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Factors that Affect the Retention of Female Apprentices

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by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to help uncover reasons for women's low participation rates in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship in Canada. This thesis analyzes data gained through life history interviews with six recently graduated female apprentices, with the objective being to gain their insights on which experiences and factors may have helped contribute to their successes. This thesis offers an analysis of apprenticeship as a gendered space and process of work-related learning. Framed by concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu, the findings suggest that the structure of the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship acts to reproduce gender through expected, or "taken-for-granted" characteristics of successful apprentices. The findings also depict skilled trades and apprenticeship as a field dominated by men and masculinity, but one in which the female apprentice can successfully practice by exhibiting a culturally-appropriate vocational habitus while maximizing field-specific capitals.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1991 there were 4,536 newly registered apprentices in British Columbia; yet, only 393 (8.66%) of those were female (Statistics Canada, 2014a). Of those 393 female apprentices, more than two-thirds (273/393, or 69.5%) were registered in the traditionally "pink" (Meredith, 2011, p. 324) skileed trades, which include food service work, and hairstyling and esthetics. Two decades later, the numbers for female representation in the registered skilled trades had indeed improved, but only marginally when one considers the big picture. For instance, in 2012, out of the 14,592 newly registered apprentices in B.C., female representation had grown to 1,821 (12.5%); yet, in terms of distribution, the situation had not changed all that much. Two-thirds (67.87%) of the female apprentices were still signing up for the pink skilled trades.

One may ask why it matters that the majority of female apprentices work in these particular skilled trades; after all, there is nothing wrong with these jobs as careers, and besides, these are trade occupations that have always been considered "traditionally female" (Mayer & Braid, 2007, p. 4). I raise the issue based on several notable factors. First, for over two decades, industry, employers, governments, and trainers in Canada have been working desperately to enroll more Canadians into apprenticeships related to the construction and industrial trades in an attempt to help fill the growing number of vacancies in these occupational areas (Sharpe & Gibson, 2005). At the same time, researchers have been studying the issue of low participation in the skilled trades from varied viewpoints, such as political (Taylor, McGray, & Watt-Malcolm, 2007; Watt-Malcolm & Taylor, 2007), socio-cultural (Taylor & Freeman, 2011), and gender-focused (Braundy, 2011; Vojakovic, 2008; Watt-Malcolm, 2005). Second, though women are entering into apprenticeships, they remain grouped largely within only two of the 57 available

Red Seal certifiable skilled trades (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014). Commenting on this trend, Vojakovic (2008) notes that "women are over-represented in trade occupations such as hairstyling and cooking…which typically do not award a living wage" (p. 1).

I have been an electrician for the better part of two decades in the province of British Columbia. For half of that time, I have worked also as an electrical apprenticeship instructor, and I can testify to both the skills shortage and the lucrative wages that this deficiency has fostered. Over my years, I have worked side-by-side with perhaps only a half-dozen female electricians, and I have seen only about two dozen female apprentices walk through the doors of the college where I instruct. This first-hand experience is consistent with recent literature relating to low participation rates amongst Canadian female workers in the skilled trades (Mayer & Braid, 2007; Sharpe & Gibson, 2005; Vojakovic, 2008; Watt-Malcolm, 2005; Watt-Malcolm & Young, 2003). Braundy (2011) provides a statistic that is hard to ignore: "Women are over 46 percent of the [2006 Canadian] workforce, but fewer than 3 percent of the tradespeople" (p. 5).

This low-participation situation would not be such a mystery to me if the female trade workers I encountered had expressed dissatisfaction with their careers; rather, the few that I have worked with have expressed contentment with their career choices and often remarked that they enjoyed their work. The same has been true for most of the female apprentices that I have instructed. Many of those who have graduated have revisited my college and have described their careers as successful and fulfilling. Again, I do not appear alone in noticing this tendency for women working in the highly-masculinized skilled trade job sector to claim that they enjoy their work (Smith, 2013), and that they often benefit from their career choice in ways unavailable

to women working jobs considered more traditional for women (Greene & Stitt-Gohdes, 1997;

Mayer & Braid, 2007).

Women in Trades (Vojakovic, 2008) is a discussion paper developed by Industry

Training Authority of BC (ITABC), the arm of the provincial government charged with

managing apprenticeships, setting apprenticeship program standards, and increasing

opportunities for workers to earn their skilled trade credentials (ITABC, 2012). The paper's key

objective was "to learn about initiatives and research that have been undertaken with an aim of

increasing participation of women in skilled trade training and employment…with a focus on

women in British Columbia" (p. 4). Two paragraphs later, the reader is told the following: "Sex-

based segregation of labour is particularly evident in skilled trades….Women represent only

6.7% of all workers in occupations related to trades, transport and equipment operators [in B.C.]"

(p. 4). It seems that others have noticed the issue of Canadian female workers avoiding, or being

prevented from joining, the skilled trades.

It was these comments and observations that sparked my interest in researching the

gendered nature of the skilled trades and led me to ask why there are so few Canadian women

entering into and completing apprenticeship training. Public pressure for the promotion of equal

opportunities and equality, along with cries for help with staffing issues from employers and

industry, have resulted in policy changes—and in my experience, attitudinal changes in most

male skilled trade workers as well. As a result, there are increasing options for Canadian women

who wish to undertake an apprenticeship in these typically male-dominated job sectors. For

example, like the relevant bodies in most jurisdictions in Canada, the ITABC has funded the

Women in Trades (WiT) program for several years. Such programs act as a bridge-in program

for women who wish to try out various certifiable skilled trades. Despite all these efforts and

considerations, as well as the generally high participation rate of women in post-secondary education and paid work, there are still relatively few women entering into apprenticeships.

The Problem

While Canadian women are increasingly participating in higher education (Vojakovic, 2008), incomes for university graduates generally have slid downward over the past several years, while the wages for skilled trade workers have steadily climbed. According to Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and Skills Canada (2012), the average weekly wages for those with bachelor degrees had their wages increase by roughly 1% between 2000 and 2011, while full-time Red Seal certified skilled trade workers experienced a 14% increase over that same time. Admittedly, these statistics come from a website whose sole purpose is to promote apprenticeship, but recent numbers from Statistics Canada appear to support them:

> After growing from 1980 to 2000, the wage gap between university and high-school-educated individuals decreased from 2000 to 2011, especially among workers under age 35. This decline was driven by more rapidly rising wages among the less-educated, a reversal of the trend in earlier decades. The narrowing of the gap was associated with a shift in labour demand towards industries, such as mining, oil and gas extraction, and construction, which are less intensive users of highly educated workers. (Morrissette, Picot, & Lu, 2013, p. 46)

Over approximately the last 15 years I have noticed that the following three factors have contributed, albeit indirectly, to an increase in my earnings as a licensed electrician. First, as the Western world has increasingly embraced new technologies, previously unknown forms of infrastructure, such as fiber-optic cable networks, recycling plants, and data storage facilities, have required construction and maintenance workers. These infrastructures have developed

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alongside existing traditional infrastructures, putting further stress on industry and employers to find or train skilled trade workers. Second, much of Canada's infrastructure was built after WWII. Now, more than a half century later, that infrastructure needs refurbishing and expansion. Third, many older skilled trade workers are now reaching retirement age around the same time, creating further demand for new skilled trade workers (Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, 2013).

Ultimately, all of these factors cause me to wonder why more Canadians are not enrolling in apprenticeships to take advantage of the situation. My curiosity has been piqued especially with regard to women, for whom, according to Mayer and Braid (2007), skilled trades provides a better chance of wage parity than most other educational and career paths. These authors claim that "trades…is one of the few areas where the equity of male and female wages on average is higher than in other industries….On average, women in construction earn 98.8% of what men make in the same trade" (p. 6). Statistics Canada (2014c) agrees, providing evidence that from 1998 to 2013, female Canadians working in the skilled trades saw their weekly wages increase by an overall percentage greater than that of their male counterparts over that same period.

Adding to these gender-related issues, another concern is that Canada is suffering from a shortage of skilled workers while simultaneously suffering from a high unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24. According to Statistics Canada (2013), "inflows to unemployment have been higher among youths than among adults every year since 1977" (p. 1). That younger Canadians, regardless of sex, are apparently resistant to entering the apprenticeship stream is especially peculiar when one considers the relatively low economic risk it provides when compared to a university education. While degree holders indeed do graduate with a more prestigious level of educational attainment, the risk involved is entirely on their shoulders, and

there is no industry-backed assurance that there will be work in their chosen field upon graduation.

It is surprising that so few choose the apprenticeship pathway, which is generally considered a low-cost option with little financial risk, resulting in little to no debt. Apprenticeships also provide a way of earning a livable income while studying, with the added benefit that the earnings come from training in students' actual field of study, not from and unrelated source of employment, such as the part-time work in coffee shops, retail stores, or restaurants, work that students in higher education often have to perform to make ends meet. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and Skills Canada (2012) points out that with apprenticeships not only do governments, trade unions, employers, and industry absorb the lion's share of the training costs, but the student-apprentice earns a guaranteed graduated income during their apprenticeship and can draw on employment insurance benefits while attending the in-school portions of their training, further easing their financial burden.

People used to avoid the skilled trades because they were physically demanding and considered dangerous, but things have changed. Although rules and regulations vary from province to province, trade unions and other worker advocacy groups, along with worker compensation boards, have worked to continually improve safety in the skilled trades over the past few decades. Nowadays, labour-saving devices such as forklifts and excavators help workers avoid backbreaking work like manual lifting and digging. As well, safety standards for equipment, tools, and personal protective equipment such as ear and eye protection have also increased.

Still, to keep things in context, I must note that regardless of the advantages associated with apprenticeship and skilled trade careers, "highly-educated workers today still earn much

more, on average, than their less-educated counterparts" (Morrissette, Picot, & Lu, p. 46). For now this situation is fortunate for those emerging from colleges and universities degree-in-hand. However, considering the aforementioned trends of shifting wages and opportunities, there is a real possibility that the tide is changing in terms careers and earnings.

Regardless of the differences between the earnings of diploma/degree program graduates versus apprenticeship graduates, Sharpe and Gibson (2005) claim that only a small fraction of Canadians take the apprenticeship route, especially women. As I mentioned previously, research shows that the skilled trades provide Canadian women better opportunities for finding work and better chances for wage parity than many other career pathways. In noting this, I pose the following question: Considering these apparent advantages, why are Canadian women not participating in skilled trades work and apprenticeships?

My Questions

As an adult educator working in an apprenticeship training program, and as a researcher, I have concluded that women participating in the highly-masculinized skilled trade sector can illuminate contributors and hindrances to their success. By focusing on the experiences of successful tradeswomen, this thesis looks at the issue of Canadian women's low participation in apprenticeships and skilled trades, and the related concerns that I have outlined above. My inquiry was informed by three primary questions: What factors and/or experiences influenced the women's decision to enter into an apprenticeship? What additional factors and/or experiences emerged during their apprenticeships and influenced their decisions to remain in the apprenticeship program? Which factors and/or experiences did they view as important to the successful completion of their programs? These questions suggest my own orientation to the

issue of gender in the skilled trades – one that is, as I now explain, influenced by the sociological thinking of Pierre Bourdieu.

Toward a Theoretical Framework: Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Pierre Bourdieu has produced so much literature in so many areas that it is difficult to pigeonhole his work to any particular school of thought. Although Bourdieu's academic training was in philosophy and his work spans many genres, he has become "narrowly classified as a social reproduction theorist rather than appreciated for the broad range of conceptual concerns animating his thinking" (Swartz, 1997, p. 3). Throughout his long career, Bourdieu embraced a wide-ranging, evolving approach to learning and researching. Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) maintains that one particularly important contribution of Bourdieu's work is found in his invitation for increased reflexivity on the part of researchers and theorists. According to Robbins (2012), Bourdieu's interest in reflexivity was mostly a product of his interest in the phenomenological work of Edmund Husserl, particularly the way Husserl questioned the objectivity of researchers. For Bourdieu, fixing the problems created by divisively aligning topics and theories with either subjectivity or objectivity became a long lasting theme and one that found its way into much of his work, including his theory of practice.

Bourdieu's work also shows signs of influence by the three "'founding fathers' of sociology" (Grenfell, 2012, p. 20), Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. In attempting to combine the apparently incompatible ideas of these philosophers, Bourdieu created his own version of sociology. Whereas others had focused on what distinguished and separated theories, Bourdieu focused on the subtleties that could act as mediators or threads to stitch them together. This concept of amalgamating ideas, rather than proving one better or truer than another, became the

foundation for one of Bourdieu's career-long goals, that is, bridging the divide between the objective and the subjective, between structure and agency.

Bourdieu concluded that it was erroneous and counterproductive to adhere to one of these schools of thought when so many good contributions came out of the others. Epistemologically speaking, Bourdieu believed that researchers had to try to see clearly what was occurring within social interactions, and to then think relationally about those interactions and the relationships that instigated them. To that end, Bourdieu believed that researchers were required to appreciate and account for both structure and agency. It was Bourdieu's rejection of the notion of picking sides that led to his eventual theoretical solution: Bourdieu's *theory of practice.*

To understand how Bourdieu conceptualized practice*,* one first needs to understand the three popular schools of thought regarding human actions that he criticized: behaviorism, rational choice theory, and cultural norms theory. According to Swartz (2002), Bourdieu rejected each theory individually; however, he felt that all three had similar shortcomings. Bourdieu, as I mentioned earlier, was constantly attempting to bridge the divide between subjectivity and objectivity, and he found all three of these theories were mired perpetually in arguments that seemed to keep the two concepts apart. Regardless of their differences, Bourdieu thought that all three existing approaches either viewed individuals as agents in total control of their destinies, or mere automatons playing out their pre-programmed lives under the control of some grand socializing structure.

As Swartz (2002) explains, Bourdieu believed that behaviorism was too reductionist, and was inconsistent with his view that "behavior is fundamentally cultural and is motivated by a dynamic reenactment of past learning that is…adaptive to external structures" (p. 62s). On the other hand, Bourdieu saw rational choice theory as oversimplified; he did not agree that human

actions could be reduced to the weighing of pros and cons. "Rather, human action is for the most part 'practical,' since it is carried out with a tacit, informal, and taken-for-granted degree of awareness" (p. 62s). Lastly, Bourdieu did not agree with the notion that people automatically conform to norms and rules. Bourdieu saw human beings as more than capable of ignoring, avoiding, or breaking rules and taboos when the opportunity presented itself and the benefits were sufficiently rewarding. To Bourdieu, human actions are "adaptive, to be sure, but also strategic, constitutive of cultural standards as well as adaptive to them" (p. 62s).

It becomes apparent then, that Bourdieu took what he wanted from each of the three popular schools of thought and discarded what he believed was too biased one way or the other. For example, on the one hand he criticized rational choice theory for overemphasizing the significance of choice in human actions; however, on the other hand he criticized behaviorism and conformity for their inadequate appreciation of the gravity that an individual's "choice" has on his or her social actions. It was not that Bourdieu was striving for paradox; it was more that he saw the three conventions as simply different aspects of one single, highly-nuanced practice, which he believed is constituted and representative of all three. Swartz (2002) succinctly explains what Bourdieu wanted practice to do: "[Practice] avoids reducing human action to either external constraints or subjective whim" (p. 62s).

Outline of a Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972]) was Bourdieu's first "significant theoretical formalization" (Warde, 2004, p. 3) and the world's first comprehensive introduction to the theoretical propositions of Bourdieu, including *habitus,* and *capital*, perhaps the most cited words in the Bourdieusian lexicon. Together these words helped Bourdieu create his unique theoretical framework designed to investigate the one overarching theme he was so interested in, namely, "symbolic power" (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972], p. 165) and its place in enabling social and

cultural reproduction. It was Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus, and how Bourdieu

envisioned habitus interacting with field, that would eventually allow the objective and the

subjective, structure and agency, to co-operate in a manner that could help explain human

practice. To explicate his conceptualization, Bourdieu introduced his now-famous formula:

"[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice" (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979], p. 101). I will now examine

each of the constituents, habitus, field and capital, and their product, practice, but I must point

out that due to the interaction and interdependence of the factors, it is sometimes necessary for

me to discuss an individual factor in reference to the others.

Habitus

The term *habitus* comes from the Latin verb *habere,* which means "to have" or "to hold"

(Swartz, 2002, p. 61s). The *Cassell's Latin-English dictionary* defines habitus as "condition,

habit, style, lie of the land, nature, character, disposition, [and] attitude" (Simpson D. , 1987, p.

103). Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) defines habitus in terms of its relationship to practice:

> The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce
>
> *habitus* [emphasis in original], systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured
>
> structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which
>
> generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to
>
> their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express master of
>
> operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular"
>
> without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively
>
> orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (p. 53)

Bourdieu believed that it was primarily habitus that provided the bridge between structure

and agency. He saw habitus as founded in the historical influences, particularly of the family,

and the primary socialization events that occur in one's earliest years of childhood (Maton, 2012). In support of Bourdieu's definition and conceptualization, Swartz (2002) states that "the habitus consists of deeply internalized dispositions, schemas, and forms of know-how and competence, both mental and corporeal, first acquired by the individual though early childhood socialization" (p. 62s). When Bourdieu claimed that habitus acted as "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures," he wanted to demonstrate how habitus closes the gap between structure and agency. "Structured structures" can be witnessed in the case of a child is raised in an artistic family. This child, because of the familial influences and environment, is more likely to grow up like the rest of the family, more likely to "develop an appreciation for art and will acquire the know-how to interpret, criticize, and appreciate works of art" (Swartz, 2002, p. 63s). In doing so, the child has internalized the artistic dispositions that have been predisposed to him or her through the familial context. On the reverse side of that coin is agency. Again, by thinking of the child raised in the artistic family, one can envision how that child, through internalizing and then reflecting the familial dispositions regarding art, becomes an agent for reproducing that disposition, and by doing so, becomes an agent for structuring. Swartz (2002) describes this action:

> Habitus generates perceptions, expectations, and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialization. An individual's habitus is an active residue of his or her past that functions within the present to shape his or her perceptions, thought, and bodily comportment….In this respect, habitus consists of "structuring structures." (p. 63s)

It seems clear then that during the early years of primary influence, one's habitus performs its task as a structured structure and a structuring structure. Still, Bourdieu believed that

one's habitus is not permanently fixed after childhood; events occur and contexts change after this period of growth, and these changes may alter one's habitus. Maton (2012) agrees, noting that "the structures of the habitus are thus neither fixed nor in constant flux. Rather, our dispositions evolve – they are durable and transposable but not immutable" (p. 52). Moreover, Maton links this evolutionary characteristic of habitus to the ongoing development of one's life, explaining that "[habitus] is 'structured' by one's past and present….It is 'structuring' in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices" (p. 50).

Habitus as embodiment. Bourdieu emphasized that because of the historical foundation of habitus, the dispositions reflected in it are deep-rooted and generate actions at the non-conscious level. In the words of Swartz (2002), "habitus-shaped behavior occurs, for the most part, at a practical, informal, and tacit level" (p. 63s). If habitus is reflected in one's "thinking" about how to go around in the world, it is also reflected in the actual "doing" of going around in the world. The dispositions related to one's habitus are both cognitive and corporeal. As Swartz (1997) says, "the concept [habitus] has broadened in scope over time to stress the bodily as well as cognitive basis of action" (p. 101). Further support for this bodily aspect of habitus is provided by Reay (2004), who lists "*Habitus as embodiment"* [emphasis in original] (p. 432) as one of four pivotal tenets that habitus entails. "Thus, one of the crucial features of habitus is that it is embodied, it is not composed solely of mental attitudes and perceptions" (p. 432).

Elaborating on this concept of embodied habitus, Bourdieu (1984 [1979]) explains that one's habitus is not limited in source to the individual, but instead, when individuals are raised and socialized under similar circumstances, or in similar cultures, their individual habituses may share certain similarities. In other words, the individuals may take on a collective habitus. Bourdieu also describes how such individuals tend to exhibit ways of walking, talking, posturing,

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gesturing, and even eating, which are distinct to that class or group. Swartz (1997) examines this phenomenon, noting that "Bourdieu emphasizes the collective basis of habitus, stressing that individuals who internalize similar life chances share the same habitus" (p. 105).

It is in *The Logic of Practice* (1990 [1980]) that Bourdieu explains how habituses can be shaped collectively. There, he describes two perfectly synchronized clocks and claims that there are but three possible scenarios to account for their synchronization. The first is to construct two perfect clocks. The second is to have a worker constantly tend to the clocks. Bourdieu discards these two scenarios because of their practical impossibility. The third scenario is to accept that the clocks share a "mutual influence" (p. 59). For this mutual influence to occur, he states, its orchestration must be performed consciously or non-consciously. Bourdieu believes that conscious orchestration is the least probable explanation, stating that "so long as one ignores the true principle of the conductorless orchestration…one is condemned to the naïve artificialism that recognizes no other unifying principle than conscious co-ordination" (p. 59). Bourdieu explains how the orchestration would more likely be the product of some innate similarity between the two clocks. "The corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose mastery of a common code" (p. 59). In Bourdieu's vision, the common code and the synchronizing of agents' habituses and practices may occur because of similar socio-cultural histories, circumstances, and experiences, rather than because of conscious co-ordination. Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) explains:

> Habitus is…inscribed in the bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition…for the co-ordination of practices…[and] for practices of co-ordination….Sociology treats as identical all biological individuals who, being the products of the same objective conditions, have the same *habitus* [emphasis in original]. (p. 59)

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Habitus, not habits. Bourdieu maintained that he purposely chose *habitus* over *habit* because the former provides elaborations and clarifications that the latter cannot. In one conversation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), Bourdieu explains: "I said habitus so as *not* [emphasis in original] to say habit" (p. 122), because, he claims, habitus more clearly emphasizes the "generative (if not creative) capacity" (p. 122). Swartz (2002) provides a concise explanation of why Bourdieu chose habitus: "[Bourdieu] sees the term *habit* [emphasis in original] as too invested with the idea of a mechanical response to external conditions" (p. 66s). Maton (2012) explains that "the habitus, however, does not act alone. Bourdieu is not suggesting we are pre-programmed automatons acting out the implications of our upbringings" (p. 50). For Bourdieu, practices develop from "an obscure and double relation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 126-127) between habitus and field.

Field

One of the issues with Bourdieu's use of the term *field* is the multiple meanings or interpretations that the term produces. Being French, Bourdieu of course did not use the English word *field* in his original writing; he used *le champ*. As Thomson (2012) explains, the French literal translation for field is *le pré,* which means *meadow*, but Bourdieu meant to describe an area of struggle, or "*le champ*, which is used to describe, *inter alia*, an area of land, a battle field, and a field of knowledge [emphases in original]" (p. 66). Regardless of the confusion caused by translation, Bourdieu decided on field in because he believed that in English it more accurately portrayed what it was that he meant by le champ. Moreover, one could contend as Thomson (2012) does, that the word field actually reflected Bourdieu's intended meaning more accurately, because it articulates several conceptions that le champ cannot.

The first conception is the field as a physical place where individuals fight battles or compete in games; this field is likened to a football field or battlefield. The second conception of field is equivalent to the field of forces found in the study of physics. This field is analogous to the field of energy between two charged particles, or two magnetic poles. The third, and arguably the most interesting conception of field is that of "force fields" in science fiction writing. In this case, the physicality of the field is not as important as what it defines. In this conception, the force field represents an invisible barrier that surrounds an area and protects it from intruders.

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) believed that field structures habitus, while habitus contributes meaning to field through the dispositions and actions of the individuals who interact in the field. Furthermore, as Swartz (2002) explains, Bourdieu saw society in general as simply a larger version of this field-habitus symbiosis: "Bourdieu thinks of society as a complex arrangement of many fields….The concept of field posits that social situations are structured spaces in which actors compete against one another for valued resources" (pp. 65s-66s). In this way, as Warde (2004) notes, field is Bourdieu's tool for thinking about and explaining the structure of the space in which individuals meet to socially interact. This concept is important when studying the interactions between agents, and between agents and their respective fields, because the force(s) that establish the characteristics of each field are ultimately brought to the field by the agents themselves, in the form of *doxa*.

Doxa. Doxa is one's belief in, and willful adherence to, certain tacitly accepted truths, norms, and rules of the field. "Doxa is…the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense" (Bourdieu, 1990 [1980], p. 68). The relationship between the field, its agents, and doxa is explained by Thomson (2012): "Agents who occupy particular positions understand how to behave in the field, and this understanding not only feels 'natural' but can be

explained using the truths, or *doxa* [emphasis in original] that are common parlance within the field" (p. 68).

Doxa is important when one considers that the field is similar to an arena established and structured for struggling over valued resources. The struggle would not occur if the individual competitors did not believe in the perceived value of the resources to be fought for and the taken-for-granted truths, or doxa*,* that establishes the rules and structure of the field in which the competition takes place. "Belief is thus an inherent part of belonging to the field" (Bourdieu, 1990 [1980], p. 67). If the resources to be fought for were illegitimate or insufficient, the competitors would not struggle for it. "Players agree*,* by the mere fact of playing…that the game is worth playing, that it is 'worth the candle,' and this *collusion* [emphasis in original] is the very basis of their competition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). Likewise, if the field was ill-defined or its rules and boundaries were ambiguous or inconsistent, if it lacked doxa, there would be no "buy-in" from potential competitors. Each competing agent's habitus must be predisposed to pre-reflexively and non-consciously accepting the field's doxa. As Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990 [1980]) chose to word it, "doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a *habitus* [emphasis in original] and the field to which it is attuned" (p. 68).

