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Communication Privacy Management Theory: What Do We Know About Family Privacy Regulation?

For families, managing private information is challenging. Family members reveal too much, they allow more privacy access to outsiders than others desire, parents attempt to negotiate Internet disclosures with their teens, and family health issues often change the way private information is defined altogether. The complexities of privacy regulation call for a systematic way to grasp how privacy management operates in families. This article presents the evidenced-based theory of communication privacy management (CPM) and corresponding research on family privacy regulation that provides a road map to understand the multifaceted nature of managing private information (Petronio, 2002). The article discusses contributions of CPM to conceptualizing privacy in meaningful ways, along with current research trends and future directions for CPM research and theorizing.

Today's family faces many issues in which privacy management decisions are necessary. There are questions about how to handle private information when children use the Internet, family members deal with a considerable number of uncertainties about privacy management as families divorce and new relationships are

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established in stepfamilies, and parents often struggle to know the best way to disclose information to their children about sexuality (e.g., Afifi, Joseph, & Aldeis, 2008; Afifi, McManus, Hutchinson, & Baker, 2007; Child & Agyeman-Budu, 2009). Privacy questions also arise from new medical advances, such as how parents share information about donor insemination with their children, how genetic information is regulated, and how to cope with revealing HIV-positive status, as well as surviving changes in communication as a result of diseases like Alzheimer's (e.g., Daniels, Gillett, & Grace, 2009; Duggan & Petronio, 2009; Greene, Derlega, Yep, & Petronio, 2003; Johnson, Kass, & Natowicz, 2005). Sometimes it is difficult to know the best way to make judgments about how to manage private information with these types of family challenges. In many ways, privacy appears paradoxical, thus making the choices more complex for families. At the core of privacy management is the need to be connected to family members while retaining a sense of autonomy apart from those members.

Untangling this dialectical tension of being both connected and autonomous presents interesting queries for grasping the place privacy has in family life. Prost (1991) has argued that, into the 20th century, the family ''gave up many of its public functions and retained only private ones'' (p. 51). As the family's private life developed, two interconnected circles of privacy emerged in families. Because individual members were granted the rights of autonomy inside the family structure as part of the emphasis on private life, Prost (1991) pointed out that it is

''within the private life of the family, the private life of the individual unfolds'' (p. 51). Ironically, in the sphere of a family's private life, the unfolding of an individual's own private information often means opening a personal privacy boundary to the other members, thereby making autonomous information belonging to the individual member public to the family (Petronio, 2002; Serewicz & Canary, 2008). As this process illustrates, the regulation of interconnected privacy boundaries in families is complicated and grows more complex as decisions are made to grant or deny access to people outside the family (Serewicz & Canary, 2008). The constellation of family privacy includes both the management of information among family members across internally constructed privacy boundaries and the flow or protection of private information to those outside the larger family privacy boundary (Petronio, 2002). The evidenced-based theory of communication privacy management (CPM) is reviewed critically here to shed light on how families manage private information and to identify areas in need of further exploration (for a more comprehensive discussion of CPM theory, see Petronio, 2002).

Overall, CPM theory was constructed to address the way people manage private information from a communicative perspective (Petronio, 2002, 2007). Although this theory has several aspects that allow for applications to privacy in terms of space and territoriality, the central focus and subsequent development of CPM has primarily targeted privacy regulation that takes place through communicative interactions. With that in mind, this article first assesses the contributions of CPM theory and the way it has changed the landscape regarding the interface among privacy, disclosure, and confidentiality. Next, this article lays out the basic principles of CPM theory and identifies several needed areas of investigation concerning each principle. Further, the article isolates the current trends in research using CPM theory as it is applied to families. Last, this review concludes by suggesting areas of investigation on the horizon for CPM to further understand the way families navigate privacy management.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNDERSTANDING PRIVACY: BREAKING GROUND

Through the research conducted to build CPM theory and the development of ideas emerging from CPM theory construction, CPM theory challenges many of the basic notions concerning privacy, disclosure, and confidentiality (e.g., Nock, 1993; Petronio, 2002; Schoeman, 1984; Solove, 2008; Weiss, 1983). There are five conceptual issues representing alternative ways to understand these notions evolving from the research application and development of CPM. First, as opposed to many previous treatments of privacy, CPM is structured within a dialectical framework. By using this framework, different ways of thinking about the concept emerged. Second, by assuming that individuals and collectives both simultaneously and separately manage private information, CPM theory allows for a viable way to see the interface of person and collectives for privacy management. Third, by actively accounting for the role of recipients in privacy management, CPM identifies a missing factor in the equation of this management process and gives a feasible way to study the significance of a recipient. Fourth, CPM theory recognizes a fundamental and salient relationship among privacy, disclosure, and confidentiality and offers a useful way to address this relationship. In doing so, CPM theory shows the centrality of the interface among these three concepts for privacy management. Fifth, by accounting for the times that privacy management breaks down, CPM theory permits a better grasp on how privacy management should work and identifies the way that individuals attempt to repair the damage.

Contribution of Dialectical Tensions to Privacy Management

The CPM theory predicts that dialectical tensions are at the core of managing private information. In other words, through the juxtapositions of needing both privacy and openness simultaneously, individuals make decisions about the way to manage privacy (Petronio, 2002). These tensions are important because they underpin the significance of recognizing the interplay between individuals and the group where privacy is concerned. Theoretically, making this move drives the basic understanding of privacy management beyond earlier discussions about privacy, which were largely concerned with securing protection for the self and restricting access to others (e.g., Westin, 1970). Allowing for the tension between telling and concealing opens the door to consider the role

of others in privacy management. As a consequence, others, including family members, become a salient part of privacy regulation (Petronio, 1991). Yet more research is needed to examine how other dialectical tensions, such as freedom and responsibility, might relate to privacy, including the work by Baxter (2010) from a dialogic perspective.

Family Privacy Boundaries: The Individual and Collective

The CPM theory provides the theoretical apparatus for assessing how family members manage individual and collective family privacy boundaries. Research has verified the existence of family privacy boundaries, including those internal to the family unit and an external boundary used to regulate privacy to outsiders (Petronio, 2002; Serewicz & Canary, 2008). Further, using CPM, research shows ways that families, in certain circumstances, establish or disestablish interconnected privacy boundaries with members and how they coordinate the rules for management (Caughlin et al., 2000). Also CPM predicts that, implicitly or explicitly, family members functioning as recipients are perceived as having a responsibility for information that other members reveal to them or to whom they give access. As a consequence, privacy management may be understood on multiple levels across and among individuals and collectives. Although existing research has provided support for these predictions, more work is needed to identify the dimensions of responsibility that emerge in various family situations. A better understanding is needed to grasp how responsibility is enacted across situations and whether the commitment to a sense of accountability on the part of the recipient fulfills the expectations of the person giving access to his or her private information.

Recipients of Private Information

The CPM theory and research demonstrate that accounting for recipients of private information is central to grasping the regulation of private information (Caughlin & Petronio, 2004). As such, the salient dynamics of functioning as both a recipient of other family members' information and an owner of personally private information occurs simultaneously and may affect privacy management decisions. Depending on the weight and significance of personally versus collectively held private information, an individual may protect one and neglect to protect the other. Unlike other treatments of privacy, CPM equips investigators with a way to account for recipient impact and the relationship between recipients and those giving access to their information (Solove, 2008). From the research thus far, there are circumstances in which the recipient feels the burden of receiving someone else's private information (Afifi, 2003; Petronio & Reierson, 2009). At other times, the recipient feels privileged to receive the information. Yet in families, the complicating factor of family membership may change how recipients respond to functioning as a confidant. More research is needed to identify specific conditions in which serving as a recipient is seen as positive, negative, or some combination. In addition, the impact of being called to function as a confidant may vary significantly depending on whether a family member expects to receive the information or is blindsided by learning something he or she did not want to know (Petronio & Jones, 2006).

