in that simultaneous transition that created tension or unease as you navigated your social media content?

Anticipatory/Entry Questions

3. Tell me about your current workplace; (What was your role, how long were you there, what are the social dynamics of your coworkers/supervisors, etc.).

4. What boundaries do you have around connecting with your coworkers and supervisors on social media in this new workplace? Describe your experiences and decisions behind choosing to connect or not connect with your new coworkers/supervisors.

5. Was there anything you learned from connecting with your past coworkers on social media that you felt you wanted to adjust for connecting with your new workers? If so, what?

6. What, if any, information did your new workplace share with you about connecting with coworkers/supervisors on social media?

a.   How did you learn how individuals connected with each other on social media in this new workplace? Did people begin to seek out your social media profiles or did you find them on social media?

7. Was there ever a time in which you felt that a past or current coworker or supervisor violated your privacy or information boundaries on social media? Could you describe this for me and walk me through what happened?

I would like for you to now open a social media page of yours that you use to connect with both coworkers and others. I want you to scroll through your own profile feed and discuss with me the thought-process you underwent as you crafted specific posts or shared specific material.

1. First, tell me what platform this is and what groups of people you connect with on this specific platform (e.g., family, friends, coworkers), and why.

2. Can you point out two or three posts that you created or shared during your job transition?

    a. Why did you choose to share these specific things?

    b. What did the videos/pictures/posts consist of?

3. Tell me about the decisions you made regarding two or three different posts and how you might have balanced sharing personal information for both your workplace members and those outside of your workplace. Please describe the posts you refer to in detail.

4. What, if any, posts of yours did your coworkers interact with? How did you feel about these interactions?

5. Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding your social media page and how you choose to connect and socialize with coworkers on it?

6. What else would you like to share about your experiences transition between these two workplaces and how you managed social media boundaries in the process?

7. May I reach out to you if I have questions about your interview transcript?

Hierarchical Code-Subcodes Model

APPENDIX G: PRELIMINARY CODEBOOK

Preliminary Theme	Secondary Cycle Codes Included	Preliminary Definition	Quotes
Boundaries may be shaped by age. Strategy: connecting with peers close in age and perceiving that others do the same	*Generational Differences, Changing approaches as you get older, social network gets tighter as you get older*	People mark their decisions to connect with others upon entry as based on age and they believe others (their older peers) do the same. It feels more comfortable to connect with peers.	I was working with folks that were around my age group. They were also students at the University that I was attending at that time. Very natural friends and relationships. And so we added each other on Instagram Snapchat. I think Facebook a little bit for some folks, and it was pretty normal and regular. (Cassandra, Pos. 22-27) We were all pretty young and pretty young professionals. We all got along really well and definitely connected over social media and hung out outside of work. But there is a pretty big divide between our level, and then just the level, even right above us. In age and experience, and in pay, and all sorts of different things. So there definitely was a disconnect there. and I would say we did not hang out with anyone that wasn't in our immediate circle Very often. (Bonnie, Pos. 22-25) And then there was one other lady who was working part time and I think they also like, I don't know. I kind of expected them to like. not want to add anyone. Because I think, for I think sometimes for the older generation. they just like they know how to keep those boundaries a little bit more clear. But it's adding both of them it was definitely further into the experience. But my boss was like, Oh, I posted up my garden on Facebook, and I was like, I don't think I have you on. Facebook, and she's like well I'll just add you and I was like, Okay. (Bee, Pos. 2) ***this is age related and feeling out social norms

| Boundaries of connection based on platform are widely disparate but boundaries tend to be shaped by the platform (and its Functions?) | Platform-specific codes for all platforms | I perceive x to be for x so I use x in x way (widely disparate). Boundary is not a wall, but a gate. You need to meet a criterion. Series of gates, behind each is a diff platform. | I I'm definitely careful with what I share and I also utilize the my friends only features on social media. So I believe that that's something that most social media platforms have right of like, who can view it? And it can be like you can really narrow it down to be just folks that you wanna have on a specific list and post to that audience. and so I utilize that, for I think each one of the social media platforms that I use. I use it on Instagram. I use it on Snapchat. I use it on Facebook, sometimes. and I kind of always, especially after the account that I had with my supervisor sharing my engagement with our work before I was able to share that I was taken to consideration. who is following me and is this information that I'm releasing into the public so to speak right like that. It's no longer in my ralph control about who sees this, how they see it, and that so I do kind of a little bit of the process of elimination on that. (Cassandra, Pos. 76-82)