Capital

Bourdieu believes that field and habitus are the two main ingredients that make up practice, that "social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). On the other hand, Bourdieu shows through his formula that practice, as he conceptualizes it, is not complete without the inclusion of *capital*. Capital provides leverage that the individual draws upon to gain an advantage while competing in the field. Swartz (2002) explains:

Dispositions require resources….The dispositions of habitus draw on types of power resources, or capitals, to enact practices….Habituses are formed with particular types and amounts of capital….Expectations generated by habitus depend on capital holdings, either inherited from the family or accumulated….The dispositions of habitus are formed by the types and the amounts of capital available. (p. 65s)

However, capital is also a reward provided through successful competition, successful practice. "Individuals are motivated by valued resources, or what Bourdieu calls forms of *capital* [emphasis in original]….Fields are competitive arenas of struggle over different kinds of capital" (Swartz, 2002, p. 65s). Therefore, capital is also an outcome, or a reward, that is won and lost in the field's competition. In this "reward" form, capital can be accumulated and banked, as it is in capitalism, to be re-applied in its "resource" form in subsequent competitions. In this dual role, as both resource and reward, capital is a unique component of the formula.

Applying the Formula for Successful Practice

Although I, and others (see, for example, Nash, as cited in Maton, 2012; Warde, 2004) have struggled to comprehend and articulate what exactly Bourdieu intended with his precision placement of the variables in the formula, in the end I would argue that the formula is more of an analogy or illustrative device than it is a calculable mathematical construct. Warde (2004) seems to agree, noting that "the formula is impenetrable; maybe that should not matter since it may have been intended merely as a literary flourish" (p. 4). The formula allows the variables to interact with one another in a relational manner; when one variable changes, those changes tend to affect the other variables and ultimately the formula's product, practice.

Practice: The Outcome of the Relationship Between Components

Practice is the outcome of how habitus*,* field*,* and capital interact. Warde (2004) describes practices as "the basic components of social existence and therefore the primary focus of social analysis" (p. 18). As I have explained, Bourdieu's formula shows the components as individual parts, but also as integrated, inter-dependent, and co-effective; to speak of one component is to refer the others. It then becomes clearer that the components must always be discussed in relation to each other, and to do otherwise is simply "not Bourdieusian" (Maton, 2012, p. 60).

In *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979])*,* where the formula first appears, Bourdieu argues that each field has distinct styles or qualities that act to distinguish that field from other similar fields. Furthermore, Swartz (1997) talks of the "subfields" (p. 122) within general fields, claiming that greater fields divide into distinct subfields because of the subtle differences that distinguish agents' habituses—factors such as style, taste, speech, posture, and comportment. Thomson (2012) provides examples of distinguishing between subfields, "between art in galleries and the art of family photographs…between architect-designed housing and project kit-homes" (p. 70). Swartz (2002) asserts that it is the quantity and quality of the specific capital(s) that modify and differentiate the habituses of individual agents. In addition, it is these differences that provide each agent entrance into a certain field, and allows individual agents to be distinguished from one another. For example, two competing architects presumably have similar habituses or dispositions for entrance into the field of architecture. Differences in capital(s) help differentiate their habituses and the styles of their works. These differences lead to differences in their practices, and their standing in the architectural field. Each architect's standing in the greater field of architecture distinguishes which subfield he or she practices in. One architect

designs elaborate and expensive custom homes while the other designs simple kit-homes. Reay (2004) appears to envision the relationship between habitus and capital in this way, stating that "my understanding of this interconnection is one in which habitus lies beneath cultural capital, generating its myriad manifestations" (pp. 435-436).

As for capital's influence, the architect who designs elaborate homes instead of low-end homes perhaps has a degree from a better school (more, better cultural capital) and secures work in a more prestigious firm (again, cultural capital). This individual's prestigious credentials may have been due to the opportunity to study at a better architectural school because of his or her family's wealth and/or standing in the community and the buoyant social connections that accompany such positioning (more, better social capital). In general terms, this individual has more and/or better capital to support his or her habitus during struggles within the (architectural) field, and to provide the agent a superior field position compared to other agents who have less. Maton (2012) provides a rather helpful way of looking at the actual shape and construction of Bourdieu's vision for capital's effect on the formula:

> One's practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)….Practices are thus not simply the result of one's habitus but rather of *relations between* [emphasis in original] one's habitus and one's current circumstances. (pp. 50-51)

To envision habitus in this relational way, one can comprehend that it is a dynamic and multifaceted factor in the overall practice equation. Likewise, to see habitus this way is to see field as its compliment; they are two sides of the same coin. Swartz (2002) appears to agree, noting that "habitus generates action not in a social vacuum but in structured social contexts Bourdieu call fields" (p. 65s).

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Successful Practice

I propose that if practices can be different, then there could be a measurable spectrum of practices for individuals competing within a given field, with success and lack of success defining the two extremes of the spectrum. As Maton (2012) indicates in the previous passage, these two opposing outcomes appear to depend on the dynamics between the factors in Bourdieu's formula. For a certain agent's practice to be successful, that is, to be successful in a given field, that agent must possess and exhibit a suitable habitus. Moreover, it would also be advantageous for the agent to have sufficient field-appropriate capital at his or her disposal.

Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) hints strongly that such a spectrum exists in the pages of *The Logic of Practice*. A "keen rugby player" (Thomson, 2012, p. 67), Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) describes the outcomes of teammates passing a ball to one another, presumably in a rugby match, and their strategies and actions to avoid having the ball stolen by their opponents. Bourdieu explains that the passer can either pass the ball incorrectly—to where the player's teammate currently is, resulting in the receiver missing the pass due to his or her forward motion—or correctly, to where the teammate will be in a few moments. Alternatively, the passing player can pretend to pass the ball to a teammate in the hopes of tricking the opponent into moving in the wrong direction, again resulting in a successful play. In both of the correctly performed moves, the outcome of the passer's actions, relative to the other agents, exemplifies what I have termed as *successful* practice.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, an individual's practice can be measured as successful or unsuccessful. My research and this thesis focuses on the factors that contribute to the successes of accomplished female apprenticeships. By focusing on this conceptualization of (un)successful practice, I was able to consider how differences in one's habitus and capital may

contribute to the final form of practice that one attains in a chosen field. With the conceptualization of successful practice as a backdrop, I now move on to the last section of this introduction, outlining the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Outline of this Thesis

In this thesis, I share the results of my research project, which was designed and undertaken to uncover factors that affect the success of female apprentices. As I will demonstrate, it appears that the six successful female apprentices whom I interviewed did indeed apply, albeit not always intentionally, strategies for maximizing their individual habituses and capitals in order to achieve successful practices in their respective highly-masculinized fields. These results appeared in the form of three themes that appeared as I analyzed my data with the aid of Bourdieu's theory of practice acting as my theoretical framework. Bourdieu argued that for his theory of practice to mean anything, especially its unique concept of habitus, it must be put into use rather than analyzed and argued about. Reay (2002) agrees, claiming that Bourdieu's theory of practice is useful because it remains open-ended, due to the "indeterminacy" (p. 438) of its pivotal factor, habitus. However, Reay warns that even though habitus is particularly applicable in studying how individuals interact with one another because it "fits in well with the complex messiness of the real world" (p. 438), that flexibility provides the opportunity for misuse, or the "danger in habitus becoming whatever the data reveal" (p. 438). I can only hope that through my appreciation and understanding of Bourdieu's theory of practice I have applied its concepts in such a way as to honor their creator's intention. To that end, I will now share the three themes that I uncovered through application of Bourdieu's theory of practice to the data I gathered.

At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced what I see as a problem: The continual low number of Canadian women participating in apprenticeships and the skilled trades. I also mentioned that I had asked my six research participants—women who are participating or have participated recently in an apprenticeship program—to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings as women in a largely masculinized field of work-related study. To help the participants focus their thoughts in similar directions, I developed three main questions, all of which focused on factors: What factors and/or experiences influenced your decision to enter into an apprenticeship? What additional factors and/or experiences emerged during your apprenticeships that influenced your subsequent decision to remain in the apprenticeship program? Which factors and/or experiences did you view as important to the successful completion of your program?

In the next chapter I summarize the literature that I found related to my problem and my questions, followed by an outline of the methodology and methods that I used during my investigation. After that, I discuss my findings and what I insights I gained via their analysis. In the final chapter I provide my conclusions and discuss what possible contributions they might provide to future researchers and those involved with apprenticeships in Canada.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter I examine the literature pertaining to Canadian women working in the skilled trades, using Bourdieu's theory of practice as a framework to structure my review. I have formatted the chapter in such a way that each of its three sections matches one of the components in Bourdieu's formula for practice. In part one I focus on field. This section looks back at the history of adult education in Canada and the ways in which that history has contributed to the contemporary issues facing the skilled trades and apprenticeship job sector, particularly but not always exclusively for women. In part two I focus on capital. Here I provide an image of modern skilled trades and apprenticeship as a highly-gendered site of learning and working that requires its members to possess and/or earn the cultural capital necessary to participate in this field. In addition, I show that this capital is earned in part through agents accepting and reproducing the field's characteristic hegemonic masculinity. In part three I focus on habitus. Here, I look more closely at hegemonic masculinity and the dispositions that workers apparently must exhibit in order to gain a profitable position in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship. This section also examines the pathways to establishing those dispositions, including the complications relating to young peoples' school-to-work transition, and factors that affect one's career aspirations. This review contextualizes my inquiry, and prepares the reader for the discussion of my findings and analysis in the following chapter.

Field: Modern Trades and Apprenticeship in Canada

As a backdrop to this section, I would like to put forward three points and one question. First, roughly half of the Canadian workforce is female (Braundy, 2011). Second, assuming that not all women would prefer working in fields considered "traditional" for women, it would seem logical to think that perhaps some women may want to work in jobs historically dominated by

men. Apparently, as I believe the statistics I provided in the first chapter adequately demonstrated, this presumption is supportable; after all, more women than men are enrolling into educational institutions in order to participate in many of the career pathways traditionally occupied by men, such as technology, engineering, medicine, and law. Third, as Braundy (2011) and Smith (2013) demonstrate, women are capable of working in occupations often labeled stereotypically as "men's jobs" (Greene & Stitt-Gohdes, 1997, p. 265). Selman, Selman, Cooke, and Dampier (1998) illustrate this point with their recollection of Canadian women doing men's jobs looking back as far as the years of the Anitgonish Movement, Frontier College, and the Women's Institute. All of this leads me to ask, why are the numbers for women enrolling in apprenticeships so low and why is the success rate for female apprentices so poor?

This question appears to be even more applicable now, considering the persistent problem of Canadian employers' inability to fill jobs, which has taken hold in almost all skilled trades (Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, 2013), the surprising degree of wage inflation for skilled trade workers that has accompanied this worker shortage (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum & Skills/Compétences Canada, 2012), the multitudes of programs that have been created with the sole purpose of incentivizing apprenticeships and skilled trades to girls and women (Braundy, 2011; Mayer & Braid, 2007; Vojakovic, 2008; Watt-Malcolm, 2005), and the degree of exposure that all of these factors have received in the media over the past few years (see, for example, Ivison, 2013). Still, regardless of the advantages that apprenticeships may offer, and of the incentives that have been put in place to make them more attractive, the fact remains that numbers for enrollments and completions have only marginally increased (Statistics Canada, 2014a, 2014b). In light of this conundrum, I would like now to look at some of the issues facing modern apprenticeship.

Canada's History Regarding Women's Trades-related Learning and Working

Watt-Malcom and Young (2003) state that "prior to 1867, Canadian vocational and equity policies and education programs were virtually non-existent….However, in the early 1900s, the need for skilled labour became apparent" (p. 131). What followed was the Agricultural Instruction Act of 1913. This Act was important because it stated that jobs considered at the time to be "women's work" (p. 131), such as housekeeping, should be covered under the auspices of a formalized occupational training program. Unfortunately, agriculture-specific training and industry swallowed up most of that program's funding, resulting in almost none finding its way into women's training programs. Even after the next piece of legislation, the more suitably titled Technical Education Act of 1919, was enacted, women's programs again were lost in the shuffle. Watt-Malcolm and Young (2003) explain that at the time, "traditional societal norms with regard to appropriate women's work were evident" (p. 131). In other words, the training provided was not much more than classes in traditional homemaking and childcare.

The real change in valuing the input of Canadian women as members of the workforce outside the home occurred in the midst of World War II. With so many men overseas fighting, women were required not only to perform all of the domestic chores in the home, but also to help with the war effort, working in various industries contributing to the Allied war machine. In 1942, the War Emergency Training Program was created to enable women to learn the skills required to operate machines and attend to assembly lines. Then, toward the end of the war, the newly appointed Special Committee on Vocational Training had a new problem. The emerging issue was providing employment for the men returning from abroad. What followed next, ironically, was a decade of various equity movements, which seemed to focus on everything but the plight of these women, who now had extensive and applicable training but nowhere to

exercise it. Finally, in 1954, with the founding of the Women's Bureau, women's issues

regarding training and employment finally began to get some traction. For the better part of the

next three decades, what occurred regarding the progress of women's issues is best described as

slow, intermittent, and piecemeal (Watt-Malcolm & Young, 2003).

This is not to say that things did not improve, or are not still slowly improving for women

who wish to enter careers in the skilled trades, but it does indicate that perhaps new strategies are

warranted. With that in mind, I now look at a wide range of issues that appear related to not only

the problem of the exclusion of Canadian women from the skilled trades job sector, but the trend

of poor participation in that field by Canadians in general.

Contemporary Issues Facing Trades and Apprenticeship

A great deal of the existing literature pertaining to skilled trades and apprenticeship in

Canada has focused on the so-called "problems" of the modern apprenticeship model, especially

in terms of how these problems have contributed to the ongoing "crisis" (Meredith, 2011, p. 323)

of low participation rates in apprenticeships, and how to formulate strategies to overcome it

(Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, 2013; Meredith, 2011; Sharpe & Gibson,

2005). It appears that Canada is not alone in its efforts to deal with this dilemma; many other

Western nations are facing similar issues. Literature from European nations, especially Germany

(Behrens, Pilz, & Greuling, 2008) and the United Kingdom (Fuller & Unwin, 2003, 2008;

McIntosh, 2005; O'Connor, 2006; Simmons, 2009; Vickerstaff, 2007) has provided diverse

insights into the overall problem of low participation in apprenticeships; unfortunately, these

insights have not led to effective solutions to problems found here in Canada.

Meredith (2011) claims that it is overly simplistic to focus on participation numbers

alone. The findings in this study indicate that many of the barriers involved in what is portrayed

as the "apprenticeship crisis" (p.323) in Canada are actually reflections of inconsistencies in what exactly skilled trades and apprenticeship entails in different jurisdictions and to different interested parties. Meredith shows that there is a correlation between apprenticeship success rates and whether the employer is a "high-intensity" or "low-intensity" (p. 333) employer. High-intensity employers, Meredith contends, are better situated to support apprentices because they are employers who "demonstrate high training capacity….[Whose] supervisors themselves are certified tradespersons, and all are familiar with the curriculum that their apprentices will follow during in-class technical training" (p. 333).

Maintaining a focus on employers, Taylor's (2005) article points towards the failure of industry in its attempts at mating corporatism to market models during periods of economic instability. Taylor notes that certain tensions are helping create an atmosphere where those young people who do not want to go to college or university are finding themselves without other options. The tensions causing this issue, Taylor claims, are "between the rhetoric of corporatism and the reality of a market model, the rhetoric of enhancing opportunities for all students and the reality of lower graduation rates associated with new curriculum" (p. 321). Taylor says that these tensions reflect "struggles around education and training and the adoption of neo-liberal policy approaches" (p. 321). Taylor provides four recommendations to help counteract these tensions. First, governments should be held accountable for the (lack of) opportunities available for high school graduates. Second, the divergent learning needs of graduating students should be considered when "school-work transition" (p. 321) programs are being developed. The third recommendation is that "programmes should involve the integration of academic and practical knowledge, and…secondary vocational pathways that link to post-secondary destinations are critical" (p. 337). Finally, educational policymakers must begin to better appreciate that the main

objective of their work "is to develop policies that increase opportunities" (p. 337) for young people transitioning from school to work.

With a similar thrust to that of Taylor's (2005) article, Taylor, McGray, and Watt-Malcolm (2007) take aim at the lack of transparency between groups that affect labour power in the oil sands region surrounding Fort McMurray, Alberta. In this paper, the authors claim that the power struggles between those representing industry, unions, employers, and educators "reflect contradictions within capitalism and labour power" (p. 379). The study's findings suggest that these struggles are created in part by "tensions between employers, educators and unions over who can deliver training and how training is to be delivered and regulated" (p. 379). Moreover, industry claims that those who are doing the training are not considering industry's need for a "flexible, skilled workforce at the lowest cost" (p. 394). Together, the incongruent aims of these parties, particularly those between corporate industry and organized labour, are forcing Alberta's provincial government to "regulate the activities of corporate capital" (p. 394). This process has proven to be both time consuming and divisive, with young apprentices paying the price as their futures sit in limbo.

Taylor and Watt-Malcolm's (2007) paper focuses on the division between vocational curriculum and the experiential learning that apprentices receive on the job. From the findings of interviews they conducted with students enrolled in a carpentry apprenticeship program involving four school districts in an urban area of Ontario, Taylor and Watt-Malcom claim that students were "confronted with the need to make trade-offs in the workplace that restricted their learning" (p. 27). The restrictions on learning occurred "partly because of the academic/ vocational divide in curriculum [and a]….Failure to address tensions rooted in power relations in the workplace" (p. 27). The authors contend that "policy-makers tend to focus on the provision

of formal training" (p. 42), but this is not always helpful because employers' dedication to providing young apprentices with adequate on-the-job learning opportunities is inconsistent and not tracked by any authority. As Taylor and Watt-Malcom state in their concluding remarks, without adequate scrutinizing of the mentoring and support practices of employers, the "distinction between employee development and exploitation is not always clear" (p. 42).

Supporting these findings by Taylor and Watt-Malcom (2007), Higgens (2000) provides evidence that mentoring and relationship-building is simply not being given the attention it deserves in this era of "organizational restructuring and globalization" (p. 292). Higgens describes the modern workplace as one in which apprentices, protégés, and new employees find that it is "increasingly difficult for individuals to develop and maintain single sources of mentoring support" (p. 292). Higgens (2000) suggests encouraging apprentices to seek out multiple mentorships over the span of their apprenticeship. Taylor and Watt-Malcolm (2007) also mention this, noting that apprentices "were often faced with a choice between accepting more stable and routine work in a specialized area of the trade or taking greater risk with entrepreneurs who provide greater access to a breadth of tasks and knowledge" (p. 42).

Several studies have shown that the vacuum associated with worker shortages has led to numerous interwoven problems that need closer examination. For instance, there has been an increase in what Fuller and Unwin (2003) term "restrictive" (p. 410) apprenticeships, which essentially limit the learning process to job-specific training, rather than mentoring a skilled, independent, well-rounded worker. Along these lines, there are those scholars, such as Simmons (2009), who claim that apprenticeship has been tailored and marketed towards young individuals coming from lower-income brackets of society, ensuring members of such social strata remain where they are. Similarly, Taylor and Freeman's (2011) critical examination of apprenticeship's

delivery model exposes its potential for encouraging acceptance and reproduction of a divisive and hobbling rhetoric: that young people are naturally either "'hands on' or 'book learners'" (p. 345). The authors claim that any such academic-versus-vocational approach reproduces societal and cultural divides, further discouraging students from considering alternative or diverse educational pathways.

Wishing to look into how secondary education relates to apprenticeship enrollments, Taylor and Freeman (2011) investigated the attitudes that Canadian high school students have towards the process of becoming a qualified skilled trade worker. The authors found that while attending high school, young people were influenced by what the authors describe as various "disincentives for youth in completing apprenticeship training" (p. 359). The findings indicated that the career planning information currently provided to high school students seems to imply that by learning through an apprenticeship model, apprentices have their educations restricted to only learning by doing. This message, Taylor and Freeman argue, tells students interested in apprenticeship that such a route will limit their learning to only practical knowledge formation, and that the apprenticeship model "works against the goal of developing theoretically applied learning" (p. 359). This confusing message, Taylor and Freeman contend, may be contributing to why young people are not choosing to enroll in apprenticeship programs, and why so many participants drop out of their programs prematurely.

Harris and Simons (2005) looked into finding "a comprehensive profile of those aspects that influence retention in apprenticeships and traineeships" (p. 361) in Australia. This study was unique because part of the authors' findings resulted in the creation of a "heuristic tool" (p. 361), a flow chart which delineates which factors tend to affect the retention of apprentices. These factors could be loosely categorized to match the components within Bourdieu's theory of

practice. For example, in place of habitus, Harris and Simons list "personal factors or 'baggage'…(antecedent factors)….These include personal characteristics…prior experiences…and personal attributes" (p. 362). Harris and Simons blend capital and field together, describing them as a mixture of "factors or circumstances pertaining to [an apprentice's] environment (context factors)….Community and family networks and supports and the actual form of their training contract….Features of [an apprentice's] on-the-job and off-the-job training (process factors)" (p. 362).

Where the study by Harris and Simons (2005) focused on factors that affect retention of both male and female apprentices, the study by Greene and Stitt-Gohdes (1997) focused specifically on factors that affect women's choices to enter into the male-dominated skilled trades. Greene and Stitt-Gohdes' findings indicate that women who choose to enter into the male-dominated field of skilled trades typically share four characteristics, which are "(1) perceived innate ability, (2) strong sense of self, (3) desire for independence, and (4) role models" (p. 271). In the fourth chapter of this thesis I look closely at how these findings and conclusions relate to my own, but for now I will say that in terms of accounting for women's participation and successes in apprenticeships, both studies place considerable value on one's habitus and how role models influence its development.

Fuller, Beck, and Unwin (2005) state that "gender segregation has been a persisitent feature of apprenticeship programmes in countries around the world" (p. 298), and one of the most unique critical examinations of this feature in Canada's skilled trades employment sector comes from Braundy (2011). Both a scholar and a tradeswoman, Braundy examines the cultural origins of the male domination of the skilled trades. Her work details how the masculinized culture found within the skilled trade employment sector persistently resists increasing women's

inclusion. By demonstrating how gender equity initiatives are "often undermined by the very people who are charged with implementation" (p. 5), Braundy provides support for Fuller, Beck, and Unwin's (2005) suggestion for finding a "holistic approach to tackling gender segregation" (p. 298) in the skilled trades.

Some of the more recent apprenticeship-focused literature produced in Canada (see, for example, Mayer & Braid, 2007; Vojakovic, 2008) has taken aim specifically at the issue of low female participation rates and what kinds of policies and practices could perhaps help increase women's exposure to, and inclusion in, the skilled trades and apprenticeship. Reflecting on the tangible outcomes of such policies, Watt-Malcolm's (2005) paper provides an interesting analysis of three different programs designed to "help women gain the knowledge and skills necessary to work on industrial worksites" (p. 1). Watt-Malcolm, through analysis of the "limited scholarly research explicitly studying bridging programs" (p. 1) and interviews she conducted with bridging program staff, found that policy changes meant to increase women's inclusion are insufficient to enable real change. Watt-Malcolm points to how staff of such programs, many of which are volunteers, often circumvent official policies to respond to the many funding issues that emerge, which are usually tied to changes that occur in governments over the lifespan of the bridging program. Such adaptations, Watt-Malcolm explains, often create barriers in terms of tracking which policies have produced which results.

Wright's (2013) paper provides a window into how sexuality and gender play a role in workplace interactions in contemporary Western construction industries. By examining the data drawn from 22 interviews with heterosexual and homosexual female construction workers in Britain, Wright found that "while women share common experiences of heightened interest and questioning, open lesbians can sometimes minimize the sexualized content of workplace

interactions" (p. 832). Wright later points out that "lesbians can experience different forms of harassment, however, from heterosexual women, while employers are less developed in their response to homophobic harassment" (p. 832). This paper provides an interesting insight into how a female worker's sexual orientation may change the types of interpersonal stresses she experiences within a male-dominated and highly-masculinized vocational setting. For instance, Wright explains that "open lesbian workers may avoid some of the sexual attention that heterosexual women face...and may find greater levels of comfort with male colleagues once the possibility of a sexual relationship has been removed" (p. 837).

Depending on which industry, occupation, or specialization one is researching, the numbers reflecting how many Canadian women are working in non-traditional jobs can vary dramatically. Many of the discrepancies seem to have a common foundation, built in part by contributions relating to how interested parties have approached the issues of educational and workplace gender equity in general. Vojakovic (2008) explains:

> Over the past decades women have made significant inroads into formerly male-dominated professions such as law or medicine. This progress has not been matched in some other traditionally male fields, including the skilled trades. However, the debates around gender equality in the workplace mainly tend to focus on occupations that require university-level education. Typically, women who are involved in high-profile roles in politics, science and business are upheld as role models and symbols of changing gender relations at work. Similarly, under-representation of women in occupations related to science, research, engineering and technology has been a subject of policy and public debates for some time. Yet, occupational segregation in skilled trades has had a relatively much lower profile. (p. 1)

Thus, if one looked solely at the numbers of women studying and/or working in managerial positions—a career traditionally considered extremely male-dominated up to just three decades ago (Morrissette, Picot, & Lu, 2013)—one may come to the specious conclusion that women have equal representation in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Overall, the various viewpoints shared in the preceding literature provide valuable insights into what the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship looks like, how it evolved, and where it may be headed. Much of this literature also makes recommendations in regards to addressing the problem of women's low participation in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship. The literature has shown that while it appears that women are less likely than men to enroll in apprenticeships, the issues of low participation and low completion is not necessarily limited to women alone. Furthermore, it appears as though such problems cannot be directly linked to just one or two easily-identifiable root causes. Rather, these issues seem to be the products of many interwoven issues spread amongst various stakeholders, ranging from industry and employers, to secondary school systems and students, to governments and bureaucrats. Lastly, while much of the literature suggests that there are existing barriers to women's inclusion in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship, there is rarely consensus on how they should be addressed. What does seem to be agreed upon is that many of these barriers are linked to sex and gender, how they are perceived in Western society, and how such perceptions influence which careers men and women choose to enter into. To help investigate these barriers and what create them, I think that one area of research that has yet to be investigated adequately is the viewpoint of successful apprentices, especially successful female apprentices. This group, I believe, could provide a source of contextualization to the under-representation issue because they have a unique viewpoint, which except for a handful of articles

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(see for example, Greene & Stitt-Gohdes, 1997; Smith, 2013), seems to have been generally overlooked. I now move on to the next components of Bourdieu's formula, capital, and discuss how it relates to the literature pertaining to the issue of women's low participation in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship.