Triangulation of Privacy, Confidentiality, and Disclosure

The CPM theory and research provide a systematic way to grasp how disclosure, confidentiality, and privacy are interrelated. In doing so, the research has underscored a fundamental shift in how we define disclosure, in particular. Because CPM makes a compelling case for multiple levels of ownership, or in CPM's wording, co-ownership of private information, often arising through the disclosure process, it is no longer useful to assume that *disclosure* refers just to revealing information about the self. Instead, it must be acknowledged that knowing someone else's private information means that there is a potential to reveal issues that belong to others. Therefore, from a CPM perspective, disclosure per se, necessarily should be viewed in a larger conceptual framework that extends beyond information of the ''self.'' Telling private information to someone carries an obligation (implicit or otherwise) for the recipient regarding third-party dissemination. For families, the concept of co-ownership tends to be more akin to a guardianship, in which there is an expectation of members protecting the dissemination to individuals within and outside of the family boundary. Thus, beyond rights to

receive information from family members is the prospect of making decisions, either independent of the original owner or in collaboration with the original owner, regarding third-party dissemination. When there is collaboration, there is an assumption that the information is protected in accordance with the wishes of that original owner. The concept of co-ownership or guardianship sits at the core of CPM theory. Although extensive work conducted on this notion (as reviewed in this article) has provided a good base, there is more to accomplish. Some of those issues include learning whether roles of co-owners vary in different contexts and examining the relationships between family members' perceived right to know information and a concomitant sense of responsibility to the member regarding caretaking of the information.

Privacy Breakdowns

The CPM theory predicts that the process of coordination can be neglected or ignored. It also calculates that if the coordination process is not enacted to establish a consistent set of co-constructed privacy rules to regulate that information, turbulence occurs in relationships between and among co-owners. Accordingly, CPM theory furnishes a way to account for and predict the probability of mistakes, missteps, violations, miscalculations, and in general, times when privacy management fails to achieve an intended goal. From the framing of privacy breakdowns that CPM offers, the potential field of inquiry is extensive. Although we know that privacy dilemmas occur in these circumstances, and we have an initial understanding of family privacy dilemmas, we have only scratched the surface (Petronio, Jones, & Morr, 2003). There are many other kinds of conditions that lead to violations, miscalculations, and missteps in need of exploration, particularly in families.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION PRIVACY MANAGEMENT

The theory of communication privacy management was developed to better understand the way people navigate the management of private information through revealing or concealing information, thereby granting or denying access to others (Petronio, 2002; Petronio & Durham, 2008). Early in the development of CPM, it was clear that fully grasping this management process required conceptualizing the notion of privacy in relationship to openness (disclosure) (Petronio, 2004). The important work of Altman (1975) has illustrated that, to grasp the notion of privacy, it is necessary to juxtapose privacy with publicness. Privacy and publicness are in a dialectical tension: Both coexist and interact because one defines the parameters of the other. We cannot have an understanding of publicness or being social without the concomitant measure of privacy. In families, the intersection of members needing to be social with each other, thereby having a degree of publicness and remaining autonomous, which affords privacy, sets the backdrop for family privacy management. The CPM theory is predicated on five principles of private information management that represent organizing tenets interlinking both individuals and collectives, such as families: (a) ownership of information, (b) control, (c) regulation through privacy rules, (d) co-ownership or guardianship of another's private information, and (e) turbulences or regulation of privacy breakdowns. Consideration of the individual and collective levels in concert is necessary to fully comprehend the nature of regulating privacy and is particularly salient in families (for a more in-depth understanding, see Petronio, 2002).

The CPM theory uses a boundary metaphor to illustrate how management principles work and to grasp the manner in which people regulate the flow of private information to others. Accordingly, the method of management is framed within a privacy boundary system for CPM because ownership, control, guardianship (co-ownership), and rule regulations conceptually set borders for access to information considered private. The notion of boundaries permeates family studies literature to represent family systems and subsystems (Minuchin, 1974; Nichols & Schwartz, 1995). Although there are obvious similarities, in the general case of privacy management, and particularly for families, a boundary represents a place that information, judged as private to the individual or the family, is housed. Using a boundary metaphor in this manner is a useful means for illustrating how granting or protecting access functions.

Principle 1: Private Information Ownership

The first principle predicts that people define private information as something they claim

belongs to them (Caughlin & Petronio, 2004; Petronio, 2002; Petronio & Caughlin, 2005). In other words, people cast ownership as a fundamental parameter of privacy. They hold a perceived right to privacy that is considered an entitlement determining what others know about them (Petronio, 2002). Embedded in this assumption is an expectation about the prerogative people have to manage their information in ways they see fit. The claim of ownership is perceptual and often held with conviction. Yet because the claim tends to be based on perceptions, there are many issues that arise confounding a person's assumption of ownership. One example is the recent conundrum concerning social networking and privacy: People believe they have privacy, yet the claims of ownership are often contradicted (Child, Pearson, & Petronio, 2009; Mayer, 2003). More research is needed to better understand the way the perception of personally owning private information affects choices of privacy management, particularly in the family.

Principle 2: Private Information Control

The second CPM principle argues that, because people believe they own their private information, they assume the right to control that information. People want to dictate the flow of information because there are risks if others acquire information they want restricted from view. Ownership signifies that individuals assume the right to control the information; however, sometimes the level of control varies. In certain cases, there is a high need for control over the privacy boundaries where the boundary walls are thick and the flow of information outward is very limited. High control needs result in establishing impermeable, dense boundaries to protect the information. This kind of information reflects what is commonly referred to as a secret because the access is so restricted that very few, if any, gain a right to know (Caughlin et al., 2000). Parents may restrict access, keeping secrets about adoption or donor insemination from their children, thereby erecting thick boundaries, reducing the possibility of knowing and exercising a high degree of control over the information (Caughlin et al., 2000). Moderate control over privacy boundaries is used where information is available to some but not other family members. For moderate control needs, the level of permeability of the privacy boundary is

variable. Finally, there are privacy boundaries with low control and more openness or access permitted, producing a highly permeable privacy boundary (Petronio, 2000a). Although we know that the level of control varies across situations, the catalyst for changing the degree of control is not always clear. Although it is possible that an individual with high control needs enters a relationship with someone who has more permeable privacy boundaries, it is not clear how that disparity might affect the nature of the relationship. More research is warranted to know whether there is a shift in privacy control needs by both individuals, therefore regressing to the mean, or by only one partner. In addition, understanding the conditions leading to privacy control change, grasping the variations that occur over time, and investigating the impact that situational issues have on levels of control all need to be explored.

Principle 3: Private Information Rules

Principle 3 contends that people depend on a rule-based system to control the flow of private information (Durham, 2008; Petronio, 2002). Consequently, privacy rules are developed to determine when, how, with whom, and in what way others might be granted or denied access to someone's private information. Privacy rules are rooted in criteria that people use to formulate and change those rules as situations arise (Durham, 2008; Matsunaga, 2009). For instance, cultural values are found to influence judgments about privacy issues and create expectations of how people think privacy should be managed. In some cultures, privacy needs are high, such as in the United Kingdom, whereas privacy boundaries in other cultures are often more permeable, as in Israel (de Munck & Korotayev, 2007; Kim, 2005; Moore, 1984; Newell, 1998; Roberts & Gregor, 1971). Gender criteria are also used as the basis for developing privacy rules. Thus, research shows that men and women regulate access and protection to privacy boundaries using different kinds of privacy rules (Petronio & Martin, 1986; Petronio, Martin, & Littlefield, 1984). Continued investigations are needed to determine whether the privacy rules men and women use tend to converge or diverge over time when they are in a relationship.

