2009

The Experiences of women tree planters in Northern Ontario

Main, Callan

The Experiences of Women Tree Planters in Northern Ontario

Callan Main

Department of Sociology

Lakehead University

A thesis submitted to

the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts

August 2009

The Experiences of Women Tree Planters in Northern Ontario

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the experiences of women tree planters in northern Ontario. Using open-ended interviews and participant observation, I explore the ways female tree planters negotiate their femininity within a male dominated work force. Drawing on literature from sociology and women's studies that focuses on gender and identity, individualism, equality, sociology of the body, sexual objectification, and women in non-traditional work, I outline a feminist critical analysis of how neo liberal discourse influences the work of female tree planters. In contrast to the existing literature on silviculture, most of which focuses on the sustainability practices, this study explores the daily experiences of women tree planters in remote work camps in northern Ontario.

I argue that through my interviews, observations and personal experiences, women within tree planting maintain and construct an equitable experience by employing neoliberalist perspectives and dialogue. In this context, this study recognizes that the negotiation of gendered identity is complex and a 'double bind' exercise. I suggest that the contradiction women face in their gendered identity as women tree planters stems from a neoliberalist perspective that both entrenches and liberates women's constructions of their work lives. In conclusion, an analysis of participant observation and interviews gives a nuanced understanding of women in reforestation work in northern Ontario.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Rachel Ariss for her unyielding patience and encouragement. Her dedication to the project was a constant source of inspiration to me. I thank you for your wise words, calm support and inspiring spirit. You have been a tremendous help.

I also appreciate Lori Chambers for reading the work while on research leave. Your comprehensive knowledge in feminist research was a source of motivation. I value your clear advice and inviting approach to academic study. Thank you.

I thank Antony Puddephatt, who also read the thesis, for his questions and advice. You made my mind swirl by looking at sociological methods and theories in new ways. Your suggestions made fantastic additions to the study.

I also would like to acknowledge Pam Wakewich and Peggy Tripp for their insights on my project. Pam, you provided me direction with your vast academic resources and ideas. Peggy, your feminine voice of forestry and teaching will not be forgotten.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for seeing me through the path of academics and reforestation. You have all been a great source of my happiness.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In the spring of 2002 I began my first season tree planting in the Spanish Forest which is located near Timmins, Ontario. I had many reasons for gaining employment in reforestation, including my desire for the experience of living in an isolated setting, gaining friendships, earning money for my post secondary education and getting physically 'fit'. After spending the last six summers working in various positions within tree planting camps sprawling over four provinces, I felt compelled to write about these experiences. My interest lies in the valuable friendships I have generated along with the incredible challenges I have faced within this work environment. The challenges vary from the great physical exertion of tree planting work to the isolation of camp life.

Tree planting has been a marginalized job for decades, however, in the last twenty years the demographics of tree planting workers have changed. According to Armson (2001) significant reforestation did not occur in Ontario until 1950. It was not until the 1950s that reforestation practices came into place largely because of the inception of the 1949 *Canada Forestry Act.* The *Canada Forestry Act* gave the federal government power to enter into agreements with provinces for anything related to forestry (Armson 2001). This included the development and utilization of forest resources, silvicultural research, reforestation, and the management of forests for continuous production. In the 1960s, the Ontario provincial government assumed responsibility for reforestation, funding it through fees received from forest products firms in exchange for logging rights (Sweeney 2005; Armson 2001). Local white male workers were reluctant to take on such work during this era of nearly full employment,

forcing the government to experiment with non-standard workers such as prisoners, local women, and First Nations peoples (Bodner 1998; Armson 2001). According to Sweeney, "this led to a stigmatization of tree planters, and local workers have since been conspicuously absent from the industry" (2005: 12). With only six weeks of reforestation work available each season many local people are not interested in working in the tree planting field.

In 1979, the Ontario provincial government introduced Forest Management Agreements (FMAs), licenses that allowed forest products firms to manage the lands under their tenure (Oldford 1987). Most firms holding FMAs found private reforestations contractors. Tree planting contractors mostly hired post-secondary students primarily because they were available for the short time period as well as cost efficient. The use of contractors was also deemed advantageous by the government because it limited public sector growth (Oldford 1987).

Currently, most tree planters work to earn money to subsidize their post secondary education costs. Some are finished school and saving to go traveling before starting a 'real' job. The majority of workers in the camp, if not all, come from a university educated background. Yet these people are working in a low-level, physically-demanding job which is seen as 'working class' (Dunk 2003). Therefore, tree planting camps stand in contradictory or confused relations to the larger class structures which presume that middle-class children will become middle or upper class adults (Cote & Allahar 1998). This suggests that within the camp, tree planters reflect the unclear class position they occupy in society. Or do they? This ambiguity as well as the reasons

which planters and more specifically women participate in this line of work will be explored in this thesis. Of particular interest are the experiences women have while tree planting, both on the job as well as living within the bush camp.

Over my seven years tree planting, many planters have acknowledged that the participation of women has been increasing exponentially. This has been brought about through conscious efforts to increase women's involvement by demanding hiring quotas for women within some reforestation companies. As well, there has been a greater interest from women themselves in working within silviculture. Over the years, I have heard on frequent occasions that a tree planting camp is 'happier' and more 'civilized' if the ratio of men to women reflects greater gender balance.

Reflecting on this characterization after seven years and over twenty camps in which I have worked in various positions, I came to the conclusion that women's experiences within a tree planting camp needed to be explored. My main interest in women's experiences is how women negotiate their femininity/identity within the work. I knew that my own identity within tree planting work had both been empowered and questioned - physically, mentally and socially. For example, I remember being infuriated by comments made at my dirty appearance and physical capabilities while simultaneously feeling proud and pleased by my work skills as a tree planter and eventually, a supervisor.

My own reactions to the gendered dynamics of the work led me to want to systematically observe the group and its work. I wanted to critically analyze the gendered social and professional interactions that had both fascinated and annoyed me,

with the goal of raising awareness in the group itself through reflection and discussion. These concerns are points of departure for my study of women working within the tree planting industry of northern Ontario.

Using participant observation for a period of four months along with conducting eighteen in-depth interviews with women and four in-depth interviews with men, I studied the gender dynamics of the reforestation industry but more specifically the experiences of women tree planters. This thesis examines the myriad ways in which female planters gain empowerment and confidence within the industry while also maintaining gendered identities such as 'mothers' and 'nurturers' within a camp. As well as addressing barriers raised by gender-based perceptions of physical strength, I discuss the positive and negative impacts of increased physical fitness on women's body images. This study, overall, illustrates and analyses the ways in which women challenge and conform to prevailing gender norms and how they strive to maintain a 'competent' workplace identity by becoming 'conceptual men' (Ranson 2005).

The remainder of this chapter provides a contextual description of tree planting to gain an insight into the environment and culture of this line of work.

What is Tree planting?

Every year, some 500 million trees are planted in Canada to establish new forests where trees have been harvested. While the responsibility for successful reforestation has varied across time and provincial boundaries, it typically rests with the company that had the original or previous forest of trees cut and delivered to their facility.

Sometimes, this is due to policies set in place by provincial governments to try to regenerate the area of forest that has been harvested (OMNR 1994: 223). These companies, or licensee holders that harvest the forests, hire tree planting companies to carry out the planting of the trees. 'Tree planting' refers to the manual planting of tree seedlings in previously logged areas. The tree planting companies hire tree planters and pay them a piece wage. The planter is paid for each tree he or she plants to quality and density standards set by the particular contract. Tree planting occurs in various types of terrain, from sand flats to steeper, rockier ground. Typically, the piece wage per tree varies depending on the difficulty of the landscape.

Tree planters are hired from around the country and they converge at a starting point near their first project. Tree planters, as I mentioned earlier, are most often partway through or just completed a university education. For the most part, tree planters use this work to fund school, their travels across the globe and to meet with new and old friends. For my study, I will focus on northern Ontario specifically because tree planting seasons and projects vary throughout the country. The worksite of tree planting in northern Ontario is typically in a clear cut area, reaching as large as 260 hectares. Tree planters are designated a piece of clear cut land and systematically cover the land with proper density (amount of trees in area) and quality of tree seedlings required. Tree planters carry several hundred seedlings at a time in tree planting bags that rest at their sides. Using a shovel, the worker must individually plant each tree. Tree planting is repetitive, physically strenuous, outdoor labour.

The living environment for tree planters varies. Some tree planters will commute from town, either living at home or in a motel. However, for most projects in northern Ontario, tree planters live in remote bush camps. My study focuses on the remote bush camp experience. Most remote camps consist of a cook shack, dry shack, office shack, privies and personal tents. Typically bush camps range in size from thirty to one hundred planters. A planter can expect to work on a crew of fifteen to seventeen planters under the supervision of a crew boss. Each camp will have an experienced supervisor who is responsible for all of the crews as well as the general operations and administration of a contract. Other management staff members in camp usually include tree deliverers, checkers/assessors and safety officers. A tree deliverer is responsible for transporting boxes of trees from a central location to the block where tree planters are planting the trees. The job involves heavy lifting of hundreds of boxes of trees each day, driving various vehicles such as trucks, all terrain vehicles and swamp machines/keggers and daily logistical planning of the production locations. The tree assessors (also known as checkers) ensure that the trees are being planted properly by the planters according to the contract specifics for tree quality and density. The safety officer is the liaison between the planters and the supervisor, and ensures that the workplace meets the reforestation company's code of safety. If any planter in the camp is feeling that appropriate measures for safety and well being are not in place, the planter can voice their concerns to the safety officer who then anonymously communicates those concerns to the supervisor.

Tree planting is known for its long work days of nine to fifteen hours. Typical shifts are four to six days of work, followed by one to two days off depending on the production schedule of the contract. There are no extended breaks within the time frame of the contracts. Days off are most times spent in a nearby town with access to laundry, a hotel room and other essentials.

Why Study Tree planting?

Tree planting is the first and last step in the process of industrial forestry. Tree planting, which is also known as reforestation and a part of silviculture implementation, is the first step in the regeneration of a forest after it has been harvested. Most forestry research has considered tree planting as a peripheral component of the forest products industry (Sweeney 2005). Despite the large body of technical and policy-based literature related to silviculture, researchers have all but ignored the workers who actually replant the trees. Recently, a growing body of work examines the physical demands tree planters endure (Mueller 2008). However, little scholarly writing addresses the organizational structure, the gender dynamics and the demographics of tree planting. Tree planting communities of practice are distinctive in that, unlike most other occupations, there is little division between work and social life. Even when the planters return to camp from the worksite or on their infrequent days off, they are still amongst the tree planting camp and/or group. This lifestyle and work environment has resulted in the development of unique social cohesion.

The lack of research on Ontario's tree planting industry in the social sciences presents problems and limitations when writing about its historical culture (Sweeney 2006). The provincial government has records of the amount of land harvested, planted, tended, and scarified. However, no comprehensive socio-economic database for tree planting or other silvicultural work exists. Statistics Canada includes silvicultural workers in the 'forestry services' group. As well, tree planters work on a purely seasonal basis. Therefore, both of these factors limit the gathering of statistics on the number of tree planters working in Ontario.

In practical forestry work, there is a tendency for men with high levels of experience and skill to mentor those men who are younger or less experienced, relegating women to marginal positions (Reed 2003). This is common in natural resource-based workplaces, which are traditionally perceived as a *man's* world, and is demonstrated in studies of forest workers that note the importance of a working*man*'s culture (Reed 2003; Dunk 2003). Despite their marginality, like other male foresters, "male tree planters tend to view tree planting as a site for the display of traditional male skill' where they can reinforce masculinities and prove that they can negotiate the wilderness and reap the financial benefits of forestry work" (Bodner 1998: 281).

Women have been involved in Ontario's tree planting industry since the 1960s, but have historically been underrepresented in managerial positions. An ad hoc study conducted by Dr. Delia Roberts suggests that women make up approximately 33% of the total population of tree planters (Mueller 2008: 28). While the incidence of female crew

bosses has increased in the past decade, the incidence of female camp supervisors has not (Sweeney 2005: 26).

Both Bonder (1998) and Sweeney (2005) write about tree planting camps. However, their studies only partially reflect women's experiences within the camps. Although Bonder's and Sweeney's work each represent promising points of departure, their discussions do not express how women negotiate their gender in the male dominated work of tree planting. This leaves an interesting gap in the literature: women's experiences as tree planters require more research, particularly from a feminist point of view.

Significance and Purpose of the Research

In recent years in academia there has been a considerable increase in the attention given to feminist thought, study, methodology and description. Much of the literature draws on the increase of women's participation in different facets of society. In other words, how are women participating in and gaining respectability in a so-called man's world? Largely, this thesis is about that – how do women fit into predominantly male-centred tree planting work? Yet, it is also about gaining more insight into women's expressed reasons for pursuing new experiences in work. Its overall contribution is to add to the growing body of knowledge on women in non-traditional work, through feminist methodology and theoretical frameworks. More specifically, my study provides an in-depth examination of the various ways in which female tree planters negotiate their identity, relationships and bodies. Finally, this research is a

reflection of the women involved in reforestation of northern Ontario, and will contribute to future work on gender and silviculture.

Despite the underrepresentation of women in tree planting camps, there has been a gradual increase in their involvement in recent years. The unique representation of women in tree planting is largely due to the age and education level of the women involved. For those reasons, the domestic sphere and the 'double day' are not usually part of the experiences of this group of women. However, I argue that women's roles tend to compete with their male counterparts as 'conceptual men'. Gillian Ranson uses the concept of 'conceptual men' in her study of women engineers. Her study explains that if women are doing the same kind of work, in the same conditions, for the same hours and with the same general expectations as their male colleagues, typically in work that is considered to be male dominated, women are working like men. Ranson argues that women engineers have to fit into the male dominated work place and to approach their work as 'conceptual men' (Ranson 2005). Motherhood, in particular, challenges the idea of the conceptual man. I will link Ranson's argument that motherhood exposes a major fallacy in the liberal discourses of gender equality and neutrality for women entering male dominated workplaces to women's experiences and involvement in tree planting.

As I stated earlier, the purpose of this research is to explore and illuminate the varied ways women negotiate gender and identity in one specific male-dominated and masculine workplace: a tree planting camp. One important goal within this exploration

is to gain more insight into women's expressed reasons for pursuing non-traditional work. What compels women to engage in tree planting and what makes them stop?

Several specific questions feed into this exploration: What are women's experiences as planters within the camp atmosphere? What kind of attention do they receive from the crew boss? Do they have opportunities to move into managerial positions? Is there a commonality in these experiences or wide variation? Do women feel comfortable and valued within the work and camp life of tree planting?

These questions are pursued largely through interviews of women in various employment positions in tree planting, including planters and those in management positions. Do women feel comfortable and valued within the work and camp life of tree planting? The questions I ask through my interviews as well as my observations during my planting season present and explore individual voices and perspectives. Most women in reforestation work have been faced with various challenges but had not spent time discussing why or what happened until these interviews. The interviews engaged women into thinking about their tree planting experiences on an in-depth level, and as such, make up the bulk of my data. However, through my own participant observation, I was also able to explore what roles women are expected to play or seen to play, by men within the camp. The women involved in this non-traditional work have various reasons for their involvement and my goal was to gather more knowledge as to why and how they become connected with such work. By bringing to light these experiences we may be able to draw upon them for insight into women's participation in other non-traditional occupations.

As a long-term tree planter myself, this research also reflects my own negotiations with gender in the tree planting camp. Advancing the testimony of women's experiences in a unique line of work promotes and acknowledges women's active participation in the work world of tree planting. Through this research study it has become clear that female tree planters are impacted in the workplace by the dominant constructions of body image, gender and relationships. I offer interpretations of their experiences through my critical lens on neo liberalism to understand how the women I interviewed manage the complex challenges and contradictions of being a woman in a male-dominated and masculine work space.

Methodological Approach

Introduction

This thesis is a qualitative study of female tree planters in northern Ontario. It takes the form of an ethnographic study of a specific work environment, where material was gathered by means of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. As mentioned in the introduction, I have worked both as a tree planter and manager in tree planting camps for the past six seasons, and therefore I have the advantage of knowing the people and the work well prior to the information-gathering period of my study. The substantial time I have spent in an industry where the turnover rate is high, coupled with my intimate knowledge of various aspects of the job, permitted me to become familiar with tree planting norms and the range of challenges women tree planters may face.

Feminist Methodology

Feminist methodological approaches to women and work will be used for the analytical framework of women's experience as tree planters. Currently in feminism there has been a rejection of the essentialist view that all 'women' share a universal identity (Olesen 2005). In recent years, feminist theory has gone beyond looking at solely gender inequality and has begun to consider its intersections with other hierarchical social relations such as class, race, ethnicity and sexuality. This thesis will only reflect the experiences of white, university educated women because this cohort is

the most common demographic of the silvicultural workforce. According to Barbara Smith (1982), feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women from patriarchy, including white economically privileged heterosexual women.

Feminist research embraces several different approaches and perspectives that coexist across and within individual research projects. Maria Mies (1993) gives a brief summary of methodological guidelines, which I attempt to use for this project. The first approach is to reject the belief in value free research. She believes that researchers need to identify their study with a conscious partiality which is achieved through partial identification with the research objects (Mies 1993). Conscious partiality conceives the research objects as parts of a bigger social whole but also of the research subjects, that is, the researchers themselves (Ibid). For example, I do not see myself as separate from the world of women in tree planting which I analyze. In chapters four and five, I turn to a lens of neoliberal discourse to understand women's comments about gender and individuality in tree planting. My critical analysis of tree planting women's comments as reflecting neoliberal discourse is not meant to show that I am outside of this discourse – through my engagement with the women I interviewed, thinking through my own participation over time, and my reading, I have become more aware of my own participation in this discourse as a way to negotiate gender and femininity in this work environment.

The second approach is that research should be replaced by active participation in actions, movements and struggles. In this regard, research should not be static and homogeneous but historical, dynamic and contradictory (Mies 1993). As feminist

research grew out of the women's movement, academic research should not be limited to the 'ivory tower'. The contribution should be in part a social action and social struggle. While interviewing various women, I felt that I was part of this movement by generating discussion on gender disparities and creating an avenue for women to voice their concerns within their work experiences. At the end of one of my interviews I stated to one of my interviewees,

> this is a women-focused project and the whole methodology of the thesis is feminist. And considering this I realize how taking our private thoughts is making it political in the sense that I have had amazing conversations with people who are reflecting on tree planting and reflecting on women in a different work environment. Watching the other women consider and contemplate my questions has been really inspiring for me and I believe the other women.

The third approach I attempt to adopt is to make the research process one of 'conscientization'. This was first developed by Paulo Freire and the characteristic of this approach is that the study of an oppressive reality is carried out not by experts but by the objects of the oppression. As Mies explains, "the women's movement so far has understood the process of 'conscientization' largely as that of becoming conscious of one's individual suffering as a woman" (Mies 1993: 41). Feminist scholars can inspire and help other women document their campaigns, struggles and experiences.

The fourth approach of feminist methodology that I would like to address is counting women in and giving them a venue to be represented. Inequities in representation and participation result in gender blindness and bias, so issues that affect women differentially are not adequately represented, conceptualized or addressed in decision-making arenas regarding environmental issues and programs (Reed 2003). By becoming more gender-specific, research projects may become more relevant to improving social equity, an element of sustainability that is often expressed as a desirable outcome of environmental management practices. The earliest beginnings of feminist research go back to the problems of finding and clearly expressing women's voices. In this process, researchers are concerned with how to translate private matters from women's lives into the often distorting frames of social science, without losing the centrality and clarity of women's voices (Olesen 2005). One of the goals of my research is to provide an opportunity by which women can engage and voice their experiences as silvicultural workers.