Capital: What Female Apprentices Require

Currently, there seems to be no shortage of media attention surrounding Canada's current simultaneous problems of rising unemployment amongst new entrants to the job market and high job vacancies in the skilled trades sector in Canada (see, for example, Ivison, 2013). This is not a new concept for someone in the position that I currently hold. For the near-decade that I have been an electrical trade instructor, I have been privy to a multitude of proposals and program incentives meant to encourage Canadians to enter into the technical and trades-related workforce. Most of the recent incentives appear to be geared towards attracting those who are not traditionally considered likely candidates for skilled trades work, especially women (Vojakovic, 2008). Unfortunately, a serious problem that financial incentives cannot address is that this half of the population was not courted for these jobs decades ago. Vojakovic makes the case that "Women constitute nearly a half of the workforce and…are well educated, it is baffling that this pool of labour has not been effectively tapped into in order to mitigate…worker shortages in the skilled trades" (p. 8)

No Quick Fixes to Gender Issues

An example of how policy changes and wording is simply not enough to remedy gender issues and sexism on its own is found in the research by Smithson and Stokoe (2005). In this research, which focused on the outcomes of applying gender-neutral language in the workplace, the authors demonstrate how it is naïve to assume that changes in wording will automatically

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precipitate changes in culture. The authors found that workers populating a gendered and sexist culture in a particular workplace chose to push back at what they saw as heavy-handed and undemocratically instilled policy reforms. Because the changes were not introduced through a process of open dialogue, the existing workforce saw the gender-neutral language policies as forced on them and an affront to their rights. Without providing an explanation for the changes, the wording that was meant to be supportive and respectful to both sexes was misinterpreted by many of the male workers as showing favoritism towards women and anti-male. By selectively taking advantage of certain aspects of the gender-neutral wording in the policy documents, dissenters were able to remain at arm's length of any perceived resistance towards, or circumvention of, the policies that the documents promoted.

Following the theme of incorrectly addressing deeply rooted cultural issues, Mayer and Braid (2007), specifically make mention of the ineffectiveness of hiring practices that exhibit "tokenism" (p. 4). In their recommendations for increasing the inclusion of female workers in the skilled trades in BC and the Yukon, the authors state that hiring token female workers must be avoided if women are to be genuinely accepted into the skilled trade workforce. The authors contend that the existing, mostly male, workforce will almost certainly regard the token female workers as such, excluding them from workplace peer networks, further reducing their chances of participating in genuine opportunities to socialize, learn, work, and succeed.

Interestingly, Simpson's (2004) study of men working within highly-feminized workplaces found that "token men" often actually experience positive outcomes. Simpson found that managers, and even some female co-workers, appeared to assume that when male workers are the minority in a highly-gendered workplace, they must have innate leadership abilities,

resulting in the token male workers receiving promotions sooner than their female counterparts, even if the males have shown no evidence of such abilities.

Lupton (2000) provides further evidence of the bias towards men and their assumed suitability for certain prestigious or high-ranking careers. Lupton talks of how managerial positions are often associated with characteristics that tend to be gendered as masculine, to the point that "both mainstream management writing and feminist analyses, have tended to 'assume' male experience while simultaneously placing men at the center of their arguments" (Collinson & Hearn, as cited in Lupton, 2000, p. s33). Braundy (2011) and Smith (2013) show how trades*workers* are often conflated with trades*men* in that the stereotypical skilled trades worker is seen as male, white, able-bodied, exceptionally strong, naturally skilled with tools, confident, assertive, independent, and violent; in other words, they are seen as imbued with characteristics of masculinity. Similarly, Lupton (2000) points to how "traditional management writing tended to treat organizations as non-gendered whilst at the same time conflating 'men' and 'management'" (p. s33). Lupton goes further, commenting on how the "hegemonic sense" (p. s46) of gendered sites of work tends to help explain and justify such inequality from within. Lupton notes that when qualified and experienced women are overlooked for higher positions in favour of less qualified, less experienced men, the work culture seems to automatically assume a position of blaming the women, of assuming that the women did not get the promotion because they were never suited for it in the first place. Lupton (2000) elaborates, stating that "women's presence needs to be rationalized away, either women have made the wrong career choice, are incompetent or are only appropriately employed at the lower levels" (p. s46). Braundy (2011) describes similar situations, in which female trade workers are kept from the better jobs by those whom she terms "gatekeepers" (p. 9). Braundy explains that "most of these [gatekeepers] are

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men, often white, working-class and middle-class tradesworkers, technicians, technologists, engineers and…teachers and administrators. They see their own skill development as an essential component of their manhood" (pp. 9-10).

Smith (2013) notes that one of the traditional arguments used to justify women's exclusion from the skilled trades is based on the notion that the work there is too physically demanding and discomforting for women to perform. "A certain kind of masculinity, which is strongly tied to the physical male body, is given legitimacy….This legitimacy and domination is fragile…but it is robust enough to have, historically, excluded women from trades work" (p. 863). In light of this, Smith (2013) notes that the female trade workers whom she interviewed claimed that they enjoyed the physical aspects of their jobs and the sense of accomplishment and pleasure they felt after completing their demanding tasks:

> While this pleasure did not mean that these women did not experience pain…it was central to their narrative of work and was often one of the most moving part of the interview….The tradeswomen's pleasure came from different things: the joy of solving a problem; the completeness of being absorbed in work; gaining a different understanding of their body; gaining a different understanding of the world….These women highlighted the frailty of reasons to justify their exclusion and the benefits of men and women having access to this work. (p. 868).

Lastly, there is literature that examines how men and women are expected to approach the topic of work/life balance in different ways. Arnot (2002) proposes that male workers are expected to disassociate themselves from their private lives when they are at work, and to use their work as an expression of their independence, their control, their power, and their competitive nature, in other words, their masculinity. On the other hand, Arnot says that early on

in life, usually through schooling, "girls…are taught to *blur* [emphasis in original] the distinction between family and work…to earn an income and use their employment for the benefit or their domestic commitments rather than for themselves" (p. 120).

The lessons to be taken away from these previous studies seem to revolve around the notion that problems relating to gender in the workplace are complex, interwoven, and delicate; therefore, solutions cannot be simple or unilaterally imposed. I would presume that the same could be said of the gender issues involved with the field of the skilled trades and apprenticeship.

Of course, not all deterrents to young people entering into apprenticeships are gender-related (Mayer & Braid, 2007). Some women—and men, for that matter—would probably not want a career in the skilled trades sector in the first place, as one would expect for any occupation. It is also noteworthy, as Subich (1998) points out, that men and women often require different types and amounts of cultural experiences while working for them to attain adequate levels of at-work satisfaction. Additionally, different types of careers provide different interactions that contribute to the at-work culture. A common theme in much of the literature regarding career choices and career longevity is that job satisfaction is highly-reflective of the culture that permeates the place of work. Still, contributors to one's at-work culture may exist outside of the workplace. People and events in one's private life produce effects that have a way of flowing over into one's work life, and vice versa.

The career one chooses, or is relegated to, can have a great influence on one's life, both inside and outside of the workplace. In 1951, Donald Super introduced his seminal theories on how self-concept affected one's career development strategy. The idea was simple enough: People create a concept of themselves that is an amalgamation of personal attributes and aptitudes, social standing and prestige, and expectations and pressures from society, family, and

peers (Super, 1951). The concept of the self, Super claimed, deeply affects career decisions. Essentially, Super showed that, in choosing an occupation, people accept that there may be parts of their personality, or viewpoints which they hold, which may have to be altered or even sacrificed in order for them to fit the template of what the particular occupation requires. Betz (1994) tells us that Super's ideas led to studies of job satisfaction (Brophy, 1959), career expectations as they relate to efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and Gottfredson's (1981) influential article on the topic of occupational aspirations.

Gottfredson's (1981) article, as Betz (1994) explains, was considered a breakthrough in creating a definitive theory on how and why people choose their careers because it argued for "an integration of psychological and nonpsychological (e.g., environmental) factors influencing career choice and development" (p. 5). Gottfredson (1981) described three crucial factors that greatly affect which careers a person may strive for: the importance of social class reflected in the type of work, the job-seeker's real or perceived level of intelligence and competence, and the person's gender. Moreover, Gottfredson argued that when people are considering which factors they may have to alter or discard for their career, "Gender self-concept will be the most strongly protected aspect of self….People will tend to sacrifice interest in the field of work to maintain sextype and prestige, and to some extent will sacrifice prestige level for sextype if that is also necessary" (p. 572).

Attitudes and Gender Awareness at Work and School

Greene and Stitt-Gohdes (1997) explain that before equity legislation "forced" (p. 265) changes to the US labour rules in the early 1970s, women in the United States were simply not legally allowed to work "in the skilled trades and in organized labor environments" (p. 265). The authors argue that regardless of the legislated changes, women in the US still had many barriers

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to overcome in terms of actually getting the job opportunities available to men. Even more alarming was the fact that, as Greene and Stitt-Gohdes note, many of the challenges female job-seekers faced appeared to revolve around other women resisting changes to the status-quo. Greene and Stitt-Gohdes show that as of the mid-1990s, American society remained resistant or incapable of accepting women as tradespeople, and the few women who did choose to work in the skilled trades were often regarded as individualistic, money-oriented, and disrespectful of family values.

The technological tsunami that started in the mid-1980s forced Western governments and industries to take note of the growing technical/skilled trade worker shortage (Vojakovic, 2008). Initiatives were feverishly put in place and many resulted in not much more than short seminars designed to make apprenticeships appear more attractive to those not traditionally regarded as skilled trade workers, especially women and girls (Pilcher, Delamont, Powell, & Rees, 1988). Braundy (2011) opines that one of the problems with "one of a kind" (p. 25) programs implemented at the high school and post-secondary level, is that they "are not often integrated into regular programming" (p. 25) and because of this, they "have been consistent only enough to demonstrate their promise, but never to achieve their long term viability" (p. 25) As Pilcher et al. (1988) discovered, although participants and observers generally regarded such one-off initiatives as "important for awareness raising" (p. 66), they were also regarded as tactics intended for the "manipulation in career choice processes" (p. 66) of young women, rather than "de-stereotyping [the skilled trades] on a systematic basis" (p. 66). These initiatives, in the end, did not appear to help in changing patterns of occupational choice based on gender stereotyping. Although these initiatives demonstrated the politically-correctness of administrations, they proved only marginally successful when assessed rigorously in terms of financial efficacy or

changing attitudes towards the gender stereotyping of work (Pilcher et al., 1988). Fenwick (2004) paints a bleak picture of this lack of change that has resulted from the formulation and implementation of these mostly politically-driven, one-off initiatives:

> The main approach to vocational education has reflected a progressive ideology of liberal feminism to improve the training of girls, rather than addressing staunch gender inequity….Educational initiatives promoted careers of math and science to 'fix' the girls….Typically one-off grants with little sustainability….These efforts can be characterized as liberal attempts to promote equality for all, without seriously addressing structural inequity. (pp. 178-179)

Watt-Malcolm (2005) echoes Fenwick's (2004) comments, saying that programs meant to help Canadian girls and women bridge-in to the skilled trades are often overly dependent on government policies to get them off the ground, which means that unfortunately, "policies are put in place or abandoned seemingly at the whim of the politicians, which creates hardships for organizations relying on government policies and related funding mechanisms" (Watt-Malcolm, 2005, p. 7). Braundy's (2011) findings are similar, noting "Equity interventions, regardless of their individual successes, receive minimal support from those administrative bureaucracies charged with their implementation, and are the first to be eliminated in funding crunches" (p. 8).

Still, it is incorrect to place all the blame for the lack of success in increasing participation in the skilled trades and apprenticeships on government and policymakers. In the following section, I will explore the effects of hegemonic masculinity and cultural reproduction on the power relations within the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship, but for now I can provide a snapshot with the research from Fuller, Beck, and Unwin (2005). These authors provide evidence that British boys and girls (aged 14 and 15) still abide by traditional gender

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stereotypes. When asked whether they would even "*consider learning* [emphasis added] a job normally done by the opposite sex" (p. 306), only 36 percent of the girls and 14 percent of the boys responded affirmatively. The follow-up research by Beck, Fuller, and Unwin (2006) found that the young people that they interviewed held strong beliefs about social limitations regarding what skilled trade work would mean to their futures and what kinds of specific occupations would present those limitations to them based on their sex:

> Choosing a career that is not traditionally associated with one's sex, can be considered a high-risk strategy….Over all, our respondents displayed stereotypical occupational attitudes….Male jobs were classified as such because of their physical aspects and the perceived need for strength….One all-female focus group felt that they lacked the ability to do certain jobs, claiming that 'stuff with electricity is confusing.' (p. 282)

Before I move on, I must draw attention to the existence of doxa found within the comments in that last passage. These young people seem to willfully accept the notion that men are better suited to some jobs and women are incapable of others. With these comments, it is apparent that these youngsters have already accepted the doxa required for maintaining and reproducing the gendered nature of learning and working. It appears then, that hegemonic masculinity and gender reproduction, two topics which I will discuss shortly, have already established solid footholds in these young people's conceptualizations of what their individual and group social realities look like. Before I move on to these two topics, I would like to finish up with the current discussion pertaining to people's attitudes toward gender at work.

On top of young people's apparent conformity in regards to gender norms at work, and the lackluster performance of government and policymakers in addressing the many issues surrounding gender at school and work, there is another source of power that appears to help in

the maintenance of gender lines in sites of learning and working: employees, employers, and the industries they represent. Helms Mills' (2005) investigation of the formation and sustainability of gender norms in a large North American utility company provides evidence that the dominant culture within highly-gendered workplaces tends to insulate itself from change. In Helms Mills' case study, the culture at the company was highly-masculinized, but the company's leadership was "committed to an equity programme" (p. 265). Regardless of the company's efforts to implement various equity initiatives between the years of 1972 and 2001, annual reports showed that "equity initiatives were undermined by the predominantly masculine nature of the organization and contextual factors that influenced how equity was understood and reproduced" (p. 265). In short, this study illustrates how places of work often find subtle and furtive ways to maintain their cultural milieus even in the face of directed policy changes.

Similar to the findings by Smithson and Stokoe (2005) regarding ineffective language policy changes, which I referred to earlier in this chapter, Helms Mills' (2005) study found that once gender equality policies were enacted, there were various methods by which the company's masculine, masculinized, and sexist, culture found to circumvent them. Helms Mills called these "sensemaking" (p. 243) strategies because ignoring and circumventing the policies "made sense" to those who did so. Again, doxa appears fundamental in the process of accepting, maintaining, and reproducing the dominant culture. Helms Mills recorded that the company's new policies were typically regarded as disruptive, and costly, by members of the company's dominant culture. Helms Mills (2005) found that "When the system is 'shocked'…the established ways of doing things are disrupted" (p. 243). Thus, any losses of profitability were generally attributed to the disruption. With this logic, workers quietly agreed that the most pragmatic solution to the profits slipping was to disregard or circumvent the new policies. The workers covertly pushed

the new policies to the back burner and overtly paid "lip-service" (p. 265) to the policies and to their supporters. In the end, the new policies were forgotten and things went back to being done the "established way" (p. 243), discriminatory but profitable. Helms Mills (2005) summarizes the outcome of policies such as these that do not have the support of the dominant class or culture: "While an organization may have the best of intentions when introducing a policy…the culture should not be underestimated" (p. 266). I would have to add to this that the influential power of money and profits should not be underestimated as well.

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996) presented research, albeit now almost two decades old, on the possible negative effects that such a focus on women's equity issues may be having on young men who are preparing to enter that labour market. The authors contend that such a focus may lead to a possible exacerbation, rather than a decrease, in the sexist attitudes held by young males. Still, this article notwithstanding, there apparently seems to be much more research written on behalf of encouraging the feminization of traditionally male-dominated work than there is against it. Much of this research begins from the premise of studying gender-specific aspirations of young people (Furlong & Biggart, 1999), connecting the sociology of gender to social identity at home, work, and school (Lesnick, 2005), including investigations regarding how decisions pertaining to having children and raising families affects many women's career aspirations in the long-term (Marks & Houston, 2002). In an upcoming section of this chapter pertaining to habitus, I explore in more depth the literature regarding the interaction between gender, careers, and dispositions and personal characteristics, but first I wish to explore the notion of cultural reproduction in education and work.

Cultural Reproduction in Education and Work

A fundamental tenet of doxa is that a person accepts the way things are because she or he believes that is how things are supposed to be. In this sense, Bourdieu's theory of practice outlines the rationalizing processes of individuals and groups that enable cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]). In short, these rationalizations allow individuals and groups to reproduce their culture's hierarchies and relationships of dominance and subordination from within, intergenerationally, and without requiring force.

Swartz (1997) tells us that reproduction was a central concern of Bourdieu's work, much of it focusing on "how groups pursue strategies to produce and reproduce the conditions of their collective existence and how culture is constitutive of this reproductive process" (p. 7). Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977 [1970]) conceptualization of cultural reproduction posits that individuals in similar or related social tiers seem to grow up believing that the stratum they are positioned in is the "natural" one for them. Because of this belief, each social agent accepts his or her lot in life and the relative degree of dominance or domination seemingly assigned to them at birth, rarely choosing to challenge the structure of the hierarchy. Because the dominated freely accept their domination, their dominators are not required to resort to physical violence to establish and maintain their superiority. As Swartz (1997) notes, "in advanced societies the principal mode of domination has shifted from overt coercion and threat of physical violence to forms of symbolic manipulation" (p. 82). This symbolic manipulation can be seen in Bourdieu's (1977 [1972]) concept of "symbolic violence" (p. 191); the "*violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity* [emphasis in original]" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167). Through such complicity, dominated individuals imagine, enact, and finally exercise what they believe to be their rightful destiny. As Swartz (2002) puts it, "much of people's everyday

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practices, Bourdieu suggests, are self-fulfilling prophesies in which they chance no more—or no less—that they expect to succeed" (p. 64s).

Seen from a Bourdieusian framework, the literature discussed here establishes that a gendered culture is being reproduced in trades-related education and work. Furthermore, as Swartz (2002) points out, "the individual habitus tends to exhibit many group-specific characteristics" (p. 64s). In the following sections, I attempt to demonstrate that this group influence on one's habitus may extend into how habitus and gender relate to one another.

Habitus: The Disposition and Characteristics of a Successful Apprentice

Smith's (2013) investigation of women who have chosen to work in highly-masculinized fields paints a picture of how these women come to attain and exhibit certain masculinized abilities and tendencies, and how through this gendered practice, they come to embody hegemonic masculinity. This piece of research provides poignant insights into what a successful apprentice "looks" like and how the characteristics of that image are defined and contested.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Being one of the Boys

Smith (2013) tells the story of a female automobile mechanic named Maria who struggles but is eventually accepted by her male co-workers because of several factors. First was her exceptional work, which Maria's male co-workers respected on a professional level. Second was by her actively "being one of the boys…as tough on her body as men were to their bodies" (p. 865). Third was her ability to contrast her self-willed masculinity at work and her "tough" attitude, with her emphasis on maintaining and projecting her feminine identity by always wearing very feminine hairstyles while on the job. This, Smith explains, allowed Maria to walk a fine line between her conscious decision to "move away from gender normativity" (p. 866), with her toughness and masculine work attitude, but to also be "brought back within a heterosexual

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matrix" through her explicitly feminine hairstyling. Unfortunately, Maria's success was eventually cut short because of the threat to normativity she represented to the company she worked for. Smith (2013) explains: "Despite being able to do what men could, Maria was ultimately still a woman….Despite her work, skill and passion and the fact that Maria felt accepted, the organization she worked for curtailed her occupational resistance" (p. 866).

This story of how Maria presented herself as tough and masculine in order to fit in as one of the male workers is helpful in conceptualizing what hegemonic masculinity rests on, specifically, the image of an independent, capable, forceful, strong, white male: the embodiment of the stereotypical skilled trade worker Smith (2013). Donaldson (as cited in Smith, 2013) adds that "'that male body is in turn yoked to strength, skill and violence which are necessary in manual work and trades'" (p. 862). The work of Braundy (2011) provides several examples to support these descriptions. Gus, one of Braundy's interviewees had this to say: "My job as a carpenter doesn't make me masculine. The fact that I have a job, and I'm a good worker, that makes me masculine" (p. 77). In another example, Braundy (2011), while referring to the work of another author (Cockburn), shines a light on what it means to be a masculine, working man:

> Cockburn does an excellent job of uncovering the nuances and implications of the
> changes in work processes pertinent to men's sense of being men. One element of this is
> their sense of feeling "reduced to the level of women. 'If girls can do it…then you are
> sort of deskilled you know, really,'…levelling them down to what they see (and have
> always feared) as the undifferentiated mass of the working class: unskilled men,
> unemployed men, old men…and women", each named in their relative sequence in the
> hierarchal system of the patriarchal order. (p. 75)

Effects of Apprentices' Experiences on Remaining in the Trades

As Braundy (2011) and Vickerstaff (2007) note, very little of the literature regarding apprenticeships has looked at how apprentices' experiences in the field affected their decisions to remain in the system or move on to a different vocation. Vickerstaff's (2007) study was similar to mine in that it looked at the experiences of apprentices; however, that study interviewed trade workers some decades after they had finished their training. Vickerstaff's study focused on asking retirees to recollect what it was like to be an apprentice in post-WWII Britain, specifically, the period spanning 1944 to 1982. Thus, many of the details are drawn from memories that are, at the time of their interviews, 20 to 60 years old. In my study I wanted the participants' memories to be fresh; therefore, I limited my participant search to only female apprentices whom had either only just recently finished their apprenticeship, or who were preparing to write their Red Seal examination.

Nevertheless, Vickerstaff's study was similar to mine in several ways. First, the study utilized interviews that focused on the social aspects of apprentices' experiences, and how those experiences can be used to reflect on "what it was like to be an apprentice" (p. 334). Second, those experiences were meant to provide a picture of how the apprentices' family lives and early years contributed to why they chose the apprenticeship route and what their apprenticeships eventually looked like. Lastly, both my study and that by Vickerstaff looked at only successful apprenticeships and focused on themes that contributed to those successes. Because my study zeroed in on the unique world of female apprentices, the themes that emerged in my study were much different from the themes that emerged from Vickerstaff's (2007) study. In my study, the participants were fully aware that they were being interviewed specifically because they were women working in highly-masculinized fields; therefore, it is quite possible that they may have

focused more on details pertaining to that uniqueness. In the chapter on methodology, I go into detail regarding how such expectations can skew data and how such distortion is difficult to account for during analysis.

Here, I will note only a couple of cursory points about similarities in themes that emerged in both my study and Vickerstaff's (2007) study. The first similar theme was the influence of masculine role modeling as a source for guidance for successful apprentices' career aspirations. The second similar theme was the importance of capital. The participants in my study shared with me stories of their efforts to earn credibility and cultural capital amongst their male counterparts. On the other hand, social capital was the form of capital most often talked about in Vickerstaff's (2007) study: "The importance of social capital, that is using the family or other connections to get into the trade" was a dimension "of the apprentices' experience that recur in many of [the apprentices'] accounts" (p. 338).

Before leaving this chapter, I want to bring up one last topic, which becomes important in my analysis and findings: the importance of vocational habitus as a factor for establishing and supporting successful careers. Taylor's (2008) paper focuses on the importance of mating one's career trajectories with one's vocational habitus. Like my thesis, Taylor's paper is positioned within the framework of Bourdieu's theory of practice, and also utilizes its components of field, habitus, and capital. Also, as in my study, Taylor (2008) finds that much of what happens to an apprentice comes from the interaction between an individual apprentice's habitus and capital, and the field that is their apprenticeship:

Apprenticeship training ironically does not favour working-class youth….For students who already doubted the value of their capitals within this field, this was clearly a challenge….As a result of the interactions between habitus and the construction field,

after a year, three of the youth were continuing with their apprenticeship while the other

two were not. (p. 409)

Concluding Thoughts Regarding the Literature

Over the last few pages, I have attempted to share what I have found in the existing

literature regarding the historical developments of Canadian skilled trades, their gendered nature,

and women's involvement in this highly-masculinized field. From the research I have examined,

it appears that women's experiences have yet to be notably appreciated in the existing literature.

For my contribution, I chose to perform original research focusing on those very experiences that

I believe have been overlooked. To understand how that research unfolded, I now turn to chapter

three: methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

When I began to look into which methodology and methods would best fit my research, I first reflected upon my guiding research questions, which ask women who are participating or have participated recently in an apprenticeship program about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings as women in a largely masculinized field of work-related study. Specifically, I wanted to know about factors: What factors and/or experiences influenced the women's decision to enter into an apprenticeship? What additional factors and/or experiences emerged during their apprenticeships that influenced their subsequent decisions to remain in the program? Which factors and/or experiences did they view as important to the successful completion of their apprenticeships? After carefully considering these questions, it was time to plan how my research should proceed and decide on a methodology to obtain raw data. This chapter will explore this process and the components that have contributed to it.