Motivating factors likewise contribute to rule making (Durham, 2008; Taylor, 1979). Goal seeking, topic avoidance, and rationing access are predicated on objectives people wish to

achieve when deciding to disclose (give access) or protect knowledge about personal information. In this regard, adolescents are often motivated to avoid talking about sex with their parents because they feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. However, when they perceive parents as receptive, informal, and composed during the conversation, adolescents are less avoidant and more motivated to talk about sex (Afifi, Joseph, & Aldeis, 2008). As such, motivations often predict which private rules are developed and implemented (Durham, 2008; Greene et al., 2003; Petronio, 2002). Risk–benefit calculations form another criterion for rule establishment, implementation, and adjustments (Greene et al., 2003). When people determine that opening access to private information promises to be more punishing than positive, they recalibrate privacy rules or establish new rules to meet their risk–benefit threshold in a given situation or in terms of meeting an overall need (Golish & Caughlin, 2002). Finally, CPM predicts that situational criteria intervene at times to serve as a catalyst for changing established privacy rules. When two people are married, they co-construct a set of privacy rules regulating private information. However, if they divorce, those accepted rules must change to accommodate the altered status of the relationship. Thus, situational transformations often require concomitant privacy rule changes (Petronio & Caughlin, 2005).

At times, people stipulate the way private information should be managed prior to disclosing (Petronio & Bantz, 1991). The use of statements such as ''Don't tell anyone but . . .'' issues a privacy rule that warns the recipient of restrictions the original owner expects the receiver to follow (Petronio & Bantz, 1991). These *disclosure warnings* explicitly state privacy rules for the recipient; however, research has shown that there are gender differences in the way that men and women expect others to respond to the warning (Petronio & Bantz, 1991). Issuing a disclosure warning when women disclose helps them feel they are signifying the importance of their information. Nevertheless, women reported that they do not have high expectations that recipients will restrict disclosure of the information to others, especially if the recipient defines it as ''good gossip.'' Men in this study believed that, whenever they issue a disclosure warning, others would likely follow their wishes (Petronio & Bantz, 1991). Disclosure warnings, as a preemptive type of privacy

rule, are interesting. Besides indicating a rule for regulating the disclosure, warnings often indicate who is considered a legitimate member of a privacy boundary and who is restricted from knowing the information. Accordingly, when disclosure warnings are issued, they signal those members judged to be in the privacy network (cell) and those who are outside that network. Research is needed to better grasp the function of disclosure warnings as a form of privacy rules and to examine how warnings are used in a family context.

Although research indicates that these criteria drive the development of privacy rules, more investigations are needed to better understand several fundamental issues. These issues include whether these criteria work in a systematic fashion, whether they work in conjunction with one another or separately, and whether one criterion can become dominant over the others having more influence on which privacy rules are developed.

Principle 4: Private Information Co-Ownership and Guardianship

Principle 4 predicts that, once a person is permitted to know private information belonging to someone else, the individual becomes a co-owner, confidant, shareholder, or guardian (Petronio & Reierson, 2009). In many ways, this principle forms the basis for a fundamental understanding of how privacy management and confidentiality are linked (Petronio & Reierson, 2009). Considered one of the most important contributions of CPM to the understanding of privacy management, this dimension not only gives the option of examining personal privacy boundaries around an individual's information but also allows for the notion of multiple privacy boundaries or collectively held private information, such as exists in families. In addition, once the original owner of private information consents to giving access to another person or persons, co-ownership status fundamentally alters the system from an individual focus to a collective focus concerning the information shared. Through this metamorphosis, it is possible to understand how family members achieve the dual roles of member in the larger family privacy boundary while preserving an autonomous privacy boundary within the family.

Communication privacy management and the research using this theory have demonstrated

that people manage multiple privacy boundaries simultaneously—some are owned personally and some are co-owned with others (Durham, 2008; Petronio, 2002). Once privacy boundaries become co-owned in collective ways, including dyadic privacy boundaries, family privacy boundaries, group, organizational, and societal, there is an expectation that the shareholders of the information establish mutually agreed on and collectively held privacy rules to manage the co-owned privacy boundaries. Negotiations about privacy rules are necessary to alleviate or preempt inadvertent violations and mishaps by co-owners. In addition, the original owner (the person giving access or disclosing private information) often holds expectations for third-party dissemination that, when articulated and agreed on by the co-owners, is likely to avoid a mishap with the information. Nevertheless, original owners tend to believe that they continue to retain the right to control information they define as theirs, regardless of who else might know (e.g., Petronio & Gaff, in press; Petronio & Reierson, 2009).

When individuals become co-owners, there are three types of privacy rule conditions that are preferably negotiated. Negotiating these conditions represents boundary coordination processes, and they include (a) coordinating linkage rules, (b) coordinating permeability rules, and (c) coordinating ownership rules. *Linkage rules* are parameters for determining additional co-owners. Negotiating who is linked into the boundary may revolve around others considered justly privy to the information and the selection criteria for status as a confidant, including such issues as the type of relationships (e.g., mother, father, aunt, and cousin), level of intimacy, and relevance of a topic for a recipient.

Permeability rules are parameters for how much others should know about the private information within the co-owned privacy boundary. These are rules regulating access to and protection of the co-owned private information. Therefore, the degree of information flow or amount of protection reflects the rule negotiations that take place and the decisions agreed on by the co-owners. Suppose Laura tells her sister-in-law, Sara (the wife of her brother), about results of Laura's medical test. Sara negotiates with Laura that she can tell her husband (Laura's brother), but Laura asks her to wait to do so until she tells her parents the test results. Because permeability represents degree

of access ranging from complete openness to completely closed-off access, this rule process permits an understanding of what the access possibilities are and how they are managed, as we find in the previous example (Greene et al., 2003; Hawk, Hale, Raaijmakers, & Meeus, 2008; Petronio, 2002).

When *ownership rules* are coordinated with co-owners (as the example illustrates), there is an agreement about how much control others have to independently manage the private information. From examining these kinds of negotiations, it is clear that sometimes co-owners are given privileges to know private information, yet are not given permission to do anything with the information (Golish, 2003). In these cases, co-owners have no rights of distribution and their control over the information is contained within the terms of their agreement to protect it from others. Research that investigates the outcomes of restricted co-ownership rights in families would be important to pursue. We know that in situations such as spouses of physicians who are involved in medical mistakes, the spouses are typically restricted from telling others because doing so would compromise the spouses' position as medical personnel (e.g., Petronio, 2006). Yet there is a toll on the marital relationship. Consequently, learning more about these kinds of situations may lead to the development of potential interventions that seek to improve the mental and relational health of couples.

Although there are many instances in which recipients negotiate privacy rules regarding protection and access, sometimes the rules are already set in place, and socialization rather than negotiation occurs. Because families, as a collective, have established privacy rules for linkage, co-ownership, and permeability, when others enter the family unit, they need to be socialized about the appropriate rules as they achieve the status of co-owner (Petronio, 2002). In the case of newly married couples entering their respective in-laws' families, they are often explicitly or implicitly taught privacy rules to which the family ascribes (Serewicz & Canary, 2008). Continued research on different ways people learn existing privacy rules and how they respond to learning rules that are contrary to the way they define privacy management is necessary to understand the larger picture of how privacy necessarily must change when the circumstance calls for adjustments.

Principle 5: Private Information Boundary Turbulence

Principle 5 predicts that, whereas owners and co-owners or guardians of private information should negotiate privacy rules to have smooth interactions and a greater probability of regulating private information in a way that alleviates unwanted intrusion or exposure, individuals do not live in a perfect world. The expectations for co-constructing or negotiating privacy rules so they are mutually enacted do not always occur. Further, there are instances in which individual co-owners or guardians have reasons to violate the established coordinated rules; they might also misunderstand them, and as likely is that the privacy rules have not been clearly identified. Consequently, to have effective explanatory power, it is necessary to accommodate the inevitability of privacy management breakdowns in CPM theory. Thus, the last principle predicts that mistakes, misunderstandings, intentional violations, intrusions, and mishaps take place and result in privacy boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002, 2006).

