Coming Home Again

The Challenges and Rewards of Home-Based Self-Employment

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This article focuses on ways of negotiating and balancing work and family as identified by in-depth qualitative interviews with 20 women working as Mary Kay consultants. Areas such as detailed descriptions of work structures, how the women did their work, how they balanced their work and family demands on a daily basis, and their perceptions of how family obligations and gender influenced their choice of a job and their job experiences were investigated. Data revealed that women negotiate work and family using spatial, behavioral, temporal, social, and psychological strategies to manage internal and external temporal and spatial boundaries. Further research should continue to explore the interaction of work and family with other home-based self-employed occupations.

Keywords: *family; home-based business; self-employment; work*

"Where do you work?" is a relatively new question in human history, although human beings have always worked while providing care for all family members including dependent children and the elderly. Prior to industrialization, however, almost everyone lived close to where they worked. A little more than 100 years ago, nearly 90% of all Americans were self-employed, and many worked from inside their homes (Berner, 1994). However, in more recent times, this dropped to fewer than 9% of Americans (Berner, 1994), and the connections between work and family life became obscured by what Kanter (1977) called the myth of separate worlds, which assumes two worlds that operate according to their own laws. In still more recent years, however, sweeping economic, social, and demographic changes have transformed both the family and the workplace. Due to increasing work and family pressures, there has been a re-

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cent trend toward working from home. People now struggle with negotiating and balancing work and family in new and different ways.

HOME EMPLOYMENT

Home employment has been labeled as home-located production, home working (Felstead & Jewson, 2000), home-based work, home work (Christensen, 1988), or telecommuting (Nilles, 1982). Often terms are used interchangeably to describe "any paid work done in the home regardless of the employment status of the worker" (Christensen, 1988, p. 2), that is, in relation to those who work at home some of the time (Presser & Bamberger, 1993). These terms also cover "work that is either done exclusively in the home or based out of the home" (Christensen, 1988, p. 2).

The defining feature of home-located production is its spatial location. Researchers have envisioned this space as a *field* within a series of overlapping social relationships (Bourdieu, 1990): "The totality of relationships within this field—including the interactions, tensions and contradictions between them—is our focus. To be in work at home is to experience two worlds of meaning and organization within one locale" (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, p. 14).

Felstead and Jewson (2000, p. 20) asserted that people who work away from home would be less likely to experience the collision of production and reproduction in their lives, as their work activities take them away from the spatial location of housework and child care. In contrast, those who work at home are far more likely to experience the cross-cutting pressures of the two worlds. They typically have to negotiate some kind of compromise between the public and private spheres within the home.

According to Felstead and Jewson (2000), research has typically suggested that

> there are two contrasting strategies in combining home and work. These ideal types—defining the extreme ends of a continuum of responses—refer to the ways in which home-located producers define and use space and time in the home (Ahrentzen, 1990a; Beach, 1989; Bulos & Chaker, 1993, 1995; Christensen, 1985; Haddon & Lewis, 1994; Haddon & Silverstone, 1993; Huws et al., 1996; Michelson & Linden, 1997; Miraftab, 1996; Shamir, 1992). One approach, it is argued, is to establish a clear separation between domesticity and employment. This strategy seeks to replicate the conventional divisions of home and work within the household. The other strategy represents a fusion of the two activities, thereby generating a synthesis that reshapes and redefines the home. (pp. 144-145)

TABLE 1
Management of Temporal and Spatial Boundaries Within and Around the Home

Term Used	*Explanation*
Open	Weak external boundaries between the home and the outside world
Closed	Strong external boundaries between the home and the outside world
Segregation	Strong internal boundaries within the home between the times and places of paid work and domestic life
Integration	Weak internal boundaries within the home between the times and places of paid work and domestic life

SOURCE: Felstead and Jewson (2000).

Felstead and Jewson (2000) contended that this conceptualization offers a helpful beginning but does not fully capture the complexities of the situation or the range of options open to home-located producers. In fact, there are two different types of boundaries that home-located producers confront and negotiate. These include the management of boundaries between the household and the outside world (external boundaries) and the organization of boundaries among activities conducted within the household (internal boundaries). In addition, Felstead and Jewson distinguished between strategies of openness and closure with respect to boundaries between the household and the outside world. With respect to internal divisions among household activities and relationships, Felstead and Jewson distinguished strategies of segregation and integration. They emphasized that these concepts are ideal types and represent the ends of the continua rather than discrete entities (see Table 1).

Other research investigating home-work boundaries includes that of Ahrentzen (1990a, 1990b), who explored the spatial, temporal, behavioral, and social boundaries that individuals create to manage role conflict and role overlap. Her thesis is similar to Pleck's (1984), which argued that home or work roles intrude on the time and space that is equated with the opposite realm's roles, particularly for women. Both Ahrentzen (1990b) and Christensen (1988) advocated distinct spatial, temporal, behavioral, and social boundaries between domestic and work life to restrict and control information and/or interaction from one role setting to another.

Nippert-Eng (1996), on the other hand, differentiated between physical, behavioral, and cognitive action and examined the process by which spatial and temporal boundaries are created, negotiated, maintained, and transformed in everyday life. Critical to her discussion is the concept of boundary permeability. In contrast to Pleck (1984), Nippert-Eng focused

on the ability of people to make mental transitions between the realms rather than the ease with which one role can invade and assume the territory that individuals associate with the other, as Pleck claimed. According to Nippert-Eng, individuals draw lines between realms (boundary placement) but also jump back and forth between the two realms (boundary transcendence). These two processes may be continually adjusted to accommodate different conceptualizations of these realms.

Thus, as Nippert-Eng (1996) noted, boundary work is affected by and reflected in three components:

> (1) The degree to which the people of either realm overlap; (2) the degree to which the objects (ranging from task-specific "tools," in the most general sense of the word, to decorations) and ambiance of the surroundings are similar/different; and (3) the degree to which we think, act, and present ourselves in either realm in similar/different ways. (p. 8)

Additionally,

> The home-work boundary varies for any given person largely according to expectations associated with the following: occupation, work organization, work group, and hierarchical position held within these, gender, family structure, spouse's wage work, one's parenting role, and domestic labor role. Each of these social statuses encapsulates historical, cultural norms about the meaning of home and work, the kinds of activities and ways of being each entails, and the ways each "kind" of person should experience these realms. . . . Furthermore, any individual negotiates these statuses within specific physical environments. (p. 14)

The more individuals integrate work and home, the greater is the focus they must give to boundary placement. The more individuals segment home and work, however, the greater is the transformation they must make between these worlds (Nippert-Eng, 1996, p. 27). Both McLaughlin (1981) and Nippert-Eng (1996) have suggested that permeable and malleable spatial and temporal arrangements in the home facilitate integration of work and domestic life. Therefore, sharing work and family space encourages more sharing of work and family roles (Beach, 1989).

The spatial location of home-located production places gender issues in the forefront (Felstead & Jewson, 2000). Family relationships and the division of household labor reflect deeply ingrained ideas about masculinity and femininity. These ideas set the framework for the activities, roles, and responsibilities of home-located production.