I have split this chapter into five sections. The first section outlines the social constructivist philosophical paradigm that helped guide me while I developed my research plan. The second section summarizes the concepts that underlie life history research, and my reason for utilizing this methodological approach. The third section examines semi-structured interviews as a method for gathering data, and presents the nuanced relationship that exists between the storyteller and story listener, and illuminates how some aspects of this relationship may obscure specific limitations associated with storytelling in interviews as a way of sharing life history research data. The fourth section provides links between life history methodology and semi-structured interviews as I have implemented them and the sociological theories of Pierre Bourdieu. Through the lens of Bourdieu's (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) unique conceptualization of a *reflexive* practice of sociology, which others (see, for example, Swartz,

1997) have termed his "sociology of sociology" (p. 271), this section examines some important concerns that Bourdieu raised regarding the tendency for social scientists to "unwittingly translate into the 'explanations' of social phenomena particular epistemological assumptions and intellectual field interests" (p. 270). The fifth and final section shares the participants' demographic characteristics. It also includes a summary of the participant recruitment and selection process, and an overview of the format of the interviews from which I obtained my raw data.

The Social Constructivist Paradigm

To begin, I approached this project from a social constructivist paradigm. This worldview is exploratory in nature, and aims to provide a way for the researcher to understand rather than explain. Creswell (2009) summarizes what the social constructivist researcher intends to achieve:

> The goal of [social constructivist] research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation….Constructivist researchers often address the processes of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work, in order to understand the historical and cultural setting….Rather than starting with a theory (as in postpositivism), inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory of pattern of meaning. (p. 8)

Consistent with the premises of this paradigm, the questions that I wanted to ask were open-ended, non-predictive, and exploratory in nature. My chief concern was with illuminating how participants make sense of the sociocultural context in which they live, learn, and work, and how they respond to it. My chief task was to guide the flow of the interviews, but remain somewhat removed from the meaning-making part of the discussion. This was in an attempt to buffer against my presence and involvement having influence on the participants' recollections

and insights. I wanted to encourage the participants to go back in time to when they found that their experiences made an impact upon them. I hoped that by reliving those moments, the interviewees would unearth deeper meanings still in what they experienced. By being there when this recollection happened, it was my endeavor to, as Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) word it, "gain understanding by interpreting subject perceptions" (p. 208).

One of the issues with the research focused through a social constructivist lens is that it relies on informant accounts, and such accounts "are likely to be oriented with an eye for the unusual rather than the mundane, to impress the researcher" (Swartz, 1997, p. 57). Regardless, I was determined to adhere to my paradigm's core principles, one of which is to encourage participants to "develop subjective meaning of their experiences" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). I was hoping that those subjective meanings would allow me to discover which factors had played a role in determining the outcomes of the participants' apprenticeships. As well, I was hoping that those subjective meanings would help show how Bourdieu's theories and related concepts applied to the participants' experiences and successful practices.

My choice to utilize one research paradigm did not mean to me that I was forcing myself to cast aside aspects and considerations of other qualitative research worldviews, such as the "advocacy/participatory" (Creswell, 2009, p. 9) paradigm, which advocates for "an action agenda to help marginalized peoples" (p. 9), or the critical theorist paradigm, which, as Swartz (1997) points out, is often associated with Bourdieu's work and research that follows it. In addition, disciplines and perspectives have started to merge and overlap, allowing multiple paradigms to cooperatively inform research. As Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2013) note, "Methodology is inevitably interwoven with…particular disciplines…and particular perspectives….The various paradigms are beginning to 'interbreed' such that two theorists

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previously thought to be in irreconcilable conflict may now…be informing one another's arguments" (p. 200). For my study, I chose to use life history inquiry as a theoretical basis from which to apply my research methods. I now turn my attention to this research methodology, describing both its usefulness and its limitations in regards to the focus of my research and how I went about gathering data.

Life History Research

"Ask a roomful of life history researchers what life history research is about and you are likely to get a roomful of diverse responses, all loosely connected to a central epistemological construct illuminating the intersection of human experience and social context" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 9). I chose to begin this section with this particular quotation for two reasons. First, it illustrates how the term *life history research* is rarely defined or applied in a universal manner, which indicates to me not its ambiguity, but its flexibility. The second reason is because the quotation mentions "the intersection," which to me is a pivotal concept for comprehending how life history research fits in to the bigger picture of qualitative research as a whole.

This intersection is akin to what Bourdieu termed the "obscure and double relation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 126) between habitus and field, or what Swartz (1997) re-framed as the "dialectical relationship" (p. 8) that functions in the intersection between individuals' actions and experiences, and their social contexts. This intersection or relationship, along with the dynamics of power in social interactions, was the impetus behind Bourdieu's (1977 [1972]) attempt to mate structure and agency in his theory of practice. I see life history research as Alheit (2005) does, as a unique form of inquiry that reflects this intersection. Life history research is founded at the crossroads of the individual's biographical history and the social contexts in which that biography expresses itself through action and interaction.

Life history research provides the opportunity for a unique form of combined sharing and learning, which relies on an authentic, empathy-focused relationship between the researcher and the participant. In this relationship, both parties have specific tasks to perform. The sharing aspect of the relationship comes mostly from the participants, as that is their primary contribution to the research project. On the other hand, because it is the researcher who most often initiates the research relationship, part of his or her task is to provide empathy to the participants as they share thoughts, feelings, and memories (Cole & Knowles, 2001). As life history research asks the researcher to care about what occurs within the relationship between researcher and participant, it is somewhat normative in nature. Nevertheless, the normative aspects of life history research do not negate the exploratory ones. Lastly, life history research, according to Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) has unique qualities within its overall purpose that are especially useful for use by the social constructivist because of the manner in which findings emerge from the uniquely "transactional/subjectivist" (p. 210) interaction between the researcher and the participant.

What life history research embodies is difficult to envision without viewing it from several vantage points. To provide an overview of the ones most pertinent to this paper, I have broken down the remainder of this section into the following three subsections. The first details the purpose of utilizing life history research. The second describes the main premises of life history research. The final section explains how the researcher performs life history research.

Purposes

In order to address my research questions from the social constructivist paradigm, I knew that I would need a methodology whose structure allows participants to reflect on their experiences and share them with relative ease. Given the reality of time constraints associated

with participants' availability and the completion of my master's degree program, I also needed to balance richness of data and intensiveness of data collection with temporal commitments. To obtain rich data in a relatively short period, I felt that it would be best to explore alongside participants in an informal, conversational manner. After considering possible options, I decided on life history inquiry as my methodology, which as Cole and Knowles (2001) note, "draws on individuals' experiences to make broader contextual meaning" (p. 20). Life history inquiry enabled me to pose the questions that I had developed but also provided the participants the opportunity to contextualize their responses in terms of their entire lifespans. Furthermore, for my data gathering method, I chose to utilize what Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) call a "semistructured life world interview" (p. 3). I chose this format because it allowed me to keep the interviews short in duration to respect the time-limited availability of the participants while still allowing the questions to remain open-ended and easily supplemented with critical follow-up questions. I was also interested in life history inquiry's use of storytelling as a conduit for allowing participants to share both their experiences and the contexts in which those experiences occurred. Alheit (2005) values storytelling as a medium for sharing, stating that "stories constitute the unity of our individuality….Stories create the social contexts without which we could not live" (p. 202).

Through sharing their life histories and their stories, I wanted the participants to take me back in time to those events where they formed meaning from their experiences. Caverero (as cited in Dillabough, 2004) once claimed that "the time of a life story is not reducible to the 'time' of that life" (p. 495). To respect this notion, I wanted to hear about the build-up to the meaning-making occurrences. I also wanted to hear about what participants were thinking and feeling afterward, and how they envisioned their pasts influencing their "'habitus formation'"

(Bourdieu as cited in Alheit & Dausien, 2002, p. 15) and their "biographical 'learning dispositions'" (Fields as cited in Alheit & Dausien, 2002, p. 15).

Bourdieu felt that interviews allowed the interviewer, interviewee, and reader to share a space rather than to take up positions, positions that Bourdieu believed interrupted open communication. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), which is essentially a book-length transcribed interview with Bourdieu, he explains his appreciation of the interview method as a way of constructing and sharing data without filtering it before it gets to the reader. In Bourdieu's opinion, the interview "shakes the author from a position of authority and the reader from a position of passivity…enabling them to communicate free of the censorship embedded in conventional forms of scholarly intercourse" (p. x). To close this discussion on participants sharing their stories during the life history interviews, I reference Danto (as cited in Alheit, 2005): "When historical events are interlinked not only through primary causal relationships, but…when they pertain to 'reasons' that need to be uncovered….that linkage…favour particularly a kind of reconstruction that historicism had already preferred – that of storytelling, of narration" (p. 203).

Premises

I mentioned at the beginning of this section that life history research has multiple meanings and applications. These depend, as Cole and Knowles (2001) state, on who is performing the research and what it is they are hoping to learn from it. "Researchers' definitions of life history research are influenced by their epistemological orientations and by their professional or scholarly autobiographies" (p. 11).

As I have worked through the various steps involved with conducting my research project, I have concluded that context is especially important with a research methodology

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steeped in the subjectivity of the participants' lived lives. Later in this chapter I discuss several lmitations that accompany attaining raw data via storytelling, but for now let me just say that they relate to context. The influence of context is of such gravity in life history research that Cole and Knowles (2001) proclaim "the slogan 'Context is everything' could well be the hallmark of life history inquiry….Lives are never lived in vacuums. To be a human being is to have connections with others….To be human is to be molded by context" (p. 22). In addition to context, there are several premises which are seen as central and essential to life history methodology, and I outline them now.

Cole and Knowles (2001) identify what the term the "principles guiding life history researching" (p. 25). They are relationality, mutuality, empathy, and care, sensitivity and respect. I will now look at these four principles in more depth, beginning with rationality.

Relationality. Relationality means to consider the relationship built between the researcher and the participant (Cole & Knowles, 2001). The researcher has an obligation to maintain a watchful eye that the union begins with, and maintains throughout its lifespan, a focus on an "egalitarian ideal" (p. 26). Both parties should exit the relationship feeling that they were respected and treated fairly. The two parties, Cole & Knowles (2001) point out, are equal in their personhood, but they are not necessarily equal in their roles and the division of labour attached to those roles. The division means that the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is both professional and personal. It is professional because it is about two parties coming together for the sake of research. On the other hand, for that research to produce genuine results, there must be a mutual interest in not only the research topic, but in each other. In other words, the relationship must get personal and intimate because, as Cole and Knowles (2001) believe, "for us, intimacy and authenticity in relationship are foundational to research quality and to

knowledge production, which what research is about" (p. 27). As Oakley (as cited in Cole and Knowles, 2001) proclaims, "authentic findings will only emerge from authentic relationships" (p. 27).

Mutuality. Mutuality takes the ideals of relationality and puts them into action. Cole and Knowles (2001) ask the researcher to ponder "how *do* [emphasis in original] we describe the decision-making process and agreements made between researchers and participants about their roles and responsibilities?" (p. 28). The agreements are made progressively as time goes on, which helps maintain a feeling of mutual contribution without attaching a sense of rigidity or formality to it. The participant does not feel like a passive actor, nor do they feel overburdened by rules and responsibilities. Cole and Knowles (2001) look at this agreement as "a natural part of relationship formation…rather than as a formally defined set of negotiations that mark the boundaries between researcher and participant" (p. 29).

Empathy. During life history research interviews, "the questions are personal, intrusive, and may evoke memories of difficult experiences and events in a participant's life" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 30). Therefore, it is important to be aware that times may arise when the researcher must support and comfort a participant who is emotional distressed. To address this concern, Cole and Knowles (2001) place reflexivity at the heart of how one includes empathy in life history research, stating that "reflexivity in research is essential for the development of empathetic research practice….Being reflexive in research leads to heightened awareness of self, other, and the self-other dialect" (p. 30). This emphasis on reflexivity when performing life history research was beneficial for connecting my research to Bourdieu's theories and concepts in that Bourdieu emphasized the importance of reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972]), particularly

in his later work with Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). I touch on this more in an upcoming section.

Care, sensitivity, and respect. Building on the notions of empathy, the final guiding principle of life history research is that of providing care, sensitivity, and respect to the participants. I see these three as involved automatically if the researcher strives for the first three principles of relationality, mutuality, and empathy. By viewing and treating participants as individuals, rather than as objects, and as equal partners in the research process, rather than as subjects under investigation, we are honoring and respecting them as persons, not just subjects sharing their lives for the good of research. Cole and Knowles (2001) describe this respect as "understanding in the experiential sense—from the perspective of a research participant, what it means to be engaged in 'researching the personal'—is critical for the development of sensitive and responsive researchers" (p. 30).

Procedures

In general, life history inquiry entails depth rather than breadth. Cole & Knowles (2001) explain that this is a reality because life history inquiry "places us with a small number of individuals for an extensive exploration, rather than with a large number for more superficial engagement" (p. 70). With life history research, the researcher is inviting himself or herself into a contextualized space and time of the participants' lives. The researcher tries to get as close as possible to re-inhabiting those spaces and times in order to re-live participants' experience and (re)construct history.

Subjectivity. Life history research is rooted in, and somewhat dependent on, the subjectivity of the participants. Subjectivity need not be seen as a threat or detriment to "good research" as critics of such deeply subjective qualitative research styles may propose (see, for

example, Fine, 1993; Hammersley, 2006). Instead, subjectivity can be seen as a benefit to good research of a different type, one not legitimized by objectivity, and not focused on questioning and doubting the integrity of the participants' accounts. "We trust the participant…. We are, quite naturally, honoring the participants' intelligence and integrity" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 71).

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997) question if, in some circumstances, ignoring subjectively formed knowledge is perhaps in itself a barrier to looking for new types of knowledge. Merriam and Kim (2008) contend that the dismissal of subjective methods for acquiring knowledge is a direct outcome of a belief in "established western scientific thinking as superior to the thinking of other existing cultures" (p. 72). They contend that "knowledge in a Western paradigm is defined by propositional statements" (p. 73). This "propositional knowledge" (p. 73) is "usually written, considered true, separate from the self, and permanent" (p. 73).

In regarding subjectively formed knowledge and the self as legitimate sources of data, the the researcher is permitting himself/herself to engage at a deeper level with what the participant/storyteller is sharing, and depth, as I mentioned earlier, is what life history research is all about. In availing one's self to the participant's historical depth in this manner, the researcher opens doors to unpredictable chances for discovery. Cole and Knowles (2001) advise life history researchers to remain attentive, noting that "when a research participant presents an opportunity…the researcher must 'seize the moment.'…'Researchable moments' are serendipitous. By their very nature they are happenstance. They cannot be predicted" (p. 78).

Reflexivity. While some qualitative methodologies, such as phenomenology, ask the researcher to bracket themselves out of the research (Creswell, 2009), life history research does

not. Critics of life history inquiry note that with its deep level of subjective, the risk of contaminating the data increases. Although there may be some truth to that, Cole and Knowles (2001) question what happens to the quality of the researcher-participant relationship when contamination is the only concern. They warn that "from this mainly pragmatic stance, the research relationship is analogous to a business deal with carefully articulated terms....In sharp contrast, we consider the research relationship from a more humanistic standpoint—complex, fluid, and ever changing with boundaries that blur" (p. 27).

Bourdieu questioned whether researchers could really perform objective research at all, especially if they failed to first appreciate the need for reflexivity. Swartz (1997) agrees, stating that "Bourdieu demands that the standards of critical inquiry be applied to observing social scientists as well as to their subjects of observation" (p. 11). Because of the substantial degree of interpretation involved with collecting and describing subjective accounts, it is crucial that the life history researcher constantly reflect on how and when he or she contributes to, or influences, the data. Cole and Knowles (2001) make the case for accepting one's involvement and attending to it via reflexivity:

> We research who we are….The questions we ask, the observations we make, the emotions we feel, the impressions we form, the hunches we follow all reflect some part of who we are as person and researcher. Our point, then, is to highlight the vital role that reflexivity plays throughout the research process. While researchers operating from a more conventional stance would claim that…"testable" hunches and hypotheses are grounded purely in the data uncontaminated by researcher bias, we make no such claims….We do, however, need to understand our presence. (pp. 89-90)

In the next section, I delve into the possible limitations associated with storytelling and story-interpreting within an interview setting. Although the conversations I shared with the participants during interviews were rich and detailed, and provided me with wonderful insights and moments of understanding, these conversations were essentially me listening and interpreting stories from the participants' lives. Alheit (2005) claims that stories "do not 'happen' in the real world but, rather, are constructed in our 'heads'" (p. 202), and within each of our heads is an enormous array of factors that can alter the story being told, heard, interpreted, and eventually conveyed to the reader. In other words, regardless of my best intentions to appreciate and attend to reflexivity, stories are stories, not perfect reflections of reality as it truly happened.

Limitations Associated with Storytelling and Story-listening

Regardless of my best intentions to interpret and portray history as the participants described them, I knew that in the final analysis, the description would come from my point of view. This section is essentially an examination of the interaction between storyteller and story listener within a relatively brief interview setting. It shows that the dynamics underlying this interaction are subtle and nuanced, and able to influence the outcome of the narrative and thus therefore history.

Perspectives and Manipulations

To begin appreciating how storytelling may have limitations, one of the first factors to consider is perspective. In the case of my research project, the participant preparing to tell me her story may regard me in any number of ways. For instance, I may appear as a researcher, as an audience, as a fellow skilled trade worker, as a representative of the dominant group (male trade workers), or as an authority figure (trade school instructor). It is conceivable that a participant may have tailored her story to which of my perspective(s) she felt were applicable. Likewise, as

a participant takes on the role of storyteller/research participant, she may construct and relay her story from the perspective of storyteller, research project participant, or simply the perspective of the person who experienced what is being shared. She may even relay it from the perspective of a combination of all of these perspectives. In other words, it is possible that the participants may have modified their stories to fit with their perspective(s) and also what they believed were my perspective(s). Likewise, I could have listened and interpreted the stories by approaching the session from one or more perspectives, while simultaneously regarding the storyteller as someone telling her story from one or more perspectives. Together, the manipulations on the part of both parties in the storytelling process may result in a recorded story being different than it would be if perspectives were altered. In short, inherent in story sharing is the possibility that both parties may tacitly collude in an attempt to help each other understand the story and each other's perspectives, to "create coherence where none exists" (Pfahl & Wiessner, 2007, p. 12).

Dangers of Sharing a Common Frame of Reference

For the listener to achieve a sense of understanding and appreciation of the story being told, the participants' descriptions of their experiences would have to be "positioned" (Razack, 1993, p. 56) within a frame of reference that the researcher can understand. For instance, a possible frame of reference is the commonalities between people due to their current work environments or their schooling backgrounds. Bourdieu recognized that these non-familial commonalities become encoded and he used his concept of habitus to illustrate how these codes become internalized as "natural" and "taken for granted" and then externalized as various aspects of the individual's outwardly exhibited disposition (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972], 1990 [1980]).

The participants in my study knew ahead of time that I was an electrician and a trade school instructor, which provided a basis for a common frame of reference. This common thread

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may have provided the participants a sense that it was safe to omit or subdue certain details. The problem is that the participants may have therefore been omitting parts of their experiences that I did not know about, but wished to. This issue of assuming shared knowledge is difficult to address. The listener has only explicit ways of indicating to the storyteller that there is a need to repeat, clarify, or elaborate on section of the story. Repetitive requests, as Anderson (2004) points out, may disturb the storyteller's train of thought, overshadowing the important message that the story is meant to convey, the experiences of the storyteller.

Multiplicity of Contexts

Storytelling is a social activity, and as Bourdieu (1977 [1972]) discovered and described, social activities are neither random occurrences strung together haphazardly, nor meticulously planned, rule-bound proceedings. Jarvis (2007) points out that social activities, including storytelling, are socialized events and socializing events and are therefore somewhat constituted by the social contexts in which they occur. Thus, following the thinking of Bourdieu regarding habitus, the storytelling process is both representative of contexts as well as generative of contexts.

Inherent in sharing one's own experiences is the likelihood of overlapping contexts because as one attempts to recall and share experiences, he or she takes on several interwoven roles. The storyteller is the subject of the story, the historian of the story, the interpreter of the story, and of course the narrator of the story. Each participant tells her story based not only on the overlapping contexts, but also on various other factors that may or may not be in play at any one time, such as her mood, her comfort in sharing in an interview setting, and how the listener reacts during the narration (Anderson, 2004). As Alheit (2005) words it, "the disposition to tell a story—or to interpret history—is always the perspective of the actor" (p. 205).

To summarize, when one considers the multiple steps involved from the beginning of an interview to final analysis, the possibility of any number of these limitations affecting the outcome is very real. This requires that the life history researcher be cognizant of the prospect that the story told and interpreted may be inaccurate. Pfahl and Wiessner (2007) allude to this, noting that "when multiple interpretations, shaped by varied perspectives, coexist, some question whose story is the 'right' one?" (p. 12). To examine the importance of this realization, I now explore how Bourdieusian sociology relates to life history's emphasis on the construction and sharing of stories.

Implications of Bourdieusian Sociology for Life History Research

In life history research, the story is an interpretation on multiple levels, beginning with the storyteller or narrator through to the researcher and finally to the audience that reads the printed version. All of these levels of interpretation may help to create history artistically, but they do not necessarily help to recreate it authentically. Alheit (2005) makes reference to this, proposing that "as 'history' is not understandable save in the form of a narrative, the narration as such 'makes' history" (p. 205). Nevertheless, it is one thing to recognize that inaccurate is a possibility in performing qualitative research, it is quite another to adequately to account for it adequately. This genuine attempt at reflexivity in research is the focus of Bourdieu's theory of reflexive sociology, which I will now summarize briefly.

Bourdieu's early life and his personal experiences helped form his character and his reputation. Because of his "provincial" background and his "anti-institutional" mindset (Swartz, 1997, p. 18), he began to challenge the French educational and intellectual establishment. Bourdieu thought that theorists and their theories received too much attention; specifically, he thought that too little effort was spent on accounting for the thoughts, dispositions, and actions—

the habituses—of researchers and theorists. Bourdieu was extremely concerned that the quality of sociological research often suffered because researchers underappreciated how their position influenced what they observed. It was during reflection on his own work amongst the Kabylia people of Algeria that Bourdieu (1977 [1972]) came to the realization that true reflexive research must "question the presuppositions inherent in the position of an outside observer, who, in his preoccupation with *interpreting* [emphasis in original] practices, is inclined to introduce into the object the principles of his relation to the object" (p. 2).

Bourdieu argued that it was overly simplistic to believe that one could define "good" research in terms of whether the researcher adhered to subjectivism or objectivism. He believed that without reflexivity, regardless of which camp a researcher adhered to, there would almost certainly be an unappreciated "distance between learned reconstruction of the native world and the native experience of that world" (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972], p. 18).

Towards a Bourdieusian Analytical Framework

Now, I will tie the sections of this chapter together to establish how my chosen methodology and method relate to the following chapter in which I present my findings and analysis. First, the life history interviews I utilized allowed the participants to relate stories from their lives to the questions I asked of them, while the fact that I used a semi-structured format allowed them to remain relatively brief so as to meet the time demands I was working under. In doing so, the participants were able to share their experiences quickly and easily, and reconstruct history in a practical, easily understood, easily performed manner. As Alheit (2005) states, "there is no other way to describe history, and particularly life history, apart from the form of a narrative" (p. 205). Second, Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity in sociology provided for me a way of attempting to address in the analysis how my presence may have influenced the

participants' processes of recollecting and sharing. I bolstered this wide-ranging, sociologically-focused appreciation of reflexivity with what I had learned from Cole and Knowles (2001) regarding reflexivity while conducting life history research specifically. Still, I needed an analytical framework from which I could make sense of the data contained in the interviews.

Bourdieu's (1977 [1972]) theory of practice gave me a unique way to analyze the content of the interviews by enabling me to focus on the field where each participant practiced, and how each participant's habitus and capital contributed to her practice within that field. Bourdieu's theory of practice, applied as a theoretical framework, allowed me the opportunity to witness the exchange between habitus and field, between an individual's disposition and the (re)actions it generates, and the social contexts in which those actions produce meaning. Furthermore, while the life history interview format allowed me to share in each participant's subjective meaning-making moments, it was Bourdieu's emphasis on researcher reflexivity that allowed me to attempt to analyze those experiences and meanings, yet still remain aware that subjectivity almost always manages to penetrate into the findings of qualitative research.

As I will explore more fully in the findings and analysis chapter of this paper, the concepts in Bourdieu's theory of practice reflect how the participants in my study executed conscious and non-conscious strategies meant to help them acquire "valued resources" (Swartz, 2002, p. 65s). Each participant appeared to apply specific aspects of her habitus while also utilizing earned and inherited cultural capital in order to succeed in her particular field. To appreciate the relationships between the participants, their successes, and Bourdieu's theories, the reader first needs background information on the participants, and how they came to be involved in this study.

Research Tools and Participants

The pool of possible participants was rather limited from the outset because I was focusing on only female apprentices, which, as Mayer and Braid (2007) establish, are not very common: "Regardless of the wide fluctuations in reported figures, women's participation in apprenticeship training programs in BC is clearly between 1 and 3%" (p. 15). Add to this the additional caveat that the participants must also be successful[1] apprentices, and the pool shrinks even more. Such a small pool meant that it would be likely that my search for participants would involve a very large geographical area. Ultimately, I was fortunate that out of the six participants involved with the study, two lived and worked in the same municipality as I do, two lived and worked with outside my region, but within a two-hour drive. The final two participants called British Columbia home but spent the majority of each month living in work camps in northern Alberta. Because these last two participants lived and worked away for several weeks at a time, they had issues with finding opportunities to meet with me for their interviews. In short, these logistical limitations forced me to limit my time with each participant to one brief (less than two hours) interview each. Because I wanted to gain as much information as possible in a relatively short period of time, I needed a way to maintain a degree of guidance over the interviews. On the other hand, I did not want the interviews to be structured rigidly, which I believed could cause the participants to restrict their input to short answers to the questions rather than elaborating on their feelings and experiences. In the end I chose to use semi-structured interviews. This format

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[1] For this project, the term "successful" refers to female apprentices who have successfully completed all sessions of their trade schooling, and who have completed enough of their apprenticeship hours to enable them to write for their Red Seal Certificate of Qualification. In other words, they do not have to be a licensed journey person yet, but they must have successfully completed the requirements necessary for them to write their licensing examination.

allowed me to keep the interviews relatively focused and short in duration, yet flexible enough to allow the participants to go into greater detail when they wished to.