Privacy boundary turbulence occurs when expectations for privacy management are unfulfilled. There are many examples of boundary turbulence (e.g., Afifi & Schrodt, 2003; Petronio, 1994, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Petronio & Sargent, in press). For instance, intentional privacy rule violations result in turbulence, and so do betrayals of confidence. Privacy dilemmas challenge recipients of privacy information, boundary rule mistakes often lead to errors in judgment disrupting boundary management, miscalculations in disclosure timing are also problematic, and so are bungling rules that guide appropriateness of topics. There are instances of fuzzy boundaries that are somewhat aligned with Boss's notion of boundary ambiguity (Carroll, Olson, & Buckmiller, 2007). Fuzzy boundaries occur when boundary ownership expectations are compromised while deciphering whether privacy is upheld or deception is lurking (Cole, 2001; Petronio, Andea, & Cichocki, 2002). If a person refuses to tell a romantic partner about his or her relational history, the partner might claim an intention to deceive. However, the person may argue that he or she has a right to keep such information private and not reveal the romantic partners. The privacy boundaries are blurry and therefore ambiguous because each person defines the information in a way that holds potential conflict for the relationship (Petronio, Andea, & Cichocki, 2002).

Obviously, there are many aspects of privacy turbulence that can be studied. For instance, more research is needed to grasp what happens when family members define the demarcation of privacy borders differently. Some information that is designated as private for the family according to one member's definitions may be seen as potentially open to others outside the family. The inconsistent border definitions have a potential to disrupt family harmony when they are tested. Further, research is also needed to unpack situations in which privacy turbulence occurs as a result of treating public space as private space (for more details on this concept, see Petronio, 2002). Particularly when parents attempt to discipline their children in public places, the potential for turbulence exists because attaining the goal of discipline may compromise private information or reveal child-rearing practices that the parents might want kept confidential. Thus, more examination of privacy turbulence is needed to identify ways that families experience privacy disruptions, violations, intrusions, missteps, misunderstandings, and mistakes in privacy management.

These five principles of CPM serve as the framework for understanding how people manage their private information and the way that others factor into management systems. The tenets offered by this theory open the path for additional testing of the interrelationships among the principles. Communication privacy management theory has been useful in gaining insights into many different kinds of privacy contexts. However, particularly in the family, CPM has provided a clear way to better grasp the complexities of both remaining autonomous and continuing important connections with family members.

CURRENT TRENDS IN FAMILY PRIVACY MANAGEMENT

Although there are many current trends in family privacy management, this review focuses on four found in the CPM research on family privacy management: (a) the boundary structures that explain family privacy management, (b) the way that family privacy boundaries shift and change over the life span, (c) the interface of boundary ambiguity and privacy management, and (d) family privacy dilemmas.

Family Privacy Boundary Structures

Communication privacy management theory and its research supports that families tend to manage two intersecting family privacy boundary spheres (Petronio, 1991, 1994, 2002; Serewicz & Canary, 2008). First, the family manages an exterior privacy boundary sphere around information that the whole family collectively owns and regulates. Second, the family regulates an interior set of privacy boundary cells linking certain members. These interior privacy boundaries often shift and change given the needs of members. However, exterior privacy boundaries tend to grow more stable over time into orientations of privacy to which the whole family ascribes.

Exterior privacy boundary. The exterior privacy boundary sphere houses private information considered collectively owned by the members, or whole-family privacy. The family establishes privacy rules that regulate dissemination or protection of this information to nonfamily members. Thus, there is an understanding about how permeability (how much others know) is regulated, the kinds of linkages (who else can know) permitted, and the way that co-ownership is defined regarding the amount of independent control given to a member to make decisions about third-party access. Sometimes this exterior privacy boundary may extend beyond the immediate family to include extended family members, as is often the case with results from genetic testing (Johnson et al., 2005; Petronio & Gaff, in press).

A case presented by Petronio and Gaff (in press) illustrates this point. A married pregnant woman seeks genetic counseling because she has recently discovered that there is a family predisposition for an inherited condition causing intellectual disabilities and potential intellectual impairments in children. She learned indirectly from a relative that a cousin's child was affected, and the woman was angry that she had not been told directly or earlier. In this case, the pregnant woman was kept outside the cousin's exterior privacy boundary by the cousin herself and not directly invited into the domain of whole-family privacy. The pregnant woman learned the information from a distant relative whom the cousin had told directly about the genetic problems. The exterior boundary of the cousin and her family was penetrated through the disclosures of the distant relative. The pregnant woman felt fortunate that she had learned about the genetic condition of the child. The cousin and mother of the child, however, felt that the family privacy boundary had been violated. Feeling that privacy violation has occurred in circumstances such as this often results because the original owner (cousin) is not able to maintain control over the distribution of private family information.

Family members, as a whole, consider one another responsible for protecting the information. They learn the privacy rules through either negotiating mutually agreed on ways to manage the co-owned information, or they socialize new members to ensure that they know the rules. In some cases, socialization or negotiation of privacy rules does not take place and boundary turbulence occurs. In the turbulent situations, uncertainty clouds the ability to know expected ways to manage the information, and the members may apply either their own personal privacy rules or ones they think should be used. The outcome may be problematic, not only for the original owner but also for the other co-owners.

Perhaps because families sense the significance of understanding privacy rules, recent research shows that when new members enter the family through engagement, marriage, or other relational designations, family members teach them whole-family privacy rules that regulate the exterior boundary (Vangelisti & Caughlin, 1997). Interestingly, the telling of family private information often marks acceptance into the in-laws' family and is followed by a set of parameters indicating rules for third-party access (Serewicz & Canary, 2008).

Thus, this outer family border around the information is managed through privacy rules that are negotiated by the members in a position to potentially share jurisdiction over the information. Thus, new members and children are socialized so they know the privacy rules deemed important to the family as a whole (Petronio, 2002; Wolfe & Laufer, 1974). The exterior family privacy boundaries are important because they give members a buffer to try out social norms, a degree of latitude to learn new norms, and they provide protection from the outside world (Berardo, 1974). The maintenance of the exterior family privacy boundary is vital to family functioning, and therefore members tend to collectively work to maintain the integrity of this boundary. Over time, this outer family boundary regulating private information,

owned by all members, evolves into a type of orientation representing the way members think about privacy management. Research on in-laws finds that partners come together with privacy orientations learned from their families of origin, but at times, these reflect different ways to consider privacy management (Serewicz & Canary, 2008; Serewicz, Dickson, Morrison, & Poole, 2007). Therefore, families can and do vary in terms of how thick or thin their outer family privacy boundary is, which results in privacy management rules that allow for degrees of privacy and openness (Petronio, 2002).

Interior family privacy boundaries. Families also develop interior family privacy boundaries (Petronio, 1994; Serewicz & Canary, 2008). As family members share private information with select others in the family structure, they create internal privacy cells around information that two or more of the family members manage. There are many types of internal privacy cells that are established and disestablished depending on the needs for access and protection of private information belonging to certain members. The interior privacy boundaries often represent a constellation of linkages reflecting co-owned information that is limited to only certain members. At any given time, within this interior sphere, internal cells coexist representing marital privacy boundaries managing co-owned and controlled information by the marital couple, sibling privacy boundaries, parent–child privacy boundaries, and any permutation therein. For all cells in the family, the privileged members ideally negotiate privacy rules that regulate the flow of this information outward to others within the family and to non–family members.