I made my name appear differently so they wouldn't be able to find me. So it's not like I would have my full name written on my social media because that's the easiest way for somebody to find you. So I actually got rid of my last name and just put my initial so unless it's me reaching out to them they wouldn't know it's me. I also did not post my profile picture until recently so it was never my face on the profile. (Mari) *and controlling tags

Well, one of the things I have a close friends list. so if you know Instagram, Instagram has filters where you can put stuff on your story for everyone to see, and then you can put stuff for maybe like a select 10, So I will vent a lot more to my 10 friends I'm like oh, my God! This meeting is so stupid or like I'm annoyed. Also, if I |
|---|---|---|---|

			am using recreational drugs I will put that on that story comparatively. But I Haven't? always done that? I have definitely posted on my story a picture of Marijuana saying like, Oh, is this oregano How weird! And both of my my new role, my direct supervisor and the director of my office, both following me and Instagram, and you feel comfortable. Still posting that content, even though you know they might see it. I try to be a lot more guarded if it has recreational drug use. So like if I post that I'm smoking weed, no I'm not gonna put that on where everyone can see But if it's political I don't hold back I again, I am politically engaged, and so my Instagram is a place where I do that (Malfoy, Pos. 7)
Strategy: Feeling out and communicating social cues for norms of connection	*Finding out about connections via conservations, observation, letting others add first, respecting people's decisions not to connect*	People "feel out" what others do through social cues and conversations, and build their boundaries around that. This is marked by entrance. Boundaries are shaped by conversations of what the norms in the org are.	Were talking about it when I was starting. So it was like, Oh, okay, so like that's Why, my boss is not following me. I have to follow them first. and in terms of like choosing who I wanted to connect to even in with people with in lateral roles, or people who are senior to me. I tend to try not to follow people, unless they follow me first more than anything just to like Make sure that it's appropriate and that's always a sensitive thing with especially when you're joining. (Jakie, Pos. 47-50)

And then there was one other lady who was working part time and I think they also like, I don't know. I kind of expected them to like. not want to add anyone. Because I think, for I think sometimes for the older generation. they just like they know how to keep those boundaries a little bit more clear. But it's adding both of them it was definitely further into the experience. But my boss was like, Oh, I posted up my garden on Facebook, and I was like, I don't think I have you on. Facebook, and she's like well I'll just add you and I was like, Okay. (Bee, Pos. 2) ***this is age related |

			and feeling out social norms It was like a little bit more weird because I was like, okay. This is not someone who I would typically be just like connecting with quite, as as you know, quickly, but I appreciate it their openness, and I don't know It's kind of weird to me. Sometimes I think when people don't they're like Oh, you can't, which the the lady who was working part time Michelle, she was like I'm not adding you until you're not working here anymore. I was like, Okay, I think more typical of what I expect, especially from their generation. And all those the ladies who are like working on the top level right. They're probably in there like late fifties early sixties so again very different approach. (Bee, Pos. 3)
Strategy specific to supervisor: waiting for supervisor to friend first	*Pressure to add supervisor, connections with coworkers but not supervisors, supervisor would not add*	In order to determine the norms, they express waiting until the supervisor makes social media connections first before they do	So I wouldn't be the first person necessarily to befriend them but if they are willing to do that before I do then it's like OK well they are making that gesture so I'm just gonna follow along and accept it. so that's what happened with that thing but it was personal in a way where I didn't quite know if it would be wise unwise to request to be a friend and when she did that I actually thought oh great I wanted to be Facebook friends with her and she's offering that first so great I don't have to go through that awkward phase of me sending a friend request and her declining it and me getting my feelings hurt. so, I think it's a very complex process trying to observe that boundary but you don't really know what's the move depending on the kinds of relationships there are or if you're unsure of that dynamic. (Mari) and then my boss and my, that was mostly because, like my boss sent me like a friend requests unlike Instagram. I mean it's like a social networking team so that's not like