When deciding how to accommodate paid employment in the home, "home-located producers and other household members may be forced to

articulate and operationalize principles and beliefs about domestic time and space that are not commonly expressed in an explicit and direct form" (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, p. 143). Home is often a place of unpaid work for women, especially with respect to nurturing, caring, and expending emotional labor. Because of the gendered nature of household regimes, under certain circumstances, women may perceive paid employment at home as affording them power and control (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, pp. 149-150). In addition, "the introduction of relations of production into the home has different consequences for male and female home-located producers—as well as for other household members" (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, pp. 20-21).

Research has found that integration is an accommodation strategy more commonly associated with women than men (Haddon & Lewis, 1994; Haddon & Silverstone, 1993; Salmi, 1997b), particularly women with young children (Salmi, 1996, 1997a, 1997b). "Both women and men saw homeworking as positive insofar as it allowed women to earn wages without neglecting those domestic tasks defined as feminine" (Gringeri, 1994, p. 103). Beach (1989) found that the women in her sample were more likely to use domestic space as a work site; to have children (especially of preschool age) present while working; to have a shorter, more frequently interrupted workday and work time; and to perform more household chores. However, Michelson and Linden (1997) found in their study of 22 Swedish teleworkers that gender was less important in determining whether an integration or segregation strategy was followed than employment status (self-employed/employee), hours of work (full-time/part-time), and length of time spent in the home. Felstead and Jewson (2000) argued that each household generates a characteristic pattern of spatial and temporal strategies for combining home and work.

DIRECT SALES

Direct sales is one occupational field in which individuals work at home. Direct sales is defined as "the marketing of products or services directly to a consumer, on a one-to-one or small group (party plan) basis" (Juth, 1985, p. 1). Most direct sellers are independent contractors who operate as a link between a manufacturer or service company and the consumer. Therefore, "direct selling lets you be in business for yourself but not by yourself" (Denalli, 1993, p. 69). There are approximately 4 million direct salespeople in the United States. Of these 4 million, only 6% work full-time (Denalli, 1993), whereas more than 60% work fewer than 10 hours a week (Wenrick, 1983). Most direct salespeople are younger than

the age of 45, married, and middle class and have another paying job (Crawford & Crawford, 1988). Almost 90% are women, and most direct sellers supplement family income or income from another job (Denalli, 1993). As a secondary income opportunity, selling competes with family, hobbies, and a primary job for the worker's time (Biggart, 1990). Therefore, the balancing act becomes much more complicated, and many direct salespeople need to balance not just one job, but two jobs, in addition to their family.

Within the past 20 years, the field of direct sales of products has become increasingly female dominated (Lopata, Miller, & Barnewolt, 1984). One reason is that direct selling is attractive to women who would like to run their own business but do not have the resources to start from scratch or purchase a franchise (Connelly & Rhoton, 1988; Denalli, 1993; Wenrick, 1983). Direct sales also provides an entry into the business world for individuals without the formal work skills or experience needed for employment in other organizations (Connelly & Rhoton, 1988; Sunden, 1983; Wenrick, 1983; Wotruba, 1992). Other women leave organizational jobs because of frustration at the inflexibility of the organization and the difficulties of achieving promotion in such circumstances (Green & Cohen, 1995) or because of the difficulties of finding adequate and consistent day care arrangements (Froberg, Gjerdingen, & Preston, 1986; Lee, Duxbury, Higgins, & Mills, 1992/1993). In addition to extrinsic rewards such as income, individuals also enter direct sales for intrinsic rewards including feelings of accomplishment, self-fulfillment, increased self-esteem, friendship, a flexible work situation that dovetails with their family responsibilities and other lifestyle interests (Wotruba, 1992), and recognition, something women usually do not get at home (Cox, 1963). Training in direct sales is typically done on the job under the guidance of a seasoned associate (Sunden, 1983). Examples of direct selling organizations include Amway, Avon, Tupperware, Shaklee, and Mary Kay Cosmetics.

Mary Kay Cosmetics was founded in 1964 by Mary Kay Ash and her son Richard Rogers. Mary Kay's overriding objective was "to establish a company that would give unlimited opportunity to women" (Ash, 1984, p. xviii). She deliberately founded a direct selling business because the flexibility provided in terms of time and number of hours worked would be appealing to women (Hattwick, 1987). The position as beauty consultant was purposefully designed to be a part-time position, leaving time for another full-time job or taking care of the family. A position with more responsibilities, called sales director, was created for those salespersons

who wanted to earn a larger income than a beauty consultant (Hattwick, 1987). Mary Kay Cosmetics, the largest direct seller of skin products in the nation, is a *Fortune* 500 company and has been listed as one of the 10 best companies for which women can work (Rogers, 1993). In 1993, Mary Kay Cosmetics had "a sales force of more than 300,000, offering a range of some 200 [skin care or makeup] products to women in 19 countries around the world" (Rogers, 1993, p. 7). "Women from all walks of life have attained goals never imagined" (Harley, 1993, p. 7).

The success of any direct sales organization is based on its ability to recruit and retain employees. Therefore, in response to current trends, Mary Kay Cosmetics has altered its recruitment strategies to appeal to contemporary women. Today, Mary Kay Cosmetics has "one of the lowest turnover rates [of consultants] in the direct selling industry" (Gates, 1988, p. 100). The average age of a Mary Kay consultant is just under 40 years, and 60% of consultants have other employment in addition to their Mary Kay business (Gates, 1988).

Green and Cohen (1995) found that self-employment does offer ways of accommodating women's dual roles as mothers and professionals. Many women are attracted to the opportunity of being a Mary Kay consultant because they expect to be able to have control over their schedule and do their paid work during times of the day and week that they do not have to meet household obligations. They also look forward to being able to meet the needs of their family by being home with their children and not having to rely on day care, for example. Work as a Mary Kay consultant contrasts with many other occupations that require employees to be at a designated site for specified hours during the day or night (McIlwee & Robinson, 1992; Pringle, 1989; Rosen, 1987).

Therefore, one of the prime motivators that women have for becoming a Mary Kay consultant is that the total amount of their time devoted to selling can fluctuate and they can fit direct sales into their day. As Connelly and Rhoton (1988) noted, "In contrast to other types of work, direct sales is less likely to create problems in other spheres. By its very nature, this work can be fit into one's existing life demands and constraints" (p. 246). Women can decide to work fewer hours as a Mary Kay consultant during busy family times, such as the summer and/or holidays, when children are home from school, and work more hours as a consultant during times when responsibilities from children and/or spouse are lessened, such as during the school year, when children are in school during the day. Therefore, restructuring their work as a Mary Kay consultant is one way of coping with juggling paid and unpaid labor.

Although Green and Cohen (1995) discussed women's dual roles as mothers and professionals, they neglected the role of spouse. Being a Mary Kay consultant

> seems to reflect a uniquely feminine work experience. Spouses of consultants have peripheral involvement in their wives' work. There is also a great deal of emphasis placed on nurturance and support, which coexists and even dominates the emphasis on success. (Connelly & Rhoton, 1987, p. 247)

Thus, it seems that being a Mary Kay consultant could have little to no effect on a woman's role as spouse.