The last approach I adopt includes feminist critiques of traditional male-centered epistemologies in the practice of social science. These critiques consider how gender influences what is considered important as knowledge, how knowledge is legitimized and how knowledge is reproduced and represented to others (Cope 2002). Meghan Cope points out that "women's active participation in what 'counts' as knowledge has historically been seen as less significant than men's through power-based gender relations" (2002: 45). The concern of epistemology requires "thinking about how socially constructed gender roles, norms and relations influence the production of

knowledge" (Cope 2002: 44-45). Also, acknowledging the extent to which women share experiences may result in common approaches of resistance to patriarchal practices and ideologies.

This last approach of feminist epistemologies is consistent with Virginia Olesen's claim that "research for women should extend and amplify research merely about women" (Olesen 2005: 236). Olesen (2005) wants to ensure that even the most revealing descriptions of unknown or unrecognized aspects of women's situations do not remain just descriptions but are distinguished as legitimate findings. She calls for feminists to take seriously how gender intersects with other forms of marginality to produce and legitimate knowledge production, as well as providing an agenda for change.

A feminist epistemology also challenges researchers to be reflexive - that is, to reflect on their own location in the production of knowledge. Such critical reflection helps to sensitize the researcher to the cultural, social, political and economic contexts of the research and to acknowledge multiple possible interpretations of the findings. Reflexivity is an open admission of the subjectivity and partiality of researchers' creation of knowledge. The challenge of this approach lies in mediating the tension between recognizing the partial perspective of the researcher(s) and making claims and recommendations that are sufficiently generalized to guide change.

These approaches of counting women in, 'conscientization', actively participating in social action, conscious partiality and a reflexive epistemology suggest many ways to bring insights from feminist scholarship into studies of silvicultural work. Although I

have simplified their content and presented them as separate categories, in practice, linkages among these approaches often blur the distinctions between them, as explained by Mies (1993). Through these approaches to my methodology, I argue that one cannot eliminate the effects of the researcher. Therefore, researchers must attempt to understand their personal perspectives on the social phenomenon they hope to study. I introduce my own critical lens on neoliberalist discourse in conjunction with my own testimony as a tree planter to the study. Finally, I believe that bringing women's tree planting experiences forward promotes and acknowledges women's active participation in the work world of tree planting.

The Process

During the initial phase of my research from May to August in 2008, I worked as a tree deliverer and planter in northern Ontario. For a period of four months, I maintained a daily journal of my experiences. This included conversations between myself and other tree planters, the slang and language used by the planters and other forestry workers we came into contact with, as well as observations made of tree planters both in camp and in the town in which the planters stayed on days off.

In the second phase of the research process, from August 2008 to March of 2009 I developed an interview schedule and conducted in-depth open-ended interviews with eighteen female tree planters and four male tree planters. Each potential interviewee received a cover letter explaining the project and providing contact information for any questions or concerns following the interview. Then each interviewee was asked to sign

a consent form and to acknowledge their confidentiality. Each interviewee, along with any person they mentioned within the interview was given a pseudonym to protect their anonymity. Interview material was used to supplement my observations and to examine the multiple perspectives and experiences of women tree planters.

Six of the twenty-two individuals I interviewed were supervisory and managerial personnel. Those in supervisory positions were interviewed through informal enquiries while on the job as well as through open-ended interviews to understand such issues as hiring practices, the expectations of female employees, as well as the distribution of tasks. This material was recorded in my participant observation log as well as through the tape recordings of open-ended interviews with various participants.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was developed during the late 19th century for the study of small, homogenous cultures. Initially, participant observation began as 'objective' monographs and 'subjective' personal memoirs (Tedlock 2005). Classical ethnography was based around the idea of a lone ethnographer who would go off and study a distant land and group. Then that ethnographer would return 'home' and write up an 'objective' account of the culture studied. Sociologists in the modernist phase sought to use participant observer methodology to conduct rigorous qualitative studies of various social processes: "Post positivism functioned as a powerful epistemological paradigm" (Denzin & Lincoln 2002: 16). From a 21st century perspective, the objectivist assumptions of the early ethnographic studies are considered improbable. The critics of

positivism believe that people are not impartial 'blank slates' but come to their understandings from a constructed perception and knowledge base. Through this criticism, participant observation became recognized as a more subjective realm of experience because it incorporates a personal reflection and perspective into the observations. More recently, researchers have been exploring their own lived experiences (Tedlock 2005).

Currently, within the critique of feminist and post structuralist epistemologies, many participant observation methods contextualize testimony and witnessing of personal stories. As Salverson argues, "when we bring our texts to contexts, we can make work that constitutes a first step towards social change" (2001: 121). I juxtapose my personal experience with a layered account of other female voices through interviews. This personal observation and storytelling will create a continuous dialogue of experience and a reflexive voice (Jones 2005: 764). When I first conceived of this study, I thought that interviewing tree planting women would be a sufficient method. However, my understanding of the concerns expressed in feminist and post structuralist approaches, which encouraged analyzing the researcher's own subjective feelings and experiences, led me to include participant observation. Using a feminist framework and combining participant observation with interviews I hope to incorporate reflexivity to build on the methods of participant observation.

It is also vital for researchers to recognize that they are part of the social world being observed. Therefore, by being both researcher and a woman tree planter, I was part of the work force in which I was studying. A research-only focus might have

disrupted the environment of a tree planting work and camp life. Since my participation within the camp would have occurred in spite of the study, my participation in the work force was presumed to be earnest.

During my four-month observation stage, I was working and living with the tree planting group many of whom were friends from previous years working with them. The summer in which I carried out my observations was my sixth season tree planting. I was a tree deliverer which meant that while I was part of management and an authority figure; I was not directly in charge of any specific tree planters. I have had experience as a tree planter, tree assessor/checker, and crew boss, thereby allowing me to be quite knowledgeable and well seasoned, from different social and occupational positions, in the realm of reforestation work.

Many of my observations relate to the day to day routines of the camp. I also made observations during days off in town as well as reflecting on my previous years spent tree planting. Most of my observational data was collected through recording detailed descriptions of conversations I overheard, discussions I had with others, and experiences throughout the days and months of the spring and summer. While I was working, I had a pad of paper along with a pen in my work truck during work hours to record events and conversations. At night I would reflect on the day while in my tent and write down any thoughts I saw as significant. Along with this, I wrote down what I observed regarding my own experience as a deliverer. How did I feel about the job? What comments were made to me during my work? How did I perceive others in this

work environment? These questions are examples of the internal dialogue I carried on during my participant observation.

The conversations and events in which I participated and recorded were 'natural and un-staged'. Although I was the only observer for this study, it was quite relaxed as I would have been a part of the environment regardless of the study. I was part of the work and camp environment as an actual worker not solely to observe the camp. This complete membership as researcher helps to not "alter the flow of the interaction" (Adler & Adler 1987: 67). Adler and Adler (1987) believe that because the researcher and the insiders relate to each through a set of experiences, feelings, and goals there is no need for the researcher to hide their role or their study.

Adler and Adler (1987) divide researchers who enter into complete membership roles into two categories: opportunistic and convert. This study would fall under the opportunistic researcher. Opportunistic researchers are those who are already involved in or are members of a group whom they eventually decide to study. Instead of having to bring a 'pretended self' to the research setting, they have to "create the space and character for their research role to emerge" and examine the setting from a different perspective (Adler & Adler, 1987: 69). The membership role precedes the researcher role. Problems are inherent in the complete membership role. One concerns the positive/legitimate or negative/stigma connotations of a researcher's association with the study group (Adler & Adler 1987). Many positivist researchers believe that research is contaminated by a researcher's inside status in which they lose objectivity. For instance, Spradley (1980) had reservations about researchers engaging in complete

participation of those being observed because it may be impossible to be objective in one's findings. Spradley cautioned that the "the more you know about a situation...the more difficult it is to study as an ethnographer" (1980: 61). However, Adler and Adler suggest that the "depth of the research collected can more than compensate for the loss of scientific detachment" (1987: 82). Being aware of my position as a researcher as well as maintaining a legitimate position as a tree planter potentially created a more genuine environment for observations. It was important to me to recognize that I would not be fully objective.

Feminist methodology does not centre objectivity – in part because it is believed to be impossible (Mies 1993). For this project, the goal of understanding how gender operates as a social category in a tree planting camp was more important than the pursuit of pure objectivity (Mies 1993). As I had worked with many of the people in the camp previously, I believe that the atmosphere was not altered by me openly recording our activities and conversations. I also recorded my efforts to remain conscious of the ripples that my participation in camp as a researcher might create. To understand the meanings that were constructed by the crews and camp, I attempted to first understand their behaviour by watching it, engaging in it and asking questions openly.

Recently, researchers have been employing participant observation to help situate researcher's personal perspectives within the more traditional 'objective' research method of interviewing. Participant observation assists interviews, and plays into and becomes part of interviewing (Fontana 2001). It aims to recount the feelings of the researcher about interview topics, as well as about the experience under

consideration, thus combining the roles of interviewer and interviewee. Participant observation provides the researcher with the flexibility to choose the most appropriate level of involvement for the particular study, enabling the investigator to fully explore the richness of the social world. This method complements interviewing as it permits the researcher to develop relevant interview questions and avoid irrelevant material. Lastly, it assists the researcher who has membership within the insider group to compare interview answers with actual work behaviour that they themselves have observed.

Interviews

Interviews place the participant observation experiences into context. Of course, there are several different types of interviews that can be used. I held semi structured interviews at the end of the 2008 tree planting season. I had forty five questions written out to be asked to each interviewee. However, the interview was open to flow and follow the interviewee's stories, perspectives and chain of thought. If a woman seemed to be engaged in a topic I would respond with further, new questions in order to keep the conversations flowing. This would influence the comparability of questions and answers during the analysis stage of this research. However, my responding in this way promoted interviewees' freedom to discuss topics and experiences that they were most interested in or were most important to them. This emphasis on what interviewees wanted to discuss ensures that what matters to interviewees is brought forward. Semi structured interviews are especially useful and

effective when the researcher is familiar with the community. My personal knowledge of the tree planting community along with my understanding of the work helped develop new topics and questions beyond the ones I formulated prior to the interviews being conducted.

The formulated questions in the interview ranged from understanding the women's background to their future plans regarding employment or careers, in tree planting or other areas. My interview guide included questions about why they participated in tree planting, what made them stay in the demanding job and finally what would make them leave (or in some cases, what had made them leave). Also, I asked if they felt uncomfortable with the work or the camp life in relation to others they worked with. Participants were asked to comment on numerous issues ranging from what they understood about the camp atmosphere to their understanding of managerial hiring procedures. In addition, the women were asked specific questions to 'being a woman' tree planter. For example, they were asked: if they thought women were able to plant as many trees as men; if women were able to advance into managerial positions as easily as men; if they encountered any difficulties or harassment because of their gender? They were encouraged to provide any and all information they wished. Upon the conclusion of the formal interview, the participants were invited to share with me any additional comments about the work or any questions they thought I should have asked.

All of the respondents ranged in age between their early twenties and mid thirties. The sample was varied in expertise relating to tree planting. I deliberately only

interviewed tree planters who had at least two seasons worth of experience. I believe that within the tree planting community a tree planter is not accepted as a bona fide 'tree planter' until s/he returns for a second season. Additionally, I wanted planters to have had time (if they were so inclined) to reflect on differences and similarities between their first and second years. Perspectives on how the camp and work are run can be altered through familiarity with the tasks as well as experiences in different camps with different managerial staff. These factors led me to choose only those women with at least two years of tree planting experience. As well, I interviewed a few women and men who were now in supervisory roles within silvicultural camps. This sample led to more diverse responses about various aspects of tree planting.

The interviews were initially conducted in the camp in which I was working. For the first few interviews I chose a quiet location in a company truck. After the season ended I conducted interviews in public locations where I could meet interviewees very informally, such as coffee shops or restaurants. A few interviews, however, were held at respondents' offices. Regardless, I tried to maintain a casual atmosphere to allow the interviewees to feel relaxed and comfortable. It was important to me that interviews be held at the end of the season because the women and men would be able to reflect on their past season and hopefully relate it to other work experiences or past seasons of tree planting.

Interviews are a commonly used qualitative method (Salverson 2001). This is because the open ended semi-structured interview can capture the opinions and perspectives of the people being researched. It also allows, to some degree, uniform

questions to be posed, potentially allowing the researcher to see some form of consistency of meaning in interviewees' responses. While the original script of the interview guarantees consistency of topics across the whole sample, each particular interview is different since new questions are elicited by the answers given by the interviewee. I allowed questions to flow and was open to participants' varying levels of engagement to questions that were more or less pertinent to themselves. This led to a more relaxed and candid experience.

Interviewer self disclosure takes place when the interviewer shares ideas, attitudes, and/or experiences concerning matters that might relate to the interview topic in order to encourage respondents to be more forthcoming (Salverson 2001). Conventionally, qualitative research students are instructed not to disclose their experiences, feelings or opinions about the research topic because "the interview is about the respondent, not about the interviewer" (Salverson 2001: 121). However, I follow some feminist researchers in rejecting this stance because it assumes a distant and hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and participants (Chase & Reinharz 2001). I believe my self-disclosure provided more credibility and validity to the research because the interviewees were able to answer openly and honestly. Although some academics are against self-disclosure as they believe the researcher may influence the objectivity with the study, I believe that stating where one stands opens up discussion for more critical engagement within the interviews. Self-disclosure does not automatically create bias. My aim was to capture the subject's perspective as much as possible. I tried to minimize the hierarchical situation of researcher and the interview

participant through an open and comfortable approach to the interview so the subject felt at ease talking with me.

Postmodernism has greatly affected the methodologies used by social scientists. In particular, the boundaries between, and respective roles, of interviewer and interviewee have become blurred (Fontana 2001). Contrary to the traditional belief that the relation between interviewer and interviewee is neutral and the results of the interview can be treated as independent of the interview process as long as the interviewer is methodologically skilled, gender consciousness changes the nature of interview results. Fontana argues that "if we are to overcome these and other potential problems the traditional relationship between interviewer and interviewee must change…The two must become equal partners in a negotiated dialogue" (Fontana 2001: 168). Most of my interviewees I had known for years through seasons of tree planting. The few that I had not had the opportunity to work with, I had met as friends in other facets of my life. Again, this provided a comfortable dialogue between us. I was able to share my feelings of contradiction between gender structures and individual ability with the other women interviewees.

It is important to recognize that I have the ability to write up and discuss this dialogue in a critical voice to which the interviewees are unable to respond. This, undoubtedly, creates a hierarchy between the researcher and the interviewees. Yet, by being part of the dialogue with the interviewees and participating in self disclosure during the interviews and study, I hope this reduced the hierarchy. By being flexible and in following what the interviewee wanted to discuss, I attempted to lessen the hierarchy

of researcher and interviewees. In open ended interviews, the researcher follows the flow of the conversation. In accordance with this style of interviews, I felt that the interviewees and I had a more flexible and comfortable discussion of their (and my own) experiences of tree planting.

Focus Groups

Initially my intention was to hold small focus groups of about four to five men towards the end of a tree planting season. Conducting research through focus groups, "helps to mobilize the collective energy of the group and to generate kinds and amounts of data that are often difficult if not impossible to generate through individual interviews and even observation" (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis 2005: 900). A focus group allows researchers to explore the nature and effects of ongoing social discourse in ways that are not possible through individual interviews or observation (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 2005: 903). However, when it came time to engage men within my camp to participate in these focus groups many warned me of their reservations. Most of the men who would have participated had a close and jovial relationship with me. When I asked them if they would be interested in participating in a focus group, many suggested that this would lead to unrealistic responses due to the sardonic and joking nature of our relationships with each other. Reflecting on their concerns, I agreed with them and decided it would be best to instead conduct one-on-one interviews with the men as well as with the women.

Summary

My participant observation is from two different work camps I was assigned to in the summer of 2008. The first camp ran through May and June, and I worked there as the tree deliverer. As the deliverer I was part of management within the camp. Although I was not directly a supervisor of anyone, I did maintain a position of 'power' within the camp because of my role[1]. At the second camp, which ran through late June and July, I decided to work as a tree planter. This decision was largely made due to my research. I thought that by being a tree planter again it would give me a greater spectrum of reflection on both employment positions and camp life. As well, planters with less experience than myself might feel more inclined to respond candidly because of our similar positions in camp hierarchy as tree planters.

My observations were mostly of my co-workers and friends as were my interviewees. Some interviews were conducted following connections made through mutual friends or through non-tree planting activities in which I participated. However, due to this limited sample, some commonality in responses may reflect particularities in how this specific tree planting company operates. Thus, this study is not representative of tree planting across northern Ontario, nor of the entire work culture of tree planting.

---

[1] A deliverer is typically promoted because they have demonstrated strong work ethic with planting a lot of trees. They endure long days in which they are paid a flat daily wage versus the piece work of crew bosses and planters. Deliverers are respected and have power because they are the employees who bring the trees to the planters. If a deliverer does not bring a planter trees then they are unable to plant and hence unable to make money.

However, I intended to capture the meanings of my own as well as participants' experiences within a bush camp, rather than aim for a complete representation of tree planting work.

As a woman engaged in studying the gendered nature of employment, I thought it was important for to adhere to the principles of feminist academic research. Feminist researchers approach problems differently from conventional methods in the social sciences since they challenge traditional epistemological assumptions, such as the notion of the neutral researcher. Feminists build on the subjective, validating individual experience. Feminist work is used to emancipate women from traditional modes of theorizing that often lead to their unequal status or misinterpretation in research. By allowing women to be heard through the interview process and to share experiences with each other at the same time, such an emancipatory dialogue can begin.

Literature Review

Introduction

Since I am following the feminist tradition that encourages reflexivity on the part of the researcher, I will begin this chapter with a discussion of the role of work in my own life. From the time I was a child, my family stressed the importance of work. I grew up with my mother in a single parent household. My mother worked for a multinational corporation and faced a heavy work load. In the late 1980s she maintained her position despite massive layoffs during that recession. During much of that time, my grandparents lived with us. My grandfather was a retired engineer and my grandmother had worked in a nursing home when she had not been a stay-at-home mother. Each told me stories of how challenging and hard the work had been and yet they emphasised the importance of work. However, it seemed that work wore my family down, in a sense it had not made them happy or fulfilled, but rather, was a means to an end.

My own experience with work began when I was fifteen years old. I worked mainly in the service sector – waitress at a golf course, daycare assistant, camp counsellor, and a 'runner' at the local bingo hall. I had very positive experiences at most of my jobs. When I became a university student, I began tree planting during summer breaks. I had heard it was a terrible job because of the monotony but that you could make a very good amount of money – if you were "good at it and a hard worker". I found it not to be a particularly terrible job - just tough and strenuous. However, the

thought of doing that kind of work for thirty years panicked me. I saw tree planting as only a temporary job. It was a way to pay for school as well as to be outdoors and physically active in the summers. I did not give it much thought until I wrote a paper in the last year of my undergraduate degree, in which I took a Marxist analysis of piece wage labour and applied it to tree planting. From my first encounters reading Marx I was fascinated by his theories on capitalist oppression, more specifically the oppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. I believed that I had witnessed my mother's subordination as a worker within a huge conglomerate. Instead of applying Marx to my mother's experience – which I assumed would be a 'case closed' analysis – I decided to apply his ideas to the work of tree planting, work which I enjoyed. It was not until I applied a Marxist analysis to my experience that I began to see that lack of power over work and working conditions was what made work miserable for people, and that this was particularly evident in the power that bosses exercised over workers.

