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WORK AND HOME BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT STYLES IN ESTONIA BASED ON PERMEABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Master's Thesis

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I have written this Master's Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

Table of contents

Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify work and home boundary management styles among Estonian employees based on levels of permeability and flexibility, and to examine their demographic and work-related characteristics. To address the need for an updated post-pandemic and applicable to a wide variety of professional sectors perspective, the study utilises a large and occupationally diverse sample of 3915 Estonian employees surveyed in 2025. K-means clustering and Latent Profile Analysis derived a four-cluster solution with the following styles: home-protective, work-intrusive, segmentive, and integrative. Multinomial logistic regression showed work schedule, managerial position, tenure, age, gender, organisation size and professional field as significant predictors of boundary management styles membership. The results of the study carry practical implications for organisations by providing a typology which aids in designing work and home policies with regard to different boundary management needs among employees.

Introduction

Currently, we live in a world with extremely blended boundaries between our work and home domains (Mathur et al., 2024), and we often are faced with a choice in which role to invest our time. Modern technology, such as smartphones, increases the challenge, as individuals are more than ever expected to stay connected to their work and home activities no matter their location (Ghai & Sharma, 2025). They can be at work answering personal calls or on vacation, dealing with an urgent work matter. To deal with the demands from both domains, individuals tend to employ certain boundary management styles, which are defined as the ways a person separates and deals with their work and family roles (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012). A boundary, in this context, is referred to as the line that defines the limits and the scope of a role, marking where one domain ends and the other begins (Ashforth et al., 2000).

The notion that individuals themselves are actively involved in managing the boundaries of the above-mentioned domains has been long established by Nippert-Eng (1996). She proposed that people intentionally organise their lives in a way that either keeps work and home fully separated from each other or completely integrated. The idea of deliberate organisation remains supported in the literature, although it has been found to be more nuanced; individuals may asymmetrically protect one domain while allowing greater interruptions in the other (Kossek et al., 2012). For example, someone might maintain strict boundaries around work, keeping personal matters out, while simultaneously allowing work tasks to spill into their personal time.

Depending on the way boundaries are managed, they can affect individuals' well-being (Wepfer et. al., 2018), work-family conflict (Matthews et al., 2010), work engagement, exhaustion (Urbanavičiūtė et al., 2023), and work satisfaction **(**Blazhevska-Stoilkovska & Frichand, 2023), among other factors. Usually, individuals who employ boundary management styles associated with low control of boundaries and high levels of integration of domains tend to experience more negative outcomes compared to individuals with stronger control of their work and home boundaries (Kossek et al., 2012; Mellner et al., 2021).

Boundary management styles are mainly understood through two key concepts: permeability and flexibility (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). Flexibility is defined as the degree to which the place and time of the work and home domains can be modified, while permeability is referred to as the extent to which an individual situated in one role is psychologically or behaviourally involved in the other role (Hall and Richter, 1988).

A considerable amount of empirical research has examined boundary management styles, and at least seven studies have identified clear typologies, largely via cluster analysis.

The earliest such study was conducted by Bulger, Matthews and Hoffner (2007), who used permeability, flexibility-ability and flexibility-willingness of both work and home boundaries to distinguish the styles. This approach has been widely adopted in the later studies (Lazauskaitė-Zabielskė and Žiedelis, 2023; Blazhevska-Stoilkovska, and Frichand, 2023; Kempen et al., 2017). Other researchers have expanded the model by adding variables such as work and home identities and boundary control, resulting in more complex typologies (Kossek et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2021). Kinnunen et. al. (2016), in contrast, focused solely on permeability to define the styles.

Most of the previous research on boundary management styles was done either before or during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the findings might reflect work arrangements specific to those periods. The pandemic has significantly shifted how individuals manage their work and home boundaries, as many employees were forced to work from home to prevent the spread of the virus (Vyas and Butakhieo, 2021). Before 2020, the percentage of employees working from home in the EU remained relatively stable at around 5%, but this number increased to 12.1% in 2020, when the pandemic began (Eurostat, 2025). Although the pandemic has passed, its effects remain visible. Many employees are resistant to returning to the office full-time (Smite et al. 2023), and to address the situation, companies adopt hybrid work arrangements, requiring employees to work on-site 1-3 days per week instead of being fully remote or fully office-based (Peristera et al., 2025). Correspondingly, the work-from-home levels have not returned to the pre-pandemic ones: in 2024, 8.9% of employees in the EU still worked from home (Eurostat, 2025). Thus, there is a lack of an updated perspective on boundary management styles, which the current study will fill using data collected in 2025.

In addition, previous studies have been conducted with relatively small samples within a specific sphere of work (Kempen et al., 2017; Blazhevska-Stoilkovska & Frichand, 2023). Mostly, individuals with office jobs and in the education field have been studied. The typologies discovered might have reflected styles only for individuals with certain occupational specifics, rather than a general structure that would hold across different work spheres. Thus, there is a lack of a generalizable classification across varying job contexts. The current study utilises a more diverse, larger sample to address the aforementioned gap.

Additionally, the studies that have deliberately identified boundary management styles usually also explore the demographic and work-related characteristics of the individuals exhibiting the found styles (Blazhevska-Stoilkovska & Frichand, 2023; Bulger et al., 2007; Gardner et al., 2021; Kempen et al., 2017; Kinnunen et al., 2016; Kossek et al.,

2012). While the studies descriptively compare the clusters, they do not specifically measure whether certain variables predict membership in a particular boundary management style. Only Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) have conducted a statistical analysis exploring predictors of such membership. Thus, there is a limited understanding of the factors that influence individuals' probability of portraying a particular boundary management style. As Gardner et al. (2021) and Bulger et al. (2007) noted, it is crucial to identify background determinants of boundary management styles, and the current study will attempt to fill this gap. From a practical perspective, identifying connections between certain characteristics and boundary management styles can help employers recognise which style their employees are likely to adopt and adjust work arrangements accordingly.

The aim of this research is to identify work and home boundary management styles among Estonian employees based on levels of permeability and flexibility, and to examine their demographic and work-related characteristics. The current paper builds on the previous literature by utilising a much larger (N=3915) and diverse sample, providing a more elaborate overview of the boundary management styles across sectors and job positions. The survey was conducted in 2025 within Estonian companies. The findings of this paper provide insight into existing patterns, recognising which could aid employees and employers in practising better work-home boundary management.

The article is divided into two main parts: literature review and empirical analysis. The literature review in Chapter 1 provides the theoretical background for the study. Subchapter 1.1 clarifies key concepts, such as boundary management styles, flexibility and permeability. Subchapter 1.2 presents the main theories related to the study, such as role, boundary and border theories. Subchapter 1.3 reviews previous empirical studies and compares identified boundary management styles. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology used to conduct the study and presents the analysis itself. The results are discussed and compared with previous findings.

Several acknowledgements are in order. The author would like to express their gratitude to Kadri Seeder from the Salary Information Agency for agreeing to add the boundary management topic to the questionnaire, as well as allowing the use of the collected data for this research. In addition, the author is thankful to the respondents of the survey. Last but not least, the author is extremely grateful to their supervisors, Anne Aidla and Kristjan Pulk, for their continuous support and understanding during the thesis writing process.

Lastly, the author notes that artificial intelligence tools, specifically Claude (2025), were used to assist with coding for statistical analysis performed in the thesis. All outputs

were critically reviewed and tested by the author. No personal or survey data was shared with the tool, and it was only asked how to write code in general for a certain analysis. In addition, artificial intelligence (ChatGPT, 2025) was used to find more academically sounding synonyms to phrases. Otherwise, all ideas, content, analysis and conclusions were created by the author of the thesis.

Keywords: boundary management style, permeability, flexibility, demographic characteristics, work characteristics

CERCS code: S190

1. Literature review

1.1. Defining work and home boundary management styles, flexibility and permeability

The boundary management literature suffers from inconsistent terminology with many overlapping concepts (Cobb et al., 2022). As a result, it is important to examine and compare existing definitions of key terminology used in this study. The central concept for the current study is “boundary management style”.

The term “boundary management style” was mainly introduced by Kossek and Lautsch (2012), who defined it as “the general approach an individual uses to demarcate boundaries and attend to work and family roles” (p. 152). In a later publication, Kossek et al., (2012) expanded this definition by identifying factors that shape these styles, such as identity salience and boundary limitations. This understanding of the term is commonly used in the subsequent research, often with only minor wording modifications that do not change the underlying meaning (Wessels et al., 2019; Oseghale et al., 2024; Moazami-Goodarzi et al., 2015). From the definition, it can be inferred that styles are created through stable patterns in individuals' behaviour regarding their boundaries. Furthermore, the definition implies an enactive and conscious process of boundary management, rather than just simply passively reacting to external pressures. Individuals can be placed in circumstances with identical high demands but portray completely different boundary management styles (Nippert-Eng, 1996). For example, one employee may keep work email notifications off during evenings by design, while another may regularly respond to messages after work hours. Both individuals face similar role demands; however, they adopt different boundary management approaches.

The only curious modification found to the definition was introduced by Gardner et al. (2021), who describe the styles as “the techniques employees use to separate roles in order to attend to work, family, and non-work duties” (p. 132). Firstly, the wording “techniques” implies specific tools or behaviours, rather than an overall strategy. This risks losing focus on style as a general behavioural pattern, and makes it harder to measure and categorise styles,

as a variety of techniques exist. Secondly, the mentioned authors emphasise separating the roles rather than just defining the boundaries. This approach would be applicable if only segmented styles existed and all individuals desired to divide their work and home. However, some individuals prefer to consistently integrate their roles, sharing their space and time and allowing interruption behaviours from home to work and vice versa, which is also considered a boundary management style (Kossek et al., 2012). Thus, the original definition by Kossek et al. (2012) remains most applicable, as its phrasing allows for different approaches on the segmentation-integration spectrum for both home and work boundaries, as well as captures the styles as an overall strategy and not just isolated behaviours.

Although, as mentioned in the definition of boundary management styles, which are defined by boundary restrictions and identity centralities (Kossek et al 2012), most research ignores the identity part in their quantitative efforts and focuses on variables that define boundary constraints, such as permeability, also referred to as cross-role interruption behaviours, and flexibility (Lazauskaitė-Zabielskė and Žiedelis, 2023; Blazhevska-Stoilkovska, and Frichand, 2023; Kempen et al., 2017). These factors (flexibility and permeability) will be used in the current research as well.