Periodically, family members belonging to privacy cells change (Petronio & Ostrom-Blonigen, 2008). A recent case study illustrates this point (Petronio & Ostrom-Blonigen, 2008). An adult daughter became ill with cancer. She owned a business, lived independently, and confided in her siblings only on certain issues. When she became ill, she had to alter those internal privacy boundaries to incorporate more family members to attain the level of care she needed. Ultimately, the daughter had to give over all of her privacy to her family. Yet as her cancer went into remission, she began to exercise her rights and attempted to reclaim control over her boundaries. These modifications in internal boundary cells resulted in challenges to her

family relationships. The modifications, though necessary, forced redefinitions of the privacy parameters that her family had developed to meet her health-care needs. Exercising rights over privacy, for her, meant renegotiating privacy rules with her family at each stage of her illness.

As this example shows, redefining the parameters of internal privacy boundaries is not always easily accomplished. There are times when members mistake the rules, or they discover they are closed out of a boundary cell where they once had privileges. Members might also misinterpret privacy rules, assume they understand the rules regulating the privacy boundary without checking, or manipulate the rules to seek control over the information. Intentional or unintentional breaches motivate these privacy rule disruptions. The complexity of managing both exterior and interior family privacy boundaries is further observed with the kinds of boundary shifts that occur.

Privacy Boundary Shifts

Privacy boundary shifts take place in reaction to at least two types of catalysts. First, there is a catalyst for boundary shifts when socialization and integration of new members is necessary. Second, critical incidents serve as catalysts for boundary shifts, such as unexpected health demands, unanticipated situations like sexual abuse, and situations like divorce. In each case, these critical incidents call for accommodating change in the way the boundaries are defined and require adjustments in privacy rules. Both cases challenge a family's assumptions about privacy regulation.

Socialization-integration catalyst for boundary shifts. Two examples are offered to illustrate the socialization-integration catalyst for boundary shifts. In the first example, privacy boundaries shift when families have children. As the children grow, they learn about privacy. Parents teach them about the family's privacy orientation and associated privacy rules regulating access and protection. The children become integrated into the family's perspective regarding privacy management, discover ways to link with other members to form interior privacy cells, and learn how to manage their own personal privacy boundary. In the second example, shifts in privacy boundaries take place when new members join a family.

According to CPM theory, at a very young age children learn rudimentary privacy rules from their parents (Petronio, 2002; Wolfe & Laufer, 1974). Although some research supports privacy rule socialization for young children, it is clear that more information is needed to better understand how these rudimentary rules development and function (Wolfe & Laufer, 1974). However, by the time children grow into early and then late adolescence, there is more information about privacy rule development positioned in the adolescent's increasing need for autonomy and privacy. In a fundamental way, through managing privacy, adolescents enact the individuation process (Finkenauer, Engels, & Meeus, 2002; Finkenauer, Frijns, Engels, & Kerkhof, 2005; Hawk, Hale, Raaijmakers, & Meeus, 2008; Petronio, 1994, 2002; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Although this stage is an important step into adulthood, parents often find the means by which adolescents execute privacy management difficult to handle. Largely because they vie for control, parents and adolescents battle over the way borders of privacy boundaries for the adolescent are marked and regulated (Child & Pearson, 2009; Hawk et al., 2008; Hawk, Keijsers, Hale, & Meeus, 2009). Some research has suggested that control issues may vary depending on the gender of the parent or the adolescent; however, with regard to issues of privacy invasions, the evidence is not conclusive and warrants further exploration (e.g., Hawk et al., 2009).

Keeping secrets is a theme that frequently arises in studies of adolescents. The theme reflects the frustrations of parents because they find it difficult to exercise control over the actions of their teens (Caughlin et al., 2000c; Finkenauer et al., 2002). At times, parents may even become hypersensitive to the belief that their adolescents are intentionally restricting access, thereby clouding the parent's ability to actively work with their teens to establish a viable set of privacy expectations agreeable to both parents and teens. If parents perceive that their adolescent is concealing information, whether or not the child is actually concealing, parents tend to enact poorer parenting choices (Finkenauer et al., 2005). Nevertheless, some research indicates that if parents limit imposed rules on their adolescents requiring high boundary permeability, the adolescent might have greater opportunity to attain more useful emotional autonomy (Finkenauer et al., 2002).

Further, other studies have found that when parents negotiate privacy rules rather than invade privacy to monitor their adolescents, the parent–child relationship is enhanced rather than diminished (Petronio, 1994; Hawk et al., 2008).

Negotiating privacy rules may prove a way for parents to signal that, although they want to know what the child is doing, they recognize their child has a right to claim control over certain information considered within the child's domain. Parents who maintain and cultivate a more open family communication culture have a greater probability of a strong and healthy bond with their adult children (Child & Pearson, 2009). Striving for a strategy to send the message of respect regarding privacy management seems valuable given that an adolescent's aim to restricted parental access might have unwanted consequences. The parents' willingness to recognize the importance of adolescents controlling rights over privacy boundaries may lead to greater motivation on the part of adolescents to give parents access. When negotiations have taken place, it is more likely that adolescents struggling with experiences, such as bullying or sexual abuse, will feel more comfortable talking to their parents (Matsunaga, 2009).

When the socialization of privacy orientations for children in families is in process, it often is a catalyst for boundary shifts that stem from privacy rule negotiations. The second example is based on the consequence of familial socialization and concerns how learning a privacy orientation affects privacy management in adult relationships. This type of boundary shifting is observed when couples commit to marriage or significant relationships. Particularly during initial commitment phases, couples may encounter the need to traverse differences they have regarding the orientation to, and management of, private information (Petronio, 2002; Serewicz & Canary, 2008). Sometimes couples are surprised by their differences in privacy orientation. For other couples, there is no discrepancy because their families of origin ascribed to similar privacy orientations. At the base of similarities and differences is the fact that, over time, families develop distinct privacy orientations toward the way they manage their privacy boundaries (Petronio, 1991, 2002; Serewicz & Canary, 2008; Serewicz et al., 2007).

In gross terms, families fall on a continuum that ranges from high boundary permeability,

across moderate levels of permeability, and to limited permeability or secrecy. These permeability measures represent different privacy orientations and reflect the kind of management used for exterior and interior privacy boundaries (Petronio, 1992; Serewicz et al., 2007). The development of the orientations depends on issues such as gender, culture, and context as criteria for privacy rules used to regulate the boundaries (Serewicz et al., 2007). Growing out of the families' socialization process that teaches children the expected privacy rules is a basic orientation to privacy management. Because families may differ, there is an adjustment period for couples during which they accommodate or modify the privacy rules they bring to the relationship from their family of origin (Petronio, 1991; Serewicz & Canary, 2008). The goal is to achieve a functional blending so that they can effectively manage their relational privacy boundary.

Critical incident catalysts for boundary shifts. Families experience many different kinds of critical incidents leading to shifts in privacy boundaries. Research on child sexual abuse illustrates one way in which this process functions (MacMartin, 1999; Petronio, Flores, Hecht, 1997; Petronio, Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mon't Mendoza, 1996; Staller & Nelson-Gardell, 2005). In cases of family members sexually abusing children, the perpetrators actively seeks to redefine the parameters of an internal privacy cell that is created as a result of the criminal act. The perpetrator manipulates the privacy rules to prevent disclosure of the sexual abuse, thus producing thick boundary walls around the information. Ordinarily, a family might have more permeable interior boundaries. However, when sexual abuse by a family member occurs, the restructuring of the rules regulating the flow of information to other members and to those outside the family is severely limited. The child does not have a say in privacy rule development when he or she has been sexual abused. The intention is to take away any rights of ownership about the information from the child. The perpetrator steals any ownership or control over the information from the child to protect him- or herself (Petronio et al., 1996).