Three years after I wrote that paper I arrived at the view that understanding power relations between women and men are as important as understanding power relations between bosses and workers. A professor referred me to an article by Gillian Ranson (2005) that reaffirmed some ideas swirling around in my head. This article, as well as a review of fundamental theorists, has led me towards developing my own understandings of how work and gender are linked in oppression both obvious and ambiguous. The literature review within this chapter, my own personal experience, and the interviews I conducted with women tree planters all point to the importance of work and employment in shaping the contours of one's life. I believe that work is an

important determinant of the quality of people's lives. Although tree planting is a seasonal and temporary job for most of those employed in it, it is a microcosm in which white, university-educated (or university-bound) young women both learn and develop their gendered positions in the world of 'work'.

For this chapter I review outstanding scholarly contributions drawing from both sociology of work and sociology of organizations literature, with the link between them being studies or researchers who focus on gender, taking a feminist perspective within those areas. I begin by looking at Kanter's (1976) classic study of tokenism – how being a minority in a group can affect one's performance at work due to more visibility and pressure. Initially, Kanter's idea that structure shapes behaviour and workplace performance was very compelling for me. Her feminist criticism of workplace organizations is a historical reference point for feminist theory regarding women and work. However, there are some flaws, mostly in the notion that work itself is gender neutral. I regard this idea of neutrality to be problematic when looking at the gendered structuring that occurs within the labour market. I will look at gender neutrality and the discussion of women as 'conceptual men' in predominantly male work places.

Following this, I turn to liberal feminist discourse, as ideas based in part in this discourse inform many of my interviewees' perceptions of their roles and opportunities in the workplace. For the purposes of this thesis, I define liberal feminism as feminism premised on an egalitarian model of gender neutrality and formal equality in both the public and private spheres. Liberal feminists' acknowledge and use sex/gender comparisons, but they focus on 'sameness' and not 'difference' in their arguments for

women's full inclusion in the workplace. Neoliberal discourse has recently become culturally dominant. Thus it is important because it is shaping both current structures of work and current understandings that gender equality has been 'achieved'. As Brodie writes "although, the enactment of neoliberal political rationalities may frame organizations as if gender no longer matters, the gendered underpinnings of social and political life do not disappear" (2008: 161).

Finally, I point to the most fundamental deduction in the concept of liberal individualism, which is the abstraction of the individual from the body. In order for the individual to appear in liberal theory as a universal figure, who represents anyone and everyone, the individual must be disembodied (Pateman 1986). The individual centre of liberalism and neoliberalism, however, is personified in bodies that remain gendered. This means we have to consider gender in relation to work when looking at women and tree planting.

Women, Work and Gender

Judith Lorber writes, "as a social institution, gender is a process of creating distinguishable social statuses for the assignment of rights and responsibilities. As part of a stratification system that ranks these statuses unequally, gender is a major building block in the social structures built on these unequal statuses" (2006: 280). As a process, gender creates the social differences that define 'woman' and 'man'. In social interaction throughout their lives, individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, react and act in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and

maintain the gendered order: "The very injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes; to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object; to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once" (Butler 1990: 145). Members of a social group neither make up gender as they go along nor exactly replicate in rote fashion what was done before. In almost every encounter, including those at work, at home, in institutions of all sorts and in tree planting camps, human beings produce gender, behaving in the ways they learned were appropriate for their gender status, or resisting or rebelling against these norms. Resistance and rebellion have altered gender norms, but so far they rarely eroded the statuses (Lorber 2006).

For Kanter, an early researcher into women in the workplace, gender is an ascribed characteristic that people bring to work and that, because of inherent biases in the dominant culture, fosters sex discrimination against women. Her research on structural conditions in the workplace has been taken up by researchers in a variety of ways since the 1970s. Kanter indicated that structural conditions shape apparent 'sex differences' and foster sex discrimination in the workplace (1976).

Kanter argued that there are two structural effects of hierarchical systems on behaviour: the opportunity structure and the power structure. She stated that women "tend to be less involved in their work and committed to it than men, interrupting their careers whenever they can; they are more concerned about their relationships with other people than the task or reward aspects of their jobs; and they have lower levels of aspiration"(Kanter 1976: 260). Kanter asked why women have developed tendencies to

focus on relationships rather than work, and argued that most of these findings can be explained by the nature of the opportunity structure. Sweeney (2005) explains that women are less likely to be in supervisor positions in tree planting due to the time it typically takes to advance to management positions. This is a problem of the opportunity structure within tree planting. Most supervisors have *at minimum* three years experience as a tree planter as well as three in a managerial position such as crew boss, deliverer and/or assessor. Since significant numbers of female managers have appeared only recently, it may take some time before they are promoted to supervisory roles. However, unlike the workplaces Kanter studied, tree planting is seasonal and transient. Thus, women may leave before they get a chance to enter the opportunity structure. Even if women are able to gain this time-based experience, however, promotion can only occur if the upper management of the contractor and the clients are willing (Sweeney 2008).

Kanter's (1976) exposure of the gendered aspects of the opportunity structure dispelled the idea that women are more concerned with the quality of relationships than men which in turn affects women's behaviour and performance. Kanter (1976) believed that it is a common stereotype for women to be more concerned with maintaining harmony than being competitive and/or cut-throat within business relations. She found through her research that women were just as willing as men to be competitive. Therefore, Kanter (1976) believed that women had the ability to be just as aggressive as men to achieve their goals within work. However, women were

influenced by cultural and gender expectations to maintain a sense of diplomacy and not show their competitive impulse.

Gendered expectations about the roles of women in the workplace, and the stereotypes about women as less competitive and more diplomatic than men arise from ideas about women as best suited for domesticity and family life, and the separation of life into the private and public spheres in the early 1800s (Miller 1987). The newly domestic family came to be closely associated with refinement and the responsibility for the informal control of others was assigned to women (Miller 1987). Women were seen as endowed by nature with a special moral sense, which became an important facet of what has been called the "cult of true domestic woman-hood" (Anderson 1980: 47). Such a view of women, although it served to exclude them from most public-sphere involvement, gave women's voices a distinctive authority, so that when they moved to regulate behaviour and manners they were seen to be voicing the morality of the whole society, rather than merely defending the interests of one of its parts (Miller 1987). This older stereotype of 'moral sense', based in the assumed separation between domestic and public arenas contributed to the stereotypes about women being more concerned with relationships than with competition that Kanter argued against.

But Kanter found that it was not only women who were concerned with relationships in the workplace. Men, as well as women, turn to relationships with work peers as an alternative interest when mobility opportunities are limited or blocked. Under such circumstances, men, like women, form strong peer groups that value solidarity and loyalty within the group (Kanter 1976). Kanter argued that as a member

of a close peer group, the individual is under pressure to remain loyal to the immediate group of work mates. She maintained that for a woman, this conflict is probably more severe because as she rises in an organization she is likely to find fewer and fewer female peers, whereas men find a male peer group at every level of the system (Kanter 1976). In a more recent study of women foresters, Tripp-Knowles (1999) argues that women are limited in their involvement and ability to influence decisions because of challenges women face due to their being a minority within the field.

The importance of peer groups in organization demonstrated by Kanter is echoed in later studies of women at work. Tripp-Knowles (1999) examined the role of gender in forestry and the tensions existing within gender interaction in the workplace through interviews with four prominent women foresters in Canada. She found that women foresters in Canada valued the importance of having women leaders break the barriers within a field still considered 'masculine'. Tripp-Knowles's interviewees state clearly that the barriers they face in being involved in forestry are because of two dominant factors: sexual harassment and/or family commitments. Most women involved in tree planting do not face limitations regarding family commitments because of the age of women involved. However, beyond specific barriers, what was revealed by both the women foresters in Tripp-Knowles (1999) study and the women tree planters I interviewed (discussed in chapter four) was the importance of having women colleagues, role models and friends to see as examples of women involved in the male dominated workplace. Tripp-Knowles found that along with having women colleagues

to share experiences with, most women felt that it was important to maintain a sense of determination.

Kanter (1976) provided one of the earliest accounts of the importance of a "sponsor" to one's career. On the basis of interviews and observations of organizational behavior, Kanter described sponsors as "mentors and advocates upward in the organization" (1976:181). Daloz more recently defined a mentor's role as "engendering trust, issuing a challenge, providing encouragement, and offering a vision for the journey" (1999: 31). Sponsors not only trained young people, they provided advocacy, helped circumvent bureaucracy, and empowered those they favored by association. More recent multidisciplinary studies have found that women define themselves differently than men in the work place, placing more emphasis on connectedness with others and less on separateness (Babcock & Laschever 2003; Barcic, Howard and Zellers 2008: 554).

Organization and Hierarchies

Interestingly, despite women mentioning the importance of female role models and leaders in organizations (see Tripp-Knowles 1999) there is a strong cultural belief that men make better leaders. Kanter (1976) analyzed past research on gender differences in leadership aptitude or style. She contended that there is considerable evidence of a general cultural attitude that men make better leaders. Kanter (1976) argues that a large number of academic and ad hoc studies have found that neither men nor women want to work for a woman. There is a prevalent stereotype that women bosses do not have the same dedication as their male counter parts (Kanter 1976).

Kanter invokes a structural explanation that can account for a preference for male leaders and women's occasional use of authoritarian-controlling leadership styles, even though she found that leadership styles of men and women vary over the same range (Kanter 1976). As Kanter contends, "an advantageous location in the power structure has real as well as symbolic payoffs" (1976: 271). This means that the leader who has organizational power has both more rewards to give and threats to make towards their subordinates. This organizational power comes from several structural factors. First, the people who have close contacts and good relations with other power holders in the system are more likely to have cultural power as well. Second, there is the advantageous location in the opportunity structure. Third, this location brings favourable mobility prospects. Kanter argued that women are likely to be disadvantaged on both first and second bases, and thus less likely to act as though they have organizational power. So even if a woman is in a leadership position, because of her rarity and isolation, she will not have the cultural power to exercise or sustain her own leadership style.

Kanter believes that it is the very nature of hierarchy within organizations that creates the conditions for opportunity and power structures to routinely disadvantage the minority no matter who that minority happens to be. She suggests that instead of expecting women (or men) as individuals to acquire work appropriate attitudes, strategies for change should focus on the structure of the organization as a total system (Kanter 1976). She comments that it is much easier to approach the individual with changes in policies and research programs than to change the structure of work

organizations. Kanter (1976) contends that the structural system maintains and favours

certain behaviours. However, it is the nature of hierarchy that should change.

But what influences the hierarchical model of organizational structures? Reskin

(1988) argues that probably no system of social differentiation is as extensive as that

based on sex category. Reskin contends that "social differentiation is achieved through

norms that set dominant and subordinate groups apart in their appearance or

behaviour" (1988: 285). For example, appearance rules require certain modes of dress,

diet or lifestyle of members of subordinate groups as emblems of their inferior status

and reserves other modes to distinguish the dominant group. Reskin's thesis implies

that men will respond to the challenge of women's presence in the workplace by

emphasizing how women differ from men, rather than by considering how the

organization might change. Especially common are certain modes of behaviour or

appearance that serve as reminders and set women apart from their male counterparts.

Gender and Organizations

Reskin (1988) presents an alternative way of thinking about power and work.

Differentiation of gender categories creates a hierarchical system. In a hierarchical

context, differentiation assumes, amplifies and even creates behavioural differences in

order to ensure that the subordinate group differs from the dominant group (Reskin

1988). To reiterate this point, Reskin looks to Rubin's claim that there is a "taboo

against the sameness of men and women, a taboo dividing the sexes into two mutually

exclusive categories, a taboo which exacerbates the biological differences between the

sexes and thereby *creates* gender" (1975: 178). So although femaleness is not always

devalued, its deviation from maleness in a culture that reserves virtues for men has meant the devaluation of women (Reskin 1988). Reskin's thesis confirms that men differentiate themselves from women by seeing them as 'add-ons' to an established hierarchy.

For Acker (1990), gender is a central dynamic in work organizations. Acker (1990) reviews the contributions of scholars studying women and organizations. She believes it is necessary to bring this knowledge together in a systemic feminist theory for several reasons. First, the gender segregation of work, including divisions between paid and unpaid work, is partly created through organizational practices. Second, income and status inequality between women and men is also partly created through organizational processes; understanding these processes is necessary for understanding gender inequality. Third, organizations are one arena in which cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced. Knowledge of cultural production is important for understanding gender construction. Fourth, some aspects of individual gender identity, perhaps particularly masculinity, are also products of organizational processes and pressures. Fifth, an important feminist project is to make large scale organizations more democratic and more supportive of humane goals. Acker (1990) examines organizations as gendered processes in which both gender and sexuality have been obscured through a gender-neutral, asexual discourse, and suggests some of the ways that social concepts of gender, the body and sexuality are part of the processes of control in work organizations.

Another impediment to feminist theorizing about workplaces and organizations is that the available discourses conceptualize organizations as gender neutral (Acker 1990). Acker argues that gender is difficult to see when only the masculine is present: "[the] most powerful organizational positions are almost entirely dominated by men, with the exception of the occasional biological female who acts as a social man"[2] (1990: 300). Finally, when it is acknowledged that women and men are affected differently by organizations, it is assumed that gendered behaviours are brought into the organization from 'outside', thus contaminating supposedly gender-neutral structures. This leaves the view that organizations are separate structures from the people who work within them as well as broader society (Acker 1990).

Acker (1990) examines Kanter's (1976) argument that the problems women have in large organizations are consequences of their structural placement: mostly in dead end jobs or as tokens at the top. Acker considers these insights but believes that when Kanter poses the argument as structure *or* gender, she implicitly suggests gender stands outside of structure. For example, she fails to account for gender differences in the situation of the token. As a result, Acker (1990) builds on these feminist attempts at theorizing about gender and organizations. She argues that thus far theories have only taken us a part of the way in understanding how deeply embedded gender is in

---

[2] A 'social man' used in this context is relying on the notion of social constructs of masculinity, alike Ranson's and Snitow's use of 'conceptual man'. A 'conceptual man' is matching male styles and behaviours within the workplace; not necessarily acting like a man but identifying with men (Ranson 2005). This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

organization, suggesting that "theories that posit organization and bureaucracy as gender neutral cannot adequately account for this continual gendered structuring" (Acker 1990: 305). But the gendered nature of social practices inheres also in organizations. Gender functions as an interpretive system that can be approached by participants in a community to make sense of and structure their particular social practices (Lazar 2007). Based on the meanings of 'male' and 'female', and the consequences assigned to one or the other within concrete social practices, such as those within a workplace, this allocation becomes a constraint on further practices (Lazar 2007: 143).

Acker (1990) argues that class is constructed through gender and that class relations are always gendered. She asserts "that the structure of the labour market, relations in the workplace, the control of the work process, and the underlying wage relation are always affected by symbols of gender, processes of gender identity and material inequalities between women and men" (Acker 1990: 305). In organizational structures, both jobs and hierarchies are abstract categories that have no occupants thus no human bodies and no gender. However, this abstract job can exist if there is a worker. It is said that a hypothetical worker cannot have other imperatives that impinge upon the job. The gender neutral status of a job and of the organizational theories of which it is a part depend on the assumption that the worker is abstract, disembodied, although in actuality both the concept of a job and real workers are gendered and 'bodied' (Acker 1990: 309). Acker writes: "the abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job, has no sexuality, no emotions and does

not procreate" (Acker 1990: 310). Sexuality, procreation and emotions all disrupt the ideal functioning of the organization. Therefore, according to Acker, the abstract worker is actually a man and it is the man's body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation and conventional control of emotions that pervades work environments (1990: 311). More clearly, the male-centric workplace is presented as gender neutral.

The male-centric work place is not visibly 'male', because it is defined as 'work' or 'good worker' habits. For example, a 'good worker' is not distracted by an ill child at home or being late to pick a child up from daycare – tasks which mothers, rather than fathers, tend to take on. Gender segregation at work is also sometimes openly justified by the necessity to control sexuality, by women being barred from types of work, such as skilled blue-collar work, where most workers are men, on the grounds that potentially disruptive sexual liaisons should be avoided. On the other hand, the gendered definition of some jobs includes sexualisation of the woman worker as a part of the job. These are jobs that often serve men, such as secretaries or care workers such as nurses (Acker 1990).

Acker (1990) argues that gender hierarchy is witnessed through examples of work organizations willing to sexualize and objectify women's bodies. As Acker announces, these symbolic expressions of male dominance act as controls over women in work organizations because they are implicitly excluded from this informal bonding. Symbolically, male heterosexual sexuality plays an important role in legitimating organizational power. Currently, hegemonic masculinity is typified by the image of the strong, technically-competent, authoritative leader who is sexually potent and

attractive, has a family and his emotions under control. However, women's bodies cannot be adapted to hegemonic masculinity. Acker (1990) contends that for women to try to function at the top of male hierarchies this requires that women render irrelevant everything that makes them women.

Acker's (1990) focus on the social construction of gender follows Kanter's (1976) advice to study processes through which men and women are allocated to different social locations as well as Reskin's (1988) lead in framing men as agents who actively create gender hierarchy at work through the sexualisation of women. Acker (1990) shows how work organizations perpetuate women's economic and cultural disadvantages. Her focus on society's gender order showed how the social organization of life beyond the workplace is embedded in the organizations.

The 'Conceptual' Man

Ranson (2005) reviews prominent theories of women and work in an article in which she further develops Snitow's (1990) concept of the 'conceptual man'. Ranson begins by looking at the landmark study of women sales persons in the formerly all male sales force in the U.S by Kanter (1976). She acknowledges that this study was conducted during the second wave of the women's movement when liberal feminism was the dominant discourse. The goals of liberal feminism included ensuring women's access to the same employment opportunities as men and equality for women and men under the law. Ranson (2005) argues that although more recent women entrants into male dominated work fields receive more legal as well as cultural support for their presence than previously, their difficulties remain. Kanter (1976) thought that with

increased participation of women in various work spaces their challenges would lessen, yet Ranson finds that this is not the case (2005: 147). In fact, others argue that many of the problems encountered by women in the public sphere, in spite of (and as a result of) gaining access to education and paid employment, are due to unchanging gendered social structures (Lazar 2007, forthcoming). Among the difficulties are exclusion and alienation among peers and by subordinates, the lack of female role models and self-determined leadership styles for women managers, suppression of nonmainstream voices in peer discussions, and the double-shift shouldered by women in the office and at home (Lazar 2007). Relying on an examination of Acker (1990), Ranson contends that workplace organizations are not gender-neutral spaces which women may enter in an equal position to men.

Ranson (2005) explores this idea through interview data from 37 women trained as engineers. Unlike professions such as medicine and law, both of which are much closer to gender parity, engineering remains male-dominated. Approximately 20% of the class entering into engineering departments in Canadian universities are women (Ranson 2005: 149).