The first factor is flexibility, a widely studied phenomenon in research on boundary management between work and non-work. Table 1 presents several definitions commonly used in the aforementioned line of studies. Hall and Richter's (1988) definition can be considered as the earliest and foundational understanding of the term, which was later transformed and used in the key theoretical boundary management frameworks of Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al. (2000). Despite the substantial attention given to flexibility in literature, there remains a lack of consistency, as different authors provide a slightly modified perception of the term.

Overall, the first common theme across definitions is that flexibility refers to how much it is possible to adjust the boundaries. The frequent use of terms such as "extent" or "degree" suggests that flexibility exists on a continuum rather than as a fixed or binary condition. For instance, at one end of the spectrum, an employee may have full control over when they complete work tasks, while at the other end, they may be required to follow strict shift schedules. Between these two extremes, employees may have partial flexibility, such as the ability to adjust their working hours slightly within organisational guidelines.

Table 1

Flexibility definitions

Authors	Year	Definition
Hall and Richter	1988, p. 215	Flexibility describes the extent to which the physical time and location markers, such as working hours and workplace, may be changed.
Ashforth et al.	2000, p. 474	Flexibility is the degree to which the spatial and temporal boundaries are pliable (Hall & Richter, 1988)
Clark	2000, p. 757	The extent to which a border may contract or expand, depending on the demands of one domain or the other (Hall & Richter, 1988)
Matthews et al.	2010, p.448	…the degree to which an individual has the capacity to contract or expand a domain boundary, either physically or temporally, in response to demands from another domain (Hall and Richter, 1988, Clark, 2000).
Cobb et al.	2022, p.2	…flexibility refers to the degree to which one can engage in a role at different times or in various spaces (Ashforth et al., 2000) or how much a border can "contract or expand" (Clark, 2000, p. 757).

Source: Compiled by the author based on the sources presented in the table

The second common theme is that flexibility explicitly concerns only the spatial and temporal boundaries. Only Clark (2000) considers that flexibility can also be applied to psychological boundaries, which, according to her, are the internal rules governing when it is proper to portray certain emotions, thoughts, or behaviours. However, this seems to be an isolated view.

There is some uncertainty about the source of flexibility. The definitions could be grouped into 4 categories. The first group of authors does not specify what determines flexibility at all (Hall and Richter, 1988; Ashforth et al., 2000). The second group emphasises role demands as the main driver of boundary change (Clark, 2000). The third group highlights the individual's ability to influence how flexible the boundaries are, without explicitly linking this to role pressures (Cobb et al., 2022). Finally, Matthews et al. (2010) combine both perspectives by recognising individuals' capacities and external domain demands. Since flexibility is one of the dimensions through which individual boundary

management styles are categorised, it would be logical that, in addition to role demands influencing temporal and spatial boundary adjustments, individuals should have some degree of control over how flexible their boundaries are. Thus, it is important to include both factors in the definition.

Overall, Matthews et al.'s (2010) conceptualisation is the most suitable for describing flexibility, as it not only captures its general characteristics, such as being a matter of degree and involving temporal and spatial boundaries, but also recognises both demand responsiveness and an individual's capacity to adjust boundaries. This makes the definition well-suited for examining boundary management styles.

The second factor, based on which boundary management styles are defined, is permeability (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). Originally, according to Pleck (1977) and Richter (1992) as cited in Ashforth et al (2000), permeability is defined as: "the degree to which a role allows one to be physically located in the role's domain but psychologically and/or behaviourally involved in another role" (p.474). However, later, as noted by researchers, the construct has been subject to various interpretations, resulting in inconsistent terminology that makes permeability difficult to measure instrumentally and vague to understand (Matthews et al., 2010). Due to the construct becoming too complex, Matthews et al. (2010) offered to view it as "inter-domain transitions", which reflect the actual frequency of psychological and physical moves between domains. The authors claimed that this would be a more theoretically grounded behavioural measure that should replace the abstract concept of permeability. However, in studies specifically on boundary management style, only Blazhevska-Stoilkovska and Frichand (2023) have used inter-domain transitions rather than permeability as one of the dimensions. More often, instead of as transitions, permeability is conceptualised as "cross-role interruption behaviours" in research examining boundary management styles (Kossek et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2021; Kinnunen et al., 2016). These are defined as "the degree to which individuals allow interruptions from one role to another" (Kossek et al., 2012, p.114). Highly permeable boundaries would correspond to a higher degree of cross-role interruptions. Classic examples would include taking a work call at dinner or responding to a personal text during a work meeting (Allen et al. 2014).

Overall, the analysis shows that the boundary management literature lacks clear and consistent terminology, which makes the concepts difficult to compare and measure. Boundary management styles are described as individuals' general approaches to managing work and home boundaries. Empirical research most commonly measures these styles through dimensions of flexibility and permeability. Flexibility describes how much

boundaries can be modified in time and space, and permeability reflects how much roles interrupt each other.

1.2. Theories related to work and home boundary management

This subchapter presents the key theories on which the work and home boundary management literature is based. First, role theory is introduced as a broader framework explaining how individuals manage multiple roles and their demands. Second, border and boundary theories are presented, since they provide perspectives specific to work and home domains. These two also explain how key boundary characteristics, flexibility and permeability, are related to the management of work and home boundaries.

The core foundation of boundary management research comes from role theory (Allen et al. 2014). It acknowledges and explores the roles assigned to individuals and how they are managed (Anglin et al., 2022). The roles provide patterns of behaviour and expectations that individuals must follow (Biddle, 1986). As each of us holds a multitude of roles, demands of which have to be fulfilled daily, managing them becomes a complex matter with its own consequences depending on the strategies used (Nordenmark, 2004). For instance, when individuals employ strategies that separate their work and home roles more, they experience a better work-family balance (Allen et al, 2021). In contrast, when roles are more integrated, a general decline in well-being is observed (Wepfer et al., 2018).

Shifting from role theory, towards literature specific to work and home boundary management, to explore how the roles are handled daily, Nippert-Eng (1996) introduced the concept of boundary work, which concerns how individuals purposefully negotiate the boundaries between their work and home roles to manage the conflicting demands through everyday actions, strategies, and rules. In her work, she develops a segmentation-integration spectrum, which offers different boundary management styles based on how much an individual separates or combines their work and home roles. At one extreme of the spectrum, the domains or roles become so blurred that there is barely any difference. There is no separate mental, physical, or temporal “territory” for either work or home. At the other end, individuals strongly segment their roles, maintaining clear, strict boundaries. For these individuals, even activities such as socialising with a colleague outside of work can be a stressor, since such interactions threaten the separation between work and personal life. These ideas could be interpreted as the first notions of symmetrical boundary management styles that individuals utilise. (Nippert-Eng, 1996)

In later research, Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al. (2000) continued to build upon Nippert-Eng’s (1996) idea of a proactive rather than reactive boundary management and the

segmentation-integration continuum. In their theories, they laid out the groundwork for most of the studies in the work and home boundary management field (Allen et al., 2014). Both works focus on role boundaries and on how transitions between them occur. While not exactly discussing the "styles", since this concept was only introduced directly in 2012 by Kossek and Lautsch, the Boundary and Border theories already implied strategies that individuals may utilise to manage their work and home boundaries and their, so to speak, predictors.

Firstly, regarding the boundaries themselves, both theories agree on 2 key characteristics: flexibility and permeability, definitions of which have been discussed in subchapter 1.1. To further illustrate how these dimensions interact, the author has created Figure 1.

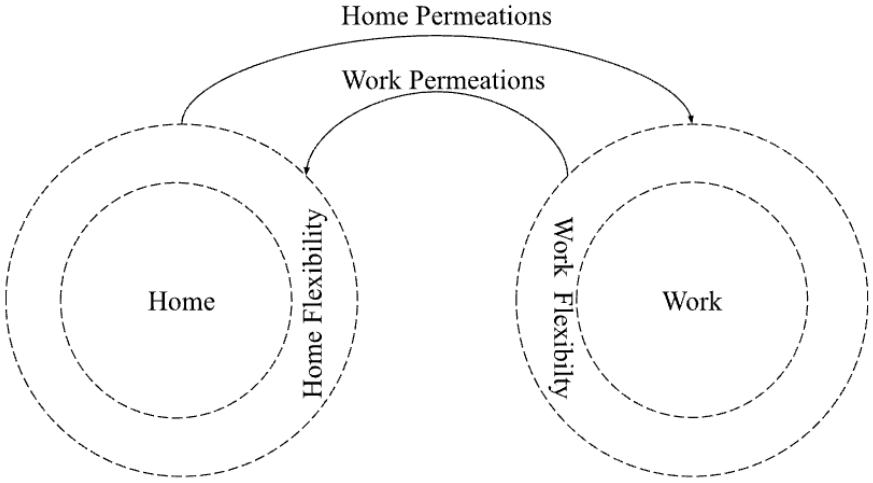

Figure 1. Flexibility and permeability of boundaries

Source: Compiled by the author based on Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al. (2000)

Both work and home domains are surrounded by a border, which contracts or expands depending on its flexibility. The bigger this border is, the more flexibility is present, and individuals have more freedom to choose the time and place for certain activities. At the same time, there are interruptions that may travel from one domain to another. Depending on how permeable or impermeable the border is, the permeations either enter or do not enter the domain. If an individual has highly flexible and permeable borders around the domains, they would engage in an integrative boundary management style. A segmentive style would result in the opposite situation.

Clark (2000) has also noted that borders have 2 more characteristics, such as blending and border strengths, which are basically functions of flexibility and permeability. Blending occurs when a boundary starts to belong to both the work and home domains. For instance, if

a person works at home, the spatial boundaries of their workplace (their house) would belong to both domains. Border strength is determined through levels of flexibility, permeability and blending. High levels would correspond to weak borders, and low levels would equal to strong borders. Since the additional 2 characteristics are essentially based on flexibility and permeability, they may give the impression of being obsolete when studying boundary management topics.

While Nippert-Eng (1996) suggested that both home and work boundaries are treated symmetrically, Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al. (2000) began exploring the idea that individuals might manage the boundaries differently in response to various factors. This introduced the possibility of additional asymmetrical boundary management styles. For instance, an individual could have highly flexible and permeable boundaries around their home domain and the complete opposite for their work domain. The theories outlined a few factors which could impact this choice.