It would appear that being a Mary Kay consultant provides the sort of flexibility that makes paid work compatible with family responsibilities. At the same time, however, Mary Kay consultants must work many hours consistently if they are to be successful, especially in the first few years, when they must establish themselves in the business. These hours have to be compatible with the needs of prospective clients, which means that most consultants spend at least some evenings and weekends holding appointments, attending meetings, and so on, particularly if they work another job in addition to their Mary Kay consulting. Evenings and weekends are also times when many family activities take place and when nonparental child care is most difficult to arrange. Therefore, if a woman desires to be successful, there may be conflict between work and family expectations and needs.

In addition, being self-employed and working out of one's home poses unique challenges that do not arise when the workplace is separate from home. One challenge is drawing the lines between home and work when work is home and home is work. How are boundaries negotiated, placed, maintained, and transformed (Nippert-Eng, 1996)? The home and work environments are inseparable and are not mutually exclusive for individuals who work at home (Ishii-Kuntz, 1994). However, because work and family roles are so intertwined, it may be difficult to identify sources of such conflicts (Ishii-Kuntz, 1994). Because Mary Kay consultants work from home, the usual boundaries between home and work can easily be blurred. Developing clear boundaries between work and domestic life can be important, but first consultants must discover where the boundaries lie between the two systems and decide if and how they want to alter these boundaries.

The creation, placement, maintenance, and transformation of boundaries includes physical, behavioral, and mental action (Nippert-Eng, 1996); whereas the different types of boundaries enacted are spatial, be-

havioral, temporal, social, and psychological (Altman, 1975). Examples of spatial boundaries between home and work include having separate office space, a dedicated business telephone line (Michaels, 1997), specific furniture and equipment, and closed doors (Shamir, 1992). Behavioral boundaries include hiring a babysitter during work hours or limiting work to hours when the children are in school, in child care, or asleep (Michaels, 1997), whereas temporal boundaries include the scheduling of home and work activities and deciding whether and how to reschedule them (Ahrentzen, 1990b). Social boundaries are based on the roles and responsibilities of household workers (Ahrentzen, 1990b), and psychological boundaries include drawing conceptual lines between home and work and filtering what is passed from one to the other (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

For women working as a Mary Kay consultant, "the dual character of their work lives" (Berk, 1988) is shaped by all of these factors: the nature of the work, the schedules of both spouses, their gender ideologies, the availability of other household laborers, and the boundaries developed between home and work. Indeed, the Mary Kay philosophy is God first, family second, and work third in terms of priorities (Ash, 1981, p. 56). Thus, the purpose of this project is to discover how Mary Kay consultants who are mothers and wives interweave their paid and unpaid labor based on the relative flexibility and constraints of both types of work. My analysis, therefore, focuses on the distinctive conjunction of social relations of production and reproduction this entails or the juxtaposition of these two sets of relationships within the home. My thesis is that the various ways in which the two worlds of home and work overlap one another create a complex mosaic of social relations and that home-located production is intrinsically diverse and multifaceted. In addition, individuals do boundary work relative to their situations using strategies that may or may not be shared by others. Therefore, by analyzing women's ways of negotiating household work and jobs, I hope to provide insights about the conditions of work and family life that contribute to or inhibit the satisfactory mediation by women of activities in each sphere.

METHOD

I developed preliminary insights into the lives of Mary Kay consultants while (a) self-employed as a consultant, (b) married, and (c) commuting to a full-time job at a small undergraduate liberal arts college. Although my husband and I do not have any children, I struggled with "how to do it all." Insights from this fieldwork helped me to develop general areas of inquiry

and appropriate research methods for this formal study. Thus, information was gathered in a number of ways. Initially, interest was developed through participant observation as a Mary Kay consultant, which included attendance at Mary Kay parties, training meetings, and other events beginning in the summer of 1993.

Semistructured qualitative interviews were then conducted during the summer and fall of 1997 with 20 women working as Mary Kay consultants, probing such areas as detailed descriptions of work structures, how the women did their work, what attracted them to the job, how closely their experiences matched their expectations, how they balanced their work and family demands on a daily basis, and their perceptions of how family obligations and gender influenced their choice of a job and their job experiences. The average length of the interviews was 2½ hours with a range of 1 to 3 hours. Each consultant was asked the same general questions so that comparable data would be available across cases. Written notes were taken during the interviews to supplement the transcriptions.

Participants were selected based on the following criteria: They had to be married, with children at home, and had to have worked as a Mary Kay consultant a minimum of 3 months. I focused on married women with children at home because they were likely to have more demanding domestic obligations than women without children or women who were not married. The director of my unit gave me the names of all consultants from our unit who met these criteria. They were then contacted and asked if they would be willing to participate in a research study. Of the 24 contacted, only 4 declined to be interviewed. In addition, several directors of other units who were friends with my director were also contacted and asked for the names of unit members who might be willing to participate in this study.

Gaining entrance into the Mary Kay community was not an easy task despite being a member. Although my own director was very open and encouraged our unit members to participate, I was unable to obtain interviews with any members of other units, with the exception of several directors. I believe my relationship with my own unit members was the reason they allowed me to interview them.

The length of time interviewees were employed as a Mary Kay consultant ranged from 5 months to 19 years. The average age was 40 years with an age range of 28 to 50 years. Number of children ranged from one to three with an age range of 8 months to 19 years. Fifteen of the 20 consultants considered themselves employed part-time as Mary Kay consultants, whereas the other 5 described themselves as employed full-time with Mary Kay. Nine of them had no other employment, whereas 6 were employed full-time and 5 were employed part-time in addition to being a

Mary Kay consultant. All 11 jobs were outside the home. Two of the 20 were currently the sole breadwinners in the household, whereas the other 18 consultants shared breadwinning responsibilities with their spouse. All 20 were White, and their socioeconomic status ranged from lower-middle to upper-middle class. Six had some college education, 7 were college graduates, and 3 had advanced degrees. Approximately half were mainline Protestants (e.g., Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist), and half were from the Catholic tradition. The marital status and age distributions of my sample are typical of Mary Kay consultants according to previous research on the direct sales population (Crawford & Crawford, 1988).

The strategies for managing temporal and spatial boundaries identified by Felstead and Jewson (2000) and the typology of boundaries identified by Altman (1975) served as useful frameworks for data analysis. The discussion and analysis incorporate responses from the interviews as well as material from the participant observation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women's lives are typically lived as connections to others (Gilligan, 1982). This concept is seen in the lives of these Mary Kay consultants. All 20 of the women interviewed were able to identify and discuss ways in which they separated, as well as integrated, work and family life, both internally and externally. Similar to previous findings on home work (e.g., Thomas & Reskin, 1990; Wotruba, 1992), many specifically got into the field of direct sales for the purpose of being able to integrate work and family spheres rather than keep them separate. However, once into their work as a Mary Kay consultant, they realized that integration of work and family life could be challenging. For some, this challenge was not unwelcome, whereas others found unexpected hurdles. For example, consultants now had to create and manage boundaries not only within the household but also between the household and the outside world in new and different ways.