Engineering has strong links to masculine attributes of scientific and technical rationality. Initiatives to get women more involved in engineering have been predicated on the notion that women must fit into the mould of engineering, not vice versa (Ranson 2005). She also found that organizational expectations favoured people who were able to put work demands first. These expectations were perceived as gender neutral, yet the researcher came to view that gender neutrality is itself a socially and

culturally constructed discourse that grants legitimacy to women's professional contribution only when they act like men (Ranson 2005). Yet the acceptance of women as 'conceptual men' means that gender discrimination remains hidden in a 'gender-neutral' environment.

Professional forestry, and the forestry industry overall, has been historically and continues to be male dominated (Sweeney 2008; Reed 2003; Tripp-Knowles 1999; Klausen 1998). Forestry workers have had distinct historical rhetorical reference to physicality and danger that are linked directly to elements of traditional masculinity which have been so important in defining forestry culture. Reed (2003) analyses the practice and discourse of forestry work in a Canadian context. She argues that the women's experience is marginalized by government and academic definitions because the forestry work in which women are typically found is overlooked. Reed "observed that women both protested their marginal position within forestry while reinforced dominant stereotypes that exclude them from participating more fully in forestry occupations (2003: 373). Reed found that women in forestry related occupations face challenges in the male dominated work and are subject to restrictions in hiring and promotion practices, as Ranson later found in her study of women engineers (2005).

Reed maintains that women's work in forestry occupations has been shaped by these formations of masculinity (2003: 386). Women have largely been unsuccessful in entering logging where 'danger' and 'physicality' are defining characteristics. However, where they do enter in occupations such as log scalers, foresters, and tree planters they provide a direct challenge to some of the conventional elements of masculinity (Reed

2003: 386). Sweeney explains that due to the competitive nature of the tree planting industry, contractors must provide a management team that caters to the needs and occupational culture of the client firms (2008: 28). Many contractors may therefore be unwilling to use female supervisors as their primary client liaison because, similar to contractors in the primary segments of the forest industry, they fear that by doing so they may lose "male advantage" (Hanson and Pratt 1995: 6).

The male domination and implied masculinity of forestry work has a ripple effect on gender norms in tree planting. Tree planting is seasonal, transient labour, and as mentioned in the introduction, its workers have historically come from marginalized groups, such as women and First Nations people. Within forestry historically, including tree planting, women have participated as a reserve and flexible labour force (Klausen 1998). It could be argued that because tree planting work is marginal, it may be more accepting of female workers than other parts of the forestry industry. However, the gender disparity is much more evident when the lack of women in more permanent and/or higher positions within tree planting camps is taken into account. So, despite some advances women may have made in tree planting, as Reed asserts: "there is no doubt, however, that their [women's] status within the forestry labour force and within forestry communities remains marginalized". (Reed 2003: 386). Thus, the male domination in the higher status aspects of forestry work is reflected in tree planting, even its marginalized position.

Male domination of specific industries such as forestry, the association of certain occupations with masculinity and the gendered aspects of many opportunity structures

all contribute to the shaping of women workers as 'conceptual men'. Reed (2003) explains that in subtle ways, her interviewees often inadvertently reinforced the gender divides that they so openly opposed. She argues that gendered identities in forestry are not just created by men in forestry occupations; they are also reinforced by women working in forestry. This situation can be understood by considering the ways in which the occupational community of forestry is socially embedded within social norms that compose forestry (Reed 2003). Jorgenson (2002) notes that this may be part of a typical adaptive strategy on the part of women who measure the requirements of success in male terms and attempt to assimilate by disqualifying their femininity and by matching male styles of behaviour. But this suggests a conscious 'anti-woman' stance that misrepresents the complexity of the situation. As Acker (1990) suggests, matching male styles and behaviour may be difficult to avoid when they are presented as organizational expectations and simultaneously proclaimed as gender neutral.

While being accepted in a workplace as a 'conceptual man' may be attractive to an individual woman, it has pitfalls. Lorber (2006) explains that everyday gender interactions build gender into the work process and other organizations and institutions, which in turn reinforce gendered expectations for individuals. More specifically, Reed (2003) and Brandth and Haugen (2000), explain that the gendering of work sites occurs in the structural hierarchies of power, in the practices and activities of work, and in the ways in which workers display their gendered characteristics. The failure to acknowledge the role of gender in setting those expectations makes the gendered aspect of those expectations invisible. Failure to acknowledge gendered structure

means that women are unaware of the implicit barriers they face in the workplace because of their gender. Placing responsibility solely on the individual for success or failure means that when women bump up against gendered norms or expectations, and cannot seem to succeed, they may see it as their personal failure.

Motherhood can be a major turning point in the careers of women, particularly those working in male dominated areas[3]. Ranson (2005) explains that retention of women in engineering becomes difficult over time because most women in the profession are in their late twenties and early thirties - an age at which that parenthood becomes significant. Tree planting is populated by women in the same age group, and thus, this workplace may face similar losses of women due to parenthood. Ranson (2005) considers how parenthood becomes the defining point at which women, but not men, leave the engineering profession, move to part-time work and in many other ways put their careers on hold. She argues that both the experience of and social construction of motherhood, and its interaction with career-paths, expose a major fallacy in the liberal discourses of gender equality and neutrality in women entering male dominated occupations and workplaces. As Acker argues, pregnancy and motherhood are signs of female, sexualized bodies that are difficult to mesh with the

---

[3] Some may argue that this could also be said that fatherhood could also be a major turning point for male tree planters. However, I have noticed that more men stay in the reforestation business longer either in higher managerial positions or as tree planters where it is more socially acceptable for the father to leave his children at home to work in remote locations. On the other hand, mothers generally have a tougher time in our society to leave their children and partners at home for weeks on end (which is how most tree planting work is conducted in northern Ontario).

hypothetical 'body-less' worker (1990). Once women begin to combine motherhood with work, they are no longer seen as 'conceptual   men'. Rather, the myth of gender neutrality is exposed – only those women who can fit the idea of the conceptual man can be fully accepted into the workplace (Ranson 2005).

Liberal feminism, an approach that relies on gender neutrality as a path towards equality for women, provides good arguments in support of women's rights to enter male worlds and to earn equal pay; however, it does little to defend women as mothers. Women entering or already engaged in 'masculine' professional work also confront cultural expectations about mothering. This expectation of 'mothering' directly contradicts workplace expectations. In contrast, the men with whom these women work with are not subject to the same social expectations regarding family involvement. Policies like parental leave or flexible work schedules are generally implied in gender neutral terms but in practice men tend to not use such policies, and some programs are not as generous to men as they are to women. Therefore, the policies are seen to make certain concessions for women, rather than as promoting gender equality. Ranson (2005) argues that women are aware of the way special concessions may mark them as different, and recognize the consequences of taking them up.

Liberal Feminist Discourse and Gender Neutrality

We need to look more closely at what Ranson exposes as a major fallacy of the liberal feminist discourse on gender equality. Ranson describes how social constructions of motherhood trump idealized gender equality in the workplace through

her analysis of the experiences of women engineers. I will begin a closer examination of this fallacy, by first exploring liberal feminism and, briefly, how gender equality is understood in the current neoliberal context. Second, I will expose how this discourse is prevalent yet misleading within tree planting work. Third, this leads to a discussion of how liberal individualism represents the individual as disembodied (Pateman 1986).

In the 1960s and 1970s, liberal optimists and second wave liberal feminists sought to achieve women's equality through the implementation of legislation and policies based on a non-interventionist state, gender neutral law, and an egalitarian model of the nuclear family. Brodie (2008) discusses the ways in which the dominant thread of second wave feminism and social liberalism in Canada emerged out of the post war liberalism. After returning from war, people had expectations that the government should regulate and look after its citizens. Social liberalism was grounded on three principles. First, that the market should be regulated by democratic governments to maximize the collective welfare of all citizens. Second, that public administration should be governed and prioritize the equality of all citizens. Third, that social liberalism was concerned that all citizens should claim equality and social security (Brodie 2008: 149).

Brodie argues that the idea of gender equality in second wave feminism emerged out of the discourses of post-War social liberalism and the institution of the welfare state (2008: 150). At this time (1940's), the Canadian welfare state reflected social policy which protected workers from the risks of unemployment, sickness and injury. Yet, women were seen through the lens of the nuclear family as wives and

mothers, not as workers. This is because social citizenship rights were largely premised on full-time employment, which was, at that time, the domain of men. This led to the validation of men's entitlements to social citizenship while women were cast as dependent citizens – dependent on individual men, family or state welfare (Brodie 2008: 150). Post-War social liberalism promoted the male breadwinner model of gender relations. In this sense, government 'gender-neutral' policies reflected a gendered society, much as workplace organizations do in Acker's arguments.

Despite the improvements to social security and social equality through these programs, feminist interpretations of the welfare state have consistently pointed out that social liberalism's commitments to universality, equality and social security were decidedly gendered (Brodie 2008: 150). At the same time, there is implicit consensus among many feminists regarding the value of the ideals of liberalism (Lazar 2007). For instance, the ideals of freedom and equality are historically important for politically disadvantaged groups of women who have been systematically denied equality under the law, and denied the freedom to control their lives, make choices, and act as agents in the world. Additionally, the overall political environment that valued ideals of equality and social welfare provided a space for the women's movement to pronounce themselves as something different than solely as wives and mothers (Brodie 2008).

In the 1970s and early 80s the women's movement was seeing a dramatic increase in federal and provincial initiatives regarding the advancement of gender equity agendas. Such advances included the constitutional entrenchment of a sexual equality clause in the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the formation of the

Court Challenges Program to fund equality-based claims-making in the courts (Brodie 2008). Brodie (2008) argues that such laws of women's equality provided the political climate for legislative remedies to structural barriers of equality. However, just as the climate changed in policies, political discourses regarding women's equality came to a halt. Neoliberal political rationalities eroded these advances in gender equality practices.

Neoliberal Discourse

Neoliberalism is a political philosophy that emerged in dominant discourse around the mid 1980s. The central principle of neoliberal policy is free markets and free trade. Neoliberalism seeks to transfer control of the economy from the state to the private sector. Neoliberalism twists earlier liberal ideas of 'gender neutrality' and an egalitarian family to develop the notions of the genderless international citizen, and coupled this abstract individual with privatization. The ideology of privatization believes that the market is, generally, not only a better regulator of the economy, but also of social life than the state. Individuals are expected to have the skills and power to negotiate the market, acting 'rationally' to fulfill their best interests. In neoliberal political approaches, the state plays into these beliefs about the market and the individual, reducing its involvement in social regulation, and leaving the market-based social structure to maintain itself. This combination, in turn renders structured inequality and women/gender invisible (Chunn 2001:255). While many feminists continue to see law and the state as places of struggle against this new order, as Chunn (2001) argues, it is also clear that socio-legal reforms alone cannot end women's

inequality. Even while acknowledging the usefulness of certain liberal feminist ideals in critical feminist terms, there is a need to caution against slipping into the mainstream neoliberal thinking pervasive in late modern societies (Lazar 2007: 154). Of particular concern to feminist ideology is the global neoliberal discourse of post feminism (Lazar 2007). Recently, a central task for some feminists has been to challenge the neoliberal idea that now pervades public culture – the idea of inevitability of the market as the main regulator of social life.

Over the past two decades there has been a dismantling of social liberalism that had been a large part of the second wave feminist movement. The practices of neoliberalism campaigned against the idea of gender equality (Brodie 2008). Feminism and feminists were soon belittled in political debate and in the popular media, and along with other equality seeking groups labeled as 'special interest groups'. According to neoliberal discourse, once certain equality indicators such as rights to educational access, labour force participation, property ownership and control of fertility have been achieved by women, feminism is considered to have outlived its purpose and individual equality 'appears' to exist (Lazar 2007). Brodie contends that "the gender politics of the 20th century have been displaced, marginalized, and trumped by the neoliberal idioms, representations and interventions"(2008: 161). She argues that neoliberal ideology cast gender as being irrelevant, and wives and mothers as critical to the reproduction of families, family values and society (Brodie 2008). As such, traces of social liberalism have been declining rapidly in policies and practices with the dominant pressure of neoliberalism becoming part of the Canadian national identity (Brodie 2008). In other

words, the dominant culture within Canada cannot see clearly the problems that neoliberalism creates for them. The performance of neoliberal political practices frames gender as if it no longer matters. In fact, the neoliberalist promise of self-sufficiency is, although not named as such, a masculine construct (Brodie 2008).

As just discussed, neoliberalism is the dominant frame for constructions of women and work policies and legislation within the last few years. Neoliberal discourse pervades our understanding of identity within Canada. I often found echoes of neoliberalist values of individualism and self-sufficiency in my interviews and observations. There is a constant rhetoric within tree planting regarding how the work develops one's physical and mental individual strength. Ideas about fitness and strength were dominant and incessant topics of discussion. Largely this was to do with being able to 'survive' the weather, the bugs and the other discomforts tree planters need to endure for their work. These findings led me to explore and analyze concepts of the body, 'fitness' and individual strength developed by various scholars, especially Susan Bordo (1993) and Macdonald, O'Flynn and Wright (2006). To demonstrate the link between neoliberal values and the body, I begin, however, with Carole Pateman's discussion of the connections between liberal individualism and the body.

The Body

Pateman explains that the most fundamental abstraction in the concept of liberal individualism is "the abstraction of the individual from the body. In order for the individual to appear in liberal theory as a universal figure, who represents anyone and everyone, the individual must be disembodied" (1986: 8). Acker (1990) points out that

this political dialogue of the universal 'individual' or 'citizen', fundamental to ideas of democracy and contract, excluded women. Women were seen as defined by their bodies in a way that men were not because of their ability to reproduce as well as through hyper sexualisation. Women now have rights in liberal democratic states yet they stand in an ambiguous relationship to the abstract individual of the state who is constructed from a white male body (Pateman 1988).

While the socio-political idea of the individual as abstracted from a body was developing over time, the body has simultaneously been understood as an indicator of social status. Bordo (1993) argues that historical changes in the social symbolism of body weight and size have been marked by class, race and gender. For example, in the mid-19th century bulging stomachs represented bourgeois success while by contrast the slender body announced aristocratic status (Bordo 1993). However, over time these identifications changed and subsequently excess body weight came to be seen as reflecting moral or personal inadequacy, or lack of will. She argues that this construction of excess weight is only possible in a culture of overabundance – those who control the production of 'culture' have more than enough to eat (Bordo 1993: 186).

Bordo ties this construction of excess weight to ideas of muscularity. Muscularity has had a variety of cultural meanings that have prevented the well-developed body from playing a major role in middle class conceptions of attractiveness. Muscles have chiefly symbolized and continue to symbolize the masculine power of physical strength, and physical strength as seen as necessary for manual labour. When

associations between fat and lower class status exist, they are usually mediated by moral qualities – fat being perceived as indicative of laziness, lack of discipline, and absence of all those managerial abilities that confer upward mobility (Bordo 1993: 199). A muscular male body, on the other hand, may represent working class masculinity, but represents that masculinity as the embodiment of hard work. Currently, the well muscled body has become a cultural icon and being 'fit and 'working out' has become a sexualized activity (Bordo 1993).

Bordo states that the "resurgent muscularity and bulk of the current male body-ideal, carries connotations of fragility and lack of power" (1993: 171) when such muscularity is found in the slender female body. She describes the rules governing the construction of contemporary femininity as a 'double bind' that legislates contradictory ideals and directives. Women learn to embody the 'masculine' language and values – self control, determination, and mastery of emotion (Bordo 1993). Bordo argues that female bodies are stripped of power through the ways slenderness symbolizes freedom from an uncontrolled femininity. As women resist their hunger and moderate their body through work out regimes they in turn become more practiced in male virtues of control and self mastery. Bordo articulates that "the ideal of slenderness, then, and the diet and exercise regimens that have become inseparable from it offer the illusion of meeting, through the body, the contradictory demands of the contemporary ideology of femininity" (1993: 172). The idea of controlling the body to fit this norm is key – that is why tree planting is liberating for many women who participate in this workforce. The demands of the work do the controlling of the body for the women - they do not have

to watch what they eat, the can just enjoy food. Historically, a fat woman was sexy because she allowed herself to lose control and in a sense to enjoy her sexuality. However, in the contemporary western world, a sexy woman is typically seen to be in control of her body which is exhibited through a firm, slim and muscularly defined body.

Hargreaves (1994), building on Bordo's (1993) work, points out that slender muscularity is the new female body ideal, at least among the white middle class if not across all groups in the west. Achieving this ideal requires even more discipline than did the earlier ideal of simple thinness. Thinness has been exchanged for "tautness and containment . . . and any form of excess, sagginess or wrinkling—even on a thin body— spoils its line and firm appearance" (Hargreaves 1994: 161). In western cultures today, women are bombarded with images of the body ideal. Over the past two decades the cultural and societal valorization of physical exercise has also permeated notions of the body beautiful such that, for today's (white) woman, the beautiful body is not just thin; it is firm, and well toned. This is what makes it sexy. Physical exercise is seen as a way of attaining this and has led to health becoming synonymous with beauty (Choi and Mutrie 1997). The strenuous physical demands of tree planting typically shape women's bodies to become more slender which in turn creates this 'healthy' ideal.

This idea of social symbolism and identity relates to women's consistent attraction to being both muscular and slender within a tree planting camp. Within a tree planting camp, willed self-control is minimal because of the amount of energy the work requires tree planters to exert throughout the day. According to WorkSafeBC, a tree planter who plants 1200 trees a day lifts a cumulative weight of more than 1,000

kilograms, bends more than 200 times per hour, drives the shovel into the ground more than 200 times per hour and travels about sixteen kilometres on foot while carrying heavy loads of tree seedlings (Mueller 2008: 27). With this much exertion, women (and men) can more easily lose weight, prove their strength by participating in tree planting work and gain greater cultural indicator's of fitness - that is, muscles - for when they return from their seasonal job.

Ideas of 'fitness' are associated with ideals of health for young people. But men and women express these ideals differently. Macdonald, O'Flynn and Wright (2006) draw on Foucault's (1995) notion of 'practices of the self' to examine how young people negotiate public health discourse on health, fitness and the body. Through in-depth interviews they studied the meaning of physical activity in men's and women's lives. For the young men, health combined with fitness was embodied in the ability to do physical work (Macdonald et al. 2006). For young women, health was associated with managing and monitoring practices associated with eating and exercise to maintain an 'appropriate' body shape (Macdonald et al. 2006). Therefore, the authors suggest that identifying as a man or a woman will strongly influence the orientations to the body and the ways in which health is discussed. Individuals constitute selves/subjectivities differently in relation to particular discourses. Femininity and masculinity are inscribed differently on the body because of culturally constituted ways of being, acting, and experiencing the body and culturally constituted investments in different relations to bodily appearance (Macdonald et al 2006). For men, fitness equals muscles that represent hard work and discipline, similar to Bordo's (1993) association between

masculinity and muscularity. For women, fitness equals a slender, toned body that represents control of the appropriate shape for a women's body. This slenderness for women provides a connection to the male professional model, because it represents self-discipline, a virtue both masculine and middle class. Constant watchfulness over appetite and strenuous work on the body are required to conform to the middle class ideal of hard work, control and self-mastery (Bordo 1993: 202). Pateman argues that women stand in an ambiguous relationship to the universal individual who is "constructed from a male body so that his identity is always masculine" (1988: 223). According to Bordo (1993), women who represent self-control and self-discipline through a slender body, are seen as less uncontrollably feminine. This makes them more adaptable to a male-defined workplace, more likely to be seen as 'conceptual men' (Reed 2005).