Both Ashforth et al. (2000) and Clark (2000) focus on role identification as a big influence on how individuals treat boundaries. If an individual strongly identifies with a particular role, they are more likely to set and manage boundaries that benefit that role. In addition, Ashforth et al. (2000) noted situational strength and culture as factors that affect boundary management. In a "strong situation", the rules of the role are firmly established and reinforced by the environment (Mischel, 1977, as cited in Ashforth et al.,2000). Clark (2000), on the other hand, brings attention to an individual's influence, other domain members and domain differences. Depending on these factors, an individual's boundary management style may skew towards one side and become asymmetrical.

Drawing on theories of boundary management, the author has created Figure 2, which describes possible boundary management styles.

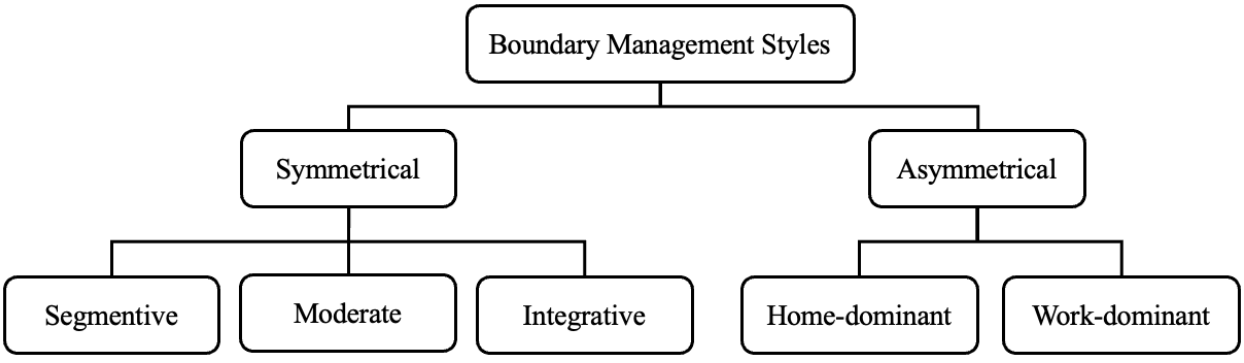

Figure 2. Boundary management styles

Source: Compiled by the author based on Clark (2000), Ashforth et al. (2000) and Nippert-Eng (1996)

The first step in categorisation is determining the style's symmetry. If an individual portrays similar levels of flexibility and permeability for their home and work roles, this would result in one of the symmetrical styles: segmentive (low levels of both), moderate (medium levels of both), or integrative (high levels of both). If the degree of flexibility and permeability varies between the roles, the style is asymmetrical. One option is home-dominant, where an individual bends their boundaries to benefit their home role. For example, if a person allows many home-related interruptions at work and, conversely, their home is protected from work intrusions. The opposite option would be work-dominant. For instance, an individual with very strict and inflexible boundaries around work and, at the same time, permeable boundaries around home would exhibit a work-dominant style.

To conclude, the boundary management literature is mainly based on the Boundary (Ashforth et al., 2000) and Border (Clark, 2000) theories, both of which agree that flexibility and permeability are the key dimensions of the boundaries. While initially only the notion of symmetrical boundary management styles was theorised, it later became evident that asymmetrical styles also exist, due to a variety of factors influencing the direction of the border.

1.3.Work and home boundary management styles and their background characteristics through permeability and flexibility dimensions

As we have seen in the previous subchapter, originally only 2 boundary management styles were assumed and identified – total segmentors and total integrators, meaning that both work and home boundaries are treated symmetrically. In subsequent empirical research, it has been shown not to be the case. As for the empirical studies identifying boundary management styles, 7 papers have been identified, as shown in Table 2. Table 2 summarises the main characteristics of each study, including the variables used to define the styles, the number and type of identified clusters, the methodological approach, the sample and the region where the study was conducted. This information allows a structured comparison of the studies, highlighting contextual and methodological factors that may explain differences in achieved results.

The studies generally use one of two primary frameworks to construct the styles. Kossek et al. (2012) and Gardner et al. (2021) identify styles based on cross-role interruption behaviours, identity centrality, and perceived boundary control. These studies resulted in more complex typologies with the largest number of clusters (6) due to the inclusion of more factors in the analysis. Other authors focus more on flexibility and permeability or the

Table 2

Empirical studies on boundary management styles

Authors	Variables	Clusters	Method	Sample
Kossek et al., (2012)	Permeability, Boundary control, work and family identities	1.Job warriors 2.Reactors 3. Guardians 4.Fusion lovers 5.Dividers 6.Nonwork-Eeletics	K-means clustering	N=591, Managers, USA
Gardner et al., (2021)	Permeability, Boundary control, work and family Identities	1.Fusion lovers 2.Family guardians 3.Dividers 4.Reactors 5.Personal life prioritizers 6.Flexible moderates	K-means clustering	N=498. N/A, USA, Canada
Bulger et al., (2007)	Flexibility-ability, flexibility-willingness, permeability	1.High integrators 2.Work integrators 3. Moderate control of both borders 4.Segmentors	2-step clustering	N=322, white collar workers, USA
Urbanavičiūtė et al., (2023)	Flexibility-ability, flexibility-willingness, permeability	1.Home protective 2.Work protective 3. Segregative 4. Integrative	Latent profile analysis	N=326, white collar workers, Lithuania
Blazhevska Stoilkovska and Frichand (2023)	Flexibility-ability, flexibility-willingness, permeability	1.Moderate control of both borders 2. Reactive, permeable borders	2-step clustering	N=143, Teachers, Makedonia
Kinnunen et al., (2016)	Permeability	1.Work guardians 2. Nonwork guardians 3. Integrators 4. Separators 5. Intermediate	Latent profile analysis	N=1122, mostly white collar workers, Finland
Kempen et al., (2017)	Flexibility-ability, flexibility-willingness, permeability	1.Work protectors 2.Work integrators	2-step clustering	N=199, university researchers, Germany

Note: N/A in the sample column means that the employment category was not specified

Source: Compiled by the author based on the sources presented in the table

frequency of cross-role interruption behaviours as the determinants, while ignoring identity centralities. Such an approach usually results in less broad categorisations.

The number and nature of profiles found vary across the studies, often due to occupational or context-specific factors. Most studies identify the classical symmetrical styles mentioned in Nippert-Eng's (1996) theory: pure integrators (high flexibility and interruption behaviours in both domains) and separators (low flexibility and interruption behaviour in both directions). Kinnunen et al. (2016) and Blazhevska-Stoilkovska and Frichand (2023) also found a symmetrical "Intermediate" cluster where individuals scored average on all indicators used. However, it often seems that the researchers tend to fit results that do not particularly fit the picture into the classical symmetrical categories presented in theory. For instance, Bulger et al. (2007) label individuals in one of the clusters as symmetrical segmentors, even though they reported higher-than-average scores on work flexibility and permeability and lower-than-average scores on the home-related variables. The previously mentioned Blazhevska-Stoilkovska and Frichand (2023) described cluster 1 as moderate, symmetrical controllers and cluster 2 as reactive and integrative. Upon inspection of the cluster means, cluster 1 scored low on permeability in both domains and work flexibility, and above average on home flexibility. The second cluster's distinctive feature was that it scored higher on the work flexibility variable and slightly higher on both domains' permeabilities than cluster 1. Although, when looking at both clusters in isolation, they can perhaps be described as the authors did, the description does not precisely reflect the peculiarities of the styles found. Thus, when reviewing previous results, it is important to look at the values themselves, as labels can sometimes be misleading and may be trying to fit a certain framework when, in reality, they are not the most appropriate.

Asymmetrical styles, where work and home boundaries are treated differently, were also found. For instance, Kempen et al. (2017) identified "Work protectors" among expatriate university workers who segment their work from home but do not do the same in the home domain, allowing home boundaries to be frequently interrupted or altered by work domain elements. In contrast, Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) identified "Home protective" style, which was also the most popular among remote workers during the COVID-19 lockdown. These individuals have stronger borders around home and weaker borders around work.

It has been discussed that occupational and contextual factors affect which styles individuals employ. For instance, Blazhevska-Stoilkovska and Frichand (2023) found that university teachers are more likely to be integrators due to high job autonomy, compared to elementary and secondary school teachers, who adopt styles with moderate control of the

boundaries due to stricter work schedules. Kempen et al. (2017) found that expatriates benefit from having flexible personal lives, since they often must integrate their private lives with work. This adjustment allows for a smoother cross-cultural adaptation. Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) discussed that during COVID-19, employees who had asymmetrical boundary management styles were likely to switch to segmentive ones over time to maintain performance at work.

Methodologically, the studies differ. Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum (2012) and Gardner, Lauricella, Ryan, Wadlington and Elizondo (2021) rely on K-means clustering, where the researcher has to define the number of clusters. Others use 2-step clustering to help decide the number of clusters and Latent profile analysis, a model-based approach. Despite the differences, the results are still comparable. Studies using a wider range of variables and larger samples tend to identify more distinct clusters, whereas those with fewer variables and more specific samples, such as teachers or university researchers, yield 2-4 boundary-management-style clusters.

Regarding regions, most studies have been conducted in North America and Europe, among white-collar workers. Despite differences across countries and sometimes occupational groups, almost all studies identify some form of work or home segmentors who protect one domain from the other, and groups of people who tend to fully integrate or separate the domains, without a strong preference for home or work.

As for the demographic and job-related characteristics of the styles, the studies explore them more descriptively through the composition of the clusters. Only Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) have used multinomial logistic regression to identify predictors. It is thought that various factors of this kind may predict which boundary management style a person portrays (Urbanavičiūtė et al., 2023). Regarding characteristics that will be researched in the current study as well, Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) found that older individuals are more likely to have a home-protective style, full-time employees are more likely to belong to the integrative or work-protective clusters, and managers are more likely to have a home-protective or integrative style.