			abnormal. But that's why I had any sort of like social media networking or interactions with my boss. That's not something I opted too I would have ever friend requested her. But it seems like the social structure pressures of it. was like not that there's anything wrong with it. She's a lovely person, but that's like the extent of those interactions. And then I became social media followers, friends with other coworkers. (Stevie, Pos. 16-22) And then I actually had my supervisor request me as a friend on Facebook and that kind of I was like, I don't know her yet, but then, in my mind, I was like, I mean I don't really have anything to hide. I you know. I try to be mindful of what I'm posting now, so I'm like I feel like I could accept her. But then I was like, if I don't that looks bad so you know, kind of let this sit for a couple of days, and then accepted her (Natalie, Pos. 85-92) **Being mindful of content after adding supervisor
Strategy: tightening boundaries in a role transition	*Will not add supervisees, Job specific boundaries based on ethics or law, Keeping work and life separate, pressure to add people*	Role transition - entering into new supervisee role and will not add supervisees. Whether by own choice or by org rule	I didn't make it a point so when I was transitioning into the role. I tried to grab coffee, with all 5 of them I didn't have a chance to do it, for all I had 2 copy, one on one before I started, and then I've had 3. After the start date. I've been working this is day 7 in my new role. And one thing I did tell all my supervisors is that I don't friend People on social media, especially people I supervise, and I made that a really clear boundary, just because, as much as I'm, I do like to get to know my superiors, and I care about them. I still want to make a boundary. Yeah. but this is my own life, like I want my life to be separate. (Malfoy, Pos. 12) So it was actually a pretty strict rule at -. So. if you were in a more senior position, you were not allowed to add anybody on

| | | | any kind of social media. If they're a junior to you So if you're in a lateral role, totally fair game, you can like, send a Facebook friend request you can send like a Instagram follow request. you can follow like even if your Instagram profile. Is not private, and anyone can follow you like you can't follow somebody who's junior to you until they follow you first.... And so you mentioned the the parameters around, whether or not to connect with people who are at least junior to you When you move up in this organization and say you take on supervisory roles and then you end up. you know. just transitioning do you then have to unfriend or block, or changes, or you just maintain those connections you're allowed to maintain those connections. I think it's just that initial invite because that could be like an intimidation thing that makes sense. (Jakie)

I think it was pretty easy for me I think I had decided before, even like started the transition, that I knew I wasn't going to add new coworkers right away to social media, because I wanted to check out the vibe first, but also because I knew, like I wanted to kind of create some more division in my life, because I didn't have as much division previously. (Bonnie, Pos. 205-206) **also in the social cue code |
|---|---|---|---|
| Changing boundaries with age and in a transition | | When people transition workplace, they tend to tighten their boundaries and mark it as age-related | And as I went as I moved up and my title changed with more seniority with my last position as the program manager and community organizer. I was also friending folks and accepting friend requests from people on social media. But I was a little bit more reserved with that because I was now working with folks who were in different age groups (Cassandra, Pos. 22-27) (placed in two separate codes) |

			I find that in the last few years, as I've gotten older and I'm not old, but like, I don't know just the further away I get, because I feel like in college I would be like very overthinking about everything that, I put on social media was on Facebook at that point it was a lot bigger, Facebook was like, much more popular at that point, or like Snapchat like, What are you posting your stories? I feel like when that was the phase of life I was in. I was a lot more intentional. I'll say, or overthinking is probably how I describe it versus now. I think I'm pretty boring on social media in like a positive way, like I post mostly pictures of my dog, or like memes, about you know Lately it's been like pumpkins my season for the millennials out there you know, things like that. (Katie)
			But yeah, at this point like I probably and maybe I'm moving more towards slightly older generation of like not using social media as much. I feel like that's where I've been at I mean it was very active in high school, and then college like Semi. And now I'm just like I don't see as much of the need for it in general, so it is interesting to see even that shift in my approach, and I think that's also helped me back from adding or seeking out adding people is that I just I don't post a lot so I don't see a whole lot of need to have them like right now. (Bee, Pos. 4)
Expressing control over who/how/and when to make it social media official	*Wanting to tell coworker before social media does, wanting to make it social media official, breaking the news of exit via social*	Participants mark that during their transitions, its important to them to be able to express control over who/how/and	I made sure that you know, I got the new job and I let my supervisor and my managers know I am leaving so there wasn't any mix up and stuff like that. So after doing that I got the new job, and I started working then I was already settled. Then I you know I did post on social media I'm at my new job now. nothing too extravagant, just simple. just like that. (Phil, Pos. 13)