It can be argued that in tree planting a woman's body is both the commodified physical force through which she gains capital, and simultaneously, a commodity that she works on to gain cultural capital. Shilling (1993) touches on Bourdieu's (1984) analysis of the body that involves an examination of the multiple ways in which the body has become commodified in modern societies. This refers not only to the body's implication in the buying and selling of labour power, but to the methods by which the body has become a more comprehensive form of physical capital; a possessor or power, status and distinctive symbolic forms which is integral to the accumulation of various resources (Shilling 1993). Physical capital is most usually converted into economic capital (money, goods and services), cultural capital (for example, education) and social

capital (social networks which enable reciprocal calls to be made on the goods and services of its members). Bourdieu (1984) argues that social classes develop clearly identifiable relations to their bodies which result in the production of distinct bodily forms. However, Shilling (1993) argues that Bourdieu makes it difficult to focus on cross-cultural factors of importance to the formation of bodies and the conversion of physical capital. For example, women or ethnic minorities are affected by a society that is patriarchal or racist as well as capitalist.

To understand this formation of bodies and conversion of physical capital in terms of tree planting, I return to Bordo (1993) and her insights regarding social and historical analysis of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' emphasizing power relations. Bordo (1993) rests her analysis on a Foucauldian understanding of power relations. For Foucault, modern power produces and normalizes bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination. Understanding this sort of power requires two conceptual changes. First, we must see power as a dynamic network of non-centralized forces rather than a possession of individuals or groups. Second, we must understand that these forces are not random, but assume particular historical forms within which certain groups and ideologies have dominance (Bordo 1993).

Shilling (1993) illustrates the general importance of the body to people, either the concern with function or alternatively with cultivating the body as an expression of elite status. As I explained in the introductory chapter, both men and women who have historically been part of forestry are from the working class. However, the majority of the people currently involved in tree planting are from middle to upper class families

and are university educated. Women tree planters have explained that one reason they participate in tree planting is because it gets them 'fit' and slender - both symbols of elite status. Therefore, the opportunity to develop this type of physical capital through tree planting labour is a large drawing point for more-or-less middle class women to engage in a typically 'blue collar' job.

Concerns with weight and having a slender body are highly gendered. Chester (1994) analysed the discourses women use regarding body image and the way they monitor weight control, through interviews with both women diagnosed with 'anorexia' and other women considered to be 'normal'. She found that many western women felt that they were overweight and that they 'ate too much' (Chester 1994). Chester also found that these concerns were significantly greater for women than for men. Further, both anorexic and non-anorexic women had the same visions of what would happen if they achieved the perfect body shape: they imagined it was the beginning of a new and exciting life (Chester 1994). Many of the women interviewed in Chester's study associated having control over their weight with a sense of control in their life. According to Chester, "losing weight is a statement that says 'I am in control of my body'" by the women she interviewed (1994: 453). Thus, increase in weight gain is equated with a lack of self discipline and a poor sense of control. In sum, Chester found that women's discourse of control over their bodies was dictated by what they can eat and what is forbidden. Controlling their food intake helped women feel a sense of control over their bodies and in a sense a control over something they 'can control' - other aspects in their life being uncontrollable (Chester 1994: 454).

This sense of control over one's body has been embraced by the middle class who are predisposed to regarding the body as a project to manage and improve (Maguire 2002). Maguire (2002) argues that over the past thirty years two body dilemmas have developed – one of health and the other of appearance - becoming *idées fixes* for the middle class (see Baudrillard 1998; Bourdieu 1984). She claims that part of the expansion of the middle class in the post-1960s is this notion of fitness activity as a primary leisure activity. Fitness is considered key to making the body look and feel good (Maguire 2002). This bodily self-improvement is an integral aspect of self-identity and social mobility (Maguire 2002; Bourdieu 1984). Maguire contends that "fitness has been promoted as a widespread mode of empowerment through which people – men and women – can take control of their bodies and health" (2002: 453). The body, as both Bordo (1993) and Maguire (2002) explain, its health and appearance, is created through vigilant monitoring and continual body work. A central belief of white middle class women in contemporary culture is that a thin body means a healthy and 'fit' body. Such a body grants physical strength and physical and emotional feelings of well-being, as well as the 'cultural capital' through which one can express elite status (Shilling 1993).

Conclusion

This thesis aims to advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex relations between power, work, liberal feminism and neoliberalist ideology and the gendered social arrangements maintained through identity, body images, and sexuality dialogue, in the specific location of a tree planting camps in northern Ontario.

Organizations reflect and reinforce social norms around gender. Despite the goals of liberalism, work place norms and gender neutrality operate to disembody workers, and gender remains a central organizing concept for social relations in and out of the workplace. The norms of a workspace can be flexible and admit women as 'conceptual men'. But if a woman becomes a mother or her body gives other signs incompatible with being seen as more or less a 'man', – through the body itself (pregnancy, for example), as well as through certain behaviours or expectations around mothering – gender reasserts itself as primary.

Attempting to understand gender relations: "...is all the more pertinent in present times, when issues of gender, power, and ideology have become increasingly more complex and subtle" (Lazar 2007: 142). In the next two chapters, I intend to show the complex, subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways in which frequently taken for granted gender assumptions and hegemonic power relations are indirectly produced, sustained, negotiated and challenged within Ontario tree planting work communities. Understanding how gender is negotiated in this specific space provides insight to the kinds of barriers, young, university-educated, mostly white and middle-class women, who do not have childcare responsibilities, in short, those most likely to benefit from ideals of equality based in gender neutrality, continue to struggle with in the workplace.

Analysis – Individualism and Equality

Introduction

Prior to conducting my interviews I had a few misconceptions regarding trends I would find regarding women and tree planting. Initially, I thought that I would find that women tree planters expressed more interest in the environmental concerns regarding the work of reforestation or, more specifically, that more women would emphasize a connection between the outdoors and eco-feminist ideology in their tree planting work. Of course, some women did explain that they endured the harsh work of tree planting because they enjoyed being outdoors. However, after more and more discussions with women, I realized that they were expressing reasons for tree planting that fit into liberal feminist discourse around issues of work and employment equity. Many women did not believe that there may be difficulties being a woman in a job that has historically been dominated by male workers and supervisors. Most women felt that successful tree planting was based on individual achievement, and not on being a man or a woman. As well, the majority of the women I interviewed believed that they would certainly have opportunities to move into managerial positions if they chose that goal and worked to earn it. However, as I mentioned in my last chapter, one of the problematic assumptions of neoliberal discourse is that women can 'have it all' if only they put their minds to it or try hard enough. This reframes women's struggles and accomplishments

as a purely personal matter, thus obscuring the social and material constraints faced by different women.

Being a woman in a tree planting camp is complex. Each woman I interviewed had a unique experience tree planting; however, there were a few common and congruent trends amongst the interviewees' responses. Many of the themes arising in the interviews stem from one common belief among women tree planters that as the number of women working in silviculture increased, there would be more and 'better' participation by the women involved. This reflects Kanter's beliefs developed in the early 1970s about how women's participation would change workplaces.

Post-secondary student tree planters did not come to dominate the tree planting labour force until the late 1970s, when private contractors began to appear. One of the most visible changes to the labour force that occurred alongside the rise of the large contractors was the increasing number of female tree planters. This is especially significant considering that most forestry work – especially those jobs that require workers to live in bush camps – is male-dominated (Dunk 2001; Sweeney 2008). One female tree planter who began work in the late 1990s maintained that "when I first started there was one female supervisor ever in our company and maybe one fifth of the camp was female, now I see many more women in management and about half the tree planters in camp are women". Male and female tree planters are generally becoming more equal in ratios in their workplace. The general rise in women's representation is due to several contributing factors: informal company policies of hiring more women; the acceptance by both genders that more equal ratios will create greater

group cohesion; women in managerial positions who are able to hire more women and serve as role models for women tree planters; and the lack of physical barriers to women and men for success as a tree planter.

This chapter is organized into six sections, primarily reflecting themes I found in my interviewees' statements, as well as those in the literature. I begin with a focus on planters and the actual planting work. In the first section, I examine the notion of women as equal planters. The second section describes the sense of competition amongst women and men planters in regards to production. The third part of the analysis considers the idea of individualism that is pervasive in tree planting discourse. All three themes reflect neoliberalist beliefs and attitudes which emphasize individualism and downplay structural and social effects on peoples' lives. They simultaneously show how aspects of tree planting work are inherently gendered, reflecting Acker's (1990) and Reskin's (1988) arguments. Here, the organizational structure of tree planting is not very separate from beliefs about equality and individualism.

I then move to the management aspects of tree planting. The fourth section examines gender equality within management. The fifth explores women's managerial style. Finally, I look at women mentors amongst tree planters. These last three themes reflect barriers to women's progress in organizations as discussed by Acker (1990) (organization is gendered male) and Kanter (1976) and Tripp-Knowles (1999) (the significance of peer groups and mentoring).

The order of this thematic discussion does not reflect the order I used in my literature review. It does, however, reflect the centrality of individual effort as it was posed by women tree planters as a solution to potential barriers to success in terms of planting lots of trees, as well as to success in advancing within the tree planting companies. The order in which I have chosen to discuss the themes reflects what the research participants bring to this thesis. In the conclusion, I discuss how these findings connect to the next chapter, which discusses body image, sexual objectification, morality and/or physical inferiority.

Equality

I found much reflection of neoliberal discourse in women tree planters' responses to my interview questions. My interviewees engaged in neoliberal discourse in their workplace in a few different ways. Firstly, they discuss the equity and equality that they see existing within the tree planting workforce. Second, they emphasize personal struggle and achievements as the path to success. Here, I discuss women tree planters' concepts of 'equality' between the genders and 'individualism' which pervade much of my interviews.

But before I begin that discussion, I would like to explain the definition of 'success' in the tree planting world. One clear indicator of success, similar to many workplaces is to move into management positions, such as crew boss, tree checker/assessor, tree deliverer and, the pinnacle, camp supervisor. Another definition of success is being the worker who plants the most trees. As tree planting is piece wage

work, those who plant the most trees are rewarded with bigger paycheques. They are also socially rewarded, earning respect and prestige through being known as a "high baller". A 'high baller' is the term used to define planters with very high production. Very high production means a planter plants a large number of trees each day and continually throughout the season.

Throughout the interview process, I heard incongruous remarks regarding women's experiences of work and equality. Over and over again women would declare that they are able to plant as many trees as men. Along with this, some would say that there was no disparity between women and men entering management positions. Yet when asked why most camp management and planters were predominantly male, and why it was mostly men who planted the most trees, no one could explain this inconsistency. Of course some women do plant more trees than men, and women occasionally hold high positions of management within the reforestation company. But, on average, women are employed less frequently than men, plants fewer trees and thereby have lower wages than men. Women are promoted less often than men, or relegated to certain management positions such as crew bossing and assessing, while higher status and higher paid delivering and supervising positions are assigned most often to men.

The majority of women found that success in tree planting was dependent on individual effort and achievement, regardless of one's physical strength. Much of this dialogue stems from a common tree planting belief that reforestation work can be done by able bodied persons of varying physical strength. This belief is largely based on the

idea that mental fortitude is what allows a planter to concentrate, persevere and thereby plant the most trees.

Rita, a four year veteran and quality assessor, is adamant that women are as capable as men to tree plant. She believes that it is a numbers game and if more women participated in tree planting then there would be more women as 'high ballers': "It is all about fortitude and it has nothing to do with physical ability. I mean a guy can carry more trees technically but at the same time it is all about mind power and pushing through it". To some extent I agreed but then I asked her why in the camp she worked at this summer, there was only one woman represented in the top ten highest planters. Rita accounts for this and states:

> But we don't have that many girls (on this contract). And
>
> we also, have a lot of very good guy planters here too. But
>
> then there is Mary who high balled her contract in
>
> Timmins. And that is an intense and tough contract. Like
>
> if you look at the company stats there are tons of girls that
>
> are in the top. Plus, I think it is more recent where girls
>
> are participating more.

The idea that the increase in women's participation will increase the amount of women at the top of the production in planting trees is complicated. I think that despite the number of women currently tree planting there still is an unequal proportion of women on the 'high ball' list in relation to men. It is predominantly men who continue to dominate high-planting numbers during a planting contract. I contend that work places

(see Kanter 1976; Acker 1990; Ranson 2005) are not gender neutral, and that this contributes to the lower proportion of women who 'high ball'.

Work is not a gender neutral location filled with gender neutral people. For instance, Martha, a fourth year veteran tree planter, acknowledges that there is a gendered difference in the treatment she receives from her crew boss. Martha explains the unequal division of land, time and resources by the crew boss when assigning work to her crew members:

> Land is given more to the high ballers. Like Greg he always gets the biggest pieces and lots of trees. I guess it's hard to say and every tree planter thinks that but Greg was always cut in within the first five people. Whereas other people and I would be cut in at the very back [limiting time spent planting trees]. If you are always getting set up with nicer land by your crew boss and always the person getting cut in first then you are obviously going to plant more trees. Basically people that proved themselves one time or had the opportunity to prove themselves before to their crew boss from then on in will get more help and greater set up to highball. And then you are naturally going to get better. So then the people that are not improving or proving themselves are getting screwed over. Then they can't do anything about it. I felt like the boys,

not generally, but most of the boys were getting cut in

first.

Martha speaks out on her frustration with the difficulties women face proving

themselves in an inherently gendered work environment.

Martha's comment led me to reflect on my own past experience as a crew boss.

I decided who would get cut into the block first. This was based on who expressed the

desire to work hard, or plant the most trees, or who had a positive outlook on any type

of land. I assigned the first cut-ins to those who expressed confidence in their ability to

plant a lot of trees. Tree planters on my crew had to vocalize their desire to compete, to

improve and/or to be positive about their land even if it was a rather challenging piece

of land. To me it did not matter whether the person was male or female. However, I

recall that many women did not express much competitiveness; and even if they were

competitive, they expressed it in subtle ways. Could this difference affect the number

of trees a woman plants? I believe so. I believe this because a crew boss will work

harder to provide more trees for a planter, carry more trees to deeper parts of the land

for a planter, provide more emotional support for a planter and/or find 'nicer'/cleaner

pieces of land for a planter who they believe is working harder than the others on their

crew. A crew boss gets paid a percentage of each planter's earnings. A crew boss reaps

benefits from the crew's capacity to plant trees, thus the most efficient worker is

rewarded. In addition to economic benefits, the crew boss receives recognition from his

or her superiors for a job well done.

In understanding this crew boss/planter dynamic, we see that planter success is both encouraged by and at least partly dependent on decisions made by their crew boss. If unacknowledged gender biases or stereotypes play a part in how a crew boss treats a planter, this will in turn affect the planter's output. It is arguable that through the operation of sexism at subtle levels, a crew boss' perception of women in this line of work may impact the ways in which they 'help' a woman planter. Subtle gender differences such as societal expectations of women to be more passive and less competitive will also affect some women's work performance (see discussion of Ranson 2005 and Kanter 1976 in chapter 3).

Stereotypes about gender also contribute to women's self-perception and ability to succeed in tree planting. Some women believe that physical strength is determined by sex, thereby fostering the idea that men are stronger and more capable of doing manual labour such as reforestation – this means that women are less likely to expect to be able to 'high ball', thus losing opportunities for nice land, early cut-ins and quick tree delivery. This is a vicious circle – poor land, waiting for trees, and starting later means less opportunity to prove oneself and 'high ball'. When structural factors such as crew boss decision-making are not taken into account, a belief that women are not capable of high balling is reinforced. Ignoring gendered structures means that women are not necessarily able to see structural barriers that prevent success, and may assign their failure to themselves as individuals (see discussion of Lorber, 2006, chapter 3). Factors such as these can play a part in the successes or disappointments of women in silviculture.

Stephanie has another perspective regarding female participation within tree planting. She believes that women can overcome their so called 'physical disadvantage' with more perseverance and effort than their male counterparts. Stephanie, a three-year veteran in tree planting, discusses her view of women high balling a contract. Stephanie states,

> I think girls can do it, I don't think there is anything stopping them...I think, I hate saying it, but women just have to try a bit harder to do it. Most guys have more shoulder strength and upper body strength and therefore can carry a bit more...but for me, I know that I don't really compare myself to other guys because for me to put in those numbers I would have to work super hard and I am just not prepared to do that. It just seems like they don't have to work, like maybe they do, but not as hard as women.

I would like to draw out two ideas from Stephanie's remarks. First, is the idea of gendering the job and saying that men will perform better because of their physical strength. Second, is this notion of individualism which will be discussed at length after this section.

The physical demands and competitive aspects of tree planting can be associated with athletics. Tests conducted by Delia Roberts in 2004 found that

on average planters worked an impressive 8 hours/day at heart rates between 60 and 80 percent of maximum heart-rate and carried over 30% of their body weight in their planting bags. To fuel all this work, planters consumed approximately 5,000 calories per day but could not meet their energy needs, losing an average of nearly 2 kg over the 18 days of the study. Planters were working as hard as many elite athletes (Mueller 2008: 28).

A parallel can be drawn between the culture of tree planting and that of sport, in their emphasis on gender differences in strength. It is commonly accepted as fact in our society that on average, women are physically weaker than men, both in and out of the sporting arena (Bansow and Roth 2004). Looking closely at women's involvement in sports, Bansow and Roth contend that "in fact, it turns out that women are not weaker than men, at least they are not naturally weaker, nor weaker to the extent commonly believed" (2004: 245). Yet this myth of women's weakness often goes unchallenged even by feminists. Liberal feminists were instrumental in the legislation of the 1970's in the U.S that offered women, among many other rights and protections, equal opportunity to participate in athletics (Costa & Guthrie 1994). However, the resulting influx of girls and women in sports did not necessarily challenge the view of women as the weaker sex. Feminists point out that in sports, male athleticism exemplified in upper body strength is still valued over female athleticism, exemplified in agility (Costa & Guthrie 1994). As Dowling writes: "through sport, the male body signifies 'better

than,' 'stronger than,' 'more than.' And this superiority appears to be inevitable—a 'natural' result of the differences in size, strength, and physical power" (2000: 192).

Judith Butler (1990) pointed out that gender is not a given, nor something inscribed upon us. We perform gender by *doing* femininity and masculinity. Thus, sexed bodies are constructed through the activities we *do* continually, often without conscious thought. Butler's point perhaps can be extended to the strength differences, which liberal feminists sometimes accept as natural. According to Butler's view of bodies as constructed, strength differences are constructed as bodies that *do* femininity and masculinity. That is, *doing* masculinity builds strength, whereas *doing* femininity builds weakness (Bansow and Roth 2004: 247).

Despite our culture's tendency to stereotype males as being more muscular and stronger than females, it has been argued that the strength difference is actually on average only about 10% to 15% (Dowling 2000; Bansow and Roth 2004). This minor difference in strength is reflected in Mueller's account of women tree planters:

women carry the same weight in their bags as men, but

due to their smaller body size it means that women are

carrying about 30% of body mass, while men carry only

24%. Both the physiological and biochemical data show

that women are working at a higher intensity than men,

but that they are able to meet the performance demands

of this rigorous occupation as well as men do (2008: 28).