In general, several studies examine how background variables may affect how an individual manages their boundaries. Some results contradict the findings mentioned above of Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023). For instance, previous studies have argued that generations differ in the value they attach to their work, with older people caring more about their jobs (Valickas & Jakstaite, 2017). This suggests that older individuals may tend to strengthen their boundary around work and weaken that around home, allowing greater interruptions, which is

inconsistent with the findings of Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023), who found that such individuals are more likely to exhibit a home-protective style. Thus, the relationship between age and boundary management is not straightforward and needs to be further quantitatively investigated. Another contradiction is regarding employees with a manager role. Kossek et al. (2012) theorise that managerial employees are believed to have greater flexibility, and Ford & Collinson (2011) qualitatively found that managers face challenges managing working hours, with these often spilling into personal time. These findings would suggest that managers would be more likely to appear in the integrative and work-intrusive clusters. However, when specifically examining management as a predictor of boundary management style membership, Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) found that work-intrusive attitudes are less relevant for managers, who are more likely to be home-protective. This discrepancy may suggest that while managerial roles create conditions in which work-related interruptions at home are more likely, the managers may still have certain qualities and resources that would allow them to counteract that tendency, such as autonomy or boundary management skills. The current study will further empirically test this relationship. As for gender, women are thought to protect their home lives from work more than men (Allen et al., 2024), suggesting they would be more present in the home-protective or segmentive clusters. As for organisation size, bigger companies are believed to implement work-life balance policies more frequently compared to companies of smaller size (Czerwińska-Lubszczyk & Byrtek, 2024), thus it would be logical for employees in larger companies to portray more segmentive boundary management styles. It is also argued that employees with higher tenure tend to portray integrative behaviours more (Bulger et al., 2007). Lastly, the professional field is thought to influence the way work and home boundaries are managed as well. For instance, white-collar workers are perceived to have more freedom and flexibility regarding where, when and how they perform their job duties (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks., 2015; Kinnunen et al., 2016), which suggests they are more likely to blur their work and home boundaries.

Overall, the existing empirical studies show that the boundary management styles can be meaningfully clustered and provide similar results. However, the conducted research still does not reach a conclusive answer, the samples used are relatively small and sector-specific, and the data analysed is outdated since it was collected pre-COVID-19, when the working conditions were different. The current study will build on the existing literature by conducting an analysis of a larger sample across different occupational groups and examining the spread of hybrid work arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Empirical study on work and home boundary management styles in Estonia based on flexibility and permeability

2.1. Methodology and data

This section provides an overview of the methodology and data used to conduct the study on boundary management profiles in Estonia based on permeability and flexibility, and their related demographic and job-related characteristics. The current study, like previous empirical studies, has adopted a quantitative approach to achieve its aim. First, the author has chosen appropriate measurement tools, which have been added to a survey distributed by the Salary Information Agency. Second, the collected data were analysed using R statistical software and presented and discussed in the results and discussion sections. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the measurement tools. Then, descriptive statistics of the studied variables were obtained. K-means clustering was used to identify the boundary management styles, as was done in previous studies (Kossek et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2021). Later, ANOVA was done to assess whether the resulting styles differed in a statistically significant way. Further, Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was conducted to validate the K-means solution. To compare the results of both Chi-square test was used. Once the boundary management styles have been identified, their demographic and work-related composition was also reviewed using the Chi-squared test. Lastly, multinomial logistic regression was utilised to assess whether there are statistically significant predictors of belonging to a certain cluster in the demographic and work-related characteristics.

As was established in Subchapter 1.1, boundary management style is "the general approach an individual uses to demarcate boundaries and attend to work and family roles" (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012, p.152). Boundary and border theories both agree that flexibility and permeability are the main characteristics of how individuals manage their boundaries, and empirical studies have used these variables to identify the styles as well. Thus, the current study also uses these two variables to identify the styles.

To measure both work and home permeability, also referred to as cross-role interruption behaviours, tools by Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum (2012) were utilised. In general, previous studies have either used this scale or a scale created by Matthews et al. (2010) for inter-domain transitions. However, the latter ones do not exactly match the conceptual meaning of permeability, since their questions themselves do not particularly imply individual responsibility for permeability. For instance, the tool includes some items, such as "How often have you received calls from family members while at work?" The reception of calls does not depend on the individual; more relevant would be to

question how often the individual responds to the calls. Thus, it was decided to use the scale developed by Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum (2012), the items of which reflect the concept more fittingly. An example item is "I take care of personal and family needs during work". The original scale consists of 8 items for work and 7 items for the home domain. However, due to the constraints of the Salary Information Agency, which intended to keep the questionnaire in a manageable length for the respondents, only 3 items were included for each domain in the survey. The author acknowledges that reducing the number of items from the original scale may reduce the reliability and quality of measurement, since fewer items do not capture the construct fully. Thus, the results of the study may be affected by this limitation.

In regard to flexibility, in the current study, it was assessed using a scale developed by Clark (2002). Since there was a limited number of questions that could be input into the survey, the approach of measuring flexibility in more detail through its ability and willingness dimensions, as was done in previous empirical studies, was unfeasible. Such an approach would add an extra 14 items. Consequently, a credible tool, but with a conservative number of questions, had to be used. Originally, Clark's (2002) scale consisted of 4 items, separately for work and home. Again, due to limitations imposed by the survey agency, 3 items were retained for each domain. An example item is: "I am able to arrive and depart from work when I want."

Both constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Overall, the selection of measurement tools and their use followed a staged process. First, the author selected the original measurement tools based on previous use in empirical studies and conceptual fit. Then, during the survey design phase, the Salary Information Agency reviewed the questionnaire and indicated that the total number of items was too large. Thus, the author reduced the number of items. Afterwards, the final submitted questions were modified by the language editors from the Salary Information Agency with the purpose of making them more understandable and simpler. Although this was done to improve clarity for respondents, modifying the original items introduces the risk that the items no longer measure exactly the same construct as intended and affects the quality of the measurement. Lastly, the tools were also translated into Estonian and Russian by the author, their supervisor Anne Aidla and language editors of the Salary Information Agency, since the survey was also conducted in these languages. Overall, the survey was done in 3 languages: English, Estonian and Russian. The full list of the measurement items used, as well as their translations and modifications, can be found in Appendix A.

As during the creation of the survey, the measurement tools were modified through translation and removal of some items, it is necessary to establish the reliability of the tools. To do so, a reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to ensure that the test items are still internally consistent, the results of which can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Reliability analysis of measurement tools

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Work flexibility	0.76	3
Home flexibility	0.62	3
Work permeability	0.82	3
Home permeability	0.73	3

Source: compiled by the author based on the Salary Information Agency 2025 Spring database

All of the factors, with the exception of home flexibility, showed a Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7, which provides a sufficient level of internal consistency to proceed with the research (Madadizadeh and Bahariniya, 2025). Home flexibility provided a result of 0.62, which, although not high, is still considered moderate or acceptable by some, especially when the number of items inside a measurement tool is limited (Griethuijsen et al., 2015; Taber, 2018).

After the choice of measurement tools had been made and they had been translated, the survey was distributed across various organisations in Estonia in spring 2025 with the assistance of the Salary Information Agency. In total, 5432 responses were received. For the purposes of this study, only respondents who were currently working in Estonia were included, resulting in a final sample of 3915 responses for analysis. The characteristics of the sample can be found in Table 4. The population percentages shown in the table are for employed individuals in Estonia.

Compared to the population, in the current sample, middle-aged individuals (35-64) are overrepresented. While women are well represented within the sample, men are considerably underrepresented, 32.9% compared to the population's 47.4%. This might be explained by women generally having a higher response rate in online surveys (Wu et al., 2022). Regarding the position within the companies, the study's sample has a disproportionate percentage of managers (28.8%) compared to the population (7.4%). Since managers often have higher and more pressuring work expectations compared to regular employees (Ford & Collinson, 2011), this imbalance can affect the boundary management styles identified in the study, resulting in more integrative styles.

Table 4

Sample characteristics

Variable	Category	Distribution	This sample (%)	Population (%)
Age(years)	16-24	76	1.94	7.0
	25-34	572	14.61	18.9
	35-44	1143	29.19	25.5
	45-54	1068	27.28	22.9
	55-64	867	22.15	18.6
	65-74	170	4.34	6.4
	75 and older	14	0.36	0.8
	N/A	5	0.13	-
Gender	Male	1280	32.69	47.4
	Female	2069	52,85	52.6
	N/A	566	14.46	-
Organization of work time	Full-time work	2570	65.64	84.6
	Part-time	221	5.64	15.3
	Shift work	716	18.29	-
	Unregulated working time	214	5.47	-
	Other	194	4,96	0.01
Managerial position	Yes	1128	28,8	7.4
	No	2755	70,3	92.6
	N/A	34	0,9	-
Professional field	Business, administration and corporate services	883	22.55	8.3
	Construction, industry and utilities	652	16.65	9.9
	Retail and personal services	507	12.95	13.6
	IT-related work	359	9.17	5.7
	Education	331	8.45	9.5
	Transportation and logistics	235	6	7.5
	Medicine	165	4.21	7.1
	Public administration and government	135	3.45	5.
	Law enforcement and emergency services	105	2.68	-
	Hospitality and tourism	103	2.63	1.0
	Social work	103	2.63	0.5
	Environment and agriculture	79	2.02	2.8
	Arts and culture	70	1.79	0.8
	Cleaning	66	1.69	-
	Others	115	2.94	-
	N/A	7	0,1	-

Note: n=3915, population statistics are for employed individuals and the year 2025

Source: compiled by the author based on the Salary Information Agency 2025 Spring database and Statistics Estonia 2025

As for the professional field distribution, white-collar workers are overrepresented in the sample, considering categories such as “Business, administration and corporate services” and “IT-related work”, while fields such as “Medicine” and “Public administration and government” are underrepresented. Since different fields impose unique circumstances regarding the structure of work and home boundaries, this might affect the identified boundary management styles. Still, it should be noted that the current sample represents a much greater occupational diversity compared to previous empirical studies on boundary management styles.

Once the data was collected, it was coded in Excel and analysed using R statistical software. To begin, the descriptive statistics of the studied variables have been obtained. Since previous empirical studies used cluster analysis to identify boundary management styles, this approach was taken in the current study as well. In addition, data clustering is a widely used and important method in empirical research to uncover unobserved groupings of variables (Jain, 2010). To conduct the cluster analysis, the optimal number of clusters was identified. Once it has been established, K-means clustering was performed. In addition, as some of the previous studies have conducted Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) (Kinnunen et al., 2016; Urbanavičiūtė et al., 2023), it was attempted in the current study as well. Lastly, the demographic and work-related characteristics of the cluster were explored with the help of Chi-square statistical tests and multinomial logistic regression.