EXTERNAL WORK AND FAMILY BOUNDARIES

Spatial Boundaries

Spatial boundaries could include the actual physical area, equipment, and furnishings used primarily for work purposes. It could also include restricting access to work space as a way to set spatial boundaries

(Ahrentzen, 1990b). Although the majority of the literature on home-based businesses focuses on spatial boundaries between work and family within the household, boundaries between the household and outside world are also important, particularly when individuals are self-employed and work out of their home. Ways that consultants encouraged open interaction spatially between domestic life and the outside included having classes at home and having customers pick up products at their house. In fact, consultants are encouraged by the Mary Kay company to have an open house during the holiday season and invite their customers into their homes for cookies and cider and to purchase Mary Kay products as gifts.

One consultant discussed spatial boundaries metaphorically. As she noted,

> A big milestone for me was putting that decal on my car. . . . I was proud of it. I wasn't afraid for people to know that I did it. I wasn't afraid to have it on my car. Not that people are running after me oh, you sell Mary Kay. I haven't gotten customers that way, but it's kind of symbolic, it's the way I felt about my work with Mary Kay.

She felt comfortable identifying herself as a Mary Kay consultant to the outside world by putting a Mary Kay decal on the family car.

An example of a shared work tool is the telephone, which can be shared between domestic life and work purposes. Many consultants only had one phone line for both their Mary Kay work and their family. In addition, the answering machine greeting for the machine used by the entire family was typically only recorded by the Mary Kay consultant and began by stating that this was the household of a Mary Kay consultant.

The majority of consultants had jobs that they considered their primary occupation in addition to being a Mary Kay consultant. Some had more open boundaries between their two jobs than others did. For example, consultants mentioned picking up products from their recruiter on their way to and from work, having the recruiter drop off products at work, or asking their school principal to allow a Mary Kay display table at a school festival.

In many ways, consultants also negotiated and maintained closed, clear, and unambiguous spatial lines between the private life of home and demands of employment. Consultants with young children chose not to have classes at home because of the ages of their children. One consultant with an 8-month-old boy and a 5-year-old girl said,

> It's difficult having facials in the house that's for sure. I did two times with people, but between him and her it just made me totally embarrassed. . . . I can't have people coming in trying to explain things and having the kids crying and screaming. When they get a little bit older I can get a sitter or when she's in school then I'll do it more. I prefer to go out and do a class somewhere when I could.

A few consultants chose to draw lines spatially between the outside world and family life by having a separate telephone line for their Mary Kay business. Others used phone techniques such as not picking up call waiting when talking to customers, even though family and work shared the same telephone line. Although no one in this sample only held classes away from home or delivered all their products and did not allow customers to come by and pick up products, these are ways that consultants could also draw closed lines between work and family.

The majority of those who were employed in addition to being a Mary Kay consultant had very closed boundaries between Mary Kay and their work environment. Many never gave out their work number to Mary Kay clients, but only their home number; they got few Mary Kay calls at work; and they sold products at work discreetly or not at all. If they did make calls regarding Mary Kay from work, they only did it while on break. They were aware, consciously or subconsciously, of the work culture. One consultant remarked,

> There are times when it's not appropriate, like when I'm at work situations, it's really not the place or time. So, I haven't maybe taken advantage of all the opportunities that I could to get my name out. But I'm real conservative, I think, in pushing the product at an appropriate time.

Behavioral Boundaries

Behavioral boundaries explore the overlap between domestic/personal life and work activities, for example, driving children to school; household members and others making demands on the homeworker while she is working, such as stopping by to talk; and receiving business calls "after work" or during meals (Ahrentzen, 1990b). One common boundary issue for homeworkers to negotiate is interaction with the outside world in the form of interruptions from people stopping by or calling (Ahrentzen, 1990b). It is not uncommon to receive solicitations for donations more often because of working at home and being perceived as available during the daytime. As one consultant said,

> I never answer the phone, because when you get on them, the people who are calling are like me, they're outgoing—they're either coaches or something or PTA people and you know they are outgoing. So they always have a lot to say, too, and then you can't get off the *** phone.

Another consultant agreed, saying, "I think probably the biggest thing that I have done to reduce the amount of interruptions in my daily schedule is not answer the phone."

Several of the consultants in my sample indicated very open behavioral boundaries between domestic life and the outside world. For example, one woman described her husband in the following way:

> He'll have me make up a basket so he raffles the basket off at these trade shows he does. . . . He told a lot of women at work and he brought home some names and addresses to put on the preferred mailing list from people he works with. I don't even know the women, but he brought home their names and addresses and I put them on my mailing list . . . and he'll make deliveries for me. Yeah, he's dropped things off for me at friends' . . . houses. One time he went to a neighbor's house and dropped something off on the street, he got out of the car to drop it off and the husband goes, "Boy, they don't make Mary Kay women like they used to" or something. [Laughs]

Other consultants' husbands were active in attending Mary Kay workshops, conferences, and social events. For many, participation by a spouse in Mary Kay events illustrated support in this venture. One consultant stated,

> He did go with me to the Poconos [Mary Kay workshop] a few years ago, which for him to take off work and make that trip with me, if you knew my husband, you would think that is a real commitment on his part because his schedule, he really changes it for no one or anything, including family members. We go on vacation based on his schedule and all.

For others, such as a Mary Kay director, spousal interaction with the outside world is a common expectation.

Beach (1989) found that the majority of homeworkers interviewed had spouses who were directly involved in their work. This involvement ranged from participating as a full-time worker to helping with portions of the workload, even when the spouse held other outside employment. Thus, the presence of work in the home can provide an opportunity for assisting and sharing a spouse's workload and a common ground for mutual endeavor. For example, one consultant said that her husband

> does most of my computer work now as it is so, I mean, he is good with that—I can turn it on and off and do a few things but it takes me hours where he can do it in a couple of minutes.

Another woman shared, "Mary Kay offers you the opportunity to travel with your spouse." Therefore, her husband is

> going to come to leadership [seminar] with me . . . and he'll go to one set of classes and I go to the other. And then he tells me the notes. . . . He likes going to those leadership classes. Because then he goes back and he uses it [the information learned] with his own job.

This involvement was also true for many of the children of the Mary Kay consultants. Children answer the telephone and take orders, hand out business cards, ask individuals whether they want facials, solicit orders, assist with classes, and deliver products. Some consultants exchanged Mary Kay products for services such as baby-sitting or clerical work, and occasionally grandparents baby-sat so a consultant could do classes. One woman stated, "When you have your own business it feels like you can share it more with your family than going out to work in corporate America and working for somebody else."

There were several consultants who discussed open boundaries between their other employment and their work as a consultant. For example, they could sell Mary Kay products openly at work to fellow employees, including their boss. One consultant who is an elementary school teacher during the day stated, "I've got lots of customers among my teacher friends and a number of the parents know that I'm selling." In addition, she said,

> And with my own daughter who became a recruit—Michelle sells Mary Kay out of Indianapolis to college students and people in the area. Actually, it ends up being her professors probably more than the students because they have more money.