In other aspects of tree planting work, I found from my personal experience as a tree deliverer, that the strength difference between men and women was minor. Tree deliverers have been predominantly male because it is believed that the upper body strength needed to lift heavy tree boxes all day is typically too much for most women. Stephanie emphasizes this perspective on her physical inadequacy by describing her experience as a tree planter in a relationship with a male tree deliverer. Here, she questions whether she believes she would be able to tree deliver:

> There's definitely a feat of strength. More physical things like putting a quad on a truck or taking it off. Yeah, that stuff scares me. So I think things like that would freak me out. So I do think there is a physical barrier. Also, I think that just might be me, like sometimes I just think I can't do it and Andrew can just do it so much faster because he is stronger. Like I can do things, you know load boxes, but I just don't do it as fast and because of that I sometimes feel inferior. Like if I can't keep up or not doing it as fast I feel like I am just getting in the way or not as good at it. Like I can work hard but it just might take me a bit longer. Sometimes I just stand back because they [male tree deliverers] just toss the boxes so easily and I think I can't do this.

However, the few women who have advanced to become tree deliverers are changing this misconception. Women are able to do the job in the same way, or able to adapt their physical differences to accommodate the work. For example, as Maya explained, a woman new to a specific task needs other women to share their knowledge of how "to load a quad differently or how you are to carry trees differently". This is because she believes that in some situations women will be doing certain tasks differently to accommodate their physical differences with men. When I asked Maya about whether it is possible for a female tree planter to plant as many trees as a male tree planter she responded with no hesitation:

> Absolutely. No physical barriers at all. I don't think it is about male and female divisions - it is more about the individual person and their mental capacity. I don't think it has anything to do with a physical barrier. Because I have seen a first year football player who is in amazing physical condition low ball the contract. You know? I have seen men who should be physically able to do it and then I have also seen other men, for instance, Scott, who is a string bean and should not be able to carry tons of trees and is physically not your typical rugged athletic man but he was the company high baller for years. You know? So, I think it has more to do with the mentality about the person and less about the physique but I don't know I

can't comment on the male capacity compared to females.

I just know that on an individual basis, the women I

aspired to were all incredible planters and could plant as

many trees as any man could.

Yet, I asked another interview respondent, Natalie, the same question and she had a

different perspective:

No I don't think it is. I think it is as easy to be at the top

but I have never been on a contract where a female has

high balled a contract so through my experience I have

never seen that. But realistically there is no real reason as

to why a female cannot high ball. I think that we are not

capable as much as men physically because of our

biological make up. However, I think mentally we are way

more capable than the average guy. So if you throw a girl

in there that is physically prepared for tree planting and is

mentally acute then she could challenge any guy. So, only

physical barriers are the real difference. I think we

(women) have an advantage mentally, based on the

females I have worked with.

Natalie's perspective is similar to many of the female respondents in that they do not

see themselves as weaker than most men, but still believe that they may face some

physical barriers. However, it can be difficult to uncover exactly what these 'barriers' are.

Looking more closely at gendering, which means to divide, categorize, or deal with on the basis of gender distinctions (see chapter 3), I would like to demonstrate how there is a distinct belief that men and women are different in terms of the physical strength required for tree planting. As Stephanie noted, she did not want to compare herself to her male counterparts. However, when some women decide not to compete with their male colleagues, the lower the bar in terms of high production levels. If most women only compete with other women then they are potentially limiting themselves. This is reiterated in a point made by Lisa, a ten year tree planter who now supervises. Lisa explains her thoughts on the equal advantages of women and men as tree planters: "I have never thought a girl couldn't do what a guy does. I don't think it is an issue at all out there. I just think that some girls think that they can't and that guys are stronger etc. I know tons of girls who are amazing planters". Many women and men rise to the competitive occasion, and are motivated by the idea of planting the most trees. Women's beliefs in terms of whether men and women were equal competitors in tree planting varied. Some women believe that men are stronger than women, and thereby, men have the advantage. Others explained that even despite this advantage women are still able to plant as many trees as men. Still others say there are no physical differences between the two genders in terms of planting capability.

Aynsley reiterates this point by reasoning as to why fewer women than men 'high ball':

But I think it is also the mentality of it when you come in. I
don't think the females that come in ever think that they
have a chance to high ball. Also, I think the problem is that
there are not that many veteran female planters around
because they tend to move into crew bossing or
something management related. Then those women are
no longer planting and the female planters coming in no
longer have a role model to look up to or the competition.
Like Madison high balled the camp last year - the whole
camp. She was a great planter. That's why you need role
models because it really is a mental game. It is not
necessarily about something physical but then why are
more females not on it. I don't know. Something I have
thought about but I don't know.

Aynsley is placing importance both on the individual planter's initial attitude as well as

the effect of role models. Effort, perseverance and seeing others go through the same

struggles seem to be factors that many women interviewed felt contributed to their

success as a tree planter and/or management. Stephanie reiterates this point but also

explains that women persevere through possible physical barriers in tree planting:

I think that on the whole women do have a pretty good
opportunity. I mean I had three female crew bosses last
year and I think the company I work for does a pretty good

job recognizing that girls can do a good job, like they may

not be able to throw five boxes at a time but they are still

really good. Those physical things will obviously kind of

win a little bit, but a lot of it depends on personality and

some girls are like 'no I am going to try and I am going to

learn'.

We see a few more examples of women believing that it is up to the individual to

challenge potential physical barriers. In my opinion, I find this very problematic because

it sets up the individual to succeed or fail without looking at the other structural

components that may come into play in effecting a person's outcome to plant a lot of

trees. Many women are socially taught that men are physically stronger than women,

at least when it comes to upper body strength. This leads to many women not thinking

it is possible to be stronger than men when it comes to physical jobs such as tree

planting. A woman limiting herself to only competing with other women creates a

dynamic in which women are not trying to reach their full potential amongst both men

and women.

Competitive Edge

Competition in this environment can be one motivating factor, driving the

individual to reach their fullest potential in number of trees planted - a job that can be

tedious without competition. Competition, both between and within genders, plays an

important role in women's discussions of their experiences as tree planters. Martha

talks about the differences between men and women in terms of competitiveness and how that relates to highballing:

> I think that guys get more competitive with each other. I think a girl rookie has a better chance of high balling the rookies than a vet girl because after their first year many girls are like I am not even going to try and beat anybody or high ball because it is too stressful. I think that we are strong enough but we are not as competitive as the boys in the 'game of the numbers'. And everyday it's like what did you plant today?

Martha is frustrated about the competition among the men on the one hand while simultaneously feeling annoyed that some men are not as competitive with her. She continues:

> they probably don't think I can put in as much trees as them [the men on Martha's crew]. The guys tend to be less competitive with the girls except for that one girl that is high balling. But they aren't even that competitive with girls because they will ask and you tell them your numbers and they will be 'oh that's good'. But with the other guys they will be more intense and competitive.

Thus, competition and competitiveness play a large part with some planters in driving them to put in more trees which in turn increase their wages along with their credibility as a good planter.

Yet this competition is gendered. Faye discusses the role of differing expectations for men and women tree planters, in both her personal as well as crew expectations when she was a female rookie:

> Yes I think being a woman tree planter is awesome. (Laughs). Definitely if you are rookie because as a female rookie the expectations are lower than a male rookie. If you are a dude you are expected to be the high baller rookie. Ya like girls getting balled by a guy it is okay but if a guy gets balled by a girl they are like 'oh no'. For example, with Tim we planted tree for tree everyday but then on random days when I was moving fast he would be like 'oh no'. Whereas if he beat me in amount of trees planted that day, I didn't care. On my crew there were no other vet girls and the vet guys that were better than me were the high ballers.

Faye alludes to the lower expectations she had of herself as well as those of her fellow crew members. Faye felt the lower expectations potentially lead to a lowered sense of competition, and therefore, a lower number of trees planted. She also notes how being 'beat by a girl' was seen as particularly bad for one of her male colleagues.

Rebecca is motivated by competition but, like Faye, thinks that at the end of the day, men would have more issues with women beating them than the other way around. Rebecca states:

> there has been competition. Like my last camp there was this vet guy and we kind of had competition between us and it was kind of fun. But I do think guys want to maintain their status of being better. I think a lot of guys would have problems with a girl planting more trees than them. But I really don't care about competing.

It seems that if men are competing with women as well competing with men the stakes are raised for men. Maya discusses her own competitive edge in comparison to her male counterparts:

> I would compete with other people in my own head for my own benefit but I wouldn't actually be outwardly competitive with them. At the end of the day I didn't really care I just cared that I knew I worked really hard and put in a lot of trees. So maybe there is an element of competition that is different from men than there is from women. I don't know.

This alternative example demonstrates some women use of other forms of competition that were not directly focused on members on their crew, but rather on the numbers one may accumulate in a day.

Competition, in itself, is not the only motivating factor in planting trees. Stephanie thinks that in itself being a woman can influence women to plant more trees. Stephanie claims:

> I think that something about being a girl in this kind of
> work could motivate you to plant more trees because you
> want to prove, even if it is just to yourself, or to your guy
> crew boss or to your male crew members that you can.
> Like being able to come back as a girl and say you put in
> 5000 trees today they will really respect that and be like
> 'wow you did' and I think that can be motivating.

This quotation reveals another form of motivation that may push women to plant more trees. The social (and personal) rewards of proving oneself, especially in regards to one's gender, would be quite motivating to some women.

Competitiveness, then, can both motivate women to and discourage them from successful tree planting. However, what is more notable within the tree planting dialogue is the emphasis on the individual to be the best they can be. Tree planting is based on the notion that both women and men should work as hard as they possibly can to plant the most trees and to make the most money.

Individualism

As discussed in my literature review, we currently live in a culture in which neoliberal ideologies are prevalent and implicit within our dialogue and viewpoints.

One of the most common concepts of neoliberal discourse is the indoctrination of individualism that casts gender as being irrelevant (Brodie 2008). However, building on Brodie, I argue that gendered social arrangements are justified by cultural productions and backed by law, but the most powerful means of sustaining the moral hegemony of the dominant gender ideology is that the process is made invisible (see Gramsci 1971; Acker 1990; Lorber 2006). Brodie (2008) believes that neoliberal ideology has cast gender as being irrelevant. Invisible dominant gender ideology combined with the idea that individualism makes gender irrelevant create a powerful push to ignore the effects of gender, hence making gender structures invisible. As we saw in the last two sections many women in tree planting work do not see the patriarchal system that underlies women's social statuses regardless of the social institution.

Throughout my years of tree planting, I have heard many people (including myself) repeat similar rhetoric about how the individual planter is in control of their own success. However, as explained earlier, many factors play into how many trees a person may plant. This is rarely, if ever, discussed in tree planting discourse. Piece wages are based on competition. It is assumed that the individual controls how much he/she makes by working as much and as hard as possible. Those who are considered the greatest planters are those who make the most money because they have planted the most trees – they are high ballers. Yet, factors such as land quality, tree assessment, weather, and so on can have very varied effects. These elements are never regarded as important to tree planters as it is assumed that you must rise above it – hard work will pay off.

Rebecca contends that success is all about the individual person and their capacity as a tree planter. She believes it has nothing to do with gender:

> I think it's hard to say because I have generally seen the
>
> top ballers be guys but girls follow pretty close. I don't
>
> think it really depends on strength. But I think guys still
>
> have a bit of an advantage but not a huge difference. It all
>
> depends on the person and a really motivated person,
>
> regardless of gender is going to do well.

This comment is fairly conflicted. On the one side, Rebecca thinks it has nothing to do with strength but then contradicts herself and believes it might be an influence. I think this shows an example of how much unrecognized gender stereotypes influence individual opinions and thoughts. Rebecca may very well think and believe that women and men are parallel in tree planting capacity. However, because our culture is permeated with the belief that men are physically stronger and more adept at hard labour (see Dowling 2000; Bansow and Roth 2004), many women struggle with denying that presumption.

Rebecca alludes to this individualism again in terms of the division of land by the crew boss:

> The better planters get better land and/or more land. Like
>
> if you are going to plant more trees then your crew boss
>
> will set you up with nicer land. The industry is about
>
> making money and it is in the crew boss' best interest to

put the best planters in the best land. But if you are a

rookie and get in bad land then you just get frustrated.

Rebecca and I then reflect on this question about fairness of land division. She asks me my perspective and I respond:

when I was a crew boss I did sometimes give nicer land to

those that I believe will take advantage of it and work the

hardest. However, not at first though, because I typically

would give the shallower pieces to the rookies and those

tend to be nicer so it is a tough call. As well, I tended to

just ask who wants to be cut in next and it is quite random.

Rebecca questions this and wonders if it is actually random. I respond that sometimes,

I would put a more experienced planter in a challenging

piece because I knew it would be easier for them to get it

done. Or sometimes I would pick out a nice piece for

someone who really wanted to work hard that day but it is

hard to know what the land is going to be like.

Reflecting on this, I think that in some aspects it is quite indiscriminate how land, time and attention is given out to a planter by their crew boss. However, crew bosses, like all people, have their biases (see Chapter 2) and this will affect the attention they give to a planter and the amount of effort and help they will provide for each planter.

Maya, a woman who planted for over eight years and moved through management as crew boss, deliverer and supervisor, discusses the need to prove she

was capable in silviculture work. Maya asserts that both as a high baller and as part of management: "I was aware that as a woman there was always the potential that I could be perceived as weaker or not as a capable. So I always put the pressure on myself to perform". Maya's quotation gives us insight into the personal pressure she felt. It also shows her knowledge, that culturally, women are not expected to be in this line of work. Instead of seeing a solution through structural changes, however, she attempts to prove to others that she is individually quite capable.

Lisa is another woman who has planted for over ten years and moved from planter to supervisor. She talks about some of her discomfort as a woman within tree planting. She emphasises that the extent of and effect of that discomfort has a lot to do with how an individual manages it:

> I think mostly I have encountered the assumption that I cannot do something because I am a woman. I have had good male friends of mine be like you can't do that, you can't do this. And I would ask rhetorically back I can't? Really? Maybe you have to prove yourself a little bit more. The more you do it the more confident you become. The way that you carry yourself is huge. You know sometimes being a woman helps me. Even with the client. Like the combination that I am a woman and my personality...they don't see it as threatening or anything like that. But the more I do it the more I think less of myself as a woman

supervisor but just being a supervisor because I know what

I am doing.

This is another example of how women within tree planting are rising above misconceptions regarding work and gender. However, we also see that gendered norms directly affect the individual and their successes and/or failures within their position. On the one hand, Lisa faces assumptions that she cannot do the work, as well as discouragement from even trying it, because she is seen to be 'weaker' or 'inferior'. Yet, on the other hand, she believes that being a woman in her line of work can be very advantageous compared to a man because she fits into the style by being 'non threatening'. This reflects some of Kanter's (1976) findings that women were perceived as less competitive and thus, less threatening in workplaces, but in Kanter's study, this was because they were seen to place relationships and family above work (see chapter 3).

Proving that 'she can do it' is part of why Aynsley enjoys tree planting so much. She thrives on the individualized nature of the work:

> I think what I like most about tree planting especially now
>
> that I am management. I like how you are pretty self
>
> sufficient and you have to deal with what's out there and
>
> you just have to deal with it. You have to get the job done.
>
> What I like most is that problem solving and working hard.
>
> I think as hard and draining as it is for us there is
>
> something rewarding about working really long days.

Aynsley likes to prove she can endure the long work days and challenges of the job.

In reflecting on these women's experiences and perspectives, I argue that the emphasis placed on the individual can be a very dangerous line of thinking, as it contributes to constructing and maintaining the gendered order. In other words, this individually-focused perspective encourages the maintenance of an invisible gendered order in which the individual is solely responsible for success or failure in the work place rather than acknowledging the gendered structures that help and hinder women workers.

Equality in Management

Gendered expectations are also found in tree planting management (see chapter 3. By the late 1990s, as Sweeney (2008) noted, it became more common to see women in managerial positions, such as crew bosses and quality assessors. But despite women's acceptance in these positions, the incidence of female supervisors (the highest managerial position in the field) and deliverers remain rare in reforestation work (Sweeney 2008).

One female supervisor noted that the first year she planted she did not see one woman in management:

> my second year all I wanted to do was crew boss and then
>
> I see Nina and she was doing such a great job. I felt really
>
> weird about how surprised about it that I was....And that's
>
> when I realized that girls can do this. Nina worked her ass

off. But still no female deliverers. So at that time there

was still only one female crew boss. Then there was Maya

but she wasn't until my fourth year planting. Now it's

pretty much half and half women and men crew bosses.

As several scholars have noted (see chapter 3), forestry overall remains a male-dominated enterprise. This contributes to barriers to women's participation in tree planting management. One of my interviewees, Lisa, gives us some insight into her feelings as a woman dealing with year round foresters:

I go out viewing [the land to be planted] by myself and

when using the radio the men will be like what are doing

young lady out here all alone. And they are always saying

things like 'that is such a big truck for such a small girl'.

They always say stuff like that but it never really bothers

me that much. The guys who have been doing forestry for

like 30 years hauling wood - those are the guys that aren't

as open to women being in the forest industry.

One female tree planter I interviewed who began working in the mid-1990s, believed that "the client still feels they can relate better to a male."

Acker's (1990, see chapter 3) claim that organizational norms and structures are premised on men's lives and bodies helped me understand the complacency tree planting companies have in maintaining the male structured work. For example, within my company, different techniques, styles and work ethics are not considered. The

company continues to follow the same hierarchical structured system of how an employee is promoted within the organization. The planters who plant the most trees are chosen to crew boss or deliver. Then, depending on the time spent as a deliverer and crew boss, the employee will be promoted to a supervisor position. One barrier is that as tree deliverer is strongly defined as a male job, few women are promoted through this management pathway. Further, upper management fails to recognize other achievements such as leadership qualities or dedication to the job as worthy of promotion. As many women move on to other jobs from tree planting before men, they have very little chance to become supervisors. Another insight into why fewer women are becoming supervisors is the social expectation (and individual desire) that women will become partners and mothers within the same time period that they would reach the position of supervisor and regional manager. Rita explains that,

> women tend to go towards wanting a family at least earlier in life than men do. You have to stick around and wait around for a long time to get into higher positions and move on. And if you want a family when you are around 28 and you just get a supervisor position and you are in a serious relationship, you can't be gone for three months of the year because it is hard on your relationship(s). I don't know it depends on the situation. Maybe if your boyfriend is in the tree planting world too.

Researchers have found that women who work in male-dominated occupations must be modified to fit into the work, not the other way round (Ranson 2005; Reed 2003, see chapter 3). Examples of this are pervasive throughout my interviews with women tree planters.

Although most of the women I interviewed were still in post secondary education, those who were not had a sense that their time in tree planting would be coming to an end soon. For instance, Lisa, who just became a supervisor this past season, feels reluctant to commit more time to reforestation. She explains that she would not be able to continue to be involved in silviculture indefinitely because:

> it doesn't leave you with much of a social life, you know by
>
> being away all the time, now anyways. I just never feel
>
> settled. I don't like that so much. If you talked to me five
>
> years ago I probably wouldn't have said that. I used to like
>
> being on the go all the time but now it's a little more
>
> difficult to make plans for life.

Lisa feels that when she was single, she was able to be transient. But as Lisa starts a family she feels the importance of being a partner and mother drawing her to a more stable and permanent job. Until women begin to reach an age in which marriage and pregnancy become issues, women can enter male dominated fields as 'conceptual men' (Ranson 2005, see chapter 3). Women are able to enter tree planting when they are able to put work demands first. However, as discussed earlier, while liberal feminism works well in defending women's rights to enter male worlds and to work at men's job's

for men's pay it does little to defend women's rights to be women (Rothman 1994). In particular it does not address the difficulty women face in these 'male jobs' to be mothers and wives.