2.2. Results of work and home boundary management styles and their demographic characteristics based on permeability and flexibility in Estonia

Descriptive statistics of the studied variables are presented in Table 5. As mentioned previously, the items were measured on a 1-5 Likert scale, where “1” corresponded to “strongly disagree” and “5” to “strongly agree”.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics of the studied variables

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Work flexibility	3892	3.53	3.67	1.00	1	5
Home flexibility	3883	3.24	3.33	0.89	1	5
Work permeability	3885	2.90	3.00	0.94	1	5
Home permeability	3887	2.93	3.00	1.12	1	5

Source: compiled by the author based on the Salary Information Agency database

Overall, the sample shows equal treatment of the domains in general. Both domains’ flexibilities and permeabilities lie around the same level. The difference comes in the boundary characteristics themselves, rather than in which domain they belong. The current

sample presents increased levels of flexibility compared to permeability, especially regarding work flexibility. This advises that respondents tend to manage their boundaries between work and home more or less successfully, even with higher possibilities to be flexible. Both work and home permeability showed medium levels, with means of 2.90 and 2.92, respectively. Standard deviations for the variables were all around 1. Considering that the concepts were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, this is a considerable variation in the respondents' answers. In addition, since the current study has respondents from a variety of professional fields and occupations, it can be expected that individuals have different flexibility and permeability conditions. These observations provide further ground for cluster analysis being necessary.

To proceed with the cluster analysis, several methods were used to define the optimal number of clusters with the help of the NbClust package in R. The most popular cluster solution was 2, followed by 3 and 4.

When attempting to conduct K-means clustering with 2 clusters, as most methods suggested, the result was an oversimplified typology. The first cluster scored high on all variables, reflecting a symmetrical integrator type in which the home and work boundaries are completely intertwined. The second cluster showed medium to low levels of flexibility and permeability. This solution primarily captured the original segmentation-integration continuum proposed by Nippert-Eng (1996) and did not reflect the more intricate styles observed in previous empirical studies. Thus, through an exploratory process, it was decided to use a 4-cluster solution, as it provided a more complex yet interpretable typology. The means and sizes of the clusters of the final solution are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Means of the K-means cluster solution

	Cluster 1 Home-protective	Cluster 2 Work-intrusive	Cluster 3 Segmentive	Cluster 4 Integrative
Work flexibility	4,09	2,89	2,60	4,42
Home flexibility	3,51	2,91	2,46	4,03
Work permeability	3,20	2,53	2,38	3,42
Home permeability	2,13	3,74	1,96	4,07
n	1164	936	878	886

Source: Compiled by the author based on the Salary Information Agency database

An ANOVA test has also been performed to find out whether the means of the K-means clusters are significantly different. All variables yielded a statistically significant result ($p < .001$). Tukey post-hoc analysis confirmed that all cluster comparisons were statistically

significant ($p < .01$) across all variables, meaning that the received cluster solution represents a set of distinct boundary management profiles.

Since some of the previous studies have utilised Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to create the typologies (Kinnunen et al., 2016; Urbanavičiūtė et al., 2023), it was also decided to use this method in the current study to see if the results of K-means clustering would reproduce. The boundary management styles identified using LPA are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Means of the LPA profiling solution

	Cluster 1 Home-protective	Cluster 2 Work-intrusive	Cluster 3 Segmentive	Cluster 4 Integrative
Work flexibility	3.99	2.75	2.40	4.45
Home flexibility	3.42	2.89	2.31	4.05
Work permeability	3.00	2.57	2.50	3.39
Home permeability	2.20	3.80	1.98	4.06
n	1428	819	721	896

Source: Compiled by the author based on the Salary Information Agency database

As it is visible from the means, the results are consistent with the K-means solution. Despite minor differences in the values, the overall holistic picture of the profiles identified is consistent across both methods. Chi-square test was also performed comparing the LPA and K-means solution. It showed a statistically significant result ($p< .001$), meaning that the results are associated. However, the methods agreed only partially, since Cramer's V statistic resulted in a moderate value of 0.5. Upon further inspection, LPA and K-means diverged mostly in classifying work-intrusive and segmentive boundary management profiles. This is expected since the methods use different classification techniques, while LPA estimates the probability of an individual belonging to a certain cluster and assumes it is not directly observed (Spurk et al., 2020), K-means separates the data by assigning the cluster centres and later trying to minimise the distance between data points and the centres themselves (Jain, 2010). Still, both methods managed to capture a very similar overall structure.

Overall, four separate profiles were identified. Given that all variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, the results were interpreted by categorising the mean scores into 3 levels. The 5-point scale was divided into 3 equal parts, so that values between 1.00 and 2.33 were considered low, scores from 2.34 to 3.66 were classified as moderate, and those between 3.67 and 5.00 were interpreted as high.

Members in the home-protective cluster 1 (N=1164) report a high level of work flexibility (4.09), followed by moderate to high levels of home flexibility (3.51) and work

permeability (3.20), and a low level of home permeability (2.13). Firstly, this suggests that individuals in this group have a high degree of control over when and where they perform work tasks. The organisations they are employed in allow a great amount of freedom in how the employees organise their work. At the same time, they encounter a considerable amount of home-related interruptions at work, having the second-highest score of work permeability across the clusters. When it comes to the home boundary, it is moderately adjustable in the space and time dimensions. Simultaneously, it is fairly protected from interruptions of the work domain, with a permeability level that is scored second lowest among the clusters. Overall, it is an asymmetrical boundary management style with a home-protective direction.

The work-intrusive cluster 2 (N=936) reports a moderate level of work flexibility (2.89), home flexibility (2.91) and work permeability (2.53), yet a high level of home permeability (3.74). They have some ability to adjust when and where they engage with work and private responsibilities; however, they are still constrained by the role's demands and obligations. Home-related matters only occasionally intrude on the work domain. In contrast, personal life is often interrupted by work-related behaviours or thoughts. For instance, individuals in this cluster would often check their work messengers and emails while at home or stop their personal activities to complete a work task. Altogether, this style can be characterised by being asymmetrical and work-intrusive.

The segmentive cluster 3 (N=878) scored the lowest across all measured variables - work flexibility (2.6), home flexibility (2.46), work permeability (2.38), home permeability (1.96). These individuals tend to keep strong borders around their roles, in contrast to the other clusters. Both work and home mostly have a strict place and time defined for them. Interruptions from one domain to the other are minimal. In summary, individuals in cluster 3 portray a symmetrical segmentive boundary management style.

The integrative cluster 4 (N=886) is the exact opposite of the previous one; all variables received the highest scores across the clusters - work flexibility (4.42), home flexibility (4.03), work permeability (3.42), home permeability (4.07). The boundaries of the domains are considerably pliable. Individuals in cluster 4 portray the greatest ability to move when and where both personal and professional duties are performed. Furthermore, the domains commonly interrupt each other. Overall, this is a clear, symmetrical, integrative style.

Once the boundary management styles were identified, the demographic and work-related composition of the clusters was analysed using Pearson's Chi-squared test, as all variables were categorical. The composition of the clusters can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

Demographic composition of the boundary management profiles(%)

	Home-protective (%)	Work-intrusive (%)	Segmentative (%)	Integrative (%)
Age (p < .001)				
16-24	1.9	1.3	2.5	1.7
25-34	16.3	10.4	20.7	10.0
35-44	32.1	23.9	35.2	24.4
45-54	27.4	29.9	22.7	31.5
55-64	18.1	29.3	15.5	27.9
65-74	4.1	5.3	3.4	4.5
Gender (p < .001)				
Male	45.4	30.0	39.0	38.6
Female	54.6	70.0	61.0	61.4
Managerial position (p < .001)				
Yes	41.7	18.3	21.6	36.1
No	58.3	81.7	78.4	63.9
Organization size (p < .001)				
250+ workers	27.9	33.7	38.3	26.6
50-249	24.8	30.8	31.2	31.1
10-49	26.6	25.5	20.3	29.2
5-9	7.1	6.2	5.0	7.6
1-4	13.6	3.8	5.1	5.5
Tenure (p < .001)				
10+ years	30.6	28.4	23.5	32.8
5-9 years	21.7	17.9	19.9	20.1
3-4 years	19.8	17.9	19.7	17.1
1-2 years	17.4	18.9	21.5	17.0
under a year	10.5	16.9	15.5	13.1
Professional field (p < .001)				
Business administration	31.5	15.8	26.1	16.4
Construction, industry and utilities	14.2	19.9	15.7	17.3
Retail and personal services	9.6	18.7	10.9	13.5
IT-related work	12.0	4.2	14.2	4.7
Education	6.8	8.8	4.8	14.3
Transportation and logistics	4.7	7.7	4.9	7.0
Medicine	1.7	5.9	4.5	4.8
Public administration and governance	3.4	3.0	4.1	3.2
Law enforcement and emergency services	2.3	2.5	3.1	2.8
Hospitality and tourism	2.7	3.1	1.6	3.5
Social work	1.4	3.8	1.9	3.6
Environment and agriculture	3.2	1.5	2.1	1.3
Arts and culture	2.5	1.6	1.3	2.0
Cleaning	0.9	1.5	1.8	2.0
Other	3.2	2.1	3.0	3.5

Note: Pearson's Chi-squared test was used to assess whether clusters differ

Source: Compiled by the author based on the Salary Information Agency database

The tested variables were age, gender, management, organisation size, tenure, and professional field, selected for their relevance to boundary management described in Subchapter 1.3. Figure 3 visualises the boundary management styles and their characteristics, helping employees and employers to identify where they are likely to belong.