Another technique encouraged by Mary Kay directors is the concept of "warm chatter." Consultants are to talk about Mary Kay to whomever they interact with in their daily lives. One director shared,

> What I try to do is not eat, sleep, and drink Mary Kay, but I try to incorporate it in my day. Like, I always have my cards. If I go to a restaurant, I always give my card out. It's like every time money exchanges my hand, my business card is right there. If I'm buying a pair of shoes, why can't they buy

> from my store? It just happens to be at my home, so I always try to think of it that way.

It is also typical as a Mary Kay consultant to have closed or clear and unambiguous lines between the private life of home and the demands of employment. Although some consultants are friends on both a personal and a professional level, many do not share their personal life with many other consultants. This could be a result of how this particular director runs her unit, that is, meetings done in a large-group format with little to no time for interaction in small groups except after the meeting is concluded. However, without encouragement, many feel uncomfortable interacting with those they do not know and/or have family responsibilities they rush home for. Thus, there is little to no interaction of the majority of consultants in small groups outside of specific cliques. Also, topics covered in unit meetings typically address work issues and not family issues. Thus, the focus of the unit meeting is unidimensional and does not encourage interaction between the outside world and family life.

Temporal Boundaries

Temporal boundaries include the scheduling of activities, that is, hours of work done in one block versus hours of work done in scattered blocks, rescheduling domestic and work activities, or using tools such as an answering machine to set temporal boundaries (Ahrentzen, 1990b). Few, if any, consultants mentioned open, easy, and ready interaction between household and outside in a temporal sense. More often than not, consultants mentioned closed lines between private life of home and demands of employment in terms of time. Using the answering machine rather than answering the phone set boundaries around when the outside world could intrude on work life and helped consultants in managing their time more effectively. Other consultants rescheduled their domestic and work activities, took time off for surprise trips, rearranged appointments for family celebrations, and canceled appointments to take care of an ill parent. One consultant stated,

> Last winter . . . my mother was very ill and had several surgeries, and . . . there were many times where I would get the kids off to school, get in the car, and drive to . . . where she lives . . . and, I remember driving there and thinking, if I was still working for a company—all I had to do this morning was make sure somebody would get my kids from school. And, anything else that I needed—if I had a facial or appointment scheduled, I just called and said, "I'll get somebody else to come and do it for you, or can we do it

> another day, I have to go tend to my mom." . . . But if I was working for someone else, the hoops that I would have to jump through and the stress and the tension and the anxiety. . . . And as it was, I was really able to focus on: What does she need and how can I participate in providing that?

All of these were ways that consultants mentioned demarcating temporal boundaries between the household and the outside world.

Social Boundaries

Social boundaries are defined in this context as the roles and responsibilities of household workers (Ahrentzen, 1990b). Many became Mary Kay consultants as a way to bridge the gap between being a working mom and a stay-at-home mom and to develop and maintain a social life or friendships. A woman who had been an executive recruiter and had run a recruiting office for a search firm said,

> Ninety percent of my Mary Kay business is sitting and having a cup of tea with somebody at their kitchen table and playing with makeup. And talking about kids and talking about school and talking about the UPS strike, you know, whatever it is that's going on, while we play with makeup. And then, when we're all done, people write me a check! And it's this amazing thing! . . . So, I guess my motivation [for being a consultant] is at least as much social as it is [financial], social for me and for them.

One consultant specifically addressed the fact that she had negotiated closed boundaries between her domestic life and her life outside the home:

> I think I want to intertwine it more than I have. In the past I've tried to keep it more separate. I think I want to try to integrate it into work and integrate it into school, 'cause I'm going to school. Maybe integrate it more than keep it separate. I think that would be beneficial. I think that would help sell products.

Psychological Boundaries

According to Nippert-Eng (1996), "boundary work is first and foremost a mental activity" (p. 7). Ahrentzen (1990b) defined the changed meaning of one's home as a psychological boundary. The majority of the consultants noted that they were the same person whether they were doing Mary Kay or interacting with their friends (i.e., not the professional me

and the personal me), whereas one fourth of the consultants said that they can be a different person when doing Mary Kay work. One woman said,

> I feel different when I'm working my regular job than I do when I'm selling Mary Kay. Of course the pressure isn't there on Mary Kay. Nobody's standing over there saying, "You've got to give me 8 hours. You only get 30 minutes for lunch. Not 31. Fifteen minutes for break." You know? So, yeah, I do, I feel different when I sell Mary Kay. It's like, "I'm the boss. I can take an hour for lunch."

She went on to say,

> When I sell Mary Kay I can be somebody different. I can let my hair out and be different. . . . I can be Mary Ann, the Miss Priss, or I can be sophisticated, or . . . I can pretend, and I can play the role. And I like that.

Many talked about anything and everything about Mary Kay to others, whereas some shared positive aspects of Mary Kay but not negative ones, and others shared information about Mary Kay products but not the corporation. One consultant also mentioned that she would vent her frustrations with Mary Kay to friends. As one consultant put it,

> I don't know [why I don't talk about the down sides of Mary Kay with others]. It's sort of like talking about your husband leaving his underwear on the floor or something. [Laughs] If I have a fight with my husband, we can be like really mad at each other, I can be really hurt, really angry, really whatever. But within 24 hours it's done, it's gone. If I tell you about it in that 24-hour period of time, you remember it forever. . . . [My husband] and I aren't even thinking about it any more 2 days later. So, I guess I think of it the same way with the Mary Kay stuff. Anything that's not going well, is incredibly temporary, and so, rather than me have a discussion with somebody who may not real sure why I'm doing this anyway. Rather than me have a discussion with them about what's wrong today that they're—it's fleeting information that they remember forever. It's a temporary condition, that only becomes permanent when people choose to grab onto it.

The Mary Kay company stresses dressing professionally, that is, wearing a dress, whenever representing the company. In addition, the company has different "uniforms," which represent different levels of advancement in the company. For example, there is a special suit that only people who have attained the position of director can purchase and wear. There is also a uniform consisting of a red jacket, white blouse, and black skirt, which

indicates you have at least several recruits under you. Several individuals talked about how the clothing they wore had a psychological impact on their behavior and how they viewed themselves. One consultant said,

> I loved getting my red jacket because I feel more business-like. I feel more professional and I feel that I am a much more involved voice in the planning of the meetings and what we do and what we develop.

Another consultant commented,

> You have your Mary Kay image on, or whatever. . . . You're trying to be a good Mary Kay consultant. You want to be professional and knowledgeable, so I think you have to present a certain appearance that, when I'm in my sneakers and jeans, doesn't come across.

However, this style of dress also turned off many consultants.