In a study conducted to learn how sexually abused children reclaimed those ownership rights, several interesting strategies were used. The children and adolescents actively recognized the need to override the perpetrator's privacy rules, but they were rightfully leery (Petronio, et al., 1996). Making this disclosure required careful planning and watchful ways of testing reactions of the recipients. One of the concerns the children had was whether someone they told about the abuse would treat the information as credible. This research identifies strategic choices that function as guiding privacy rules for how these children decided to reveal the sexual abuse. The children (mean age approximately 12 years old) identified setting parameters as an important precondition for disclosure. Thus, they needed to feel comfortable in the setting before they would disclose. Although the place was considered important, more significantly for achieving a comfort level was what took place in that setting. The children stated that they waited until both they and the target were engaged in an activity such as washing the dishes or watching television to disclose the abuse. They often selected these situations because the target receiving the disclosure would be less likely to make eye contact when the child was telling about the abuse. This made the children feel safer and alleviated being the center of attention. Thus, one rule for disclosure was selecting a circumstance that provided the opportunity for a collective activity to take place, thus reducing the strain of disclosing for the child.

The children also reported that they strategically used *incremental disclosure* to gauge the receptivity of the target to hearing about the sexual abuse (Petronio et al., 1996). They were mindful of the potency the disclosures had for the recipient, but they also used this approach to protect themselves from the recipient's unwanted negative reactions. Accordingly, they would tell a little information, assess the reactions of the recipient, and move to reveal more specific information about the abuse if the respondent seemed receptive. Children regulated the flow of their private information to others through the strategies of telling and regulating the circumstances in which they told. The strategies the children used represent implementation of their privacy rules aimed to draw more clearly defined privacy borders around the information they felt was theirs to tell. However, their caution rightly acknowledges the fact that the perpetrator appropriated the children's right of ownership and dictated alternative rules for dissemination. Yet the attempt to disclose the abuse bravely

reclaimed control over the information. Through such actions, the children actively worked to reduce the sense of lost ownership and ambiguity they may have felt about whether they really had the right to make the disclosure.

Another example of an incident-based catalyst for privacy boundary shifting concerns an intersection of health care and family privacy. Although legally the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and its privacy rule are geared to protect privacy, in reality there are many privacy and confidentiality issues in health care that the HIPAA parameters regulate less directly (Lo, Dornbrand, & Dubler, 2005; McDonald, 2009). When factoring in the significance of families and health, the focus on the behavioral components of privacy management and choices about disclosure are different from what HIPAA rules suggest. Nevertheless, the behavioral components are important aspects to understand (Petronio & Lewis, in press). Genetics is perhaps one of the most obvious health issues where behavioral enactment of privacy management (as opposed to considering the legal domain) is a concern because many members who learn results struggle to know what rules are best to make a decision about a viable course of action concerning informing their families (Johnson et al., 2005; Petronio & Gaff, in press).

From recent research, one of the main themes found in examining privacy issues in families and genetic testing concerns the questions of information ownership (Petronio & Gaff, in press). When individuals seek genetic testing, they generally want the ability to control and authorize disclosures about their conditions (Kass et al., 2004). However, when families are involved, the decision criteria often are changed, and adjustments to family privacy rules become challenging, if not problematic. There are many situations such as undisclosed adoption, protecting a child's genetic condition, diagnoses of Alzheimer's disease, disclosures of Huntington's disease in families, and forensic DNA testing in which families confront decisions about privacy management for members (Gallo, Hadley, Angst, & Smith, 2008). There are many ways that families react to such privacy problems. Sometimes a member might block the ability of other members from knowing the test results. One case of a recent study illustrates this point. A mother actively thwarted her husband's attempts to tell their adult son about his father's newly discovered genetic condition (Petronio & Gaff, in press). The mother worried that knowing the test results would negatively affect decisions their son was about to make. The mother developed strategies to secure the privacy boundary around the information that she and her ex-husband co-owned so that their son was essentially denied access to the information. The mother, thus, appropriated the right of the son to know and hampered the father from telling. Consequently, the mother took control from the other family members and locked it away.

Another study investigated a comparison between disclosure of parents and affected adults for genetic and nongenetic conditions. The findings suggested that parents disclosed their child's diagnosis to others more often than affected adults disclosed their own disease (Johnson et al., 2005). Interestingly, parents are less likely to regret their disclosure decisions (Johnson et al., 2005). Affected adults expressed greater concern about the disclosure and fear of discrimination. The findings suggest that parents, though technically co-owners of the information with their child, seem to feel it is appropriate to decide when and to whom they tell their child's medical condition. From the research, it is not clear whether parents consulted with their children about the parameters for making such disclosures. Granted, if the children were too young to understand the ramifications, it would make sense that the parents would not negotiate privacy rules. However, when children are older, telling others inside and outside the family without determining their children's feelings about others knowing may have negative ramifications for parent–child relationships. As these studies have suggested, sometimes one family member might behave in ways that take away control from others, thus shifting the level of ownership and repositioning the boundary lines to fall more under the jurisdiction of that member than a shared boundary among members.

A third example of critical incidents serving as a catalyst for boundary shifting is HIV/AIDs disclosures. Obviously, there are many difficult challenges to privacy management when it comes to HIV/AIDS (Greene et al., 2003). There is fear of boundary leakage when HIV-positive individuals do not want to tell anyone in the family about their diagnosis because they understand that the boundaries are highly permeable among the members. Telling one

person is likely to mean that all members will know the diagnosis. At other times, drawing a thick boundary around an HIV-positive diagnosis excluding certain family members is enacted to protect those members so that they will not worry. Disclosure to family members, as a whole, is relatively low (Greene et al., 2003). However, there is a tendency to target specific members with whom the diagnosed person has established an interior privacy cell. There are many dynamics regarding privacy management that arise when family members become ill that affect how privacy boundaries necessarily must shift and change to accommodate the needs of the member.

As the two types of catalysts for boundary shifting illustrate (i.e., socialization-integration and critical incidents), there is fluidity to the nature of privacy boundaries. The rules that guide judgments about choices to regulate the flow of private information both internally to other members and across the exterior privacy boundary often fluctuate depending on circumstances and needs of the family members. Although there is a level of constancy found in family privacy orientations, there is also the possibility for change. An underlying issue that boundary shifting points out is the potential for boundary ambiguity to emerge as a result of experiencing boundary changes.

Boundary Ambiguity and Privacy Management

The concept of boundary ambiguity is one that Boss (2002) developed to understand reasons for family stress and ambiguous loss (Boss, 1980, 1999). Clearly, Boss's concept of boundary ambiguity has import for our understanding of privacy management in families. Particularly salient is the following statement Boss makes on setting the parameters of boundary ambiguity for family systems (Boss, 2002):

> Family boundary ambiguity can result from two different situations: (a) one in which the facts surrounding the event are unclear or (b) one in which the facts surrounding the events are clear, but for some reason, the family ignored or denies them. In the latter case, the family's perception of the event is different from that of an objective outside observer. (p. 77)

The notion of boundary ambiguity, as indicated previously, suggests a condition that results in privacy boundary turbulence (Boss,

1980, 1999, 2002, 2006; Carroll, Olson, & Buckmiller, 2007; Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1989; Petronio, 2002). Often, co-owners of information find confusing the expectations for how they should regulate permeability of the boundary (how much someone else should know of the collectively held information), how they should determine the parameters for linking others into the existing privacy boundary, and how they should understand the limits of co-ownership control. When such privacy rules are unclear, the outcome is ambiguity as to how the private information should be managed.

The work conducted on family boundary ambiguity, regarding divorce and stepfamilies in particular, resonates with the research that examines boundary turbulence as a result of uncertainty or ambiguity about appropriate privacy rules (Afifi, 2003; Afifi, Afifi, Morse, & Hamrick, 2008; Buehler & Pasley, 2000; Cole & Cole, 1999; Golish & Caughlin, 2002). For example, Afifi (2003) found that children of divorced parents often felt caught trying to balance loyalty to both parents. They might reveal information about one parent to the other parent. But they felt trapped because doing so meant that they were disloyal to one or the other parent. However, if children concealed information from either parent, as often is requested, there was a potential to compromise the children's relationships with one or both parents. The children were frequently uncertain about which privacy rules should be used because rules that seem appropriate can become problematic for the child, depending on the expectations of either parent. As a consequence, there is boundary ambiguity about the acceptable rules for access to family information.