Participant Selection

In order to undertake my research, I obtained an ethics certificate from two institutions. The first was the University of Calgary, where I am a student completing this thesis for my Master's degree. The second was the college where I work as an apprenticeship instructor. Once my ethics paperwork was all in order, I began searching for potential participants. My criteria for inclusion were simple. Potential participants had to be female, and had to be registered in an apprenticeship that leads to a Certificate of Qualification, or what is commonly known as a "Red Seal" in Canada. I was also willing to accept recent graduates of the apprenticeship system, tradeswomen who had received their Certificate of Qualification within the last 18 months. I wanted to try to keep my pool restricted to participants that had fresh memories of their experiences in the apprenticeship system. Lastly, the participants needed to agree that their participation was voluntary and that they would not be paid for their involvement.

Participant Demographics

The demographics form that I provided the participants requested from them typical information about demographic characteristics as outlined by the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). These characteristics include age, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, level of education, and racial group. As well, I asked about topic-specific characteristics such as the length of time each participant had spent in her apprenticeship and the industry that she was currently employed in.

Each participant identified herself as White, heterosexual, and in her twenties (22, 23, 25, 26, 28 and 29 years old) and living and working either rurally or in a small city at the time of the

interview. There were variations identified in all other demographic fields. One participant was

married, one was in a common-law relationship, and the remaining four identified themselves as

single. Only one participant had children, 28-year old Adrianne [2] was a single parent of two

young children. All but Lauren had at least one sibling. Five out of the six participants stated

"middle class" as their socioeconomic status. Lydia was the only exception; she stated "lower"

as her socioeconomic status. When asked their highest level of educational completion, four

participants mentioned that they had graduated from high school. Lydia and Frankie both stated

that they had also completed a program in college, but neither elaborated on the type or duration

of their program. No participants had completed a university level degree. There were also very

few commonalities in terms of fields of employment for the participants' parents, varying from

bookkeeper to delivery driver, carpenter to health care worker, hairdresser to grocer. One

participant's mother was on long-term disability, and another's mother was unemployed.

In terms of employment for the participants themselves, five of the interviewees were

working full time at the time of the interview. Frankie, aged 25 was the only interviewee to

identify herself as currently unemployed, but also described her situation as between jobs rather

than unable to find work. As for the individual skilled trades that these three female apprentices

were working in, Michelle worked in carpentry, Lydia stated residential framing, and Robyn was

a plumber. The three remaining apprentices were all involved with the electrical trade. The last

demographic item that I investigated was utilization of financial incentives available only to

female apprentices. Of the six participants, only two had taken advantage of such incentives.

Two of the others mentioned that they were unaware of the incentives until it was too late for

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[2] All participant names are pseudonyms, provided to protect the privacy of participants, and to maintain standards of confidentiality.

them to apply, and the last two participants were aware of the incentives, but had not utilized them.

The wide range of responses indicate inconclusiveness regarding which female apprentices succeed in the skilled trades, demographically speaking. Even the demographical characteristics that were consistently shared by participants—race, age, high school completion, and sexual orientation—would be difficult to use for drawing hard lines from. The variances seem to point to the rather banal conclusion that, in terms of demographics, successful female apprentices do not necessarily have much in common with each other. Of course, with such a small pool, I would hesitate to generalize at all. It would be interesting to see if the lack of trends I witnessed would continue, or if new trends would perhaps surface, if one repeated the study with a larger number of participants, or if, for instance, one gathered participants from a larger geographical area.

The Interview Process

Before conducting the interviews, I emailed each participant a copy of the following documents: letter of initial contact, participant informed consent form, participant demographics form, and the interview schedule. These documents are provided in Appendices A through D of this thesis. The interview schedule consisted of 12 open-ended questions beginning with questions pertaining to the participants' childhoods, families, role models, and early connections to career planning. As the questions progressed, they focused more on social interactions at work and trade school, and on encouraging the participants to share stories and anecdotes pertaining to their experiences as women in a highly-masculinized field of learning, working, and socializing.

I scheduled the interviews via email in accordance with the participants' individual requests. Each participant agreed to a recorded one to two hour interview at my campus. None of

the interviews went over time. Before beginning each interview, I spent some time with the participants individually to ensure that each understood the consent process. I also reminded each participant that her interview data, along with her personal data, would be locked in a file cabinet. Each participant read and signed the consent form before the interview began.

I conducted the interviews as conversations, using the semi-structured interview schedule to guide the overall process. I tried not to interrupt when the participants were talking, reserving my input to those times when clarification or elaboration was required. Because I did not want the participants to feel as though they must confine their responses to only answering the questions on the interview schedule, I encouraged the participants to continue when they appeared concerned that they had drifted a bit off topic. In other words, I intended for the questions to be catalysts for thought and reflection; I did not intend for the participants to consider them as limits to the conversation, and I was explicit about this before and during the interviews.

Participants were encouraged to speak openly and frankly, and I made sure to remind them that they could choose to answer as many or as few questions as they wished. All participants answered all questions posed, and often shared much more than asked of them. Overall, the participants appeared genuinely willing to share their experiences and opinions. There was no time in any of the interviews in which any participant seemed reticent or uncooperative. Reflecting back, I think that I was very fortunate to have such forthcoming participants; the recollections and stories that they shared with me were far more descriptive and illuminating than I had wished for.

Concerns Pertaining to Rigor

Cole and Knowles (2001) tell us that "one of the hallmarks of qualitative research is the transparency of the research process…which makes clear the researcher's connection between method and meaning" (p. 122). In this section, I attempt to live up to this standard through exposing some concerns I have with my research and this thesis in terms of rigor, or the "standards or criteria used to make judgements about the quality of a research piece" (p. 122).

To begin this investigation, I first considered what exactly are those "standards or criteria" and what role do they play in assessing the rigor of research. Cole and Knowles (2001) make the claim that researchers working from a positivist paradigm usually approach the issue of rigor by relying on "criteria primarily associated with methods of measurement and…accuracy" (p. 123); namely, validity, reliability, and generalizability, or what Kvale (as cited in Cole & Knowles, 2001) calls the "'the methodological holy trinity of psychological science'" (p. 123). Unfortunately, Cole and Knowles (2001) go on to point out, these criteria are often "inadequate for judging the goodness of research that falls outside the positivist paradigm" (p. 123) because, they say, "to use the criteria of validity, reliability, and generalizability to assess a life history study, for example, would be like examining the contents of a barrel of apples in order to decide which orange to buy" (p. 123). After reflecting on my research project, which was informed by life history research, I think I understand what they meant with that metaphor. In this section, I explore each of these three "standard" criteria, looking at how well my study performed in addressing their concerns, and I explain why I found each one slightly problematic in that process. I begin with generalizability.

Generalizability Concerns

As Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) state, "if the number of subjects is too small, it is difficult to generalize and not possible...to test hypotheses of differences among groups or to make statistical generalizations" (p. 113). My study involved only six participants, which I believe relegates it to the "too small" category. Unfortunately, because of certain time constraints and because my project involved interviewing successful female apprentices, which are rare, it was difficult for me to enroll enough participants for my project to qualify for the "large enough" category. This predicament, I believe, demonstrates that the criterion of generalizability is problematic for many studies, including mine, because its results are somewhat binary: the study either has enough participants or it does not. This leads me to perceive generalizability as somewhat poorly suited for assessing work that is not already generalizable; it seems to reward large studies simply for being large and penalize small studies simply for being small, with little attention paid to the quality of the data and findings either size of study provides. Such an approach to assessing rigor and value seems to be somewhat discriminatory and a bit outdated. Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) seem to agree, stating that "classical social scientists would like to see *human phenomena* [emphasis in original] limited to those social experiences from which (scientific) generalizations may be drawn" (p. 247). I admit that my study was small, and its findings are based on a tiny pool, but context is always important, and from what I found in the existing literature, mine was a unique study that produced unique findings.

Reliability Concerns

Next is the issue of reliability, which "pertains to the consistency...of research findings; it is often treated in relation to the issue of whether a finding is reproducible at other times and by

other researchers" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009, p. 245). What I would like to focus on here is the "other researchers" stipulation. As I mentioned in my earlier section pertaining to the limitations associated with stories and storytelling. I can make no claims as to how my participants' responses and narratives may have differed had their interviewer been someone other than me. Again, I am a man, a skilled trade worker, and a trade school instructor; I can only speculate as to how those factors may have influenced what my female apprentice/participants chose to share or not share with me, if those factors influenced the participants at all. Having said that, prior to organizing my data and searching for themes and trends, each participant received a copy of her transcribed interview and was provided one week to read it over to confirm its accuracy. I reminded each participant to check her transcription carefully to make sure that I had not somehow altered what she had meant to say, which can be easily done when transcribing speech into words on paper, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) point out:

> Even the exact same written words in a transcript can convey two quite different
> meanings, depending on how the transcriber chooses to insert periods and commas....The
> very concept of a sentence fits with the tradition of written language and does not
> translate well into oral language....Where to insert periods and commas is already an
> interpretational process. (p. 185)

In the end, I did not receive a single request for revisions; therefore, I can only assume that one or more of the participants did not actually read the transcriptions, or what I had written accurately captured the meanings that they meant to share.

In addition to errors that may have occurred in the recording and transcribing phase, there would have been parts of the interviewees' responses, anecdotes, and stories which I found more compelling or interesting than another researcher may have. This may have led me to focus more

of my attention on those topics during the interview. For instance, later in this thesis I describe what happened during the conversation I had with one participant named Michelle. Michelle's interview was my last for the project, and by the time we sat down together I had noticed while skimming my field notes and transcribed interviews that a certain word had come up frequently in the prior interviews, which of course piqued my interest. In the interview with Michelle, I waited for a point in our conversation at which the context was suitable for me to ask Michelle a subtly leading question. Because of the poignancy of Michelle's reply, which I share in chapter four, I do not regret posing the question in the leading manner that I did. However, I can easily understand that without an appreciation of the situation's context to help one judge my actions, some may claim that my slight manipulation perhaps tainted Michelle's comments, thereby rendering them unreliable. In my defence, I provide the following passage by Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) regarding the suitability of leading questions for certain situations:

> The qualitative research interview is particularly well suited for employing leading questions to repeated check the reliability of the interviewees' answers, as well as to verify the interviewer's interpretations. Thus, leading questions need not reduce the reliability of interviews, but may enhance it; rather than being used too much, deliberately leading questions are today probably applied too little in qualitative research interviews. (p. 172)

Validity Concerns

The last of the three criterion for ensuring rigor is validity. I appreciate the concept of validity in principle, because, as Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) show us, "it points to a question that has to be answered in one way or another: Are these findings sufficiently authentic...that I may trust myself in acting on their implications?" (p. 246). But where I find the

concept of validity problematic is in scholarship's inability to define what exactly validity is

meant to focus on in that "one of the issues around validity is the conflation between method and

interpretation" (p. 246). In some situations, validity's focus is on method, as in Brinkmann and

Kvale's (2009) defining statement that "validity has in the social sciences pertained to whether a

method investigates what it purports to investigate" (p. 246). Yet other times validity seems to

look more closely at how research is presented literally; at how the data was documented,

interpreted, and communicated to an audience. For example, in the following passage, again by

Brinkmann and Kvale, (2009), it is clear that their validity concerns are in regards to writing and

not to method: "ascertaining the validity of the interview transcripts is more intricate than

assuring their reliability" (p. 185). Of course, one could argue that the process of actually writing

research could fit within the realm of method, but even this need for semantics supports my

concerns; concerns that Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) appear to have as well: "one of the

issues around validity is the conflation between method and interpretation" (p. 246).

Regardless, it is my duty to address all of the factors that pertain to rigor, and that means

addressing validity. To do so, I will address both halves of the "conflation" issue as best I can.

First, in terms of asking whether or not my project did what it set out to do, I think it did. I

approached this project for the social constructivist paradigm, which meant that I was looking to

understand rather than to explain. In this research project, I wanted to find which factors

appeared to contribute to the successes of six female apprentices, and as I attempt to demonstrate

in my following chapter, I believe I found what I was looking for. Perhaps another researcher

performing my study would have identified different findings and come to different conclusions,

although that could be achieved by merely approaching my problem via an alternate paradigm.

The second half of the conflation issue pertains to the validity of one's recording, interpretation, documentation, and transmission of one's data and subsequent findings; in other words, one's actual writing. I think with this concern, what becomes a crucial consideration is the constructive nature of writing. Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) state that "transcriptions are constructions from an oral conversation to a written text. The constructive nature of transcripts appears when we take a closer look at their reliability and validity" (p. 183). According to Cole and Knowles (2001), issues of rigor, including validity, will emerge "when others engage with our published or communicated research text....[These issues] are about the central or essential conceptualizations of process and how meanings are made and represented" (p. 113). Furthermore, these authors go on to point out how it goes against the spirit of qualitative research to attempt to stifle the artistic characteristic of its construction. For example,

> In contrast to more linear approaches to research representation, where writing is interpreted as "writing up" the data and analysis, in the kind of research we advocate, writing (or any mode of arts-informed representation, for that matter) is an integral part of the analysis process. We write *for* meaning rather than *to record* meaning [emphases in original]. (p. 122)

Continuing with their efforts to show that different research approaches result in somewhat incomparably different forms of written works, Cole and Knowles (2001) refer to another scholar's concerns regarding the (over)emphasis on validity in qualitative research texts:

> [Kvale] suggests that a validity paradox has been created by the persistent quest for certainty and legitimation, and that we need to find a way out of that paradox of "legitimation mania and validity erosion." He offers a useful reframing of the concept of validity so that post-positivistic research is judged according to the quality of its crafting,

the nature of its communicability, and its pragmatic value. He argues that research

attendant to these qualities would make questions of validity superfluous because it

would be so powerful and convincing in its own right that it would be inherently valid,

like a strong work of art. (p. 124)

Returning to my concerns regarding validity in the "writing up" of my research, I

concede that I may have misinterpreted some of the data that I gathered and/or that I may have

misworded or inaccurately represented that which I believed I was conveying in a manner

faithful to its source. As I mentioned earlier, there are many points between gathering one's data

and presenting one's findings and conclusions at which the original message may be degraded or

altered before it gets to the reader.

To summarize, in terms of the criterion for evaluating the rigor, I believe that reliability

and generalizability are difficult to apply in a meaningful manner to my research and this thesis,

whereas issues related to validity seem quite applicable and germane, yet still problematic. I

believe that it would be quite difficult to make any useful generalizations based on the small pool

of participants I was able to interact with. Furthermore, because of the unique characteristics and

limitations related to who was involved with my project, both in terms of the interviewer and the

interviewees, it would also be quite difficult to exactly reproduce the project to ascertain its

reliability. On the other hand, the criterion of validity seems much better suited for assessing the

rigor that I applied to my research. Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2013) pose what they see as the

"central question embedded in validity: How do we know when we have specific social inquiries

that are faithful enough to some human construction that we may feel safe in acting on them?"

(p. 249). When I look at my problem, which was the low rates of women's participation in the

field of skilled trades and apprenticeship in Canada, and I then reflect on my interpretation of my

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data and my findings, I believe that my research has been faithful to my problem and to what I wanted to explore. I wanted to know about which factors and experiences the participants believed influenced their successes, and I believe that the insights and the recollections of experiences that the participants shared with me were informative and illuminating, and I believe that in general, my interpretations and descriptions were respectful to the messages that the participants wished to share.

Toward Analysis

I started the analysis process by first transcribing the six interviews. Again, because I wanted to ensure the accuracy of my data as best I could, each participant received a copy of her transcribed interview and was given seven days to confirm its accuracy. With no requests for revisions, I then moved on to tabulating and organizing responses and comments from the transcriptions. Next, I referred to the field notes I had taken during and after each interview, and added them in the margins of the transcriptions. I then tabulated and organized responses. I grouped similar and congruent responses, comments, and recollections together and then made a separate list of those that were noteworthy, unique, and/or anomalous. Next, I (re)read books and articles that I thought had bearing on the study, and searched for recent literature reflecting research into what seemed pertinent to my data and emerging themes. Together with the existing literature, the information and stories constructed, gathered, and shared during this process yielded the data that I turn my attention to in the following chapter, in which I discuss my findings and analysis.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

At the beginning of this thesis, I introduced a problem: the phenomenon of persistently low participation of Canadian women in apprenticeships and the skilled trades. I also mentioned that to look into this problem, I asked my six research participants to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings as women in this largely masculinized field of work-related study. Approaching this research project from a social constructivist paradigm, which aims to help the researcher comprehend rather than explain, I was interested in understanding what meanings the participants drew from their experiences as successful female apprentices. To provide the participants flexibility in how they wished to share their experiences, I chose to utilize the life history interview format, which is particularly suitable for replying to open-ended questions, and to using stories to share experiences and meanings.

After applying Bourdieu's (1977 [1972]) theory of practice as a theoretical framework to analyze the data that I gathered, three themes emerged. The first theme was that while growing up, all of the participants were influenced by models of masculine strengths. The second was that the participants shared a belief that there are certain common facts and fictions about what it is like to be a woman working in the highly-masculinized field of the skilled trades. The third theme was that during their time as apprentices, the participants utilized varying yet similar strategies to negotiate their feminine identities while (mostly) complying with the dominant, highly-masculinized culture in which they found themselves. This chapter begins with an exploration of these three themes, followed by a discussion in which I relate the themes to the concepts in Bourdieu's theory of practice to help address my research questions.

Theme One: Models of Masculine Strengths

This section explores the depictions of models of masculine strength that appear to have influenced the participants' childhoods, adulthoods, career trajectories, and subsequent career successes. Here, I illustrate that while the participants' models were all unique individuals, the ways in which they influenced the participants' dispositions and actions were somewhat alike.

When asked the question "Who modeled success for you, and in what ways?" all but two participants immediately mentioned male role models. The first exception was Frankie, who initially stated that she did not remember any particular person, male or female, being a role model to her. Later in our conversation though, Frankie mentioned that she looked up to her stepfather, whom she called "Dad." When asked to describe a time during her apprenticeship when she was extremely proud of herself as a tradesperson, Frankie told me a story about when she was struggling with her schoolwork and was considering quitting her apprenticeship. Her stepfather suddenly passed away and she then decided to stay the course because "he was really proud that I went into it" (Frankie, interview, June 12, 2014). Frankie told me that now that she had finished her apprenticeship, she was proud of not quitting and thought that her stepfather would be as well: "Finishing first year, and still continuing on with it, and him being proud, I think that was part of…my most proud moments" (interview).

It seems apparent from Frankie's comments that she wanted to make her stepfather proud; therefore, one could presume that he was an important and influential figure in her life. Although Frankie told me that she could not identify who modeled success for her, I believe that Frankie's desire for her stepfather to be proud of her accomplishments was an indicator of the depth of their relationship. Perhaps this could also be taken as an indicator of Frankie's vision of him as her role model.

Robyn was the second participant who did not immediately identify a male as her model for success. Robyn's story was unique in that she grew up in a one-parent family. Robyn stated that her mother had been her role model because of the perseverance she had shown in raising three children singlehandedly. Robyn mentioned that her mother had also been influential in her decision to become an apprentice because during Robyn's childhood, her mother had worked at an airplane repair company for 12 years, which Robyn claimed was an "all-male" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014) place of work. Still, over the span of the interview, Robyn increasingly expressed admiration for her two older brothers, who both work as electricians. She also explained how they influenced her, stating that "they also modeled my success….Growing up they were, kind of, my Dads….They always took care of me, and I always got to bug them, play with them….I was rough and tough with them" (interview). I then asked Robyn to elaborate on her brothers' paths to becoming electricians. As it turned out, their grandfather was an electrician for the telephone company and as Robyn saw it, "that's why my brothers picked, chose electrical" (interview).

In the end, I concluded that Robyn's model for success was not a single person, but the combination of her mother and brothers. Robyn's admiration for her mother seemed to focus on her as a successful single parent and as a woman who had worked for many years in a male-dominated environment. In those two regards, one can envision how Robyn's mother modeled success for her in terms of independence, determination, and challenging sex-role stereotyping of jobs. At one point, Robyn was clear about her mother's influence in Robyn's choosing to work in a male-dominated field, stating: "I'd seen her [Robyn's mother] do it [work amongst men] for 12 years growing up, so I knew it could be done" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014). On the other hand, considering that Robyn repeatedly expressed how much she looked to her two older

brothers, whom she referred to as her "Dads," (interview) when it came time for her to choose a career, it is apparent that they modeled success for her as well as Robyn's mother.

Adrianne stated that she felt both of her parents modeled success for her, but she put extra emphasis on her father as being instrumental in her choosing to work in the skilled trades: "Who modeled success? I guess both my parents did. My dad, definitely more, for me. He was a carpenter, so I kind of grew up around that my whole life, and just the way he was, I guess" (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014). Noting the fact that she had become an electrician, I asked her why she eventually chose that trade instead of following her father's example. It turned out that her father's influence was again instrumental: "When I got out of school I worked with him for a while….I actually wanted to be a carpenter…, but my dad told me not to….[He said] it was too hard on your body and you don't make enough [money]" (interview). It seems apparent from these comments that Adrianne's father was a particularly influential figure throughout Adrianne's career planning process.

Like Adrianne, Michelle's description of the relationship she had with her father provided insights into her admiration for him, and helped connect her current career in the skilled trades to time they shared working together when she was a young child. "My dad's my hero….I've always worked with my dad….I was building Barbie furniture in my dad's shop when I was six" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014).

On the other hand, Lydia's story was different from the other participants' in that she was the only one of the six participants who indicated that her primary model for success was perhaps not from within her family. When I asked Lydia who she thought modeled success for her, she quickly replied that it was her father, but the phrasing she used seemed to focus not on who modeled success *per se*, but who she thought modeled pride in good workmanship, or perhaps

good work ethics. "I would say my dad definitely modelled success. He was more like, 'Well, if you are going to do a job, you better do it right the first time, or else you're going to be doing it again'" (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014). Quality of work was a common theme throughout the interview with Lydia, so in that sense, it appears that her father was indeed a role model. However, from what I gathered from Lydia's subsequent comments, it may be that her primary model for success during her apprenticeship was not exclusively her father.

Like several other interviewees, Lydia stated that she had always strived to impress her father; however, unlike the other participants, Lydia's choice to start her apprenticeship went against her father's wishes. Lydia described that her father had wished that she go to university to study for a career in medicine. Lydia explained to me that she did not like the idea of being "stuck in an office" (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014), that she had always been "stubborn" (interview), and subsequently decided to follow her dream to become a carpenter. "I don't think they were very happy with it" (interview), Lydia said of her parents' reaction to her decision. Pausing between words and forcing a wry chuckle, Lydia appeared agitated as she recalled the manner in which her parents indicated to her that they "didn't really want me to go into [trades]" (interview).

As the interview progressed, Lydia referred to a male trade school instructor who seemed to have made quite an impression on her. Lydia described his influence on her, stating: "The teacher was immaculate; he was a great teacher. And, yeah, he was very encouraging, and really wanted you to succeed" (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014). When I asked Lydia if she could think of any other people that had perhaps helped influence her career decisions and her success as an apprentice, Lydia's response was telling: "I'd say, mainly, it was that teacher….I'd say he influenced me, and just like watching him, like, he was really good at what he did, [he] really

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encouraged me" (interview). After this comment, I asked her if she considered him as a model for her success, and she quickly replied affirmatively.

Lauren, who had finished her electrician's licensing examination only a few hours before her interview with me, stated that both of her parents, and her male cousin who had a successful carpentry contracting business, were equal influences on her life and her decision to enroll into her apprenticeship. When Lauren spoke of her cousin it was apparent that he was the person who most modeled success for her when she was growing up. When asked, Lauren immediately replied: "He certainly did….I want to be like him one day….I want to be successful" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014). Although it seemed clear that Lauren's cousin modeled success for her, her father seemed to as well, but in a more general sense. Lauren told me about spending time with her father, saying: "I was really hands-on as a kid. Always, like, my dad, the around-the-house-handyman….He can fix things, basically do everything….We would always be working on his car together, or finishing the basement, or working on some project" (interview).

This theme of models of masculine strength suggests that the participants drew from their respective models' examples and influences in ways that helped each participant practice and succeed in her respective field. Although the models were varied in many respects, each seemed to provide similar influences regarding images of what work can look like. Regardless of the sex of the model, or his or her relationship with the participant, it is clear that all the models provided examples of how one can work with one's hands. Perhaps more importantly, the models demonstrated that one does not need to be male to successfully perform "men's" work.

Theme Two: Facts and Fictions Regarding Women Working in the Skilled Trades

Another theme that emerged in the analysis of the data was that the participants shared a belief that there are certain common facts and fictions about what it is like to be a woman

working in a highly-masculinized, male-dominated environment. The insights provided by the participants indicated to me that they believed that the misconceptions regarding the gendered nature of skilled trades are a greater barrier to women's participation than the gendering itself. From the interviewee's comments, there were two general misconceptions regarding women's participation in the skilled trades. The first misconception was that male skilled trade workers are generally abusive towards female co-workers. The second misconception was that skilled trades work is too physically demanding or too dangerous for a woman to do.

The Myth of Mean Men

In general, all six participants described the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship as less hostile towards female workers than most people imagine. Although there were stories of male workers harassing or shunning some of the participants, all six interviewees indicated that the majority of the male workers they had worked with were generally welcoming of female co-workers, both inside and outside of work. Several of the interviewees mentioned that male workers often invited them to go "out with the guys" after work to socialize. Michelle, the participant who reported experiencing the most conflicts with co-workers, both male and female, mentioned that she was often asked out for drinks after work, but always refused. Michelle told me that she believes that male workers lose respect for female workers who socialize with them off the job: "One of my struggles, um, is you can't drink with the guys. And not that I ever slept with the guys, but as soon as you start becoming their buddy is when they start losing respect for you on the jobsite" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014).