One of the important differences between women tree planters and the women engineers Ranson (2005) studied is that tree planting was never considered a permanent job for many of the women. Female tree planters are typically leaving the job permanently for other work before motherhood. However, for those women who do want to continue in silviculture, the transient lifestyle of the bush camp poses a specific difficulty for childrearing. The camps and the work are not conducive for childcare. The infrastructure is not set up for women to be able to do the work as well as raise children there[4]. Therefore, I argue that men have a greater opportunity to pursue higher management positions because of the ability to leave partners to take care of children 'at home'.

Brittany, another woman who just reached her tenth year involved in silviculture and finally became a supervisor, makes remarks similar to Lisa's. Brittany loves the work but does not see it as a career. She states:

> I love working outdoors and I would do this job forever if it
>
> made sense but it's not the type of job you do when you

---

[4] A professor of mine noted that the difficulty would be the same for men, that is, to have children at tree planting. I agree that men would also be challenged to have a family while leaving for work in remote locations in silviculture. However, I am aware that in our society it is more socially acceptable for men to leave their families to pursue work while mothers typically stay near their children even if working.

are older unless you move into a regional manager position but then you are stuck in an office. So there is nowhere to go from supervisor and I don't want to get stuck supervising for years and then not be able to find another job. Also, unless you want to be single for your whole life or unless you luck out and find someone who has gone the same route then you probably need to end working this job.

Brittany reiterates this notion that tree planting field work is not conducive to having a family.

Maya had completed over eight consecutive seasons before leaving tree planting about three years ago (she is now an educator and married to her tree planting partner with whom she has a son), and provides insights into why she left:

It was just time to move on and to have stability and wanting to have a regular job. I found it really hard when I was applying for new jobs, people would ask what I had done for the last eight years. I had even had a supervisor position. I thought had developed those skills and pretty sure that those are things that have made me great at the jobs that I have had since but most employers have no idea. I was just recognizing that it was time to move on to jobs that would be more recognized to other employers.

Another with stability is that my partner had quit planting

and had a job which made our life a lot more difficult

when I would go into the bush. I also didn't see myself,

supervising was great, but I didn't feel like I had enough

guidance to do the best the job I could do so I didn't want

to continue doing that.

Maya touches on quite a few barriers that she faced if she was to

continue her work in silviculture. First, the lack of stability the work

provides as well as the lack of recognition it entails. Second, the lack of

support from her husband to keep working in remote tree planting

camps. Third, Maya explains that the lack of support from her fellow

colleagues and company affected her ability to do the best job she could

do as a supervisor.

I would like to draw on this last point for the final two sections of this chapter.

Many women who are in management positions remarked that there is a stereotype

and mould affixed to managerial styles - mostly the expectation that managers should

be demanding, authoritative and intimidating. Some women commented that they felt

uncomfortable with this style while others felt that they would like to be more

authoritative but then risked being judged as a 'bitch'. The issue of managerial style

leads into the final discussion of importance of women as role models. Women

reiterated over and over that the more they saw women in positions of power the more

likely they would want to follow suit.

Managerial Style

The theory of 'conceptual men' relates to women's promotion to roles in management. Ranson argues that "this position of strength [management] is achieved by proof of successful career performance according to male standards – in other words women paying their dues as conceptual men"(2005: 157). From within the tree planting world, Lisa explains her opinion on women as crew bosses, deliverers and supervisors:

> there are certain stereotypes of what a deliverer should be and what they look like. And what a supervisor should look like as well. When I went to supervise I had a small camp and I was a little bit of everything. You know what you are doing but if people don't think you are confident then they can see right through it. Step all over you, if you know what I mean. But most definitely, crew bossing is a little bit different in some respects than the other management. I don't think there is any kind of advantage of being a guy over a girl for crew bossing. But supervising or delivering it is a bit harder to make that jump as a woman. There still are not that many women supervisors or deliverers but I think there is a lot more than there used to be.

Lisa discusses how important it is to be confident and in control to gain respect of the camp. Maya's earlier comment that she did not receive the support she needed to be a good supervisor, is echoed by Lisa who also had difficulty maintaining this sense of control in a camp leadership position. Lisa and Maya both felt that not having the support of their work superiors as well as not having women to look up to for guidance created barriers for them. Aynsley discusses her thoughts on becoming a supervisor in the future:

> I feel like women in supervisor positions do have a harder time with it because they can't just bully their way through it, if they have to. Like they can't take the intimidation factor because there is definitely a difference between being an 'asshole' and a 'bitch'. You can call your supervisor an asshole but if you call your supervisor a bitch that just brings a whole different realm of connotations to it. Bitching is associated with whininess and neediness in a way. The problem is that I think a not relaxed woman is different from a not relaxed man and that brings out gender stereotypes.

Aynsley brings up the implicit stereotypes that are part of our cultural norms. Although *bitch* and *asshole* can be used in many different forms and have different meanings, Aynsley sheds light on the embedded meanings we have for such words. This in itself can be reflected into our perceptions of gender and how they demonstrate labels. A

bitch is more reflective of whining whereas *asshole* typically refers to someone as being mean, strong willed and bull-headed. Therefore, these labels instantly conjure up different senses of gender stereotyping and leadership styles.

Another example of these gender stereotypes is when Brittany discussed a review she received from her male bosses regarding her management approach. Brittany was told that her style was too abrasive and she needed to be more sensitive to her planters. She asserts:

> It's so funny to me that I heard from my regional manager
>
> that I needed to be more sensitive and not as harsh.
>
> Whereas, I have heard from other women in management
>
> positions that they need to be less sensitive to the planters
>
> and should care less. It's like no matter what we do it's
>
> like we are going to get criticized.

She suggests that this 'abrasiveness' would never have been criticized in a male supervisor but thinks because she is female her bosses expect her to demonstrate particular 'feminine' traits, such as being 'approachable' and 'gentle' in her leadership style. Brittany understands that such traits would be valuable to a leader, however, what she speculates is that this type of criticism would not be given to a male supervisor. What Brittany calls into question is the gendered expectations of women in leadership roles.

Brittany's comments relate to Kanter's (1976, see chapter 3) ideas on women and leadership, as does my own experience as a crew boss. I had crew bossed for three

seasons and had been quite successful in each of those seasons. I measured my success by the strength of my crew's bonds to each other, the desire of crew to return for future seasons, as well as the production (numbers of trees planted) by each member. For all three years my crew planted the most trees in camp and my planters had numerous 'personal best days' (most trees a person has planted in one day). Many of these planters returned to work each season in my crew. However, each end of season review with my supervisors provided the same criticism: I was too 'nice'. If all of the indicators of what makes a good crew boss showed that I was a capable and productive leader, why did it matter how I led my crew? In my experience, the inherent preference for male leaders and authoritative-controlling leadership styles, explained by Kanter as cultural biases against women as leaders, is echoed in my supervisors' critique of my leadership persona as 'too nice'. When my supervisors continually criticized my 'nice' leadership style, they wanted me to change to fit the organizational norm, as Ranson argues women engineers must do, instead of allowing the organization to open up to a new 'nicer' leadership style.

The question of how and why different jobs become gendered was raised when two women discussed the unspoken distinction between male and female jobs within management. Martha explains how there are gendered jobs within a tree planting camp: "I feel like there are women checkers/assessors but no men. This is also true for men as deliverers but barely any females. It seems like it is always women checking and men delivering". From my personal observations, I have only known three women out of dozens of men who have delivered. The reverse is true for checking. It seems

that checking and delivering have been bestowed a gendered distinction. This may have to do with the job's duties. Deliverers are required to lift heavy amounts throughout their day. Due to gendered assumptions, men are typically believed to be stronger physically than females. However, Faye has an alternative perspective regarding women as checkers rather than deliverers. Faye states that checking is seen as less valuable than the other management positions: "because I was the checker, I wasn't legitimate management. It isn't the respect you get for the position the way deliverers are treated. Deliverers are seen as manly Gods who ride in on their quads dropping off the trees for planters". This characterization of tree deliverers may sound excessive, but I recall over the years planters (including myself) idolizing and looking up to deliverers; whereas, checkers/assessors were seen to be more of a nuisance. While this in part reflects the nature of the job, the fact that the lower status job is the one that has become predominantly female cannot be ignored.

An interviewee who was not in management herself, however, whose boyfriend was a deliverer had this to say about seeing more women in management:

it just seems like all it would take is more communication.

And I find that a lot of guys in this business don't talk and I

need to know what's going on. So just tell me what's

going on and let me wrap my head around it and then we

can do it, we can do it together. There is no rush, there is

no reason to like show off our muscles and just let's get it

done and that just comes out more when it is male

> dominated so like if a girl was in charge...like all it takes is
>
> a little direction and it could be fun doing it. And I think
>
> that has the potential of coming out a bit more if a female
>
> was/is in charge.

This point demonstrates a desire for different leadership styles in management which requires acceptance of the idea that both men and women can use various techniques in leadership. What is voiced throughout the interviews is the desire to see and use different leadership styles. Almost all the women I spoke with mentioned that once they saw women actually acting as planters, crew bosses, deliverers, checkers and/or supervisors, they also saw the possibility of moving into these positions.

Women Mentors[5]

As Tripp-Knowles (1999, see chapter 3) found, women mentors played an important role in supporting women entering forestry, as well as continuing to expand opportunities for women in forestry. This in turn was representative of many women's voices that I heard throughout our interviews.

Many of the women I interviewed responded that the initial reason for getting involved with tree planting was being familiar with people who had done it before.

---

[5] I mean the term 'mentors' and 'role models' not as a person whom another emulates but rather, a person experienced with and sympathetic to many of the kinds of challenges a woman will be faced with in her tree planting work.

Maya who planted for over eight seasons explained she was drawn to tree planting because of women she admired:

> I had a friend who was a bit older than me, well I had two
>
> friends that were older than me and had already planted
>
> and had really good experiences. They were both women
>
> as well and one of them became my crew boss. It was a
>
> good way to make money and put myself through
>
> University. So I would say the money and having female
>
> mentors and just wanting a good experience.

Brittany found that seeing a great woman crew boss propelled her to also believe she could one day be in a management position:

> as soon as I saw Lizzie....and I am not a super girl power
>
> feminist but I have always just done the jobs that I have
>
> wanted to do regardless if it was male dominated. And I
>
> really don't think about it. Like if I want to do it and I can
>
> do it – then I do it. But the girl crew boss that I had seen
>
> prior to Lizzie had been terrible. After I saw Lizzie and she
>
> doing such a great job all I wanted to do was crew boss.
>
> Lizzie worked her ass off, she worked so hard.

Another interviewee, Aynsley, talks more about her own role model:

> she was the first person I could identify with and in upper
>
> management and there haven't been a lot of women that I

have been working with. She is just really in tune and reflective on things. I would finish a planting season and run into her after the season and she would understand. She and I could talk about planting and I could totally be blunt and I could totally talk about the struggles I had as a female planter or female management. She had been through it and she knew it. Anyways, she would talk about trying to be feminine in a masculine world.

Aynsley is not just identifying with her mentor as an example of a woman filling the position, but also that her mentor understands the particular struggle she has had as a woman in a male dominated space. This speaks to me of a different awareness than Brittany expressed in her desire to be a crew boss. Aynsely's determination to enter and continue in tree planting management as a woman is both supported and propelled through the opportunities she has to share with a mentor who has had similar experiences. Being able to engage with women who are willing to share their knowledge, experience and struggles helps less experienced women stay involved with planting or increase their interest in 'high balling' or working in management positions.

In Sweeney's (2008) study, many female tree planters were found to be more willing to work with female crew bosses than with male crew bosses. One noted that "from a female point of view it's good to have a female crew boss, especially when you know she was a good planter" (Sweeney 2008: 29). Another believed that it was "good to be on the same page as someone and not have to think about the sexual

differences." Finally, one female tree planter found "male crew bosses a bit more intimidating than females." In short, female tree planters are often receptive to female crew bosses because they act as role models, there is less tension due to gender or sexual differences, and they are often perceived to be less intimidating (Sweeney 2008).

In terms of entering into management positions, Maya explains that there are three conditions that either prevent or encourage women to go into delivering, crew bossing, assessing and/or supervising. Maya believes that:

it entirely depends on three things. One is the pool of women that are in tree planting at the time and their desire to want to. Second, it depends on what kinds of female mentors that they have because women are going to supervise, deliver and crew boss differently than men are – that is just because we think differently, we react differently, we have different physical capabilities but if you have female role models who show you how a women crew bosses, supervises, and delivers I think you are more likely to want to go in the direction. Third, I think so much has to do with the regional managers and their desire to want to promote women into those positions. I think you need the women to show you how it can be done but you also need men and women who are in positions to grant promotions to want women in the field as well.

Maya touches on another valid point regarding support by fellow colleagues as well as regional managers. Maya is aware of the need for support in a male dominated environment. This is a structural barrier that reflects more than individual desire to be a crew boss or learning from individual mentors. Working in a supervisor position can feel very overwhelming and alone. The support a woman has from her regional manager can make a world of difference in women developing confidence in their supervisory roles and in retaining women supervisors.

My interview with Brittany, a first year female supervisor, brought out her now conflicted experience as a supervisor. Brittany's experience was positive in that she felt that the contract had run smoothly, her planters' production was on target and her management had enjoyed their experience. However, Brittany also felt that there was a lack of support from her supervisory colleague, her regional manager, and her client, all of whom were men. She did not feel that a woman regional manager would have necessarily given her more support; however, she did feel that she would have had more camaraderie with her upper management if they had not all been men.. She felt that being the only woman in upper management left her out of the 'old boys club' of forestry. Brittany felt misunderstood and judged:

> so the client I worked for I knew him pretty well but I have
>
> always felt insecure around him. Ya know the female
>
> thing, but I didn't really care. Like I was the only female
>
> deliverer for how many years, 3 years and I supervised and
>
> I was the only female in Manitoba doing that. And if

> anything happened it would have been nice to have a little
>
> bit more help. I know the other supervisor (a man) got
>
> quite a bit of help. Like I would do it but do it wrong and it
>
> would have been nice to have my regional manager help
>
> me do it right the first time.

Brittany acknowledges that she could have done with more support from her colleagues as well as her regional manager in order to gain more insight into her new job duties. As well, she found that the meetings she had with the client and her regional manager left her feeling 'outside'. She states:

> I was really nervous about our meetings. There were no
>
> jokes and it was uncomfortable. I was super pissed on the
>
> inside but I couldn't show it. So I was trying to be all
>
> diplomatic and like I made a couple of jokes but no one
>
> liked my jokes. It was the first time that I felt like I was
>
> part of an 'old boys' club but not invited to join.

This reflects Tripp-Knolwes' (1999) and Kanter's (1976) arguments (see chapter 3) that being in a minority position in a workplace limits women's ability to influence decisions. Brittany's experience demonstrates the importance of having more women in management positions for practical support, to feel welcome as well as to have support with client and forester relations.

In the minority context, role models and mentors (see chapter 3) become key to women's desire to enter and ability to remain in tree planting. Over and over again,

women interviewed voiced the importance of seeing women in tree planting and more specifically in management positions. Lisa explains how she got into a supervisor position:

> I didn't even picture myself in that role because all of my supervisors before me were burly dudes. So I was like ok that is what a tree planting supervisor looks like. But what really helped me was seeing Jen. She had been one of my supervisors. So she was a huge part in giving me the opportunity. She was the one that told me I could do it. Just seeing her being able to do it gave me confidence.

Lisa's response here truly indicates the importance women place on seeing other women before them entrusted into management positions.

My own experience reflects this: an older woman encouraged me to join her crew as a planter, and so I began tree planting. She was my crew boss for two years and provided me with opportunities to gain knowledge that I do not think I would have received working for a man. She vouched for me to become a crew boss, provided me with encouragement and respect as well as offered me advice on the challenges I would face. Reciprocal respect, predictability, commitment, understanding, and empathy further shape the relationship. From this perspective, mentoring is a reciprocal learning relationship characterized by trust, respect, and commitment, in which a mentor supports the professional and personal development of another by sharing his or her life experiences, influence, and expertise (Barcic, Howard and Zellers 2008: 555).

Conclusion

After reviewing these six sections we begin to gain some insight into the experiences of women tree planters and their motivations and challenges to remain in the field. Women tree planters express a variety of initial motivations for entering tree planting. Many voiced motivations such as money, friends, the outdoors and role models. Once involved in tree planting women indicated that they met obstacles such as physical barriers, bosses, expectations, competition and larger societal barriers such as gender stereotypes. This was also the case in Tripp-Knowles' (1999) study of women foresters. She found there were a variety of initial motivations and reactions to barriers by the women she interviewed. There were also diverse opinions regarding the women's involvement and impact in forestry.

Tripp-Knowles'(1999) study demonstrates the importance of seeing women's experience in forestry as very multi-layered and diverse. Some women in forestry work considered their obstacles to be based on the structure of forestry and the gendered barriers within this arena while others found it to be a very individual matter. This was similar to my experience interviewing women in tree planting. However, I found that a significant number of women placed an emphasis on individual work ethic, individual expectations and individual conduct within the work. For example, Sylvia found that when reflecting on her experience she had often had to submerge her feelings and thoughts. She said to me one night, "I find that I have to just let a lot of things go even though it is not fair. There is no way that women get the same treatment as men, but

you ignore it and just try and rise above it". Clearly, Sylvia is frustrated by some of the 'special' treatments she has noticed men planters receiving. However, she chooses to address it more on an individual level than trying to make changes by making complaints to those in positions of power.

Tripp-Knowles' (1999) concludes that there has been a shift within professional forestry from structural barriers to more subtle attitudinal obstacles. I agree with Tripp-Knowles' conclusion, to the extent that women now enter tree planting in a supposed 'equal' position to men. However, as Reed (2003) and Brandth and Haugen (2000) argue, the multiple levels on which the gendering of workplaces operates continue to restrict women from being on a truly equal playing field with men.

The experience and work of women tree planters are very diverse. While there are some commonalities that have existed between the women there are also considerable differences. Tree planting is at a pivotal stage with respect to gender. Women are entering the job in greater numbers, and more are entering into managerial positions. However, women are still noticeably underrepresented in some specific field positions, such as delivering and supervisory positions. The interviews I conducted provide an avenue to show the successful journeys women have made in tree planting. They also show how attitudinal expectations and observations are influencing how women get involved, and whether women continue in tree planting. There are many factors limiting women's involvement in these positions ranging from lack of mentors to so-called physical barriers to drive and competition to bosses' expectations.

Understanding these factors can provide a basis for suggestions as to how to improve retention of women in tree planting.

The next chapter of this thesis will consider women's explanations of why they enjoy tree planting work, and the role of gender in aspects of camp life beyond work performance. Primarily, the chapter will focus on body image, sexual objectification, morality and/or physical inferiority. Hopefully, by critically engaging in the various experiences of tree planting women, positive and successful changes to silviculture can be made.