Boundary ambiguity of this kind derives from the lack of agreement between divorced parents about which privacy rules the children should use. The children are not given clear guidelines that would allow them to make decisions consistent with the expectations of each individual parent. The parents have broken their family privacy boundary apart; they not only have changed the rules but also each has a different set of privacy rules that is often inconsistent with the other. The children are caught in the middle—possibly worse, caught in a situation in which parents are not able to sustain a consistent set of expectations for them to follow. Perhaps likely, the parents are individually struggling with learning how

to reestablish a new family privacy boundary but may change the rules frequently because of their own uncertainty. Communication privacy management argues that when there is collective agreement or coordination about which privacy rules should be used, the privacy boundaries are more likely to be managed effectively. However, if an agreement cannot be reached, there are no consistent rules to use.

Afifi's (2003) research highlighted that, even if separate families of divorce are able to establish agreements on the privacy rules used to regulate their respective external and internal privacy boundaries, the children who live in two separate households are boundary spanners (Petronio, 2002). Such children are often expected to know the appropriate privacy rules for each family because they span across both households. However, at the same time, many parents assume that the children will not reveal family secrets to the other parent or to stepfamily members (Afifi, 2003). Nevertheless, each family may be unlikely to seek cross-family negotiations to reach an acceptable set of privacy rules to regulate within and across family privacy boundaries. As a consequence, the outcome for these children is that they feel caught with no guidance and considerable likelihood of using the wrong decision criteria to judge the appropriate actions. Afifi's research pointed out that because such circumstances resulted in dilemmas for children of divorced parents, children tended to respond to ambiguous situations by avoiding any discussion about one parent in front of the other (Afifi, 2003; Afifi & Schrodt, 2003). That avoidance, therefore, functions as a means of protecting their own personal privacy boundary. Because there is no viable set of privacy rules that can be applied to manage privacy boundaries across both parents, and given that any attempt to negotiate privacy rules for one parent tends to compromise the ability to appropriately regulate private information for the other parent, the children choose to guard the only privacy boundary they have control over, their own personal boundaries. In this manner, any discussion about the best solution for these children regarding privacy management is avoided. The boundary ambiguity that is created for children under such circumstances puts stresses not only on the children but also on the family system. As this discussion implies, embedded in boundary ambiguity is often an underlying privacy dilemma.

Family Privacy Dilemmas

Families encounter privacy dilemmas that stem from a variety of issues concerning responsibility for information (Petronio et al., 2003; Petronio, Sargent, Andea, Reganis, Cichocki, 2004; Rosin & van Dijk, 2005). Communication privacy management posits that managing private information can be problematic, particularly when individuals are asked to keep information confidential (Caughlin & Petronio, 2004; Petronio, 2002). Ordinarily, family members assume that they will function as confidants. However, there are situations in which the nature of a relationship with other family members in conjunction with the kind of information they are asked to care for clash, thus resulting in a privacy dilemma. Thus, family privacy dilemmas are predicaments that reflect within-family tensions arising out of being privy to confidential information. These predicaments can cause conflicts among family members. Often, the difficulty resides in the fact that there are no clear solutions because any action has the potential to compromise the confidant and other family members (Petronio et al., 2003). Although family members often depend on one another to serve as confidants, there are situations when being told certain kinds of information by a family member or learning something secret about a family member can be unsettling (Caughlin & Petronio, 2004; Pennebaker, 1990; Petronio, 2006; Petronio et al., 2003). The recipient family members may feel ensnared by the knowledge they have discovered or have been told.

Research has indicated that there are at least three different ways in which family members become embroiled in informational privacy dilemmas (Petronio et al., 2003). First, there is the possibility of a *confidant privacy dilemma*. These dilemmas occur when one family member reveals an incident to another member that demands an action difficult to enact. A dilemma ensues because each option available to manage the predicament has consequences that result in uncomfortable and problematic outcomes. The following example illustrates this point:

> One specific situation I experienced with my family was with my uncle's recent drug problem. In confidentiality, he told me about his problem and about how he was still using drugs. This put me in an awkward situation. I either had to tell someone who could help or I could not get him any help. By breaking my word and not protecting

his privacy, I could offer him some help. . . . This situation is very stressful and difficult for me. (Petronio et al., 2003, p. 38)

The second way is an *accidental privacy dilemma* (Petronio et al., 2003). This kind of dilemma represents predicaments in which a family member inadvertently learns private, problematic information about another family member and must determine what to do with the discovery. Such circumstances pose dilemmatic situations because there are no obvious solutions. They are also difficult because the family member is not prepared to know the information, has not agreed to hear the information, and learning about the situation is unexpected or even unwelcome. This example is an excerpt from an account given by a 19-year-old college sophomore to illustrate accidental family privacy dilemmas:

> My mother asked me to clean the garage while she went to the store. I was working away when I moved a table and letters fell to the ground. They looked special; they had a ribbon tied around them. I noticed that they were addressed to my mother, dated last year. The handwriting did not look like my dad's. I wondered what they were, who they were from. I was afraid to open them, yet intrigued. My curiosity got the best of me. I opened just one to see. My world took a dive. There before me was a love letter to my mom. They were from some man I never heard of. What could she be thinking? (Petronio et al., 2003, p. 25)

The young man puzzled through the choice of others he might tell; that is, in CPM terms, he considered criteria such as risks and benefits of telling other family members, friends, or his father to reach at a viable privacy rule for linking others into the boundary around this discovered private information.

A third type of family privacy dilemma stems from something the person does to him- or herself. Although different in means, the outcome is similar to the first two types of dilemmas in terms of family privacy regulation. This third type is *illicit privacy dilemma*, or situations in which a family member intentionally pries, snoops, or spies on another family member and discovers private information that creates a dilemma for the person snooping or spying. Thus, these members obtain access to information that catches them off guard. The knowledge they gain is unexpected

and throws them into a bind because they know they should not have pried, snooped, or spied. The outcome tends to be unpleasant for them personally. Further, because they actively sought the information, they have difficulty revealing their discoveries. For instance, a respondent reported being told not to go through her mother's locked desk (Petronio et al., 2003). However, as an adolescent, the restriction of access to her mother's papers intrigued her. One day when she was home from school alone because of illness, she located the key to unlock the desk, opened it, and began to read some of the papers her mother kept there. She happened on a birth certificate that was hers but one she had not seen before. The last name was different from hers, and it was issued in a different state, but the date was correct, as was the first name and the weight (the same as what her mother said she had weighed at birth). She realized that she needed to confirm her belief that she was adopted, but because she violated her mother's privacy, she was ensconced in a dilemma of her own making.

As these family privacy dilemmas illustrate, there are no easy solutions because, for every action taken, there are reactions shifting the issues and outcomes. Consequently, CPM posits that, for these dilemmas, factoring in the kind of information being told and the potential potency of the family relationships among or between the members and confidant, the most viable way to cope with them is through management strategies. One issue hampering decisions about useful management strategies is the possibility of family members feeling caught in the need to navigate both ''jurisdiction and autonomy'' simultaneously (Putnam & Stohl, 1996, p. 153). Negotiating jurisdiction (co-ownership rights and responsibilities) and autonomy (the desire to make independent decisions apart from the original owner of the information) for families depends on coordination of privacy rules used to regulate permeability, linkage, and ownership of boundaries so members can handle the dilemmas. In some ways, understanding the dynamics of family privacy dilemmas and productive management strategies to handle them brings attention to the potential liabilities members may face when they serve as co-owners of private information belonging to other members. The relationship members have with one another and their history affects how they treat the private information. These issues also have a bearing on considerations of projecting

consequences as well as estimating the risks and benefits for possible options to manage the dilemmas. Overall, family privacy dilemmas and attempts to manage them underscore the duality of family membership. Holding joint positions as family members and autonomous individuals in the family system has its challenges, which are clearly identified when members are caught in a privacy management bind.