Lauren, in contrast to Michelle, seemed to regard socializing with her male co-workers as not only enjoyable, but a necessity for group cohesion. Lauren told me that during the summer months, she and her male co-workers—Lauren is the only female worker in her crew—go

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camping together almost every weekend. In addition, to save on the cost of rent, they all share rental housing in the same neighborhood. This situation, Lauren told me, allows the crew to enjoy backyard parties and barbeques together. She described the arrangement as "kind of like being in a really big family" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014). Lauren, who describes herself as a talented cook, also makes food for her male co-workers in trade for items and services they can provide for her. From her description of her work life apparently mixing so seamlessly with her civilian life, it seems that Lauren is a full-fledged member of her work's inner social circle. In fact, Lauren described herself as such an integral part the group that she is involved with hiring and firing: "We kind of weed out the ones [new employees] that can't… really keep up. For the social aspect as well as, you know, the work aspect" (interview).

The few stories of participants feeling unwelcome on a jobsite because they were women generally revolved around one or two antagonists—usually male, but females were sometimes involved—attempting to keep the newly hired female apprentice from merging into the social structure of the worksite crew. These attempts to segregate, the participants told me, were usually successful for the first day or two, after which the incumbents become accustomed to the new female apprentice and accept her. Michelle was the only exception; she told me that she had been forced to quit jobs because she was never accepted into the groups at particular sites. Once, Michelle explained to me, she was dismissed "because…the superintendent's girlfriend didn't like me, and she worked on the job too" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014).

Other than Michelle's few bad experiences, the majority of the participants' stories indicated a tendency for groups to re-establish the level of camaraderie that they had before female apprentices had been hired. To Robyn, the initial uneasiness was a normal part of being new and really not so much part of being a member of a minority. Although, Robyn admitted,

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some of the male workers acted coldly to her upon her arrival, but "they seem to warm up, after a couple of days" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2013). As Adrianne worded it, most problems will fade away "when they see you work" (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014). Generally, participants stated that they understood they were required to prove themselves as skilled workers, capable of completing tasks independently. Still, participants also believed that this was fair; in fact, they stated that they wanted to prove themselves rather than have supervisors pressure the existing group members into accepting them because of anti-discrimination policies.

Throughout the interviews, stories of participants experiencing notable resistance from co-workers were generally rare. The participants all agreed that although interpersonal frictions can and will occur from time to time, these episodes were so infrequent that the participants did not regard them as legitimate barriers to women participating in the field. They also agreed that stories were often blown out of proportion and such exaggerations became the basis for the common misconception that the skilled trades exists as an environment that is overly hostile towards women. Frankie stated that "a lot of girls, women, might go into [the skilled trades] thinking it's going to be a really horrendous environment with, [pause] men being big jerks to you because you're outnumbered one hundred to one….I didn't have that feeling" (Frankie, interview, June 12, 2014). Adrianne agreed, saying: "My girlfriends, they just literally think it's like I go there and I get harassed all day, and get hit-on all day. And it's not like that at all" (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014).

During our conversations, not a single participant expressed that they believed a valid barrier to women's participation in skilled trades and apprenticeship was the treatment of women by men. In fact, several mentioned that they believed a more considerable barrier was the acceptance by so many women of that very myth. Michelle and Lauren were the only two who

claimed that they had ever had any notable altercations with male co-workers while working as apprentices, but both of them did not indicate to me that they attributed those experiences to the skilled trade environment specifically. In fact, both Michelle and Lauren, along with Frankie, stated that the worst experiences that they could recall regarding sexual harassment was while they were working as servers in bars and restaurants.

Interestingly, Michelle seemed noticeably most critical of the women she had encountered while working in the skilled trades. Michelle claimed that there were many female trade workers who "create problems, and…are slutty, and sleep around, and are [in work camps] to find a guy to marry and take care of them for the rest of their lives" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014). Although Michelle stated that she had been the target of male advances and harassment, she also expressed to me that she still preferred working with men: "the exciting part is definitely not having to work with women….When guys have issues, they tell you. They don't talk behind your back….[You] don't really have to deal with the cattiness of women" (interview). Lauren made very similar comments: "I hate drama and gossip….Working with guys is so much easier…much more relaxed" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014). Robyn agreed: "There's a lot less drama…At [previous retail job], where there was 30 women working together…drama happens" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014).

These comments on the apparent ease of working with men did not mean that none of the participants had experienced pressures or discomfort from their male counterparts while on the jobsite. For instance, Robyn, who describes herself as very laid-back, told me that she does not take issue with the sexist jokes and banter that her male counterparts openly share at work. On the contrary, Robyn claimed that such an open dialogue allows her the freedom to be herself. "That's the way [men] are; that's who they are, so why change when they are in front of me?

That's my thought. And, why should I change when I'm in front of them either?" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014). To add to this, Lydia told me that in her experiences, the age of the male workers was a factor in the way she was treated. "I found a lot of the younger generation, they accept girls into the trades; whereas, the older guys don't really want you there" (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014).

Midway through her interview, Frankie was talking about how she finds that older male skilled trade workers often treat newly hired female workers in a slightly sexist, "old school" (Frankie, interview, June 12, 2014) manner that she finds somewhat comical. Frankie explained to me how that after being hired, the initial phase of tension tends to pass quickly once she demonstrates her abilities. According to Frankie, after this phase has run its course, the older men seem to treat her how they treat her younger male counterparts, with a certain avuncular roughness. Frankie stated that she believes that this pattern is reflective of the social-cultural-political shifts that she believes have happened in Canadian society: "We're now in a society where you don't have to be worried about…men putting you down, or…you know, being intimidated. You want to make good money? You choose to go into trades….There's nothing to worry about" (interview).

On the other hand, if certain male colleagues are not willing to accept female co-workers and choose instead to actively resist or undermine their right to participate, supervisors can be instrumental in influencing and correcting the male worker's behaviors on the worksite. The following is a passage taken out of Michelle's interview regarding the support she received from her supervisor at her last jobsite: "The crew was forced to respect me, which they all did, and I think that's because my foreman respected me" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014). Michelle also understood that this force came with a cost. She claimed that although the crew had to

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follow orders, she knew she could not exploit or flaunt the situation. After mentioning to me that her supervisor "forced" the crew to respect her, Michelle did not appear to like how her words came out, so she added the following: "I mean [my supervisor] does not treat me any different than anybody else….You don't walk around empowered….You can't walk in being a bitch, because you will get run off-site instantly" (interview).

Michelle's observation of how her male co-workers were "forced" to respect her, does not suggest that equity policies are being implemented and respected across the board. Still, as Frankie mentioned, it seems that there has been a shift in the overall mindset within the skilled trade landscape over the past few decades. Although examining to what degree this shift is attributable to policy changes is out of the scope of this thesis, by comparing this shift to what resulted from anti-sexism and affirmative action policies in other areas, such as universities, which are now equally populated with women, it is not unreasonable to predict that such policies may produce similar outcomes for the skilled trade sector.

The Myth of Physical Discomfort

Another point that emerged in every interview was that the participants wished to dispel the myth that skilled trade labour is overly strenuous and dangerous. Adrianne, a shy and soft-spoken plumbing apprentice, had this to say regarding these misconceptions:

I think a lot of women have…the wrong opinion of what [apprenticeship] is…. I mean, it's hard, don't get me wrong…. I don't know if they get it in their head that it's too hard? That women can't do it? (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014)

The interviewees in my study mentioned that they truly enjoyed their work, regardless of the physical hardships that often accompanied it. They also expressed that they were proud of the quality of work they produced, and enjoyed the praise they received for it. As I mentioned in the

literature review chapter, the female trade workers who were participants in Smith's (2013) research project reported that they enjoyed the physical aspects of their jobs and the sense of accomplishment and pleasure they felt after completing their tasks. These sentiments were reflected in the comments provided by the six participants that I interviewed as well. Adrianne had the following to saw about what she found most exciting about her career: "Doing what other women can't....I shouldn't say they can't, but they don't" (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014). In both my study and Smith's (2013) it was common to hear stories of men and women working together and enjoying it. Lydia's response encapsulates this theme: "I like my job. For me, personally, it's the people….I like working on bigger sites where there is lots going on, and just like …working together" (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014).

When asked what the hardest part of her job was, Robyn responded that it was "not being strong enough," but she quickly provided to me her pragmatic solution: "But, I also have no problem asking anyone for help, so that makes a big difference" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014). Being comfortable asking for help was another point that several of the participants made, but I was particularly taken by Lydia's description of how she goes about getting assistance from her male co-workers. The following passage is indicative of Lydia's rather forward and confident disposition. I also believe it is demonstrative of the interactions that are possible for women who choose to question assumptions regarding what it is like to be a woman working in the male-dominated skilled trades.

> Um, the hardest part? Well, I definitely know my limitations. I, for me personally, I think I can do everything, and I will, like damn near die [chuckles] to get something done. And, sometimes the lifting can definitely be a little bit of an issue. But, usually how I've done it if I do have a hard time with something, I'll wait for somebody, and I'll go do

something else in the area, and then when somebody walks by I'll [snaps her fingers] just be like "Hey you, come help me with this". (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014)

From Lydia's description of how she "asks" for help, it seems that she has established herself as a female agent who appears comfortable situating herself in a dominant position within her field, regardless of its gendered norms. Perhaps, as I will explore later in this chapter, Lydia has attributes reflected in her habitus, and forms of capital at her disposal, which together allow her access to advantageous field positions.

When asked about personal qualities or characteristics that they believed had aided in their success as apprentices, the six participants used very similar language to describe their natural attraction to "hands-on" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014) types of work, their pride in successfully completing projects at work, and their rejection of other forms of employment that they deemed as more traditional for women. Robyn mentioned that prior to her apprenticeship she had worked in a retail clothing store. She said that she was unsatisfied there because she found the tasks boring and she was uncomfortable "dealing with people and selling things" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014). Lydia had previously worked in a retirement home, but found it frustrating because she likes variety in her work and she prefers being outdoors. As she worded it: "I wanted to go outside….I'm an outdoorsy person, so being inside, being stuck in an office or just running around serving people food, it's just, no" (Lydia, interview, June 19, 2014).

When asked the question "What would you suggest could be done to make the skilled trades and apprenticeships more appealing to women and girls?" none of the participants mentioned on-the-job factors one might automatically assume, such as improving working conditions, increasing safety, or providing better supervision and mentoring. With a wry laugh, Lydia told me that her biggest concern is the limited selection of work clothing and apparel

designed for women. For the other five participants, the suggestions were similar to Robyn's: "Well, to appeal to girls, would definitely be something to show in high school, which I would have loved. Um, probably would have got me into [apprenticeship] a lot sooner" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014).

To summarize, although the preceding comments regarding perceived myths come from a very small pool of participants, the overall uniformity of the comments suggests that the at-work culture of Canadian apprenticeships and the skilled trades is perhaps not as hostile towards female workers as is commonly assumed. Add to this the participants' comments regarding poor accessibility to information about non-traditional career options, and one can see that more research is needed with a focus on how myths about the gendered nature of certain careers contribute to limiting young people's career aspirations and opportunities.

Theme Three: Negotiating Female Identities

The third theme that emerged during the analysis of my data was that each participant appeared find ways to negotiate her female identity in response to being regularly immersed in a highly-masculinized and masculinizing place of work. There were two general strategies used by the participants to facilitate this negotiation. The first was that some participants actively re-connected with their feminine identities during and after work. By doing this, these participants were able to subdue or counteract some of the masculinizing effects of their jobsite culture. The other main strategy was for the participants to focus more on certain non-gendered aspects of their work, such as the quality of the workmanship, or on their personal lives and their families. By disengaging with the some of the gendered aspects of their jobs, these participants' feminine identities were eroded less while at work. This allowed them to avoid having to actively re-

connect with those identities like some of the other participants had to. I now look more closely at how these strategies were performed.

Generally speaking, the participants acknowledged that a useful strategy for attaining legitimacy in their male-dominated worksites was to maximize the masculine aspects of their habituses. In addition, some participants appeared to enjoy doing this. Lauren stated that she found it "nice to be one of the guys sometimes. You know, forget you are a woman for a little while" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014). Upon these remarks, I asked Lauren if her enjoyment in being "one of the guys" was an indication of a masculine side to her personality. She replied: "Oh yeah! Yup. I grew up rolling around in the dirt, eating bugs, making mud pies. I haven't really grown out of that [giggles], maybe the bug part" (interview). Lauren was explaining to me that one reason she likes working in construction is because in that environment she is expected to dress accordingly, which means dressing in work boots and coveralls. To Lauren, dressing this way provided her the benefit of not having to concern herself with doing things that she believes women are required to do in other settings. As she put it, "you know, there's just days where you don't want to shower, and you don't want to shave your legs, and…being a waitress, you have no choice" (interview). Yet, as the discussion moved on, Lauren admitted that because she purposefully acted more masculine than she really was, she had secret ways of re-engaging with her feminine self. As Lauren told me how she counteracts her masculine façade, her posture and facial expression changed in a way that seemed to indicate a great weight had been removed from her shoulders:

I am going really personal here. Something that I have found to, really keep myself feeling like a woman, is, I will admit, you know, I wear cute underwear [giggles]. And I'm going out there and I'm saying it. Like, I will, I will spend money on underwear and

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on a bra. And, you know, it's just something that makes me feel feminine when I'm

surrounded by dudes all day. And, you know, nobody ever sees it, nobody needs to know.

But, it's something at the beginning of the day, and at the end of the day, I know I am

still a woman. (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014)

As I would soon find out, Lauren was not the only one of my participants who needed to

"confess" to me that they still had a feminine identity in spite of appearing or acting masculine at

work. For instance, Frankie's comments towards the end of her interview closely mirrored

Lauren's: "My grandma always called me a tomboy….I'm a tomboy that can work, but I also

can go, dress up and have a good time and be a lady" (Frankie, interview, June 12, 2014). Lydia

made similar remarks: "The clothes that I wear definitely represent tomboyish [attire]….I dress

like the guys to fit in with the guys....Outside of work though, I, I'm a girl" (Lydia, interview,

June 19, 2014).

By the time I got to my last interview, which was with Michelle, I had noticed that the

word "tomboy" had popped up frequently when participants were describing themselves or

talking about their childhood or adolescence. I was intrigued by this development and interested

to find out if Michelle would self-identify similarly. Eventually, a suitable opportunity appeared.

Michelle was telling me how she forces herself to suppress her emotions while working in camp

because she believes emotional individuals cannot survive in work camps. Michelle said that

"another hard part is that you can't show your emotions….Emotions…they have no place up

there….The [emotional persons] you do see…they're gone [meaning that they quit]" (Michelle,

interview, July 18, 2014). Michelle's appraisal of the culture where she worked indicated to me

that she saw it as highly-gendered, specifically in a masculine sense. This is in line with Arnot's

(2002) understanding of the relationship between work and masculinity. Arnot claims that "the

productive world becomes masculine" (p. 120), and to survive and thrive in that masculine world, it is necessary to avoid representing anything "'feminine', 'domestic' and personal/emotional" (p. 120).

Michelle's comments illustrated Arnot's conceptualization of the gendered nature of work. When I asked her if she agreed with the statement that for her to survive in the environment that she had just described she needed to act more masculine, more like a tomboy, she replied with "You have to be a, not even a tomboy, you have to be a, a man!" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014). With that bold statement, it appeared that Michelle caught even herself off guard. She countered quickly, describing herself as very feminine when she is not at work: "Oh God, I am a princess….One hundred percent. Outside of work, probably a hundred pairs of my shoes are all high-heels….And dresses, and I am a total…female…princess, outside of work" (interview).

As the interview moved on, Michelle told me that she made a concerted effort to act very macho at work not only to fit, but also to indicate to her co-workers that she would not allow herself to be dominated by the male majority. Michelle told that when male co-workers make sexist jokes aimed at her, she retaliates in kind, by attempting to demean them by attacking their manliness and virility. Michelle described to me one instance in which she held her large framing hammer in front of her pelvis, proclaiming to the male instigators: "'My hammer is a lot bigger than all your guys'…I trip over mine. I bet you wish you had that problem'" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014). On the other hand, Michelle told me that she wore cosmetics and a pink tool belt on the job, and that she styled her hair every day before work. Perhaps these were ways for Michelle to maintain her feminine identity while embedded in such a highly-masculinized culture, similar to how the participant named "Maria" in Smith's (2013) study

always wore a very feminine hairstyle when working as an auto mechanic, or how Lauren

secretly wore feminizing, "cute" undergarments beneath her dirty coveralls. In any case, it

seemed that Michelle was somewhat aware that the more she acted like "a man", the more she

needed to strive to maintain a connection with her inner "princess."

In line with Michelle's assessment of why she portrays a certain masculine guise on the

job, Lauren, Frankie, and Lydia indicated that they were aware of how their masculinized at-

work persona helped with social aspects of working within a highly-masculinized male

workforce. Similar to Michelle, all three participants also seemed to believe that their efforts of

appearing masculine at work needed to be counterbalanced through some sort of re-feminizing.

All four made a point of telling me that outside of work, they went back to being a "princess," a

"woman," a "lady," or a "girl."

Two participants, Adrianne and Robyn, indicated that they made no such efforts to act

masculine at work, nor did either of them mention attempting to reestablish their femininity

outside of work. Adrianne and Robyn were by far the two most soft-spoken participants and had

the least to say about what they did to fit in amongst the male workforce where they each

worked. While the other four participants described the various ways that they each tried to "be

one of the guys," Adrianne and Robyn instead seemed to use an at-work strategy of avoiding

drawing unwanted attention to themselves. In contrast to the other four participants, Adrianne

and Robyn kept low profiles and focused mainly on their work instead of concerning themselves

with projecting masculine profiles and/or acting competitively. Also, Adrianne and Robyn both

did not appear to put much emphasis on the social aspects of where they worked. Adrianne

mentioned that she did not act any certain way to gain acceptance. Instead, she believed the best

way to gain acceptance and legitimacy was to perform well and let her work speak on her behalf,

noting that she has "worked with a couple women that are absolutely awful, so I get it, why some guys think we're all like that" (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014). Although Adrianne seemed aware of the concepts of gender and gendering by stating that "I like being…definitely a tomboy, so I like...the idea of being equal" (interview), she also seemed satisfied with it providing her jobsite equality rather than advantage. Likewise, Robyn who "never has a problem with anybody" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014) also did not appear to utilize a gender-based strategy at work. Robyn generally regarded her masculine tendencies as part of her personality, something that she seemed to envision as being engrained in her through spending so much time with her brothers and their male friends during her childhood.

Adrianne and Robyn did not describe relying on strategically portraying masculinity as a way to gain acceptance and legitimacy at work. Because of this, neither of them described attempting to achieve a counterbalance like the four other participants did. Neither Robyn nor Adrianne mentioned doing anything special to their attires or appearances to feel feminine. One could speculate that perhaps Adrianne's role as a mother of two young children may be sufficient for her to re-engage with her femininity after working with men all day. Also, with the responsibilities associated with caring for two children, one could imagine that Adrianne does not wish to get involved with the politics of men versus women when she is at work, and by sidestepping such issues to the extent that she is able to, perhaps her feminine identity is simply not sacrificed to the same degree as some of the other participants. Adrianne indicated that family is the most important thing in her life. She mentioned several times in our conversation that she ignores any negative remarks aimed towards her at work, and that she is very proud to earn enough money that she can provide everything that her children need and want. She also told me that she would not quit her apprenticeship until it is finished, no matter how bad a job

could be, because her father passed away recently and she wants to finish it because she knows he would be proud.

Robyn, as I mentioned earlier, stated that a main influence in her life in terms of her work ethic was her mother. Robyn's mother raised three children singlehandedly, and Robyn indicated to me that she appreciated how difficult that must have been. Although Robyn does not have children of her own, she was the only participant that was married and she remarked that she placed a lot of value on family. Robyn told me that the most stressful time she has had as an apprentice was when her mother had decided to travel and work in Indonesia for a year. Even though Robyn was married at the time and had the support of her husband, she missed the time she often spent talking with her mother. Robyn explained that whenever she has problems or stress, she talks to her husband first, but her mother is the person who is truly able to comfort her. Robyn also told me that her method of sidestepping male-on-female harassment issues at work is that she thought of her male co-workers as her brothers. Robyn seemed to accept that the males at work may sometimes tease or harass her, but her easygoing and forgiving demeanor allowed her to regard it as though she is simply being teased by her brothers like when she was young. She told me that "it's like having older brothers everywhere, kind of, is how I thought about it….So, it never really fazed me.... I don't care if people talk about things that are…rude, in front of women….That's just the way they are" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014).

In a field such as the skilled trades where one is regularly required to perform manual labour, it may be beneficial to possess qualities or characteristics associated with physical strength, or that allow one to feel more comfortable working with one's hands and with tools (Braundy, 2011). Also, if that field is dominated by highly-masculinized males, it may be beneficial to possess traits, characteristics, or qualities that allow one to feel more comfortable

while working amongst men. The participants in my study all described having such qualities, and shared with me that for the most part, they understood that these made their working lives easier and more productive. While some participants, such as Michelle and Lydia understood that they were choosing to overtly act in a masculine way in order to survive and excel in their respective masculinized work cultures, others such as Lauren and Frankie saw themselves as just being themselves, as "natural" tomboys who gravitate towards hands-on work and working amongst others with the same preferences, namely, men. Adrianne and Robyn, on the other hand, seemed to appreciate that they may have masculine qualities, traits, or characteristics, but they did not seem to fully appreciate the effects that this has on their at-work lives in the same manner as the other four participants.

Regardless, each participant appeared to utilize individual techniques to reconnect with her feminine identity, and those techniques appeared to vary in response to how much masculinizing each participant undertook at work. The participants who "acted" like men, and the participants who recognized that their masculine characteristics play a part in their at-work lives, also described performing re-feminizing activities to return their feminine identities back to the fore. Adrianne and Robyn on the other hand, the two participants who did not appear to engage in gendering and masculinizing as much as the others did not seem to require performing any specific re-feminizing exercises or supplementing their femininity when away from work. Lastly, Adrianne and Robyn illustrated a point that I referred to in the second chapter of this thesis. There, I mentioned that Arnot (2002) described a prerogative reserved almost exclusively for female workers: the allowance to include their personal lives and family concerns in their work.

Understanding Participant Comments in Relation to Bourdieu's Concepts

In the first chapter of this thesis, I stated my research questions, which focuses on factors: What factors and/or experiences influenced the participant's decision to enter into an apprenticeship? What additional factors and/or experiences emerged during their apprenticeships that influenced their subsequent decisions to remain in the apprenticeship program? Finally, which factors and/or experiences did they view as important to the successful completion of their programs? To address these questions in terms of the three themes I have just shared, I would like to now refer back to Bourdieu's theory of practice. For the remainder of this section, I will explain how these themes, and the factors that I was inquiring about, connect to the three components of Bourdieu's theory of practice: habitus, capital, and field.

Habitus as a Factor Contributing to Participants' Experiences and Successes

Swartz (1997) explains that for a particular field to operate there must be agents who have habituses suitable for that field. Also, as I noted in the first chapter, an individual's habitus is structured during one's early years of life (Swartz, 2002) and helps shape one's lifelong practices (Maton, 2012). Furthermore, for this structuring to occur, often there is a template for the young person to follow. In my research project, it appears that the participants' models of masculine strengths acted as their templates.

All of the successful female apprentices involved in my research project described having had memorable models of masculine strength influence their lives and career decisions. Although each participant was a unique individual, it appears as though all the participants' shared the common feature of being relatively comfortable sharing space and interacting with males, so much so that when asked the question "What do you think was most important in influencing your decision to enter a male-dominated career?" three of the six participants

individually responded that she had never truly considered the masculinity of the field as a concern. As for the remaining three interviewees, their responses were quite similar to one another: "I get along way better with guys than I do girls" (Adrianne, interview, June 10, 2014); Lauren: "Working with guys is so much easier" (Lauren, May 29, 2014); "It didn't faze me" (Robyn, interview, June 16, 2014). From these responses, I conclude that all six participants were comfortable learning, working, and socializing with men and with learning and working in masculinized environments. Moreover, it seems that this comfort was due in part to influences provided to them by their individual models of masculinity.

Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) believed that one's habitus is mostly developed during childhood, but according to Maton's (2012) and Swartz' (1997) understandings, habitus can still be altered later in life by influential people and events. During our conversation, Lydia mentioned that she admired one of her trade school instructor's attention to detail and she also stated that the quality of her work was very important to her. Perhaps Lydia's appreciation of this instructor and his work altered her habitus in some way, but still in alignment with her original habitus, which was predisposed to hands-on types of work. Swartz (1997) describes this type of habitus evolution as "an ongoing adaptation process as habitus encounters new situations…and tends to elaborate rather than alter fundamentally the primary dispositions" (p. 107). Frankie also mentioned having a secondary influence, perhaps even a secondary model of success, telling me that "through first year…my boss, helped me…a lot. He was more, kind of like a father figure… He was very supportive…. I'd go and work six hours, he'd…give me…a little bit extra than I should have" (Frankie, interview, June 12, 2014). Although she did not elaborate on if her boss had influenced her as a worker, one could presume that in Frankie regarding her boss as a father

figure, and through her overt appreciation of his generosity, Frankie's attitude and habitus (and apprenticeship) may have been influenced by his presence.