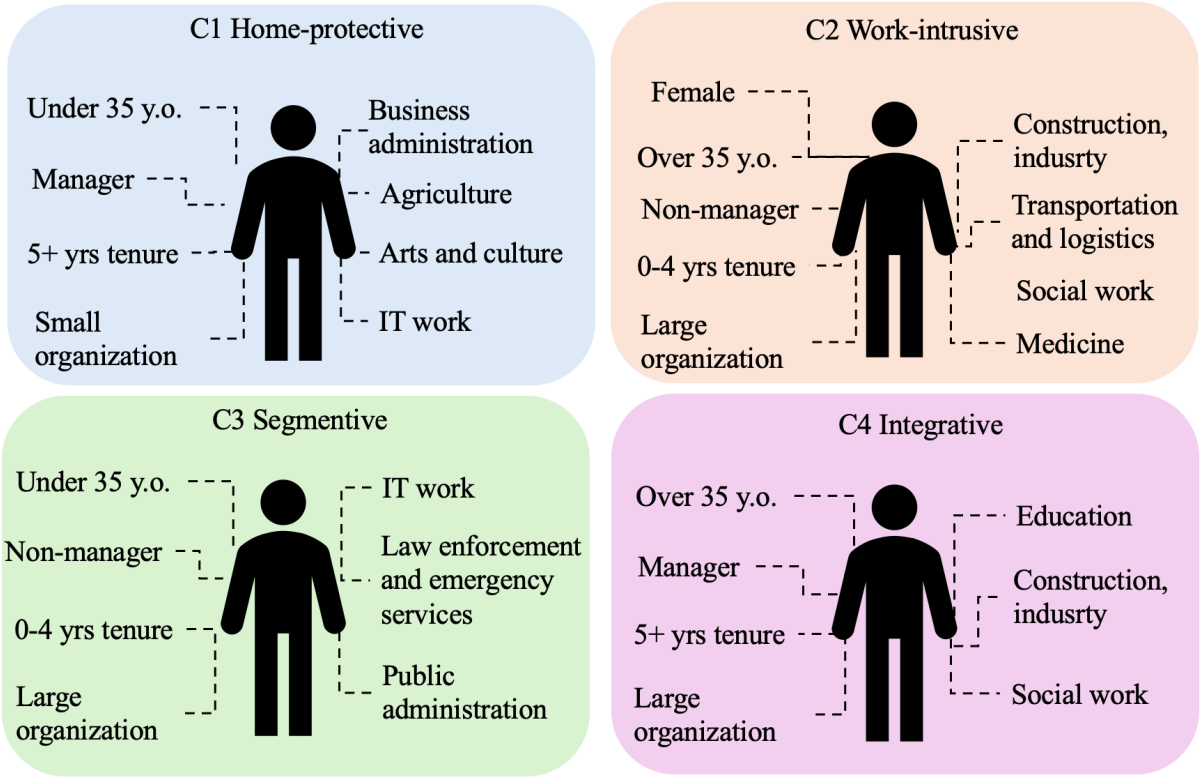

Figure 3. Background characteristics of boundary management styles

Source: Compiled by the author based on the author's calculations and on the Salary Information Agency database

Clusters 2 and 4 were dominated by people aged 35 and older, while Clusters 1 and 3 consisted of younger generations. While both genders were mostly distributed evenly, cluster 2 stood out as being more populated by women. Concerning management obligations, Clusters 1 and 4 were more populated with individuals in managerial positions compared to the second and third clusters. Cluster 4 had the highest proportion of people working 10+ years in their organisation. Regarding organisation size, cluster 1, which is characterised by being home-protective, is most populated with small organisations. As for professional fields, white-collar jobs, such as ones in business administration, IT, and government, were found to be more popular in clusters 1 and 3. Fields such as construction, industries, transportation and logistics were more popular among clusters 2 and 4. Education workers were found to be the most common in cluster 4. Medicine field workers were more populated in cluster 2, which is characterised by frequent work interruptions at home.

After the composition of clusters had been reviewed, multinomial logistic regression was done to see if there were significant demographic or job-related predictors of belonging to a certain cluster. Results can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9

Odds ratios of statistically significant multinomial logistic regression results

	C2 vs 1	C3 vs 1	C4 vs 1	C3 vs 2	C4 vs 2	C4 vs 3
Age						
35-44	1.48	-	1.44	0.70	-	1.39
45-54	2.00	-	1.93	0.41	-	2.37
55-64	3.07	-	2.41	0.29	-	2.68
65-74	3.03	-	-	0.30	-	1.90
Gender						
Female	2.23	1.30	1.31	0.58	0.59	-
Managerial position						
Yes	0.31	0.38	-	-	2.61	2.13
Tenure						
Under a year	1.52	-	-	-	-	-
5-9 years	0.60	0.74	-	-	-	-
10+ years	0.60	0.69	-	-	-	-
Organization size						
250+ workers	3.49	2.72	2.42	-	-	-
50-249 workers	3.60	2.87	2.94	-	-	-
10-49 workers	2.53	1.76	2.32	-	-	-
5-9 workers	2.62	1.75	2.58	-	-	-
Work schedule						
Part-time	-	-	-	1.87	2.08	-
Shift work	2.77	2.11	2.78	0.76	-	1.32
Unregulated	0.08	0.23	0.59	2.77	7.08	2.56
Professional field						
Construction, industry and utilities	4.07	1.67	2.43	0.41	0.60	1.45
Transportation and logistics	5.04	1.72	3.11	0.34	0.62	1.81
Medicine	5.43	2.90	4.37	0.53	-	-
Retail and personal services	3.12	-	2.09	0.41	0.67	1.63
Social work	3.06	-	3.52	0.50	-	2.31
Education	1.83	-	2.75	0.45	-	3.34
Hospitality and tourism	-	-	-	0.42	-	2.71
Arts and Culture	-	-	-	-	-	2.34

Note: Only statistically significant results are shown ($p<0.05$); Reference categories: age = 25-34, gender = male, managerial position = no, tenure = 1-2 years, organization size = 1-4 workers, work-schedule = full-time; professional field = Business administration; C1 – home-protective, C2 – work-intrusive, C3 – segmentive, C4 – Integrative

Source: Based on the author's calculations based on the Salary Information Agency database

The multinomial logistic regression results show that certain categories of age, tenure, organisation size, work schedule, gender and position within the company significantly influence the likelihood of exhibiting different boundary management styles.

Older employees (35-74), compared to those aged 25-34, are more likely to belong to the work-intrusive and integrative clusters relative to the home-protective cluster. Additionally, they are more likely to belong to the integrative cluster than the segmentive cluster.

Women are more likely than men to belong to the work-intrusive cluster relative to the home-protective, segmentive and integrative clusters.

Managers are less likely than non-managers to belong to the work-intrusive and segmentive clusters relative to the home-protective and integrative clusters.

Compared to employees of 1-2 years, those with less than one year of tenure are more likely to belong to the work-intrusive cluster relative to the home-protective cluster. On the opposite side, employees with longer tenure (5+ years) are less likely to belong to the work-intrusive cluster relative to the home-protective cluster.

Compared to employees working in very small organisations (1-4 workers), those employed in larger companies are significantly more likely to belong to the work-intrusive, segmentive and integrative cluster compared to the home-protective one.

Shift workers are more likely than full-time workers to belong to the work-intrusive, segemntive and integrative clusters relative to the home protective cluster. Employees with unregulated working time, compared to full-time employees, were found to be most strongly associated with the home-protective style.

Compared to employees in the business administration sector, those in construction, industry and utilities, transportation and logistics, medicine, retail and social work are more likely to belong to the work-intrusive cluster relative to the home-protective and segmentive ones. Education, hospitality and tourism, and social work show an increased likelihood of belonging to the integrative style rather than the segmentive one compared to the base category.

Overall, 4 boundary management styles based on permeability and flexibility among workers in Estonia have been identified. Two symmetrical and two asymmetrical styles were discovered, supporting and extending the classical theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies. Furthermore, the demographic composition of the styles has been compared, and factors increasing the likelihood of belonging to a certain cluster were identified.

2.3.Discussion

The results of this study revealed four distinct boundary management styles – home-protective, work-intrusive, segmentive and integrative, and several predictors of belonging to a certain style.

Regarding the typology itself, both K-means clustering and Latent Profile Analysis identified the same 4 distinct styles. Using two different methods to discover the styles aimed to be a methodological contribution of the current study, since previously researchers relied only on one to create their classifications (Kossek et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2021; Bulger et al., 2007; Urbanavičiūtė et al., 2023; Kinnunen et al., 2016). Such an approach, allows for the validation of the results and agreement of both methods further strengthens the typology.

The study provides an updated view on boundary management styles in a post-pandemic context. Two clear, symmetrical styles were found: segmentive (Cluster 3) and integrative (Cluster 4). This outcome is consistent with the theoretical framework of the segmentation-integration continuum described by Nippert-Eng (1996). Furthermore, similar symmetrical styles have been identified in most of the previous empirical studies (Kossek et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2021; Bulger et al., 2007; Urbanavičiūtė et al., 2023; Kinnunen et al., 2016). It can be concluded that these 2 approaches of boundary management are consistent across different contexts, including the post-pandemic work environment. However, this study has not found evidence of a style exhibiting moderate control over both boundaries among workers, similar to those discovered by Bulger et al. (2007) and Kinnunen et al. (2016).

Two asymmetrical styles were also observed. The home-protective (Cluster 1) style matches best with Kinnunen et al. (2016) nonwork guardians and Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023) home-protective style. Although when it comes to the latter in that study, decreased levels of both home permeability and flexibility were observed, while in the current study, home permeability is low, and home flexibility is moderate. Still, it was deemed appropriate to consider this style as home protective. Even if the mentioned boundary is pliable space and time-wise, it is still strongly protected from work-related interruptions by individuals. The work-intrusive (Cluster 2) style, characterised by high levels of home permeability, can be compared to Kossek et al. (2012) job warriors, Kinnunen et al. (2016) work guardians, and Kempen et al. (2017) work protectors who portray very frequent interruptions of their personal life by work. The asymmetrical styles found confirm the ideas of Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al. (2000) that boundary management can also be directional, with individuals selectively protecting one domain over the others due to a variety of factors.

The finding of meaningful and reproducible boundary management styles provides further ground for a person-centred approach in work and home boundary management research. Instead of focusing on single variables, such as flexibility, permeability, etc., it is important to recognise that these features combine within individuals and form a unique blend, a boundary management style, providing a holistic picture of how boundaries are treated (Kossek et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2021). As noted by Gardner et al. (2021), such a perspective may be more beneficial while designing policies or choosing techniques to aid in dealing with the work and home boundaries of employees.

Furthermore, previous empirical studies often lacked a large enough representative sample. This article has contributed to the literature by utilising a much bigger sample (n=3915), containing respondents from a variety of professional fields, organisation sizes, and work schedules, among other characteristics.

As only a limited number of studies have investigated predictors of belonging to a particular boundary management style, which was noted as an important direction for future research (Kinnunen et al., 2016; Kossel et al., 2012; Bulger et al., 2007), the current study has also explored this dimension. The identified clusters differed significantly in their background characteristics composition, and several determinants of cluster membership were found.