	media, didn't post transition for workplace sake, announcing after things are official	when the social media official post is made	I think I waited until after I had told my boss and like told my coworkers that hey, I got a new job like my last day will be this day before I posted anything. But I did have the classic like I'm moving again, or I haven't. Jump on post But I definitely waited until everyone that needed to know at my organization knew before I let that go out. There was that kind of like a same day situation, or was it a I told them, and maybe like a couple of days later, even a week later. Then I posted. It was definitely a few days later. I mean, like I told them things are starting to get in order. I've looked at paperwork now I'm gonna post. (Bonnie, Pos. 78-84) I definitely did not announce it right away. I was very fortunate to have a very short transition between not having a job and having a job. So when I left my organization I had already secured my position at my current place of employment. And I could have made it an announcement right then in there that I left this organization and I'm starting a new place at this organization. So on LinkedIn I did update my job my place in employment. But I think I waited until a couple at least a month, at least a month, into my new places employment before making that announcement. (Cassandra, Pos. 122-127)
Strategy: face saving for both new coworkers and old coworkers/org	*Not wanting to hurt coworkers feelings*	Need to express excitement for new things but gratefulness for old things	I was like more hesitant to like post and stuff after that with of my bosses, because I was like she like. I don't know if she wants me to even communicate with her anymore. So like to them on social media, but like I wasn't gonna unadd anyone. But I was like they're hesitant to interact after that. But but yeah, but leaving there, I mean I have been in the agency to face for like basically 2 and a half years, and I don't know. (Bee, Pos.

| | | | 3)... And I just didn't want to be able to play into that like I'm leaving I'm excited to be leaving. You should be excited for me, too, so I want you to know about it. But I didn't want to like make it so I think that was kind of it, and just trying to make sure everyone was on the same page and felt good about things that makes sense. (Bonnie, Pos. 119-121)

But I Didn't really announce. that I had a new job even on LinkedIn like when I made I I put I updated it on LinkedIn, but it said, Oh, do you want to share this on your feed and I was like No, so I don't know I think that that's partially, because I knew how hard it was for me like leaving the last place, and I kind of didn't want to just like rub it in which I don't know I I I guess truly like is because like I really did care about the people I was working with there, and I knew their lives are going to be made a little bit harder by me leaving and because I know the process. Like I had gone through that process with losing other coworkers, and all of that, and that was just like is very difficult. So I want to. I just remembered that, (Bee, Pos. 4)

Yeah, that's a good question. no defriending or anything. in fact, in my like. Good goodbye email and messages, I was saying, like, Hey, if you want to vent about the bachelor with me, like here are my like Instagram handle and my personal cell like if you're ever in Cincinnati like let's grab a coffee or something so like I definitely like left that invitation on the table. (Jakie, Pos. 90-92) |
|---|---|---|---|

| Posting non-controversial "safe" content | *Topic avoidance, not sharing too much, avoiding judgement, audiences get what they get* | | So I just became like Hyper. I think, aware of… Once I knew that I was planning on leaving and seeking out actively, seeking out other job opportunities. I just became hyper aware of what I was posting online, (Cassandra, Pos. 105-107)

Oh, no, I'm not gonna post that or do you just post everything. Use the private filters to kind of post specific things. How do you navigate that? Okay, I don't post everything. I only post something that I feel like confident about it, for instance, something like my love life. Sometimes I feel its something private to me and only some people, yeah. And also certain topics, maybe when I am supposed something about the same topic, like maybe family issues or something affecting me. Personally, I would say like I'll put some privacy or just not post it (Steff)

Sometimes I think about it like, if my boss saw this, would I be okay with that? I'm usually not one to post anything too controversial or like anything revealing or anything like that. (Bonnie, Pos. 62-63) |
| Changing visibility upon exit | *To maintain privacy, to avoid gossip, minimizing visibility but not blocking or defriending* | Some either limited or stopped limiting upon exit, | I I there really isn't anything that stands out all that much other than like it just seems like these people that I'd worked with for like a year. And then it was like all of a sudden, like we were like following each other, on Instagram, and like on Facebook and stuff and connecting that way. Sort of There's just like sort of all at once that it happened. That's the only thing I like stands out at that time. (Stevie, Pos. 56-59) * waited until exit to friend