Perhaps the participants' masculine-influenced dispositions allowed them to more easily work and socialize with males, inside and outside of the workplace, and helped them gravitate towards what might commonly be thought of as "men's jobs" (Greene & Stitt-Gohdes, 1997, p. 265). In addition, three of the participants had held jobs working as servers in restaurants and bars before entering into their apprenticeship. Michelle told me that "I first started out as a server, as many girls do" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014). But these participants found that they were expected to dress, "provocatively" (Frankie, June 12, 2014) and in a "revealing" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014) manner, which they found "demeaning" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014). Lauren and Michelle were adamant that they would never return to such jobs. Lauren, for example, said to me: "I don't want to waitress again. I spent eight-hour shifts in three-inch heels….And, being looked at, you know, like a piece of meat, from every drunk guy at the table" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014).

Interestingly, all three of the participants who had worked as servers mentioned that the demeaning aspects of those jobs were main contributors to why they wanted to become tradeswomen. I found this intriguing; after all, one prominent stereotypical image of a trades*man* is of the gruff ironworker whistling at women walking by the jobsite. For these three women to gravitate towards the skilled trades may indicate that these young women perhaps do not buy into that stereotype.

Although some of the participants did engage in stereotyping during the interviews, it could be that this was simply a reflection of what they had learned to do in order to cope and survive in highly-masculinized, perhaps sexist, workplaces. For instance, Frankie described how

she learned how to "deal with men" (Frankie, interview, June 12, 2014) by working at her parents' truck stop and car wash: "To take the criticism from the loggers, because they are kind of pigs….I think growing up working in a truck stop definitely helped me understand….I could deal with men" (interview). After this comment, I asked Frankie if her experiences at the truck stop allowed her to have an easier time talking to men. Her response speaks volumes to how social interactions early in life contribute to one's habitus: "Yes I do….I am not intimidated….I'm more straightforward. You could also say that I have a personality like a man, I guess" (interview).

To summarize this theme, all six participants described having models of masculine strengths influence them as they grew up and during the times when they were considering possible career trajectories. Furthermore, at least two participants appear to have had secondary influences in periods of transition after the primary socialization phase of their childhoods. Regardless of when the influences occurred, it appears that each participant's habitus gained characteristics through those influences that were contributing factors in her success in a work environment that could be regarded as hostile to female workers.

Field as a Factor Contributing to Participants' Experiences and Successes

At the start of this chapter's section regarding my second theme, facts and fictions regarding women working in the skilled trades, I made mention of how the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship is perhaps not what it seems, or what it has been portrayed as. Indeed, the six interviewees paint a much different picture of what the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship is like for those few women who choose to enter it. This field does not seem to be as caustic as one would presume; in fact, I was surprised to hear how pleasurable these female apprentices found their experiences working in such a male-dominated environment.

Bourdieu theorized that the outcome of practices, the way in which individuals go about their social lives, depends greatly on what kind of field the agent has to deal with. If, when applying Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]) formula to a certain situation, the field is not as demanding as imagined, then one can presume that it may be easier to produce successful practices with less effort on the part of the competitor. A more demanding field provides more challenges to the agents while a less demanding field provides fewer. Using this logic, if a particular field is more conducive to accepting female agents as legitimate competitors, it is then more likely that female agents will be more likely to succeed in that field.

Nevertheless, each field is unique. During the interviews, both Frankie and Michelle described previously working on jobsites that were so excluding of women that they quit. These two stories did represent a very small portion of the worksite stories I recorded, but it is still worth noting that regardless of changes that have apparently occurred in many work cultures, there are still some sites that either support or ignore sexist ideals and even sexual harassment.

As for how conditions and parameters of the field affects the levels of success for female apprentices, perhaps it is the slight changes in the way that the field of the skilled trades has adapted to the involvement of women that has been the largest contributing factor. Alternatively, perhaps the field has not changed so much as how recent generations of young women perceive it or choose to interact with it and the males who populate it. More likely, it is a combination of these two things. As Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972]) theory of practice suggests, the practical outcomes have as much to do with what is subjective as it does with what is objective.

Capital as a Factor Contributing to Participants' Experiences and Successes

The field is a site in which agents struggle with and against other like-minded agents, for "control over valued resources" (Swartz, 1997, p. 122). Interestingly, as an individual agent

acquires more of these valued resources, the valued resource becomes, in turn, part of the agent's capital. This resource-capital then subsequently improves the agent's position in the field, thereby improving his or her chances of attaining even more valued resources during subsequent struggles. In the case of these six female apprentices, it seems that their habituses helped them appear as legitimate competitors in their respective fields, which were not only their places of work, but also spaces where social interactions, or practices, occur.

As I have already pointed out, each participant's habitus was somewhat influenced by a model of masculine strength. This in turn was exhibited outwardly by each woman, which provided for her a degree of masculinity that represented a field-specific form of cultural capital. Exhibiting this field-specific capital helped ensure that the female apprentice was regarded as a legitimate entrant into the male workers' field. By complying with the field's doxa in this way, each of these six female apprentices were subsequently awarded further legitimacy by the males. As Swartz (1997) points out, "actors also struggle over the very definitions of what are to be considered the most valued resources in the field….*Fields are arenas of struggle for legitimation* [emphasis in original]" (p. 123). The legitimacy awarded to the participants was not only useful for their inclusion in the field where they worked, but also for inclusion in that field's socialization subfield. Whereas, for instance, other new entrants may be included in the greater field only because of inclusionary policies dictated by the employer, only those new entrants who have accepted to abide by the field's doxa and have therefore been welcomed into the subfield by power-holding incumbents can participate in that subfield's socializing and integrating activities. In short, when one is allowed into the exclusive, almost furtive subfield of socialization, rather than only the larger and more apparent field of occupation, one is regarded as "the likes of us" (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979], p. 471) by the power-holding incumbents.

With their acceptance relatively secure, these six female apprentices next became involved with the struggle for a valued resource that can be thought of as cultural credibility. Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) called this cultural credibility "honour" (p. 16) and stressed that it was in itself a form of capital: "honour…the product of a more or less conscious pursuit of the accumulation of symbolic capital" (p. 16).

To conceptualize what this cultural credibility, or honour, entails, one only has to imagine the life of an undercover police officer who is trying to gain access to the inner workings of a street gang. The officer must earn what is often referred to as "street cred" (street credibility) with the real gang members if he or she wants to infiltrate their seedy organization. To earn this street cred, the officer must portray a believable gangster-like habitus. The officer must "become" a gangster, just as the real gangster inductees would have to. To do this, all inductees must exhibit a suitable habitus by speaking and acting in a certain gangster manner. This may include performing tasks that would be indicative of a gangster, such as buying and selling illegal drugs, or engaging in violent acts against rival gang members.

By their choosing to work in the highly-masculinized field of the skilled trades, the six female apprentices I interviewed were all (unknowingly, for the most part) going "undercover" so to speak. Similar to the undercover police officer, these six women were entering into a field that is perceived as hostile towards women, and they would therefore need to earn street cred with the incumbent agents already populating the field. How accurate this image of hostility actually is depends on many factors from within the culture of the field itself, as well as the habituses of the incumbent actors (who are mostly men) and the habitus of the female apprentice who wishes to gain access to the field. As I learned from Michelle and Frankie, some fields contain cultures that are less accepting of outsiders than most. In such cases, as these two

participants described, inclusion and acceptance is virtually impossible, or so difficult that the agent removes herself from the competition. This is what Maton (2012) terms a "field-habitus clash" (p. 58) Maton (2012) explains the relationship between habitus and field:

> What is likely becomes what we actively choose. Actors thereby come to gravitate towards those social fields (and positions within those fields) that best match their dispositions and to try to avoid those fields which involve a field-habitus clash….Moreover, by virtue of field-habitus match, actors share the *doxa* [emphasis in original] of the field, the assumptions that "go without saying" and which determine the limits of the doable and the thinkable. (p. 58)

Instead of exiting the field, the agent with a field-appropriate habitus finds herself with a more favorable position in the field. This position allows her to compete and accumulate valued resources. It is important to understand that the valued resources are not only obvious and material things such as wages; rather, valued resources can be superior versions of things that make the field exist. An agent who is more successful than others may win superior job opportunities, cleaner working conditions, less strenuous tasks, better relations with supervisors, and of course the respect and admiration of other agents in the field, in other words, cultural capital. For an outsider to compete, she may be required to win entrance to the field in the first place; as such, a certain general class of habitus may be an entrance requirement. Once a member of the field, the female apprentice needs to maintain her status as "one of the guys." This is done through making sure she frequently exhibits her field-matched habitus appropriately and then through winning credibility or honour, and adding its value to her habitus.

The application of suitable habitus and acquisition of useful cultural capital appears to have helped these six female apprentices in their struggles for more valued resources, resulting in

even better positions in their fields. Field position is a constant concern because struggles are ongoing, and a better field position will make the struggles less arduous and more profitable. Cultural capital is a constant concern because it acts like a currency that allows agents to purchase better field positions. Cultural capital is "a practical tool used for getting along in the social world" (Swartz, 1997, p. 115)

The advantage of better field position indicates to the female apprentice—whether or not the participant is cognizant of how exactly she gained this improved field position is another matter—that the reward for fitting in is less friction from other (mostly male) agents in the field. To the males, this fitting in performed by the female apprentice perhaps appears to them as her way of accepting the "natural" masculine way things are supposed to be (the doxa). The reward that the males provide in return comes in the form of decreased hostility and friction, which equate to an increase in cultural capital and subsequently better field position for the female apprentice. As the female apprentice continues to make an effort to fit in over an extended period, the struggle to fit in becomes easier and the cycle repeats. Moreover, fitting in becomes less of a requirement the longer it happens because her being there eventually becomes part of the natural, taken-for-granted reality of the field. At this point, the female apprentice is not as judged on her gender or sex as she is on her work ethic and quality, and her general likeability.

This scenario was described by several of the participants in my research, and also by some female skilled trade workers in Smith's (2013) study and the apprentices in Taylor's (2008) study. All of these participants described succeeding by portraying the correct "vocational habitus" (p. 394). In Taylor's study it was shown that by exhibiting a vocational habitus that was suitably matched to the field, the workers "appeared" to fit in, which resulted in them being accepted and fitting in for real. Like me, Taylor found that fitting in resulted in the participants

earning increased cultural and symbolic (and perhaps eventually social) capital, which allowed

them the right to claim better field positions, which were essentially higher places in the social

hierarchies of their workplaces.

This earning of capital which often leads to improved field position appears to be a factor

contributing to cultural reproduction. To illustrate how this works, I would like to share what

Lauren described to me during our conversation. At one point in the interview, the conversation

turned to Lauren recounting a particular day at work when she was a first year electrical

apprentice. She told of a day so miserable that she was considering not returning to work. Lauren

explained how her decision to persevere earned her capital and gave her a new understanding of

her place in the hierarchy at that time and in the future: "I am a first year, I have to deal with the

shitty stuff now, so I can be a journeyman and give the shitty jobs to… [first year apprentices],

you know, four years from now" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014).

Gaining capital is crucial for the successes of those who enter a field with a perceived

handicap. In the case of the six female apprentices whom I interviewed, gaining cultural capital

was its own reward because those gains helped erode their perceived handicap of being the

"wrong" sex for working in the male-dominated field of the skilled trades. The rewards that they

earned, and subsequent erosion of their perceived handicap allowed for the next round of

struggle to become easier, which allowed their winning of capital to snowball, so to speak.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, particular forms of capital may be more or less

important for successfully practicing in a certain field. In addition, forms of capital may affect, or

be affected by, the outcomes of struggles on that field. So, to return to the discussion to the

subject of factors, it becomes possible to perceive that the somewhat masculinized characteristics

exhibited in the dispositions of these six female apprentices may have been factors that

contributed to their successes. In short, these characteristics appeared to contribute to their

stockpile of capital, which is an essential factor for successful practice.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Summary of the Findings</h2>

In this chapter, I began with an exploration of the three main themes that emerged during

the analysis of the data I gathered through interviewing my six research participants. The first

theme was that each participant described growing up and being influenced by a model of

masculine strength. The second was that the participants believed that there were certain facts

and fictions regarding what it was like to be a female apprentice working in the male-dominated

skilled trades. The last theme was that each participant found unique ways of negotiating their

female identity in response to their immersion in their masculinized and masculinizing field of

learning, working, and socializing.

Following the exploration of these three themes, I discussed how the meanings found

within them related to the concepts of habitus, field, and capital, which make up Bourdieu's

formula for his theory of practice. In summary, the evidence indicates that the participants in my

study came to attain and exhibit certain personal characteristics that helped contribute to their

habituses appearing as suitably matched to the characteristics of the fields where the participants

worked, learned, and socialized. This field-habitus match in turn helped each participant earn

cultural capital and a superior field position. Together, the suitability of the participants'

habituses and capitals to the fields where they competed, resulted in these female apprentices

experiencing successful practices within the highly-masculinized field of skilled trades and

apprenticeship. Furthermore, it appears that the participants' habituses came to possess these

characteristics through growing up around models of masculinity and through the absorption and

application of the "practical knowledge" (Maton, 2012, p. 53) required for them fit in with the dominant masculine majority in their respective fields.

Other findings that emerged during analysis suggest that the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship is not as hostile towards women as is commonly accepted, but one that requires its members to accept and reproduce certain masculinized, masculinizing norms. Newcomers who seem "different" are required to undergo a "conversion" (Bourdieu, 1990 [1980], p. 16), which indicates their acceptance of the field's doxa. Whether participants were required to undergo this conversion, or they were already predisposed to fitting in, each seemed to portray a certain habitus at work that was implicitly deemed necessary and appropriate for the individual's field.

The findings also indicate that exhibiting a field-appropriate habitus results in the acquisition of a form of cultural capital, which is required for inclusion in the more meaningful, less superficial, social fabric of the at-work culture. Through induction into this richer fabric, the cultural capital of the inductee rises, providing for her, as in the case of Lauren, the opportunity to escape the initial title of challenger to become a full-fledged incumbent within the power-controlling echelon. Although not all of the participants had risen to this level, those who had provide evidence that women can indeed become not only successful skilled trade workers, but successful skilled trade socializing agents.

Lastly, although it does not directly address the factors that affect the retention of successful female apprentices, there was one last theme that emerged that I believe is important in regards to the problem of women's low participation in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship. Five of the participants in my research project mentioned that to help make apprenticeships more appealing to girls and women, there needs to be more accurate information

provided to them while in high school. In addition, they said that such information should be provided to young women in the form of "girls-only" information sessions, claiming that any male presence would most likely intimidate those girls who are considering attending. Lauren also mentioned that it would be helpful if one of the session's speakers was a successful tradeswomen, like herself. I asked Lauren if she would consider being such a role model, and she said she would indeed, adding: "My mom's always said… 'I would love to see you walk into a school, in a dress and high heels, and tell them you are a journeyman electrician, and show them your certificate'….It's actually something I will do" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014).

Together, the themes I have discussed and the findings that were indicated, together show how Bourdieu's theory of practice can provide insights into what factors contributed to the successes of these six female apprentices. For a discussion of how these factors and themes tie into the problem of low participation rates for women in the skilled trades in Canada, I now turn to the conclusions chapter of my thesis.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

I begin this final chapter of my thesis by providing an overview of the purpose and findings of my research project. Following that, I summarize my findings in terms of how they related to my research questions, which asked the participants about which factors they believed contributed to the successful completion of their apprenticeships. Next, I compare the findings and conclusion from my research to previous research identified in the literature review. The final section of this chapter provides my thoughts on possible ways my findings could contribute to the work of future researchers looking into the problem of low participation amongst Canadian women in apprenticeships. I also discuss how my findings could be applicable to several other groups related to this issue. The first group is the parents of girls and young women preparing to set out on their career pathways. The next group is made up of policymakers, program administrators, career counsellors, and teachers in provincial educational systems, particularly those at the secondary level. Individuals in this group are on the front lines of how young adults learn about themselves and what they see as realistic options in terms of planning their futures and their careers. Because of this rather weighty responsibility, persons in this group need to be more aware of how the policies they enact, and the guidance they provide to young adults is affecting future generations of learning workers. The last group that I believe could benefit from my findings and conclusions is those involved with designing and delivering apprenticeship programs, particularly trade school instructors attempting to help guide young men and women as they embark on a career in what has traditionally been a highly-masculinized and male-dominated field. In light of these unique field characteristics, trade school instructors especially must be aware of their role as mediators and role models.

Overview of Purpose and Findings

The primary purpose of my research was to uncover factors that affected the retention of female apprentices working in the highly-masculinized field of skilled trades. I wanted to know what factors contributed to the success of women who appear to have overcome the multiple issues that seem to keep so many women from entering into and completing an apprenticeship. To help me understand which factors contributed to their successes, the six female apprentices I interviewed shared with me their personal stories of overcoming barriers, making new friends, achieving their goals, and struggling to find a place in the male-dominated skilled trade sector. Perhaps most importantly, these six women shared with me their insights into which factors and influences may have contributed to their successes. They also shared with me their insights into what they believed could be done to make the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship more attractive and accessible for other Canadian women like them who want to participate and succeed in this highly-masculinized site of learning, working, and socializing.

Factors Affecting the Retention of Female Apprentices: Habitus, Capital, and Field

In the first chapter of this thesis, I presented a variation on Bourdieu's theory of practice in which I adjusted the concept of practice to become *successful* practice. I posited that if practices can be different, then there could be a measurable spectrum of practices ranging from successful to unsuccessful. I believe that for one's practice to be successful, the primary requirement is that one's habitus be well-suited for the field in which one competes. Furthermore, to help one's habitus succeed in that field, one should have adequate amounts of the types of capital(s) that are complimentary to the requirements of that particular field. Although Bourdieu's (1984 [1979]) formula for practice is comprised of habitus, capital, and field, Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) maintains that he envisions social practices as

constituted mainly by the interaction between field and habitus. Bourdieu sees field as standing on its own, as the circumstances that exist in the world, but he sees habitus in the agent whose struggle is inherently supported or weakened by the types and amounts of capital(s) available to him or her. Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, to be successful in a given field, an appropriate habitus is an absolute necessity, whereas certain capitals affect how well or how poorly that habitus engages with that field. I believe that the career achievements attained by the six female apprentices I interviewed demonstrate my conceptualization of what successful practice entails.

As I illustrated in my analysis and findings chapter, the participants in my research project described growing up with models of masculine strengths influencing them and their images of what success looks like. According to Swartz (1997), one's habitus is mostly shaped by interactions and influences during childhood and the early schooling years. The findings in my study suggest that the habituses of these six female apprentices were influenced at a young age by their models in such ways that the participants were comfortable working and socializing with men. In addition to being comfortable around men, it also seems that the participants were not deterred from entering into a career where the dominant culture is both masculine and masculinizing. Lastly, the findings support the idea that habitus is not only founded within the individual, but, as Swartz (2002) posits, also by the collective culture of the social group in which one learns primary socialization skills. It follows then, that if individuals had similar experiences, and were socialized under similar circumstances in similar cultures, their individual habituses may share certain similarities. It is possible then that the habituses of my six research participants were also alike in terms of their occupational successes partially because they had similar upbringings and similar models for success.

In my findings, I indicated how the six successful female apprentices I interviewed all appeared to bolster certain aspects of their habituses with a form of field-specific cultural capital that was deemed appropriate for the male-dominated fields where they worked. Some participants described experiencing what Maton (2012) terms a "field-habitus clash" (p. 58). This occurs when certain fields can be so hostile to challengers who appear "different" that they are unable to remain there, regardless of their attempts to exhibit what they believed were field-matching habituses and capitals. Notwithstanding these few exceptional cases of field-habitus clashes, my findings indicate that generally the individual participants were apparently able—albeit, often unwittingly—to exhibit aspects of their habituses that were suitably aligned with the field.

In addition, the participants often carried certain forms of cultural capital which helped legitimize their habituses, further aiding them in their attempts to hold advantageous positions in their relative fields. Swartz (1997) states that "[a field's] 'new arrivals' must pay the price of an initial investment for entry" (p. 126). Once holding such positions, it appears that the participants were then able to then earn additional capital as a reward for their acquiescing to each of their individual field's doxa. This "reward" capital was effectively supplemental to the "initial investment" (Swartz, 1997, p. 126) capital that they had when they first entered the field. This additional capital allowed the participants to extend and improve their standing with the dominant actors within the field.

Participants appeared to have different ways of earning this reward capital. Some participants learned to act in a manlier style, while others seemed to almost naturally fit in because they had certain inherent masculine qualities and/or personality traits or characteristics. Lastly, some participants seemed to earn capital because they were regarded as amiable, diligent

co-workers who took pride in their work. Likeability, work ethic, and attention to quality appeared to allow these participants to mostly circumvent the gender-focused aspects of the field's doxa, and still earn respect and legitimacy with the field's dominant males. Regardless of which strategy each participant used, all six of these female apprentices seem to have created individualized permutations of Bourdieu's formula for attaining success, but with the common method of correlating a field-appropriate habitus with capitals that substantiate and legitimize that habitus in the eyes of power-holding incumbents of their field.

Relating my Research to the Existing Literature

In the second chapter of this thesis, I examined some of the existing literature regarding the various issues with apprenticeship and the skilled trades. As I mentioned in that chapter, much of the literature has looked primarily at the "problems" with apprenticeship as a model for work-related learning and mentoring. I also mentioned that I agree with Vickerstaff's (2007) findings that shows how very little of the literature regarding the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship has looked at how young workers' experiences have affected their training and career outcome. In my literature review, I also quickly referred to four specific research papers (Greene & Stitt-Gohdes, 1997; Smith, 2013; Taylor, 2008; Vickerstaff, 2007) which I found very helpful for informing my own research project. I would like to now spend a short while relating my findings to the findings in those articles.

Smith's (2013) article investigated the notion that gender segregation in the skilled trades is built and maintained via "hegemonic masculinity, a socially privileged masculinity" (p. 862) which rewards those who physically embody a particular male form. As I found in my study, Smith claimed that some women can break into the privileged social position typically reserved for males with this form by essentially mimicking their masculine characteristics, their habituses.

Like "Maria" in Smith's study, the successful female apprentices I interviewed mentioned

having certain characteristics and abilities that seemed well-suited to working alongside their

male counterparts. Additionally, it appears as though the participants in my study, for the most

part, were accepting of the hegemonic masculinity where they worked. They freely chose to

acquiesce to the gendered norms that the hegemonic masculinity (re)produced and subsequently

to their own domination. In other words, the participants enabled a main factor needed for both

cultural reproduction and hegemony to occur: symbolic power/violence. As I mentioned in

chapter two, symbolic power/violence allows the dominated to see their domination as natural,

taken-for-granted, and legitimate. As such, the dominated not only accept their lot in life, but

through that very acceptance, their dominators are not required to resort to physical

power/violence to establish and maintain their dominance.

Still, it should be noted that the participants did not to appear to suffer for their

acquiescence; in fact, all interviewees appeared happy or, at least, very satisfied with their

careers. This could be taken as evidence that the participants shared an understanding that they

needed to appear and behave certain ways at work in order to be recognized as legitimate field

agents. As Bourdieu (1990 [1980]) would say, the participants had a "'feel for the game'" (p.

66). Bourdieu claimed that it is this feel for the game that allows individuals to believe that they

are legitimate field agents and meant to be competing. He said that in their "misrecognition" (p.

68) of their domination as natural and legitimate, dominated agents come to believe that their

field position as the dominated is also natural and legitimate. In Bourdieu's words, "belief is thus

an inherent part of belonging to a field" (p. 67). In addition, Bourdieu claimed that by agreeing

upon each other's legitimacy, agents come to accept the outcomes of field competitions:

"Membership in a field implies a feel for the game…[and that] everything that takes place in it

seems *sensible* [emphasis in original]: full of sense and objectively directed in a judicious direction" (p. 66). Agents' "collective misrecognition" (p. 68) of their field positions as legitimate and their unquestioning acceptance of their field's doxa means that "the logic of the functioning of the field remains misrecognized" (p. 68).

I do not know for sure why the participants acquiesced as they did, but I can speculate that perhaps it had to do with their previous employment experiences. Three of the participants had previously worked as servers at restaurants and bars. Waitressing, Michelle noted, is often considered a "traditional" job for young women when they first enter the job market. All three of these participants claimed to have suffered much more discomfort and humiliation as servers than they ever had while working as apprentices. In addition, several of the participants had worked in jobs that were not as overtly gendered as waitressing, yet they found that they could not make a decent living, or they found the work boring or unsatisfying. To me, this indicates that while the skilled trades may be a site of hegemonic masculinity, for those women who are able to survive and thrive in those sites, the gendering occurring there may not cause enough discomfort to warrant self-exclusion. In the cases of the participants in my study, it seemed that from their comments they were all quite aware of what they were getting themselves into by entering the male-dominated skilled trade job sector. Furthermore, they all seemed to have the necessary habituses to adapt and succeed within the masculinized/masculinizing environments they had chosen.

Taylor's (2008) article was particularly interesting to me in that it also used the principles of Bourdieu's theory of practice to look at the career trajectories of several young apprentices. Like me, Taylor found that "individual and structural factors come together to produce…outcomes" (p. 393). Taylor found that certain things that affected the participant's

habituses, such as "student's prior experiences in school, part time work, [and] expectations" (p. 393), along with "social capital and locations within the field" (p. 393) all contributed towards the participants in that study succeeding in their apprenticeships.

Taylor's (2008) conclusions regarding the habitus-field relationship are similar to what I found, noting that "young people make career decisions…which are influenced by their habitus….Their habitus forms affinities and disaffinities with the structural relations in [the field]….Individuals may or may not have the necessary pre-existing capital to play the game to their advantage" (p. 394). The notion of a certain habituses being particularly well-suited for certain occupations, or a what Colley, James, Diment and Tedder (2003) term an occupation's "vocational habitus" (p. 394), illustrates how workplace cultures often establish parameters that together act as a filter for determining which workers are capable of matching with that culture's expectations, its doxa. Colley et al. note that "vocational cultures…transform those who enter them….Vocational habitus reinforces and develops [dispositions] in line with the demands of the workplace….Vocational habitus involves developing not only a 'sense' of how to be, but also a 'sensibility'" (p. 471).