Firstly, younger individuals (under 35 years old) were found to be more likely to exhibit home-protective and segmentive boundary management styles. This would advise that younger people might prefer to portray boundary management styles that favour stronger boundaries around the domains, especially around home, while older age groups show more blending of the boundaries. This is consistent with the findings of Bulger et al. (2007), Kinnunen et al. (2016), Urbanavičiūtė et al. (2023), and Kempen et al. (2017), in which the more integrative clusters had the highest mean age. The way individuals treat their work and home boundaries depends heavily on the demands and expectations of their roles (Clark, 2000; Ashforth et al., 2000). From the work side domain, older employees are more likely to hold more senior positions with greater responsibility. As for the home domain, older individuals are more likely to have a family with children, which naturally increases responsibilities. These factors may make strict boundary management more difficult and the blending of the domains a necessity. Furthermore, older generations tend to attach more value to their work (Valickas & Jakstaite, 2017), which could affect how many work-related interruptions they allow in their home lives.

Secondly, the current study has found that gender-wise, women are more likely to exhibit a work-intrusive boundary management style compared to men and other styles. This is an interesting find, since, usually, it is thought that men allow greater work interruptions at home and women tend to keep the home domain more protected (Amirkamali et al., 2024; Allen et al., 2024). Only one study exploring boundary management styles has derived similar results, where there was a higher percentage of women in the cluster, allowing higher interruptions of the home domain by work (Kempen et al., 2017). Since the current sample presented a disproportionate amount of managers and white-collar workers, it might be that female participants were also disproportionately present in such occupations that foster work interrupting personal lives.

Managers were more likely to exhibit integrative or home-protective styles, similar to the study conducted by Kinnunen et al. (2016). This may be attributed to managerial roles being associated with increased demands and responsibility (Ford & Collinson, 2011). Thus, individuals might either accept the blending of domains caused by such demands or proactively adopt boundary management techniques to aid in protecting the home boundary. The latter option is further supported by managers usually having more freedom to adjust their working time when needed (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012), which helps to choose time that would not interrupt their home lives.

The integrative cluster had the highest proportion of people working 10+ years in their organisation, which matches the results of Bulger et al.'s (2007) exploration, where they thought that integration of the domains can become more of a preference with increasing tenure. However, the multinomial logistic regression did not provide any significant results regarding longer tenure increasing the likelihood of belonging to the integrative style. Instead, evidence was found that tenure only predicts membership to either the home-protective or work-intrusive styles, with more experienced employees more likely to protect their home boundaries and individuals who have been within the company for shorter periods (less than a year), allowing greater work-related interruptions at home. The latter might be happening due to new employees having increased pressure to establish themselves within the company.

Compared to larger organisations, companies with 1-4 employees were more strongly associated with the home-protective boundary management style. This suggests that small organisations may be able to create conditions that aid in protecting the home from work intrusions. Possibly, this result is due to the autonomous nature of work arrangements in such workplaces. On the contrary, larger organisations have more structured schedules and greater

role demands, which may reduce home boundary protection, even if bigger organisations tend to implement more work-life balance policies (Czerwińska-Lubszczyk & Byrtek, 2024).

Lastly, regarding professional field results, white-collar workers tended to populate the home-protective and segmentive clusters, and blue-collar workers appeared more in the work-intrusive and integrative ones. Regarding the former, it might be that office-based workplaces have more regulated working time and are more aware of and supportive of the work-life balance concept for their employees. This allows to keep their boundaries strong and for domains not to interrupt each other too much. As for professional fields more associated with manual labour (construction, industries, transportation), the results might be explained by these occupations being associated with irregular working hours and project jobs. Employees can be expected to be available all the time if a certain job arises, a permit to do a job is given, or something breaks. Thus, interruptions of home life by work are more common, and this limits control over the boundaries. Increased presence of education workers in the integrative cluster can be addressed by teachers usually taking certain tasks home, such as grading or planning lessons, even if their job entails structured working hours, which leads to the blending of the domains.

The present study has several meaningful practical implications. The identification of four distinct boundary management styles demonstrates that individuals differ inherently in how they navigate their work and home boundaries. This finding suggests that standardised, generic approaches to organisational flexibility and work-life balance policies are unlikely to sufficiently address the diverse needs of employees. Instead, organisations would benefit from recognising the individual differences in boundary management when designing work arrangements, flexibility policies and well-being interventions. Employees themselves can also build awareness regarding their boundary management and communicate it to their managers to set clear expectations and find solutions. In addition, as boundary management styles are defined in terms of both flexibility and permeability, organisational policies should focus on both dimensions, assisting individuals not only with when and where they work from but also with managing interruptions. For instance, raising awareness regarding the possible negative effects of frequent interruptions or promoting techniques that help to return more quickly to the interrupted activity.

The demographic and work-related characteristics found associated with each style may serve as a guide in the differentiation of employees. For instance, sectors such as construction, transportation, education, and medicine are more prevalent in integrative and work-intrusive styles, suggesting that employees in these fields may benefit from increased

organisational support in maintaining boundaries, since such styles are usually connected to more negative well-being outcomes (Kossek et al., 2012; Mellner et al., 2021).

The current study, conducted in the post-pandemic environment, where hybrid work has become popularised, offered one of the first examinations of boundary management styles based on a large and occupationally diverse sample. Thus, providing a more generalisable typology and minimising the effect of occupational constraints that could have been reflected in previous studies. The examination of background predictors addressed the need for a deeper grasp of the role of background variables in boundary management styles, noted by Gardner et al. (2021) and Bulger et al. (2007).

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify boundary management styles and their work-related and demographic characteristics among Estonian employees, based on flexibility and permeability.

Firstly, definitions of key concepts, such as boundary management style, flexibility, and permeability, have been analysed. It has been found that boundary management literature suffers from inconsistent terminology, particularly regarding flexibility and permeability. Based on the analysis of existing definitions, it was concluded that flexibility is best understood as "…the degree to which an individual has the capacity to contract or expand a domain boundary, either physically or temporally, in response to demands from another domain" (Matthews et al., 2010, p.448). Permeability was conceptualised as cross-role interruption behaviours, reflecting "the degree to which individuals allow interruptions from one role to another" (Kossek et al., 2012, p.114).

Secondly, foundational theories related to boundary management styles were reviewed. Border theory (Clark, 2000) and Boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) both outlined flexibility and permeability as key characteristics through which the styles are defined, and that boundary management can be both symmetrical and directional, with individuals selectively protecting one domain over the other.

Thirdly, previous empirical studies on boundary management styles were analysed and compared. Seven studies identifying clear typologies were reviewed. It was found that even where identical variables and clustering methods were used, the number and nature of profiles varied considerably. The inconsistency was attributed to differences in sample characteristics and occupational context. Regarding demographic and work-related characteristics, previous empirical studies on boundary management styles have mostly

explored the topic descriptively, using demographic composition tables rather than analyses of these factors as predictors.

Following this, the methodology was decided, the data gathered and analysed. A survey was distributed among Estonian companies in 2025, and a total of 3915 responses were utilised for the analysis. K-means clustering and Latent Profile Analysis were performed using variables such as work flexibility, home flexibility, work permeability, and home permeability. Both methods identified a four-profile solution. ANOVA confirmed that the cluster means were statistically significantly different across all variables. A chi-square test and Cramer's V were used to compare the two clustering solutions, revealing a moderate agreement between the methods. The composition of background variables within the clusters was compared, and multinomial logistic regression was used to determine if there are significant predictors of membership in a certain style within the demographic and work-related variables.

Lastly, the results were interpreted, discussed, and compared with previous research. Four distinct boundary management styles were identified: home-protective, work-intrusive, segmentive, and integrative. The finding of meaningful boundary management styles further strengthens the person-centred approach in literature, rather than the variable-centred one. As for background variables, work schedule, managerial position, age, gender, organisation size and tenure were found to be significant predictors of membership in a certain cluster.

The research has some limitations. To keep the survey in a manageable length for respondents, the number of measurement items was reduced, and they were additionally modified by the Salary Information Agency language editors. As a result, the constructs may not have been captured identically to the original scales. This is also clearly reflected in the lower reliability score observed for home flexibility. Furthermore, flexibility was measured using tools not previously utilised by researchers in previous empirical studies, which could have affected the ability to reproduce the results. However, the styles identified in the study are consistent with prior research, which used the full measurement instruments, suggesting that even with the reduction of items, the scales still captured the construct sufficiently to produce meaningful and interpretable results. In addition, the study's sample overrepresented white-collar workers and managerial employees relative to the population, which may limit the generalizability of the results to the broader population. However, the current sample still had more occupational diversity than in previous empirical studies, which have typically relied on a single occupation or sector sample. Moreover, the Estonian results may not be

generalisable to other countries with different cultures. Additionally, the study uses self-reported data, which may bias the reported levels of the variables.

Regarding further research, it would be useful to focus on the psychological variables, such as personality traits, role identity, and cultural factors, as predictors of membership to a certain boundary management style. The current study focused on background variables; however, the mentioned parameters, at least theoretically, should have a greater influence on the boundary management style a person chooses. In addition, since such research was previously conducted on small, sector-specific samples, future research could replicate the styles identified in this study with a large, occupationally diverse sample in other countries to determine whether these styles are consistent across contexts. Furthermore, the current study has only focused on work-related characteristics. It may be useful to add family-related characteristics into the analysis when reviewing cluster membership to further understand which individuals are more likely to belong to which style. Additionally, further research could focus on finding the outcomes which individuals experience due to belonging to a certain boundary management style.

As the current world is characterised by blurred boundaries and the post-pandemic introduction of hybrid work arrangements, the topic of how individuals manage their work and home boundaries is highly relevant. This study contributed to the literature in several ways. Firstly, it provided a post-pandemic perspective on boundary management styles relevant to the current shift in work structure. Secondly, utilising a large, diverse sample, the study offered a typology applicable to individuals across different professions, showing a general structure that holds across different work spheres and is not overly influenced by occupational specifics. Thirdly, identifying demographic and work-related predictors of boundary management styles provided further insight into the limited understanding of background determinants of these styles. In practice, the study provided a framework that organisations and individuals could use to better understand their boundary management approach and make informed decisions about managing their work and home lives.