INTERNAL WORK AND FAMILY BOUNDARIES

Spatial Boundaries

As mentioned previously, examples of spatial boundaries between home and work identified in previous research on home-based businesses have primarily focused on how to carve out a space for the work domain separate from the family domain within the home. These include having separate office space, a dedicated business telephone line (Michaels, 1997), specific furniture and equipment, and closed doors (Shamir, 1992). Spatial strategies used by the Mary Kay consultants in this study to segment work and domestic life included having a separate space for their Mary Kay business, shutting the office door, keeping all their Mary Kay materials in one place, and having no Mary Kay reading material in the bedroom. For example, one mother with a teenage son stated, "We put doors up. . . . That way I could go in my office, close the door, and when the door was closed. . . . That helps to some degree."

A woman with a 5-year-old daughter stated,

> I . . . had my business scattered all about so this past winter I converted what used to be Alex's nursery into my doll room and my office so I have a computer and I have stuff on the computer so that's helped with being more organized.

One respondent with a teenage son discussed carving out a space for family from the work domain in addition to carving out a space for work from the family domain:

> You have to physically make changes when you've finished work, so that you know you can begin to relax. I've learned to shut my office door. I've learned to put the answering machine on when I change clothes. . . . If I really want to get away in my bedroom, there's certain rules I have. I don't ever bring my Mary Kay reading material . . . into my bedroom.

It is also possible to integrate work and domestic life, and women working at home frequently shared that space with children (Beach, 1989). One consultant remarked of her son,

> Even if I'm on the phone, he can sit at my table in my office. He does that a lot. 'Cause if he's doing math problems, I'll be on the phone, but if he gets stuck, when I'm off the phone I'll help him with a math problem and then go back to the phone.

One consultant with two teenage daughters shared use of the telephone: "My daughter went to Germany. So last night I got to call all my customers, without being interrupted with my daughter. My younger daughter is a phone hog."

Behavioral Boundaries

Examples of behavioral boundaries that segment work and domestic life include hiring a baby-sitter during work hours or limiting work to hours when the children are in school, in child care, or asleep (Michaels, 1997). Behavioral strategies utilized by the women interviewed included developing rituals, using a weekly plan sheet, having rules about phone use and television noise, and having routines or set days to do specific tasks. A respondent with children ages 14, 12, and 5 noted,

> I have to designate a time to do my paperwork every day. I just start, usually in the morning when I have peace and quiet. . . . I go in my office for about an hour and get all the paperwork done. Then it is out of the way and it's not a burden to me the rest of the day. . . . I feel that I am more productive doing my paperwork and all the things like that without any interruptions when I have the quietness, then I don't have to worry about the family because that can be distracting.

Mary Kay consultants are strongly encouraged to use a planner and plan their day, as well as their week and month, in advance. Specific tools or suggestions promoted by Mary Kay include the "6 Most Important Things List" as well as a weekly plan sheet and date book. Three fourths of the consultants talked about using some tool to negotiate and maintain segregation between work and family boundaries. One advantage of planning is that it enables one to do more things at once or integrate work and family life. For example, according to one consultant,

> You can do other things while you work, particularly if you're on the phone. And you have a lot of phone work. I can be loading the dishwasher, or putting a load of clothes in the laundry. Things that other women can't even think about when they're at their job. But I can do that while I'm still concentrating on a phone call.

She went on to add,

> Sometimes you have "dead" time on a weekend, or you just have time to clean your office if you have an extra half hour and you're thinking about something you want to get done, you can just go do it and not have to wait till Monday morning.

Another consultant stated, "When I'm getting a shower, when I'm putting makeup on, I listen to Mary Kay tapes. While I'm cooking dinner there's a Mary Kay tape on." Beach (1989) suggested that permeable and malleable spatial and temporal arrangements in the home facilitate integration of work and domestic lives for homeworkers' families.

Many Mary Kay consultants noted that the ages of their children had an effect on the need for and types of strategies used to develop and maintain work and family boundaries within the home. For example, the cognitive abilities of the children to understand rules and boundaries had an influence on how and what kinds of boundaries these women could negotiate. Also, the social development of the children also influenced their level of independence and how much attention they needed to have from their mother. A respondent who became a Mary Kay consultant when her children, now 14 and 12, were 3 and 2, said that she noticed these changes in her children as they aged:

> Usually . . . I'll just say, tell them individually, I am gonna be working on the phone for an hour or whatever and designate a time so that they know that and they don't interrupt me because I am working and doing my phone work. So then I go in the office and the door is shut and they know not to

> bother me. But there are a few exceptions when . . . they do interrupt me, but they are getting better at it.

Another respondent with three boys ages 11, 13, and 14 explained, "My kids interrupt all the time. That's the other down side of working at home. You can't lock the office door. Every year that they're older, less interruptions."

Many spoke of how work and domestic life were integrated behaviorally. For example, one woman laughed about the fact that her teenage daughter wanted her to do facials for all her friends. Others talked about how their spouses helped load and unload the car for classes, came up with ideas for open house, helped with record keeping, helped fill orders, unpacked orders, put labels on products, and stamped sales information. Their children participated by stapling newsletters, putting labels on products, making up new cards for classes, cleaning mirrors, carrying bags to the car, and doing inventory. Again, the presence of work in the home provided an opportunity for assisting and sharing in the workload and a common ground for mutual endeavor for both spouses and children of the Mary Kay consultant.

One of the challenges of integrating domestic life and work can be that "home is not a peaceful environment," as one consultant stated. A consultant with a 5-year-old girl and 6- and 7-year-old boys noted,

> Home can get tiring and the walls close in on you. You've had enough of being here and you need to get out. Kids can be distracting at the same time—mommy do this, mommy do that and it's hard to make phone calls a lot of time if the kids are needing me or deciding to be ornery or fighting or whatever.

Ahrentzen (1990b) found that many individuals started activities such as exercise and socializing with others because working at home was getting claustrophobic.

Consultants also struggled with being perceived as "not really working" by self and others. One consultant said, "When the kids were younger and went to school they would say, 'Oh, my mom doesn't work, she's at home.' " Another consultant with a 5-year-old daughter said,

> Like when she was like 2-3, she really kind of didn't know, but at one point she made a comment to me, this was when she was about 4, we talked about work and college and all and she said, "I'm not going to work, you don't work." I thought, oh, you're going to college and you're going to work. "Well what do you do?" I said, "Well, I sell Mary Kay." She said, "Well, that's not work." She's been to enough functions with me. She goes with me

> to the red jacket breakfast meetings and all and she's been home obviously a lot when I've done classes and facials and all and she sees it really is WORK, not PLAY. So she grasps it more as a job. . . . Now that she's getting older she can make more of a connection and all. I leave for the meetings and I have a briefcase and all so she associates it with the job. It's work as opposed to just play.

Because home work is informal labor done in the home, it means "the worker is responsible for setting those boundaries ordinarily set by the outside workplace that allow the worker to accomplish tasks relatively uninterrupted by the needs and concerns of family" (Gringeri, 1994, p. 108). Thus, homeworking can be perceived as "not a real job" because it is done in the home at odd hours of the day and night and lacks the form and status of a real job in the view of those people around the homeworker (Ahrentzen, 1990b; Christensen, 1988; Costello, 1988; Gringeri, 1994).