I was like more hesitant to like post and stuff after that with of my bosses, because I was like she like. I don't know if she wants |

			me to even communicate with her anymore. So like to them on social media, but like I wasn't gonna unadd anyone. But I was like they're hesitant to interact after that. But but yeah, but leaving there, I mean I have been in the agency to face for like basically 2 and a half years, and I don't know. (Bee, Pos. 3) I personally avoided connecting with my immediate supervisors until I was getting close to leaving the organization (Mari, Pos. 7)
Strategy: Rewriting boundaries upon violation	*Violations*	Variety of violations summarized in quoted section	Person who was violated by boss sharing her engagement with the workplace (Cassandra) The one individual who had her boss tell everyone about her leaving and even it posted on social media (Natalie) Violation of coworker bringing up political post made her no longer post about politics (Bee) Person who marked boss watching their every move on social media as a violation (Carter)
Using more segmentation upon exit	*Wanting to keep work and life separate*	Once they leave a job, they tend to segment more as they transition into a new job	Most of my social media is private so there have been comments in not my current or the one just previous. But A few years ago I remember having coworkers who I was friends with outside of work. Talk about things that I posted inside of work like a party, or you went to dinner with so and so like mentioning things that I posted. But wouldn't have necessarily told other people that I work with who I didn't accept to follow me on those social media platforms. And it didn't really bother me but I did have I remember, for one person in particular. It was just like, Hey, don't mention I mean

| | | | there's nothing in there like if you mentioned it, I'm gonna get in trouble. But, like my social media, is private for a reason, because some of these people like I would rather not have conversations about anything other than work. (Harper, Pos. 178-184)
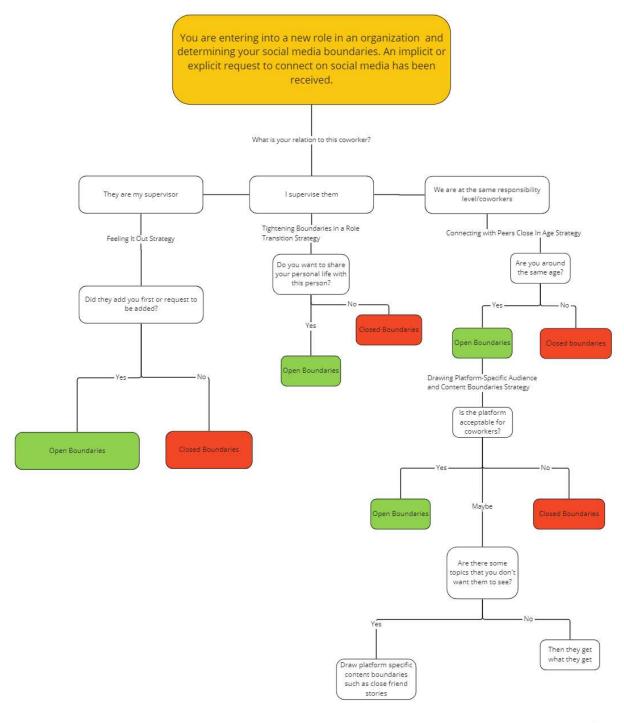
And I want to have some separation between my personal life and my professional life. not that I'm trying to block them from entering my life or my friend but it's more if I get to know them well enough to see if I wanna share all these nitty gritty parts that I want to share with my social network I wanna be careful. so I did extend friend request to my current coworkers whom I have met and at least had some conversations with but I have not extended that with people whom I have not interacted fully yet. so I'm still in that sort of watchful transition where like oh what kind of lines can I draw to keep my social network kind of effective and tight and welcoming without becoming too overwhelmed to a point where I get stressed out about oh I shouldn't say this or I shouldn't post this because so and so doesn't know me well enough or I shouldn't show this off or whatever. that sort of I think I'm also going through a social media where I'm trying to filter but not too much if that makes sense. (Mari, Pos. 27)