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APPENDIX A

Measurement tools for flexibility and permeability used in the distributed survey

Measurement tools

English(original)	English (modified)	Estonian	Russian
Work permeability (Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum 2012) ***5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree***			
I take care of personal and family needs during work	I sort out my personal matters during my working hours	Tegelen töö ajal isiklike asjadega	Я занимаюсь личными делами во время работы
I respond to personal communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) during work	I respond to personal emails, messages or calls during my working hours	Vastan töö ajal isiklikele e-kirjadele, sõnumitele või kõnedele	Я отвечаю на личные письма, сообщения или звонки во время работы
I do not think about my family, friends, or personal interests while working so I can focus	I don't think about personal matters at work so I can stay focused	Ma ei mõtle töö ajal isiklikele asjadele, et saaksin keskenduda	Я не думаю о личных делах во время работы, чтобы сосредоточиться
When I work from home, I handle personal or family responsibilities during work (excluded)			
I monitor personal-related communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) when I am working (excluded)			
I attend to family or personal issues during work. (excluded)			
When I work from home, I work in a space designated for that purpose only. (excluded)			
When I work from home, it is okay if my family or friends interrupt me. (excluded)			
Home permeability (Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum 2012) ***5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, strongly agree***			
I respond to work-related communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) during my personal time away from work	I respond to work-related emails, messages or calls outside my working hours	Vastan vabal ajal tööga seotud e-kirjadele, sõnumitele või kõnedele	Я отвечаю на рабочие письма, сообщения или звонки в свободное время
I work during my vacations	I sometimes work while on holiday	Töötan mõnikord ka puhkuse ajal	Я иногда работаю во время отпуска
I allow work to interrupt me when I spend time with my family or friends	I let work matters interfere with my life outside work	Lasen tööasjadel end vabal ajal segada	Я позволяю рабочим вопросам отвлекать меня в личное время

I regularly bring work home (excluded)
I usually bring work materials with me when I attend personal or family activities (excluded)
When I'm at home, I rarely think about work, so I can fully get away from my job. (excluded)
I monitor work-related communications (e.g., emails, texts, and phone calls) during my (excluded)personal time away from work. (excluded)

Work flexibility (Clark, 2002)
5-point Likert scale: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

I am able to arrive and depart from work when I want.	My working hours are flexible	Minu tööaeg on paindlik	Мое рабочее время гибкое
I am free to work the hours that are best for my schedule.	My working hours fit well with my personal life	Minu tööaeg sobib hästi isikliku elukorraldusega	Мое рабочее время хорошо сочетается с личной жизнью
I could easily take a day off of work, if I wanted to.	I can take a day off work whenever I want to	Saan soovi korral töölt alati vaba päeva võtta	Я могу взять выходной, когда это нужно

My employer allows me to carry out non-work projects during spare time at work. (excluded)

Home flexibility (Clark, 2002)
5-point Likert scale: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never

I am able to arrive and depart from home when I want.	My personal life is flexible (time-wise)	Minu isikliku elu korraldus on (ajaliselt) paindlik	Моя личная жизнь гибкая по времени
I am free to carry out my family responsibilities during the hours that are best for my schedule.	I can take care of personal responsibilities at a time that suits me	Saan isikliku elu kohustustega tegeleda endale sobival ajal	Я могу заниматься личными делами в удобное для меня время
I could easily work an extra day, if I wanted to.	I can always do an extra day at work if I want to	Saan soovi korral alati lisatööpäeva teha	Я могу при желании работать дополнительные дни

My family allows me to carry out work projects during spare minutes at home. (excluded)

Notes: “When I work from home, I handle personal or family responsibilities during work” – left out due to some of the surveyed people not having the opportunity to work from home
“I monitor personal-related
communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) when I am working” – left out due to being very similar to the included question mentioning responding to communications. Since responding is more in the control of individual, that item was deemed to be more relevant and included in the survey.

“I attend to family or personal issues during work.”– left out due to being practically identical to “I take care of personal and family needs during work”.
“When I work from home, I work in a space designated for that purpose only.” – left out due to some of the surveyed people not having the opportunity to work from home
“When I work from home, it is okay if my family or friends interrupt me”. – left out due to some of the surveyed people not having the opportunity to work from home
“I regularly bring work home”- excluded due to being similar too “I allow work to interrupt me when I spend time with my family or friends”
“I usually bring work materials with me when I attend personal or family activities” – excluded due to some of the respondents not having the capability to bring work materials home
“When I'm at home, I rarely think about work, so I can fully get away from my job” – excluded due to the item referring specifically to home setting and not capturing other aspects of personal life
“I monitor work-related communications (e.g., emails, texts, and phone calls) during my personal time away from work” – left out due to being very similar to the included question mentioning responding to communications. Since responding is more in the control of individual, that item was deemed to be more relevant and included in the survey.
“My employer allows me to carry out non-work projects during spare time at work” – excluded due to similarity with the permeability concept
“My family allows me to carry out work projects during spare minutes at home” – excluded due to similarity with the permeability concept
Source: Compiled by the author

Resümee

TÖÖ- JA KODUELU PIIRITLETUSE JUHTIMISE STIILID EESTIS LÄHTUVALT PIIRIDE LÄBILASKVUSEST JA PAINDLIKKUSEST

Kateryna Nahorna

Magistritöö eesmärk on määratleda Eesti töötajate töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise stiilid tulenevalt piiride läbilaskvusest ja paindlikkusest ning demograafilistest ja tööga seotud tunnusetest. Töö käsitleb kahte uurimislünka. Esiteks on enamik varasemaid uuringuid läbi viidud enne COVID-19 pandeemiat või selle ajal, kuid pandeemia on muutnud töökorraldust hübriidtöö suunas. Seetõttu on vajalik ajakohastatud käsitlus töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise stiilidest. Teiseks on varasemad uuringud tuginenud väikestele ja spetsiifilistele sektoritele keskendunud valimitele, mistõttu ei pruugi leitud klastrid olla üldistatavad enamikule tegevusvaldkondadele.

Autor analüüsis mõistete „töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise stiil“, „paindlikkus“ ja „piiride läbilaskvus“ olemasolevaid definitsioone. Piiritletuse juhtimise stiil tähendab üldist lähenemist, mida inimene kasutab piiride määratlemiseks ning töö- ja kodurollide vahel tasakaalu hoidmiseks. Paindlikkus viitab sellele, mil määral on inimesel võimalik muuta ühe eluvaldkonna piire ajaliselt või füüsiliselt vastavalt teise eluvaldkonna nõudmistele. Piiride läbilaskvus väljendab seda, mil määral ühte rolli täites tegeletakse psühholoogiliselt (mõtted ja tunded) või käitumuslikult (tegevused) teise rolliga seotud aspektidega. Näiteks tööl olles tehakse isiklikke kõnesid või loetakse isiklikke e-maile. Varasemad teoreetilised käsitlused on toonud esile sümmeetriliste ja asümmeetriliste piiritletuse stiilide olemasolu ning neid mõjutavad tegurid.

Olemasolevad töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise teooriad on jõudnud ühisele arusaamale, et piiritletust määratlevad piiride paindlikkus ja läbilaskvus. Kui esialgu käsitleti peamiselt sümmeetrilisi stiile, kus nii töö- kui ka koduvaldkonnas on paindlikkuse ja läbilaskvuse tase sarnane, siis hilisemates käsitlustes on peetud võimalikuks ka asümmeetriliste stiilide olemasolu. Sümmeetrilisust ja asümmetrilisust mõjutavad erinevad tegurid, näiteks situatsioon, rolliga samastumine ja kultuur. Autor koostas kirjanduse analüüsi põhjal joonised, mis illustreerivad töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise stiilide klassifitseerimist ning piiride paindlikkuse ja läbilaskvuse omavahelist seost.

Varasemate empiiriliste uuringute analüüs näitas, et töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise stiilid jagunevad klastritesse ning uuringud annavad sageli sarnaseid tulemusi. Samas kasutatakse uuringutes erinevaid klastritesse jaotamise meetodeid ning väikeseid ja

sektorispetsiifilisi valimeid, mis piirab tulemuste üldistatavust. Lisaks tuuakse demograafilisi ja tööga seotud tunnuseid välja enamasti taustainfona, mitte sisulise analüüsi osana.

Empiirilises osas kasutati 2025. aastal Palgainfo Agentuuri uuringu raames kogutud andmeid. Lõplik valim hõlmas 3915 Eestis töötavat inimest erinevatest sektoritest. Töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse stiilide tuvastamiseks kasutati K-keskmiste klasteranalüüsi ja latentsete profiilide analüüsi. Mõlemad meetodid tuvastasid nelja profiiliga lahenduse.

Esimesena tuvastati kodu kaitsev stiil, mida iseloomustab madal kodu piiride läbilaskvus ja kõrge töö paindlikkus – töötajad korraldavad oma tööd paindlikult, kuid kaitsevad eraelu tööga seotud katkestuste eest. Teiseks tuvastati tööle fokusseeriv stiil, mida iseloomustavad sagedased tööga seotud katkestused koduses elus ehk kodu piiride läbilaskvus on kõrge ning töö ja kodu paindlikkus on keskmine. Kolmandaks tuvastati segmenteeriv stiil, mida iseloomustavad madalad näitajad kõigi tunnuste lõikes – töö- ja eraelu hoitakse rangelt lahus. Viimasena tuvastati integreeriv stiil, kus piirid on mõlemas suunas väga paindlikud ja kõrge läbilaskvusega. Multinomiaalse regressiooni tulemused näitasid, et vanus, sugu, juhi amet, organisatsiooni suurus, tööstaaž, tegevusvaldkond ja töögraafik olid olulised klastrisse kuulumise ennustajad.

Uuringu tulemused pakuvad praktilisi soovitusi nii tööandjatele kui ka töötajatele. Organisatsioonid peaksid paindlikkuspoliitikate ja heaolumeetmete kujundamisel arvestama töö- ja koduelu piiritletuse juhtimise stiilide mitmekesisusega. Ühtne lahendus kõigile ei pruugi olla tõhus, kuna töötajad, kes kaitsevad oma kodust elu töökatkestuste eest, ning need, kelle piirid on vastupidiselt väga läbitavad, võivad vajada põhimõtteliselt erinevaid lähenemisi.

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