

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA(M):  
A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE BORDERS BETWEEN  
WORK AND LIFE DOMAINS DESCRIBED BY WOMEN IN THE  
U.S. APPAREL INDUSTRY

Laura E Mc Andrews

Dr. Jung Ha-Brookshire, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The study explored the border development and management between work and life domains as described by women working in the U.S. apparel industry. By modeling Clark's (2000) work-family border theory and coupling the social identity theory, the study's aim was to discover how women manage and negotiate their work and life domains, the borders between domains, and the people who occupy the domains in order to attain balance. The interpretation from a qualitative case study approach, which triangulated semi-structured interviews, field observations, and photo elicitations of five women revealed three theme categories: (a) definition of work and life domains; (b) grand view triggering events and effects; (c) every day triggering events and effects. Implications derived from the results offer important opportunities for corporate human resource departments to cultivate a work environment that may be more sustainable in the long term with reasonable work expectations and more supportive role models.