Well, I'll say my boundaries you know maybe my private, and I really want to keep something in my private life. I really wanna you know keep it private because I'm I don't want to, you know. Looking into my personal space, and you know knowing where everything that is actually going away with me, because I'm I'm not a celebrity, you know. I just want to, you |
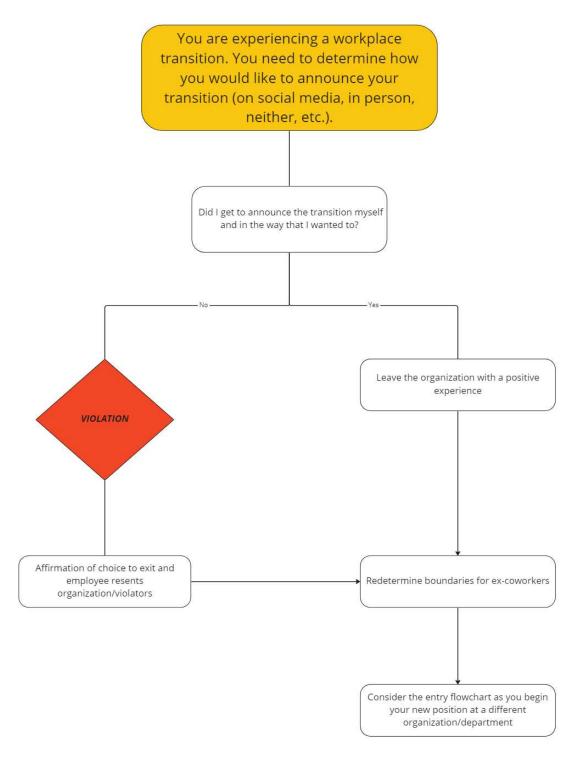
			know. Remember where I am. so I love, you know, keeping my private life private If if we are coworkers you know you can be friends with me. But you know it just like, you know, to keep it. You know, professional (Phil, Pos. 1)
Lacking in boundary work	*Not very active, not posting a lot in general, audiences get what they get, posting who you are of what is important to you*	Some type of code to capture how we post content about and for us, but we draw boundaries around that content as far as who can see it to make sure we are comfortable with the audience seeing that content Its like we draw a boundary around us and the audience and gather who we feel comfortable sharing ourselves with, the things we are proud of and the things we enjoy	Yeah, I think I don't give a I guess like in summary like I don't seem to give a lot of thought to whether coworkers see or like how they would interact. I mean my stuff feels like pretty pretty safe in that way. But I think like I kind of draw lines around who I connect with on social media. No, not that. I think it would like be that that much judgment. But I also feel like you know I don't friend those people because it's like some things are like just private, and I see like coworkers like a lot, and then if they're not if they don't follow me. Request to be like my friend and they probably want I'm assuming they probably want the same boundary. You, I guess, is how I feel about it. (Stevie, Pos. 222-228) That's just how we keep up with people and I wanna share things about my life with people, and whether they like it or not. (Bonnie, Pos. 180) Good question. I think for me I don't tend to post too much. But when I do I think it's really either meant to I think usually 2 things come up meant to share something that I found interesting, or or something that would build awareness for others if they saw it. And that's usually around like social justice different kind of causes. And then usually it's also something if I'm posting something it's also for for me I feel like for me. It was I usually would post a lot around food and cooking And so for me, it was more of like building this like personal kind of like quote scrapbook of different photos

			of me cooking these different dishes. And it's just yeah people can like it and and think it's cool, or say that it looks good or like, if they don't. And that's fine but for I think for it was always for me to do that kind of my own self expression, and I feel like that's the consistent way. (Lucas, Pos. 8)

APPENDIX H: ENTRY FLOWCHART

You are entering into a new role in an organization and determining your social media boundaries. An implicit or explicit request to connect on social media has been received.

What is your relation to this coworker?

They are my supervisor

I supervise them

We are at the same responsibility level/coworkers

Feeling It Out Strategy

Tightening Boundaries in a Role Transition Strategy

Connecting with Peers Close In Age Strategy

Did they add you first or request to be added?

Do you want to share your personal life with this person?

Are you around the same age?

No

Yes

Yes

No

Yes

No

Open Boundaries

Closed Boundaries

Closed Boundaries

Open Boundaries

Open Boundaries

Closed boundaries

Drawing Platform-Specific Audience and Content Boundaries Strategy

Is the platform acceptable for coworkers?

Yes

No

Open Boundaries

Maybe

Closed Boundaries

Are there some topics that you don't want them to see?

Yes

No

Draw platform specific content boundaries such as close friend stories

Then they get what they get

miro

APPENDIX I: EXIT FLOWCHART

You are experiencing a workplace transition. You need to determine how you would like to announce your transition (on social media, in person, neither, etc.).

Did I get to announce the transition myself and in the way that I wanted to?

No

Yes

VIOLATION

Leave the organization with a positive experience

Affirmation of choice to exit and employee resents organization/violators

Redetermine boundaries for ex-coworkers

Consider the entry flowchart as you begin your new position at a different organization/department

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