Temporal Boundaries

Beach (1989) found that participants reported variable work days of nonuniform hours punctuated by breaks for domestic needs. With this format, home work more closely resembles the premodern use of time described by Thompson (1967) than the discipline imposed by industrialization. Thus, it is common for those who work at home to have no standard workday and a workday punctuated by interruptions (Beach, 1989). Age of children also appears to be a major factor influencing the course of the workday. Work and domestic life were integrated temporally for many Mary Kay workers with young children. A respondent with a 3-year-old girl and a 5-year-old boy shared,

> Now, my kids are still young, they're still little, so they need more of me. When they're in school until 3, that's going to be a whole other block of time I can have. But right now I can't really say that that is my time for Mary Kay.

Others tried to set temporal boundaries by trying to do hours of work in one block versus hours of work done in scattered blocks. One consultant with a 4-year-old boy scheduled her work hours around when he went to bed and when he got up in the morning. Another consultant said,

> I was able to work either when the children were at the preschool, or during their nap times, I worked a lot. My children, both children always slept for at least 2 to 3 hours in the afternoon. I could count—I just put them down at 1 and they got up at 3. . . . I would get showered and dressed in the morning and be a mom, and then I would just put something a little more—I would

> put a skirt on when I put the baby down. I wouldn't have to change my face or anything. Put a skirt on and I could have someone come to the house and do an appointment while they were napping and then I'd go back to being a mom.

One consultant summed it up by saying,

> Oh, it's nice to sit here until noon and the job is to make phone calls. That's one of my favorite things. It's nice not to have to fight traffic and, I don't know, having somebody else tell you what to do all the time. Being a nurse for all those years, working crazy shifts, holidays, I mean I can decide when I want to take off. The kids when they were younger and if they needed to go to soccer practice or this place or that place, I could do it and schedule around it.

Social Boundaries

Many recognized that the age of their children had a significant impact on their abilities and desires to devote time and effort to their Mary Kay business. Many women chose to be a Mary Kay consultant so they could stay home with their children. However, because of this, they placed more emphasis on the family domain and were less likely to work on developing their Mary Kay business while their children were young (i.e., infants and toddlers). Then as their children got older (i.e., of school age), the interviewees were more likely to take their Mary Kay business seriously. A respondent with a 9-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl declared,

> I try and grab the times where I can conveniently work and do something with those times, because I kind of give up any idea of doing a whole lot during the summer because what's the use of having a home-based business if you can't participate in what's going on at home. And right now, the kids are home, there's places to go and things to do and so on. And I want to be able to enjoy that. It's probably the first time in my adult life that I *have* really been able to enjoy it. Which is one of the nice things about the business, is that I know that it's there.

A respondent with a 5-year-old daughter noted that not only the individual life cycle but the family life cycle plays a part in how she runs her business:

> Everybody is kind of different and you find that women are at different stages in their life in this business. Which is really unique and it's kind of fun to see but nonetheless that can cause discord because I'm at the stage

> now where Mary Kay is just there, you know they say God first, family second, and Mary Kay third, well it's a distant third. Mary Kay is just here for me, it's fun, I will continue to do it, but my business is growing very slowly. . . . But my number 1 commitment right now is to my daughter. She's 5 years old and I'm enjoying every moment that I can with her now. She's going to get older and reach that stage where she doesn't want to hang around with mom anymore, she'll have her own little friends, and that's probably when I'll fall back more to Mary Kay, but for right now it's a very distant third for sure.

Some women recognized a need to separate work and family but had yet to do so. They continued to let the family domain dominate or take over and left little or no space for the work domain. This may be because drawing lines between the two domains means that both cannot exist without compromise, and culturally women hear the message that they are to sacrifice their work for their family. Separation of work and family is difficult when the work site is apart from the home but nearly impossible when the work site is the home. As one respondent with three small children said,

> Sometimes I feel guilty if I feel like I should be paying attention to them at that particular moment. But most times I try to spend enough time otherwise that if I need to do that I'm okay with that.

Another respondent with two small children said,

> I tried to tell them that they can't talk to me while I'm on the phone with Mary Kay. But I will say right then and there that I do feel guilty whenever I would say that. Because they'd see mommy home and they've only known mommy home for them. Now mommy's home and she's working and . . . they don't understand it.

That the "work never ends" was also a common problem witnessed by many women. Gringeri (1994) noted that the lack of formal boundaries between home and paid work allows work to permeate many areas of the home. Bringing paid work into the home typically adds to the work of women homeworkers, extending their workday. As Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) noted, the work is always before one's eyes. Other needs and tasks do not disappear. In fact, other homeworkers mentioned a tendency for others to expect them to do more housework because they are home during the day (Ahrentzen, 1990b). However, as Salmi (1997a, 1997b) pointed out, in many ways this is also the experience of women working outside the home.

Psychological Boundaries

Women in this study used strategies such as talking to their family and stressing the importance of what they are doing and sharing their successes and their goals as ways to both integrate and separate domestic life and work. According to a respondent who has three children,

> I talked to her [the youngest, who was 5 years old] about how important it was making directorship and what Mommy would do in order to obtain that goal and . . . she understood that. She really is a big help. And in fact when I made directorship she said, "Mommy you made directorship because I didn't interrupt you when you were on the phone."

One respondent with a 2-year-old daughter had no trouble compartmentalizing and cognitively separating work and family spheres: "I guess I've always had this mentality, when I'm working, I work, and when I play, I play. And the two don't meet. I'm either in one mode or the other."

For many, separating domestic life from work was important. Ahrentzen (1990b) discussed "rituals" or special activities that people do to make the transition to starting work for the day. One respondent shared this ritual: "I go to WaWa's, get coffee, go in the side door [at home] and be at work." As Albertson (1977) noted, the journey to work can provide a necessary transition between changing roles. This journey is something homeworkers do not experience, and so they need to create their own rituals or journeys. Many of the consultants had no rituals, however, particularly for the work they did while at home.

As one woman stated, "It's mine . . . it's my own business." Another said, "I can never be laid off." Beach (1989) noted that her sample of male and female home workers strongly voiced the value of work independence, perceiving it as a desirable alternative to a work world esteeming conformity, submissiveness, and routine.

Issues of motivation and self-discipline were common. One consultant stated,

> Tapes—especially this past year I've really relied on those tapes that we get. [Mary Kay Cosmetics designs motivational tools for their consultants to use such as audiotapes and books.] Directors. Great motivators—they just know what to say at the right time.

In addition, one of the goals of the weekly Mary Kay consultants meetings is to motivate and inspire consultants.

For many consultants, the source of motivation can change:

> When I took my daughter to college 2 weeks ago my current motivation was to make money to pay for it. And when I came home and helped a new person do her debut, my motivation was to help other women reach their potential. I guess the mission is . . . it's become more of a mission than a career . . . and the mission is to help other women reach their potential.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I have described women's experiences of interweaving their work and family spheres, considering the relative flexibility and constraints of both spheres as a case study of the impact of home-based self-employment on negotiating work and family. The data suggest that not only can these women identify the challenges and rewards of home-based self-employment, but that they also note that the two domains of work and family need to have some boundaries or structure for both to be successful in their lives. Theoretically, being self-employed and working out of your home should enable one to "have it all," as my director noted in her December newsletter. Indeed, as one mother of two young children stated, "So, you're . . . able to make your own decisions, make your own hours, make your life—fit everything into your life. Everything that you feel is important." However, as the research literature has noted, "having it all" has a price. The same flexibility and control over the workday that allows individuals to reduce their work hours or otherwise rearrange work for family needs (Brett & Yogev 1989) also results in perceptions of "not really working" or issues of needing to stay focused or motivated and ignore distractions. As one respondent noted, the disadvantages are the same as the advantages. This is a reality that must be considered by individuals considering entering into self-employment, especially those considering working out of their home.