Aside from the characteristics defining family privacy dilemmas, research on specific contexts offers insights into privacy dilemmas for families that occur in a number of situations, such as health care (Petronio et al., 2004). There are many exemplars. Dilemmas that revolve around choices family health advocates may make to provide support for their family members is one context in which there are difficult decisions to make about privacy management. In one study, findings show that the intersection of functioning in an advocacy role while managing confidentiality of the family member's private health information is, at times, problematic (Petronio et al., 2004). In this particular study, several themes emerged that exemplify the nature of this type of dilemma. The themes revolve around the extent to which family advocates often feel torn between making choices about whether they should violate or protect the family member's privacy. Violating privacy may lead to the more productive health outcome but compromise their relationship or embarrass the family member. Family advocates accompanying a member into the initial physician interview may find that the patient tells the physician information the family advocate knows is untrue, such as when a patient, seeking medical attention because of heart problems, states unequivocally that he or she never smoked. The family advocate might feel uncomfortable shouting out during the visit that the statement about smoking is a blatant lie. However, not saying something may jeopardize the medical course of treatment for the patient. In this example, the family advocate became an inadvertent confidant. Clearly, this person was not the intended recipient, yet because of the familial relationship and role of health advocate this individual was playing, the sense of responsibility was obvious to the family member. However, the most viable course of action to address this dilemma was not as obvious.

A family member may feel the role of inadvertent or *reluctant confidant* present a dilemma. Typically, people who find themselves in this role receive information that they do not want or may not have requested from the discloser. Nevertheless, embedded in the relational ties with the discloser, the confidant senses an obligation to take some type of action (Petronio, 2000c). To varying degrees, the reluctant confidant may feel responsible for the information because of who sent the message. Thus, with co-ownership status, regardless of whether the recipient is reluctant, there is an expected responsibility for a certain amount of guardianship over the information that is received. Even when recipients actively solicit private information, there is a possibility that they will find themselves regretful that they asked. Regardless of whether they solicited or were reluctant confidants from the outset, recipients (particularly family members) feel that they must determine a course of action (Greene et al., 2003; Helft & Petronio, 2007; Petronio, 2000c, 2006; Petronio et al., 2004; Petronio & Gaff, in press; Petronio & Jones, 2006).

As this discussion illustrates, when family members encounter dilemmas of their own making, or because they serve as confidants for others, whether or not they are reluctant, they face difficult choices. These choices often test family members and call into question the best way to manage family-based privacy while still preserving family relationships and maintaining personal boundaries around their own privacy. Although these circumstances are often unpleasant, in the greater scheme, they help individuals see where the privacy system needs change. If individuals heed that observation, the repair to the privacy boundaries may strengthen the core relational life of the family.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 30 years, communication privacy management theory has grown from infancy to its present state through the efforts of many researchers and collaborators (Petronio & Durham, 2008). To date, CPM theory offers a sophisticated understanding of why privacy is a central concept in relationships of all types, particularly families. Families clearly illustrate the multiplicity of management issues and the interface of both collective and personal privacy boundaries. As such, it is necessary to consider the dialectical nature of access and protection for many levels of private information. From the initial model defining parameters of CPM, families, in particular marital couples, were

used to carve out the first iteration of CPM theory (Petronio, 1991). Marital couples were selected as the focus because the relational dimensions of marital couples meant that they had a defined set of boundaries and illustrated how negotiations need to take place so they can navigate private information interactions. Analyzing marital couples helped pinpoint some of the underlying ways people in relationships work with one another or against one another to regulate the privacy boundaries.

As CPM theory continues to develop, the validity of the basic set of principles also continues to be tested and substantiated. New avenues of application help extend the CPM principles and concepts. This endeavor creates novel ways to consider privacy management and aid in the evolution of this theoretical frame, which allows for more discoveries. There are two main issues on the horizon: power and emotions. These two concepts have been implicitly positioned within CPM theory; however, it is clear that the way they likely play a central role in privacy management is yet untapped. For families, power and emotion may be central issues surrounding privacy management choices, boundary regulation, and shifts in privacy rules changes. Investigation of power and emotions in a CPM context will add to a more complete understanding of privacy management.

The notion of power is implied in the principles that define CPM. Although the relationships have not been investigated or directly addressed in CPM theory, there are existing clues as to how power might be accounted for and articulated with CPM tenets. For example, the principles of control and ownership imply that people assume the right to make judgments about their private information. As such, there exists a power dimension given that people believe in the ability to control what happens to their information. This perspective is extended to the concept of co-ownership, such that the original owner, after having disclosed the information, often seeks the opportunity to tell the guardian or co-owner how to disseminate the information to others. This strategy may be used as a power move to exercise rights over the information even after it is no longer completely in a person's control. The most blatant example of power in privacy management is the coercive power sexual predators use to keep the abused child silent (Petronio et al., 1996).

We also find that, even when people neglect to articulate specific privacy rules for co-owners and/or guardians, if the co-owner reveals the information to someone the discloser would not select, disclosers tend to feel that their power over the information has been compromised. Although this incident may occur by mistake, the outcome of the co-owner appropriating rights to make a decision apart from the original owner is the same. Hence, the co-owner effectively undercuts some power over controlling third-party dissemination. When the seizure of power is intentional, there are significant ramifications that emerge especially within families. A clear example is found in the genetics literature, where family members withhold salient genetics results because they take control (power) away from other family members to decide about dissemination (Petronio & Gaff, in press). There are also examples of how power to control information is taken back once it is taken away from rightful owners. The research on child sexual abuse by Petronio et al. (1996) illustrated this point: Children empower themselves by making disclosures about the abuse to others. Thus, power is clearly featured in the context of ownership and control over private information, yet it remains an area set for further examination within a CPM framework.

The second area, emotions, likewise is implied in the theory of CPM. Although not yet studied in this context, emotions may serve as a mediating factor in the kind of privacy rules used in certain situations. We know that situational issues often serve as catalysts for changing the privacy rules a person or collective uses (Petronio, 2002). It may be that, when a person has high emotional needs to disclose, the privacy rules characteristic for that person change to accommodate the individual's need to vent those emotions to others. Stiles's (1987) fever model of self-disclosure suggested that, when the level of emotionality increases to a particular intensity level, individuals were compelled to reveal private information. Emotional catalysts for telling private information in families or telling family private information to outsiders have potentially negative ramifications for members and for the family as a whole because the need often trumps existing privacy rules regulating access (Fitness & Duffield, 2004). Similarly, other types of emotional conditions, such as grief, sadness, anger, and depression, may also serve as conditional modifications or

changes to existing privacy rules that families use to regulate privacy boundaries both for internal members and for individuals outside the family (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998; Fitness & Duffield, 2004). Although inconsistent with the way these spouses typically regulated privacy, for instance, one spouse may be so distraught that she reveals her husband is having severe psychological problems to outsiders in an effort to seek sympathy or gain social support (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998). More explorations about the way that emotions intercede in the privacy management of families are necessary to better grasp the way members attempt to regulate revealing and concealing emotionally challenging situations. In addition, determining the connections between emotions and privacy would open the door for developing interventions and therapeutic tools to help families functionally cope with situations that have the potential to interfere with effective privacy regulation.

Power and emotion promise to be productive areas of exploration within the CPM framework. However, there are, as yet, many more such issues that have the potential to advance the development of a comprehensive and predictive way to understand privacy in families using the lens of communication privacy management theory. The yield of understanding gathered from the research evidence stands as a road map to develop therapeutic tools for families and interventions that can aid in better ways to make judgments about revealing and concealing private information.

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