Comparing my findings to Taylor's (2008), it appears that to form a vocational habitus that is suitable for a certain field of work, one must already have an overall habitus that is predisposed towards accepting the demands of the field, and accepting what alterations of one's habitus are required by that field. Yet, to appreciate this, the agent needs both the sense that there is need for altering one's habitus accordingly, and also a sensibility that this alteration is a good thing, that it will result in successful at-work practices.

Vickerstaff's (2007) research was useful for me in that it was specifically attuned to the understanding the experiences that apprentices reported having while enrolled in their programs.

As I mentioned in my literature review chapter, the main difference in between my research project and Vickerstaff's, is that mine aimed at gathering meanings from the experiences of female apprentices; specifically, only successful female apprentices. Vickerstaff's article was very useful to me because it concentrated on the experiential aspects of apprenticeship, and how experiences affect the apprentices' careers and their routes to adulthood.

Unfortunately, because Vickerstaff's (2007) interviews were with workers who had been enrolled in apprenticeships between 1944 and 1982, and only two of the 30 participants were female, there are many spots in Vickerstaff's article which do not align with my own methods and findings. For instance, many of the apprentices in Vickerstaff's research project reported that when they had enrolled, it was very common for parents to actively encourage children, especially male children, to undertake an apprenticeship. "For many working-class families in the post-World War II period getting a trade was a key aspiration for their male children" (p. 336). In contrast, the participants in my project were all women, and only Robyn, whose mother had worked in a skilled trades-related occupation, reported having a parent who mentioned apprenticeship route before she actually chose it. Lydia on the other hand, reported that her parents were not at all happy about her choice to enroll in a carpentry apprenticeship. The other participants reported that their parents' reactions were best described as accepting but not enthusiastic.

On the other hand, there were several topics or themes that emerged in Vickerstaff's (2007) article that were evident in mine as well. The first was the importance of capital. Vickerstaff's participants generally agreed upon "the importance of social capital, that is using family or other connections to get into a trade" (p. 338). In my study, some participants related to me how they fit in better at work by acting more masculine, resulting in their gaining a special

form of cultural capital that seemed oriented towards masculinity. Although, two of the participants in my study, Robyn and Adrianne, expressed that they participated in these types of gendered acts much less than the other four. For these two women, the importance of family, earning a living, and having pride in their work was apparently much more important than socializing and fitting in with the males at work.

What Greene and Stitt-Gohdes (1997) found through their phenomenologically-oriented study entitled *Factors that influence women's choices to work in the trades* was that the women they interviewed who had decided to work in the male-dominated skilled trade job sector typically had four factors that helped in their decision-making process. The first factor was a "perceived innate ability" (p. 271) which was as a "motivator and served as an incentive" to participating. (p. 271). The second factor was a "strong sense of self" (p. 271) which "enabled the women to face and overcome problems arising from sex-role stereotypical attitudes prevalent in society" (p. 272). The third factor was a "desire for independence" (p. 271), and the fourth factor was the influence of role models who "demonstrated that individuals should not be restricted in their behavior because of gender" (p. 273).

One could make the claim that when critically examined and placed within a suitable sociologically-informed context, the four factors which Greene and Stitt-Gohdes (1997) uncovered are representative of the components in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Perceived innate ability, strong sense of self and a desire for independence strongly reflect the concepts of habitus and capital. The fourth factor is the influence of one's role models. As I have discussed at earlier points in this thesis, role modeling is a main contributor to habitus development and how one's habitus interacts with fields.

In summary, I think a key similarity amongst all these works and mine is that they all indicate that much of what occurs during one's time in an apprenticeship has to do with one's habitus and what forms of capital one has access to. While the findings by Greene and Stitt-Gohdes (1997) were in regards to women's choices to enter into a trade related job, it also provided insights into what factors contribute to why some women may choose to work in a field considered non-traditional for women. Vickerstaff's (2007) findings point out how role models influence one's habitus and one's career aspirations and successes. That study was exceptional in illustrating how much of an influence a role model can be in career decisions and providing ongoing support. Taylor's (2007) paper, in its use of Bourdieusian concepts, echoed my findings regarding the importance of mating each field with an appropriate type of habitus. It also demonstrated how one, and one's habitus, can enter into a field on better footing with the help of field-appropriate, supportive capitals. Finally, the work by Smith (2013) showed how the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship is one based heavily on gendering and gender reproduction. Smith's article is similar to mine in that both demonstrate how persons who are considered non-traditional skilled trade workers may be empowered through exhibiting dispositions and utilizing capitals that match the field's masculinized doxa and culture.

Limitations of my Research

Before I move on the final section of this chapter, I would like to share what I perceive as limitations to the research I performed in regards to my findings and conclusions. In chapter three, I have provided a more in-depth examination of what I perceived as the limitations my research project encountered in terms of methodological rigor.

It was unfortunate that there were time restraints involved in terms of how long I could spend time with the participants. Cole and Knowles (2001) propose that life history inquiry is at

its most useful when the researcher can spend long periods of time with participants, and over multiple sessions. Because I had time restrictions related to my degree's completion date, and because the participants had such busy lives traveling back and forth to work and taking care of family, it was unrealistic to try to plan for longer interviews or multiple meetings. Although the stories and experiences that the participants were able to share with me in these brief meetings were richly detailed and enlightening, they were brief nonetheless. I can only imagine what other details I could have added to what I have if there had only been more time.

Another constraint related to brief interviews was that they limited me in terms of the number of questions I could ask, and how structured the schedule was. With only an hour or two to perform the interviews, I was forced to structure the interview schedule in such a way as to maintain a certain degree of on-topic focus. With this in mind, I structured the schedule so that the questions progressed by building upon one another with a definite starting point and finishing point. This did indeed allow for what I asked, but it also restricted the conversation somewhat. Of course I reminded the participants to veer-off on whatever tangent came to mind, but still, the linear format of the schedule no doubt limited the participants to playing the role of elaborative respondents.

Several times in this thesis I raised the topic of researcher reflexivity and how a deficiency in it can contribute to distortions in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Sometimes, participants' recollections of events can be blurred or distorted purely by accident or by the natural process of fading memory. On the other hand, there may have been times when my presence as a male skilled trade worker and/or a male skilled trade instructor may have influenced what information the participants felt comfortable sharing. I have to wonder: how much different would the participants' stories have been if I had been a female researcher, or

someone unrelated to apprenticeships, or just one of their friends wanting to hear a story about their work. To look from another angle, perhaps my own interest in the subject caused me to look more closely at some details than others. In the spirit of honoring the reflexivity in sociology that Bourdieu promoted, I admit that I can never be sure as to how much my own biases or subjective interpretations could have obscured or altered what was shared with me. The very fact that I was performing research may have clouded which data I was toward or how I chose to interpret that which I gathered. In the end, I can only hope that I did justice to the spirit of the participants' memories and experiences, and to the courage that they showed in sharing them with me.

The last limitation I would like to speak to is regarding the demographics of my participants. As I mentioned, all the participants were white, heterosexual, in their twenties, and working and living rurally or in small towns. I have no way of knowing if that homogeneity indicates a similarity in demographic characteristics for female apprentices in general, or simply one related to the small geographical area from which the participants were drawn. It would find it interesting to repeat my research study, but with a larger pool of participants gathered from all across Canada. It would also be useful to such a study if one could include female apprentices working in some of Canada's larger metropolitan areas, where one is more likely to find more diversity regarding persons from ethnic minorities and the LGBT community. It would also be helpful to include the experiences of female apprentices from First Nations and immigrant backgrounds. After all, as Vojakovic (2008) claims, persons from these two groups "seem to be more likely to take up trades-related occupations than the general population in BC" (p. 7). Surely members of these two groups have unique stories to tell someone who is willing to listen. Regardless of what limitations are attached to my study and my findings, I still see value in what

I have learned and been able to share here. Perhaps my study will spur on new research that will be able to provide de-limitations to the issues that I encountered. With the hope that this will come to pass, I now move on to my final section of this chapter: future considerations.

Future Considerations

To return to my problem of the persistently low participation of Canadian girls and women in the skilled trades employment sector, I look at the findings I have presented in this thesis and I see opportunities to approach this problem from more vantage points. There is great opportunity for performing additional qualitative research looking more deeply at these women's experiences. What I have added to the scholarship represents only the surface of this topic. Further research involving women working in the skilled trades could help clarify and elaborate on some of the topics I was only able to touch on briefly. I was surprised to hear so many stories of how participants in my project were, for the most part, warmly accepted into the male-dominated cultures where they worked. One possible topic for future consideration could be what the male workers thought about these women entering into "their" world. Braundy (2011) provides some data relating to men's negative reactions to women entering the skilled trades, but I know from personal experience that not all male trade workers feel this way. It would be interesting to hear from those men who do not resent or resist women participating in the skilled trades. What benefits and/or detriments do these males experience by welcoming women into "their" space? Does advocating for inclusion of women cause the friction with other males who are not so willing to see women working in the skilled trades? Smith (2013) claims that the female participants in her project described feeling the least gendered when they were "involved and engaged in their labour processes" (p. 869). Could the same be said for the males in the dominant majority?

Could, as Smith (2013) asserts, simply having more women working in the skilled trades eventually result in a displacement of the gender norms that have become a hallmark of the culture within the skilled trades? Vojakovic (2008) believes so, stating that "ensuring that women reach a critical mass in the trades is the ultimate goal, which greatly depends on retaining more women in skilled trades careers" (p. 23). Still, that goal may be difficult to reach, for as Vojakovic also points out, "most of the programs aimed at increasing participation of women in apprenticeship and trades have not succeeded" (p. 24). Not only that, but in light of the findings I have provided here, it appears that in order to retain more women, new entrants to the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship are required to somewhat acquiesce to the gendered doxa of the existing culture. This only works to help enable cultural and gender reproduction, thereby perpetuating the cultural norms that seem to be keeping women out in the first place. All of these questions, and countless more, are waiting to be asked of the many men and women who are participating in the skilled trades and in apprenticeships. Such questions force me to consider what recommendations I believe I can provide in light of my findings.

I believe that there are individuals and groups not directly involved with apprenticeships who probably should be. I believe that these persons and groups should be made more aware of how their influences affect young peoples' career decisions and subsequent successes or failures. I wish for parents to understand how important they are as role models. Parents are the first and most influential sources of role modeling for young children. The ways parents approach the topic of sex and gender (and gendering) has great and long-lasting effects on their children, and even the children of other families who they come into contact with. Parents have the role and responsibility to help shape their children's habituses, and parents need to know that these formative developments tend to be deeply rooted and difficult to alter later in life. For this

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reason, parents who wish to help their children see beyond the limitations associated with sex and gender should aim to teach and demonstrate to their children that gender is a learned behavior (Arnot, 2002) and within their control to a significant degree. The women I interviewed for my research project were in touch with their feminine identities. Each had not become a "'surrogate male'" (Le Feuvre, as cited in Smith, 2013, p. 864); rather, they were able to utilize the masculine aspects of their habitus as a form of capital which helped them excel and succeed in their careers, careers which they appeared to enjoy very much. I believe it would have been a shame if these women had never tried their hands at apprenticeship simply because parents or role models had not allowed them to develop the masculine aspects of their habituses.

To educational system policymakers, I ask that more attention be given to those factors that contribute to female apprentices' capitals. Policymakers have little to do with the development of young peoples' habituses, but they can be involved with providing support once young people come of age, when they begin considering career trajectories. Policies, particularly policies within the provincial high school system that affect how young adults envision and prepare for their futures, can be formulated and enacted in ways that will help support those who do choose to rupture the gendered status quo. High school educational models across Canada can be altered to provide more information about what a career in a non-traditional career, particularly in regards to the misconceptions about who can and cannot work in certain jobs.

As the participants in my study remarked, the modern system seems to treat apprenticeship as something that one "discovers" almost by accident when out of high school. Lauren commented that "even guys don't get enough information in school about trades….I would have don't this when I was 19 or 18. I didn't do it until I was 25 because I didn't know" (Lauren, interview, May 29, 2014). All but one participant believed that for more young women

to find out what they wanted to know about a career in the skilled trades, there needed to be accessibility to advice from women whom have already succeeded in an apprenticeship, preferably in the form of "girls only" information sessions. Also, high school administrators and teachers could do more to reduce gender stereotyping of subjects, including career planning. Michelle, who claimed to have always enjoyed working with her hands and doing crafts, said that in high school she did not feel welcome when she tried to participate in a shop class. She claimed that the feeling she experienced when she walked into the shop laboratory was nothing short of "intimidating" (Michelle, interview, July 18, 2014).

It is pleasing to see that programs that are meant specifically to help women gain entrance into the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship are gaining popularity, but I think more can be done in terms of offering these programs earlier in a young woman's career decision process. Out of the six successful female apprentices whom I interviewed, only two were involved with the Women in Trades program in BC, and another two had never heard of it until they were essentially finished their apprenticeships.

As I mentioned earlier in this thesis, I have been instructing electrical apprenticeships for almost a decade now, and in that time I have helped with many of the Women in Trades programs that have been ushered through the doors at the campus where I work. Sadly, I have noticed that sometimes the young women who are enrolling in these courses seem to be encouraged to participate as expressions of what Mayer and Braid (2007) called female participant "tokenism" (p. 10) which only works to "further isolate" (p. 10) them and other girls and women who wish to genuinely participate on their own accord. Still, perhaps tokenism is not harmful. Perhaps as Kanter (as cited in Mayer and Braid, 2007) contends, regardless of whether

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or not females who choose to participate in work typically dominated for men are token females, "the more women there are, the easier it gets for all of them" (p. 10).

Individuals in all levels of the trade school system should be informed that there definitely are female students out there who are similar to the participants in my study, young women who are predisposed and well-suited to surviving, thriving, and succeeding in the field of skilled trades and apprenticeship. The women I interviewed had the qualities which Smith (2013) talked about: perceived innate ability, strong sense of self, a desire for independence, and especially strong role models. Some of the young women I have seen come though my college's Women in Trades program exhibited few of these characteristics. That is not to say that these young women could not be successful in an apprenticeship, but they are facing an uphill battle by starting off with deficits in such essential areas.

Perhaps trade school administrators could design promotional literature that helps young women understand what kinds of factors are important for succeeding in these types of training programs and career fields. For instance, promotional literature could ask potential candidates to consider whether or not they think they have the four qualities that Smith (2013) mentioned. Alternatively, administrators or counsellors could ask questions of potential participants to get an idea of how their habituses have been influenced. For instance, they could ask if they grew up helping their dads fix things around the house or designing and building things by hand like Lauren, Lydia, and Michelle did. They could ask questions about the potential participants' childhoods and who they spent their time with. Was a lot of that time spent playing mostly with boys? Do they have more male friends than female friends, like Frankie and Adrianne? Did they grow up tagging along with their brothers like Robyn? Perhaps taking time to consider these types of influences and events would help young women conceptualize ahead of time what kinds

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of dispositions are more likely to result in successful apprenticeships. Perhaps such considerations would help them picture if they would be well-suited to working in the skilled trades.

Lastly, as Braundy (2011) suggests, trade school instructors need to be open minded, supportive, and encouraging of diversity. Trade school instructors are uniquely situated to witness and help mediate the gender based conflicts that so often occur between young men and young women in such highly-gendered settings. As role models and influential guides, trade school instructors can set a higher standard for inclusion and compassion in the highly-competitive, highly-masculinized field of skilled trades and apprenticeship. Lydia pointed out how much she looked up to her first year trade school instructor, and her comments regarding that instructor's impact on her illustrated how one's habitus can indeed experience secondary influences. Noting this possibility, trade school instructors should be made aware of their effect on students' lives. Whether educators appreciate it or not, students listen to and absorb what is said by people in such leading and modeling roles. In those roles, educators have the rare opportunity to begin to help dissolve barriers and inform young people about possibilities and realities.

Vojakovic (2008) says that the content of apprenticeship programs must be modified. I agree. She claims that what many young female apprentices are lacking are the crucial "interpersonal skills to deal with workplace challenges" (p. 33). I see these "skills" as reflective of habitus and capital. Why not encourage front-line educators to help fix these deficiencies while in the trade school classroom or in the trade school laboratory? These venues are meant to mimic the real world of working in a skilled trade environment. Perhaps then it would be advisable to encourage skilled trade instructors to address real-world interpersonal issues that are

sure to arise on the jobsite, but in the relative safety of the training site. I have personally seen the difference it makes when I support the outsider, when I choose to insist on equality of opportunity in my classroom and on my jobsite. I have found that when the "other" sees that someone with authority and credibility is willing to stand by her and let her learn in her own way, she knows then that she is included and that she can succeed.

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Consent Form

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:
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Title of Project:
Factors that influence the retention of female apprentices.
Sponsor:
N/A

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study
To gain information from female apprentices about factors that may have influenced their choice to enter into an apprenticeship and remain in the program through to its completion.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?
As a participant in this study, you will be asked to answer questions in an in-person interview lasting between 60-120 minutes. The questions will focus on what factors may have influenced you to enter into your apprenticeship, and what factors may have influenced you to remain in the apprenticeship.

The interview questions will focus on three groups of factors:

1. Personal factors - Things like family life, childhood experiences, role models, previous education, and previous work experiences.

2. Within-apprenticeship factors - Things like what it was like to be an apprentice, what kinds of environments you worked in, relationships with co-workers and employers.

3. Outside-of-apprenticeship factors - Things that may have happened in your life in general that affected your apprenticeship, such as personal relationship events, birth of a child, illness, accidents, death in the family, moving to a new home or city, or sudden financial changes.

To ensure accuracy, the interview will be tape-recorded and then transcribed into a typed document (hard copy). As a participant, you will have one week to review your transcript to ensure accuracy and clarity of meaning. Requested revisions to your transcript will be made and the revised transcript will be treated as the final version. Lack of contact within the weeklong review period will be taken as acceptance of the transcript as forwarded.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, the data you have provided can be removed up until the point of data integration (September 1st, 2014).

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?
Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide some personal/contact information (e.g., name, age, city of residence, sexual orientation, etc.), level of previous education, trade (e.g., electrician, plumber, welder, etc.), industry you work in and the region of Canada in which you are working . You will also be asked to share stories about your experiences working and studying as an apprentice.

To ensure your privacy, all personal information collected along with the audio recording of your interview, will be kept on an encrypted disc drive within a locked cabinet. Any data in hard copy form (on paper) will also be kept in this locked cabinet. This data will only be accessible to Dr. Jubas (Principal investigator and supervisor) and Lukas Skulmoski (co-researcher). Neither the recordings nor the transcriptions will be available to people outside the study team. Within five years of the end of the research project, all hard copies (paper versions of digital data, typed transcriptions) will be shredded. Also at this time, the audio recording of your interview and your digitized personal data will be deleted.

I understand that findings from this study will be discussed in Lukas Skulmoski's thesis. Findings might also be discussed in scholarly articles or conferences presentations. In order to protect anonymity, all participants will be referred to with pseudonyms. As a participant, you can choose your own pseudonym. If you do not choose a pseudonym, one will be assigned to you.
The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?
Risks: As some of the questions may be of a personal nature, such as questions about your childhood and family, or stressful situations that may have occurred during your apprenticeship, there is the possibility of becoming upset or distressed when recalling and sharing such memories. As mentioned previously, you are under no obligation to answer any questions, and you may resign from the project at

any time.

Benefits: By participating in this study, you will be providing research data to hopefully improve the level of gender equality within the Canadian trades landscape. By providing your insights into what it has been like to work as a female apprentice, you may be providing valuable information that could help subsequent generations of girls and women succeed in their endeavor to become a competent and successful tradesperson.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?
As mentioned previously, the only people who will access to your personal information, the audio recording of your interview, and the transcription of that interview, will be Dr. Jubas (Principal investigator and supervisor) and Lukas Skulmoski (co-researcher). All such information and materials will be kept on an encrypted disc drive within a locked cabinet. Any hard copies (paper versions of data and transcriptions) will also be kept in this locked cabinet. The data on the drive will be deleted within five years of the completion of the study, and any hard copies will be shredded at that time as well.

Your pseudonym's correlation to your true identity will only be known to Lukas Skulmoski and Dr. Jubas. This information will be kept in a locked cabinet and will also be destroyed along with all other data.

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. You can decline to answer any questions that you wish to. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, the data you have provided can be removed up until the point of data integration (September 1st, 2014).

Signatures
Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.
In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.
Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns
If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:
Mr. Lukas K. Skulmoski

Werklund School of Education
Ph: (250) 938-2002
Email: lkskulmo@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Kaela Jubas
Werklund School of Education
Ph: (403) 210-3921
Email: kjubas@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact an Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Letter of Initial Contact

Date: March 17, 2014

Project Name: Factors that influence the retention of female apprentices

Primary Investigator: Dr. Kaela Jubas

Co-Investigator: Mr. Lukas K. Skulmoski

Dear (Name of Potential Participant),

Currently in Canada, hundreds of well-paying trades positions remain vacant. At the same time, women populate only a small percentage of the Canadian trade workforce. As part of my Master's program, I am conducting this research project to identify factors that are common among women who have succeeded in the apprenticeship system. This study provides a forum where women can share their stories and express their feelings about working and studying as an apprentice. As a participant in this study, you will be providing valuable insight into what it is like to be a woman working in a highly-masculinized workforce. It is our hope that any information that comes from this research could be used to further the plight of women struggling for parity across the spectrum of male-dominated careers in Canada. By volunteering your time, you may be helping future generations of women increase their potential career options.

Your participation will consist of a one-on-one interview that should take approximately 60 to 120 minutes. The interview will be tape-recorded and then transcribed into a hard-copy.

Rest assured that your personal information will not be shared with anyone other than the researchers named at the top of this document. To protect your identity, you will be given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym for yourself, or have the researchers assign one to you. All your personal information will be kept on an encrypted disc drive, and all hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet. In order to find out what kinds of experiences during your apprenticeship, some questions will be of a personal nature; you may decline to answer any questions you wish. Your involvement in this study is voluntary, and you may exit the study at any time. This study has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board.

My work in this study is being overseen by my academic supervisor, Dr. Kaela Jubas. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to help with this study. If you have any questions or if you would like to participate in the study, you can contact me via my email address or phone number provided at the bottom of this page. Your participation and the information you share with me are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lukas K. Skulmoski

Email: lkskulmo@ucalgary.ca

Phone: (250) 938-2002

<u>Participant Demographics</u>

Project Name: Factors that influence the retention of female apprentices

Primary Investigator: Dr. Kaela Jubas

Co-Investigator: Mr. Lukas K. Skulmoski

Date: _____

Please note: **Completing this form is voluntary; you may choose to answer as many or as few questions as you wish.** All information you provide is treated confidentially, and will not be shared with anyone other than the investigators named above. This background information will help the researchers assess the diversity of participants in the study. Thank you for choosing to participate in this study; your involvement is greatly appreciated.

Name: _____ Age: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

City of residence: _____

Education (please check highest level completed, other than your trade schooling):

☐ High school not completed
☐ High school
☐ College
☐ Undergraduate university
☐ Graduate university

Current employment status (please check all that apply):

☐ Employed part-time   ☐ Self-employed
☐ Employed full-time   ☐ Unionized
☐ Unemployed

Industry currently working in, if employed: _____

Socioeconomic status: _____Race/ethnicity: _____

Sexual orientation: _____Marital status: _____

Number of siblings: _____Number of children: _____

Your age when you started your apprenticeship: _____

Did you enter your apprenticeship via a 'women in trades' program? _____

Industry you started your apprenticeship in: _____Was this a union job? _____

Number of times you changed industries during your apprenticeship: _____

Province and region currently employed in: _____

Province and Region where you started your apprenticeship: _____

Father's occupation when you entered your apprenticeship: _____

Mother's occupation when you entered your apprenticeship: _____

There are various financial incentives available specifically for female apprentices. Please list any that

you utilized: _____

Interview Schedule

Date: March 11, 2014

Project Name: Factors that influence the retention of female apprentices

Primary Investigator: Dr. Kaela Jubas

Co-Investigator: Mr. Lukas K. Skulmoski

The interview questions are purposefully open-ended with the intention of allowing participants to answer in their own terms. The questions are meant to elicit information that identifies factors that may have influenced the individual's choice to enter into her apprenticeship, and then remain in the program through to its completion.

1. How would you describe your family and education life while you were growing up? What sorts of encouragements and pressures related to mapping your future did you encounter? Who modeled success for you, and in what ways?

2. Describe you previous work experience(s) before entering into your apprenticeship. How did those experiences influence your choice to become an apprentice?

3. What do you think was most important in influencing your decision to enter a male-dominated career, and what do you think has been most vital to your current success as an apprentice? In particular, which personal traits and which supports stand out as most important for you? How have you seen those traits and/or supports influence your success?

4. Describe the support you have received from those outside your social circle (trade school instructors, employers, union representatives, employment insurance personnel, etc.). How would you describe or illustrate the social environment of your trade school? How well would you say that you fit in there, and what helped or stood in the way for you? How did the social environment and regular interactions make a difference for you?

5. Thinking about your current or most recent workplace, how would you describe the social climate there? How well would you say you fit in?

6. What has been the hardest part of being a woman in a male-dominated career? On the flip side, what has been the most exciting part of being a woman in a male-dominated career?

7. Describe a time during your apprenticeship when you were extremely proud of yourself as a tradesperson. On the other hand, can you describe a time when it was rough and you were considering quitting your apprenticeship. How did you deal with that stress?

8. What has been the biggest benefit to your life, due to you sticking it out through the entire apprenticeship?

9. If you had the chance to roll back time, what information or advice do you wish you had been given prior to entering into an apprenticeship?

10. How has your personal life changed over the span of your apprenticeship? Have there been any unanticipated events that have affected your apprenticeship's progress?

11. Do you know of any female apprentices that quit? If so, why do you think that they did?

12. What would you suggest could be done to make trades and apprenticeships more appealing to women and girls?