In addition, being self-employed and working out of one's home poses unique challenges that do not arise when the workplace is separate from home. For example, Wharton (1994) noted that women seek ways to participate in the labor force without changing their family routines. In fact, many enter into certain occupations because they believe that the job would be compatible with their domestic responsibilities. This was true for the women I interviewed. Many made the decision to become a Mary Kay consultant because they wished to stay at home with their family but also wanted to have an outlet for adult conversation and personal fulfill-

ment and earn some money while doing so. One respondent shared that she and her husband made the decision after the birth of their child that she would

> stay at home. . . . Go from being full-time [employee] to being a stay-at-home mom . . . that whole new hat that you wear in that thankless position and I thought well at least I'll be able to still mingle with other women who have the same interests as I do, whether they are working or stay-at-home and that would kind of bridge the gap and maybe help me develop a social life. . . . I didn't want to be locked in the house with no exposure to the outside world.

Many women soon discovered, however, that they had exchanged one set of challenges for another.

One task for these Mary Kay women was deciding when and where to draw lines between home and work and when and where to integrate work and family when work is home and home is work. As one woman said, "You usually get in the car and go to work. Now it gets all mixed up. The lines definitely aren't clear." However, the majority of the interviewees were able to identify and discuss how boundaries were negotiated, placed, maintained, and transformed. They were also able to recognize that the home and work environments are inseparable and are not mutually exclusive (Ishii-Kuntz, 1994).

These same women have been able to institute, consciously or unconsciously, ways of negotiating and managing boundaries around work and family to feel successful in both domains. Although all of the women were aware of the importance of boundaries, not all were able to initiate or maintain the boundaries, because of values and beliefs about parenting and family life. One respondent, who had been a stay-at-home mother since the birth of her first child and only began as a Mary Kay consultant after the birth of her second child, stated how she felt when she did Mary Kay work when the children were home. She said,

> I feel bad, like I should be sitting down on the floor and playing a game with them or reading to them, cuddling with them, because that's why I'm home. So, then I have to think about, well, if I wasn't home, they'd be in day care right now. So that's what stops that guilt.

Thus, one of the ironies of home work is the cost it can exact on family relationships (Costello, 1988). Although many Mary Kay consultants chose the work so they could care for their children, for them to do their work, their children had to at least be occupied if not ignored.

In fact, one challenge of interviewing mothers who work at home is that many times children or spouses were nearby during the interviews and interruptions were common. However, it was deemed necessary to do the interviews in the consultant's homes to observe their workspaces and their boundary strategies firsthand. Thus, interruptions were one way of measuring work and family boundary separation.

The interaction of the five different types of boundaries can also be very important. For example, the physical boundary of a separate workspace can initiate and/or reinforce the behavioral and psychological boundaries or the ways individuals think about and act toward home and work. In addition, many times the physical boundaries are nonnegotiable and permanent, such as a separate office. Other times, even the physical boundaries are flexible (e.g., a shelf in a closet). Most were aware of this complexity and stated that they tried to have some permanent, nonnegotiable spatial and temporal boundaries in place, but behavioral, social, and psychological boundaries were often less easy to manage.

Others were aware that they needed to institute and/or enforce the boundaries they had instituted around work and family. Female workers, workers in large households, and workers with lower incomes are more likely to experience intrusions of work into the family sphere (Heck, Rowe, & Owen, 1995). This may be related to the specific worker's ability to fend off intrusions or the tenacity of family members in their demands on the home-based worker (i.e., adults versus children) (Heck et al., 1995, p. 197). Whereas recognition and identification of these needs are the first steps in negotiating work/family boundaries, additional steps of implementation and enforcement must be taken for these boundaries to be successful. Also, this process is different depending on the family life cycle stage, spousal support, presence of another job, and so on. Strategies that work for any one individual at one point in time may not work for another and/or need to be altered as children age and circumstances change. This lack of clear direction and/or solutions can be stressful for women who are self-employed, and many women may feel alone and frustrated with their situation, particularly those with young children.

One challenge in the negotiation between work and family boundaries is to decide the priorities and expectations for work and family. It could be that some women advance their Mary Kay business on a slower career track than others (Bailyn, 1977), that is, the "mommy track" (Schwartz, 1989), giving priority to their family. The following response by one respondent with a 13-year-old daughter and a 9-year-old son illustrates this issue:

> I'm always thinking, tomorrow, next week, next month I'll get this together. So, I don't beat myself up over what I didn't do yesterday, or last week, or last month. I'm always thinking once I get this taken care of—you know, today I didn't do squat, but tomorrow. You know, as soon as the kids are in school, as soon as whatever. So, I don't spend a lot of time beating myself up over what I haven't gotten done.

An outcome of a slower career track could be that the more a woman restructures her work as a Mary Kay consultant for her family obligations or expectations, the less likely she is to advance her business, build her customer base, and recruit others as consultants on her team, and, thus, the less likely she is to be financially successful. Is there a point where the trade-off of work for family becomes excessive? Do many women quit being a Mary Kay consultant because they find that the priority of family over work compromises their business too much and they are not financially successful? Or is it because Mary Kay takes up too much "family time" and they are unwilling to negotiate in that arena? Although the advantage of working full-time as a Mary Kay consultant is that one only has to work 30 hours a week, less than most full-time jobs, the lack of set hours and pay can offset this advantage. As one respondent noted, "You either make it because you make it happen or you don't make it because you don't make it happen."

This study focused only on the negotiation of work and family spheres from the consultant's perspective. Although many consultants discussed how their children and spouse affected the boundaries, family members were not interviewed to hear their perspective(s) on how they respected, created, or maintained spatial, behavioral, temporal, social, or psychological boundaries both within the household and between the household and the outside world. Further research should investigate this issue of boundaries from the perspectives of all individuals living in the household and analyze the data using the strategies developed by Felstead and Jewson (2000) in addition to the typology identified by Altman (1975).

SUMMARY

Work and family are dynamic spheres and constantly change and adapt through interaction. However, this interaction is exacerbated when an individual's family sphere and work sphere are within the same site. Because the population of women who work at home (e.g., telecommuting, home-based businesses) is growing, it is important to investigate the spheres of work and family life and how they contribute to or inhibit the

satisfactory accomplishment by women of activities in each sphere. This study examined the effects of being a direct salesperson and the tasks of negotiating and managing paid and domestic work with a sample of married women, who are also mothers, employed as Mary Kay consultants, and provided insights about this process.

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