Analysis – Body Image, Sexual Objectification and Social Control

Introduction

I had an interesting conversation with two men whom I worked alongside on the management team. One was my supervisor and the other a deliverer with whom I worked closely. Both have worked in the reforestation industry for at least five seasons. It was about a month into the contract and the supervisor commented that this was about the time that the women tree planters began to feel comfortable enough to 'hook up' with the men in camp. My impression was that they saw the women in camp as suddenly becoming interested in sexual activity. Both men commented that many women who came to tree planting camps were not sexually uninhibited. They believed that most women tree planters had had limited a number of sexual partners and were used to being monogamous. I found this to be a bold and ignorant statement, as neither man had any way of knowing about the women's sexual histories. However, I was fascinated and asked why they thought that women in tree planting camps were more inclined to be sexually available around this time of the season? The supervisor responded that it was because the women had been now doing intense for a month in the outdoors. They had shed some weight and were now feeling healthier, stronger and fitter than they usually do when not tree planting. And with this change, he believed, the women had a greater comfort with their bodies giving them a new sense of sexual freedom. It was a striking statement that these two men acknowledged the liberation many women feel in their bodies through tree planting, and then associated it with women's sexual interest and availability. Additionally, the men felt that women's sexual

interest and availability was a great benefit to the male tree planters in camp. I mention this conversation because it appears that many people within tree planting associate 'improved' body image with sexual liberation. However, along with this sexual freedom I heard throughout women's responses the social constraints they felt in regards to 'hooking up' with men and/or being objectified.

Over the course of my interviews, I noticed that many women referred to the weight they lost while planting and how 'fit' they became, as well as the freedom they felt by 'being able to eat whatever they wanted' without gaining weight. Women talked about the changes that their bodies underwent from many different perspectives. However, most perceived weight loss overall as beneficial to their appearance and general self image. The women I interviewed often mentioned their weight loss and their freedom to eat whatever they want as a liberating part of tree planting work.

My interview guide did not ask specifically about body image or weight loss. However, when I asked the women what they enjoyed most about the tree planting work, almost all of the women responded that they enjoyed being active, getting 'fit' and slim, and being able to eat whatever they wanted. This points to the strength of open-ended interviews because otherwise I would have failed to ask questions regarding 'fitness' and body changes within the interview; a theme which was common to most interviews. By conducting open-ended interviews, the women interviewees were able to bring up and highlight important topics that otherwise the researcher might not have considered to ask. Also, despite my own observations as a participant, I did not acknowledge my own feelings around body image and tree planting until I was

able to reflect on what the respondents were highlighting. More to the point, I now acknowledge that getting 'fit' and losing weight are strong reasons for why I do go tree planting. However, I had no idea that it was as important to other women until I began the interview process.

This last analysis chapter is organized into four sections. The first examines body images of female planters. How do they feel about their bodies and body image while planting? What is their idea of physical fitness? How does this contribute to their enjoyment of tree planting work? The second section moves on to a feeling of sexual objectification within tree planting camps. Many tree planting contracts are places where romantic and sexual relationships form. Does this affect some women's job performance, and if so, how? The third section provides an analysis and critique of women as the social 'control' of behaviour and balance within tree planting camps. Finally, I will look at the challenges women face negotiating work place identity in a male dominated environment while living in bodies inscribed with notions of sexual objectification, moral responsibility and/or physical inferiority. In the conclusion, I discuss how women explore their identities through their body and how this manifests in tree planting work. The constructions of a 'fit' and sexy body, how this applies to women's body-image and sense of self-worth is acknowledged as a significant part of the female experience in reforestation of northern Ontario.

Body Image, Self Esteem and Cultural Indicators of being 'Fit'

In tree planting, we see many women thrilled with losing weight and becoming thinner. They are happy to indulge in eating - as it is a much needed break from the constant self monitoring they do for the rest of the year - but they are none the less able to lose weight because of the drastic number of calories they expend during the day. This reflects Bordo's (1993) understanding of how control of the appetite (especially feminine appetite) is central to how women's bodies can be shown to belong to the middle class (see chapter 3). As MacDonald et al. (2003) explain, men and women engage with the idea of 'fitness' differently – men focusing on the ability to do the work, and women focusing on appropriate body shape (see chapter 3). Tree planting affects women's body image and ideas of fitness in the relief it offers from self-monitoring. Molly articulates her experience of maintaining her body through working many years in reforestation:

> I lost a lot of weight tree planting. That was one thing I noticed after not tree planting anymore that once you were out of that routine of going to the bush every summer you had to think about maintaining your body. I had had many years where I would never think 'oh I have to go to the gym to get in shape or I have to go on a diet because I gained five pounds'. I didn't care because I knew I was going to lose it when I went back tree planting. I never ever cared (about gaining weight) but now without

that little boot camp it is more of a consideration. I never

ever thought about what I ate and never thought about

needing a physical routine but now I have to.

After Molly provided this account, I disclosed my perspective with her on the freedom

of having tree planting as a means to maintain my own physical appearance: "Yeah it is

quite liberating. It is the only time where I actually feel like I can eat whatever I want.

Whereas when I am not tree planting I would be like 'oh wow I just gained two pounds

how I am going to lose it?'". We both felt that weight control through the physical

demands of tree planting was a way of feeling good about our bodies and having a

positive self image. Women tree planters, through their work, gain the benefit of a more

sculpted and thinner body which increases their cultural capital, without having to

exercise the same self-control over food as they do in their non-tree planting lives (see

chapter 3).

Consistently, in the past, both men and women who have typically been part of

forestry are from the working class (Armson 2001; Dunk 2003). However, as mentioned

earlier, the majority of the people involved in tree planting in Ontario today are from

middle class families and are university educated. Women tree planters have expressed

that they participate in tree planting because it gets them 'fit' and slender - both

symbolic examples of elite status. Therefore, the ability to gain this type of cultural

capital from tree planting labour is a notable drawing point for middle-class women to

engage in a 'blue collar' job. Repetitive and consistent forms of body discipline such as

watching one's weight, exercising, shaving, and doing one's hair and face are for the

most part *daily* activities in which women seem to treat their bodies as objects. Treating one's body as an object has profound implications because the body is largely our means of communication with the world (Bansow and Roth 2004; Merleau-Ponty 1962). For instance, Maya explains her physical appearance of feeling feminine while tree delivering:

> my physical appearance started to change because I was lifting heavy boxes and equipment all the time and I lost quite a bit of weight but I had also gained quite a bit of muscle mass in my upper body and I felt physically more like a man. My boobs shrunk. My body was looking a little bit more masculine so I felt on days off, kind of a joke but kind of serious, I wanted to wear more feminine clothes to feel more feminine. Because I felt like the job and my physique felt so masculine I needed to feel like a woman on days off. And my hair was short so that was also part of it. But there is also this neat thing as a planter that without looking feminine and without trying to dress in a feminine way there is this thing in tree planting where you feel a little bit sexy because you are 'fit'.

There are two parts to this comment. First, Maya discusses the importance of maintaining femininity through the ritualized routines of weight control, feminine clothes and having long hair. Second she mentions her sense of self – she feels good

because of her 'fit' body. Stephanie also emphasized how being 'in shape' contributed to the enjoyment and satisfaction of reforestation work: "it makes you feel good to know that you can do it and you can do it just as well as a guy and you can have fun and you get in really good shape. It is challenging physically and mentally but once you finish it is pretty good accomplishment. It is a big motivation for a girl to get that strong and 'fit'".

Women in tree planting typically come much closer to the taut, muscular yet slender body ideal (see discussion of Bordo 1993 and Hargreaves, 1994, chapter 3) or at the very least feel as though they do, without aiming to achieve it through exercise. Rather, focusing on competent tree planting gives many women the side-effect of 'fitness'. My own experience is that, every season I have gone tree planting I have lost a significant amount of weight. I refer to it as my tree planting 'diet'. However, this diet consists of me doing nothing extra or differently than just doing the tree planting job itself. I get to go and make money, get strong and eat whatever I want and still lose weight because of the excessive amount of calories I am burning each day. For many women in my similar demographic, the potential of losing weight while simultaneously making money can be quite alluring.

Almost every woman I interviewed mentioned how great they felt about their physical appearance while tree planting. This was usually associated with weight loss and toned muscles. As Lisa said in her interview, "I like that I trim down. Even when I am supervising I lose weight all the time. I don't know, I feel good at the end of it all". Another woman, Stephanie, explains what she likes most about the job is "actually, uhh

the food (laughing). I really like feeling in shape and honestly I do like eating a lot...umm it is a huge thing being able to eat a chocolate bar and not feel bad about it. And ahh it is pushing myself and feeling like I am in shape". In traditional female employment, which may not require much physical strength, maintaining a slender body requires a woman to control her diet and exercise. Within a tree planting camp, however, the work is so physically demanding that women do not have to exercise specific control over what and how much they eat. This is freeing for many women.

This notion of being able to eat whatever you want is really appealing to most women planters. The challenges women face of having to push themselves to work hard and plant a lot of trees are offset by the freedom women finally feel in not having to monitor everything that they eat. For most of my women friends who tree plant, this is the only time throughout the year that they do not think about what they are eating because they know that the work that they are doing will exert enough energy to burn the calories consumed.

A sense of contradiction comes in, however, in that the physical benefits and outcomes are simultaneously empowering and enslaving of women (see Bordo 1993). More specifically, that women's sense of power from the physical abilities and 'fitness' they experience and exhibit while tree planting can be exhilarating. However, it can be potentially enslaving for women because they uphold this body ideal which requires much effort to maintain in our culture of abundance. Additionally, most tree planting women, as students, spend most of the year in more sedentary activities or employment. So, although the women are able to achieve these body ideals they are

not able to keep up this bodily form. These intrinsic motivations to tree plant for majority of women are from culturally induced perspectives on beauty such as losing weight or the 'ability to eat whatever one wants'. Labour-based employment, such as tree planting, is a key way (previously reserved for men) for women to access success and express bodily strength and skill. However, this experience may potentially bind women more tightly to societal ideals of women's bodies as trim, thin and 'fit'.

Women as Sexual Objects

In addition to women's physical appearance being discussed in terms of losing weight and becoming 'fit', some women interviewees also discussed sexual objectification within the tree planting camps. The female body as a sexual object is part of the tree planting discourse. For example, Brittany and I shared our experiences of sexualization as tree deliverers. It stemmed from me mentioning that a fellow co-worker once explained to me how alluring it was that I drove a pick-up truck. Brittany agreed that many times, tree planters would compliment her not because she was doing her job well but because doing that job as a woman made her attractive. She states,

> I want you to say I do a good job because I do a good job.
>
> Not because I am a female doing this job. I don't want
>
> things to be said because I am a girl and I am hot doing it.
>
> Do you know how many reviews I get from the planters
>
> that say 'Brittany is hot'? It's fine but...come on. They
>
> only think I am hot because I am dirty and I am on a quad.

Those kinds of reviews like that has nothing to do with my

job. It is so weird when your regional manager has to tell

you that.

I asked her if she thinks that such comments from the tree planters make her appear

less credible as a worker to her boss (the regional manager). Brittany thought these

comments meant that she was required to prove herself more and demonstrate her

capabilities. Later on in our interview, Brittany states:

it bothers me so much because there is not that many girls

doing this job (delivering) and you get comments about

your sex appeal all the time because you are driving trucks

and quads and you get more credit regarding your

appearance than for doing the job...and it was so funny

like the guys would either comment that you were hot

because you were dirty or they were almost disgusted

with you.

Brittany is unsure how to 'perform' as a woman tree deliverer who is capable at her job

but is ogled and sexualized by many of her male co-workers.

Natalie, a crew boss, is also aware of being sexualized within the camp and tries

to limit this objectification through what clothing she chooses to wear. She fears that

she will lose credibility or respect if she does not try to dress discreetly. For instance,

Natalie asserts:

I definitely was aware of what I was wearing. What I mean is I think on a really hot day I don't think I ever walked around in only my sports bra because I was always conscious of the fact that I am a boss and I didn't want to expose too much of myself, even though it is something that I wanted to do because the weather was so humid. I definitely did not expose too much of my chest to anybody and it was fully conscious. I guess I just didn't want anyone to confuse.....(pause) or even look at me with sex in their minds. Not saying that everyone would want to have sex with me but it is really important that...I don't know...like I am their boss and I tell them what to do and maybe they should respond to that instead of while I am talking to them they are looking down at my chest or something like that. I didn't want the line to be smudged. If you want to be respected then you have to present yourself with respect to a certain extent. We are in such a small environment and you have to camouflage yourself...like it turns into really innate humanistic qualities when you are out there. If you wander around with little amounts of clothes on, it is just a matter of time that you become a target.

Natalie suggests that it is up to the woman to maintain her respect level and not become a 'target' of sexual advances or harassment. Here, she is engaging with early (and continuing) gender stereotypes that women are responsible for the behaviour of others, especially 'moral' behaviour (see chapter 3). To 'camouflage' herself was to maintain a more masculine appearance and to keep her sexual conduct in camp minimal. It is important to Natalie, as a woman crew boss, to maintain her authority, and for her, that means she must try to prevent being sexually objectified by her co-workers.

On the other hand some women interviewed believed that being objectified was sometimes liberating and beneficial. For instance, Aynsley believed that

> sometimes being a female in the bush is super beneficial because we can get what we want. I felt like the forester clients I worked with were always impressed with me being a woman and doing this job. And as bad as this sounds, I feel like you could just flirt your way into getting help or getting what you want.

On another note, Faye expresses the importance of feeling feminine and sexualized by the men in her camp. For example, she wears spandex pants both because they are functional and also as a way to feel attractive. She recalls a few male members of her crew commenting about her pants and her relief that they considered her appealing:

> I look good in these pants and you remember I am a woman. Thank you for not forgetting that I am not a guy.

You know when you get treated as one of the guys and

sometimes you feel like you are no longer looked at like a

girl? Well, I was feeling that way and I was like I better

make out with someone tonight so you remember that I

am a girl.

It was very important to Faye that she maintained her womanliness which she felt she could demonstrate primarily through dressing in a way she saw as sexually attractive and by being sexually active. Rita also mentions wearing spandex pants as a way to distinguish herself from the men in camp: "planting with spandex is so comfortable and it definitely distinguishes me from the boys. The men notice and make comments on the spandex pants". Both of these comments show the empowerment Aynsley and Faye feel through being seen as sexual, and thus, as women. The women see themselves as expressing their identity as women is by dressing in a 'feminine' fashion. It is interesting that these two women want to express a distinct difference from the men and to be seen as women. I believe this demonstrates the comfort many women feel in tree planting camps to be recognized as women. It shows that they do not feel disadvantaged as women and therefore do not show signs of hiding their femininity or de-gendering themselves in a tree planting camp.

My observations of women engaging in various sexual relationships in camp ranged from women 'hooking up' with a different partner each day off to women finding a permanent partner for the season to a partner for life. Most planters in camp

saw a woman's decision to 'shack up'[6] with a man, more-or- less monogamously, as normal and acceptable. However, many times I overheard other men and women gossiping about a woman who was being a 'tree planting slut'. A 'tree planting 'slut' was a woman who would have numerous sexual relationships throughout a given season. Of course, some men would be having numerous sexual relationships as well but I believe this was not regarded in the same negative light. I often heard women being called 'sluts' in a derogatory tone, while men were applauded for 'high balling' sexual partners in the camp.

Faye, however, reports a different experience as a woman who is open to numerous sexual relationships in a camp. Faye admitted that a big component to going tree planting was to have sexual relationships with various men she would meet there. She states on her experience of her last season: "everyone was pretty much on the prowl when I got there which I was like sweet because that is why I go planting. People learned fast that I was single so I didn't shack up with anyone for a long time because I could just play the field. Every day off was a new adventure with who I was going to 'hook up' with". She did not feel that this negatively affected her image or 'respectability' in camp.

---

[6] A sexual partnership that lasts a season and where someone moves into the other person's tent is known as a 'shack up' within tree planting slang.

Women 'Civilizing' the Tree Planting Camp

Although women are now participating in the public sphere, the idea that women have responsibility for the home and child-raising, and for setting domestic standards in the private sphere, still lingers. Many women express that they feel a responsibility to care for others in the camp, beyond what is specifically expected of them in their jobs. Martha remarks on feeling the need to look after other members on her crew, particularly the men:

> I would always feel like I was mothering the boys. Like if they left their backpacks at the cache [the location on the block where one would keep their stuff and load up with trees] or left their sweater I would always carry it out for them. And it's like why don't you take care of your own shit? I am not your mother.

Over the three seasons that I crew bossed, I also felt like I was 'babysitting' or 'mothering' my crew. I would feel this way when planters would turn to me and ask for help finding the planting gear that seemed to go 'missing' from camp. At the time I noticed that my fellow male crew bosses did not bother helping their crew members find their planting equipment when it went missing. I probably did not have to help my planters but I felt it was my responsibility as a crew boss or as a woman or as a woman crew boss – I am unsure. But it is this feeling of 'mothering' versus being a 'boss' that bothered me. While women in a tree planting camp are typically neither wife nor mother, they either enter as a girlfriend of one of the male tree planters or, if single, are

considered sexually available for the men. This is commonly spoken of in a camp, that the men are 'happier' and more satisfied by having women in camp as targets for and respondents to their sexual desire.

Women tree planters are not there to do specific work that serves male co-workers such as a secretary might do. But because tree planting is predominantly male and the camp a masculine space, the women are hired to help 'serve' men's happiness and sexual attention by being there to 'civilize' the camp, as viewing objects and/or sexual partners, as discussed supra. This sexualisation of women's bodies, mustered for the purposes of social control in the camps, marginalizes the actual work activities done by women.

The sexualization of women's bodies serves to support men's heterosexuality. Male-defined heterosexuality is embedded within the tree planting discourse to such a degree that the jargon used for certain work activities is not even questioned. Indeed male sexual imagery pervades organizational metaphors and language, helping to give form to work activities. Within tree planting slang there are rampant sexual innuendos. For example, humping trees is carrying a box of trees to the back of your land from the road; 'creaming out' someone's land is planting the really nice and easy land first while leaving the more difficult land last; 'dicks' is the term for large tree seedlings. These symbolic expressions of male dominance act as significant controls over women in work organizations because they emphasize hegemonic masculinity. Another clear example of this is the development of the pornographic library developed by the male management

members during the summer of 2008. Pornographic magazines were bought and collected in an attempt to support male heterosexuality[7].

There also remains a sexual double standard, whereby women are expected to remain sexual gatekeepers, and are thus seen as upholding sexual morals. This is why women with multiple sexual partners in camp are spoken of in derogatory terms, while men with multiple partners are not. Natalie's earlier comments about her conservative style of dress in part reflected her desire to avoid becoming a target of this double standard by appearing 'too sexy'. What is interesting about tree planting work is that the private and public spheres come together because the workers live in a bush camp together – interactions with co-workers also become interactions on a domestic front. Interestingly, there are many comments from men and women alike that understand women as being necessary to exercise social control within the bush camp. This reflects the social expectation that women should exercise a 'domesticating' influence over men. Traditionally feminine qualities of nurturing, non-competitiveness and supportiveness are tied up in these expectations. Many people throughout my years of planting have referred to the times when the mentality of a camp has become 'animalistic' because the camp had no or insufficient gender balance. In these comments, 'animalistic' meant that the camp atmosphere was unruly, there was foul language regarding women, and there was more aggressive behaviour such as 'play'

---

[7] This also suggests a particular form of masculinity (and femininity) which is being promoted as well. Men who do not 'fit' heterosexual stereotypes may be as marginalized as (or more than) women.

fighting amongst the men. These comments included the idea that the camp was unkempt and disorderly.

When I was a crew boss, part of my job was to hire my own crew, making my own decisions as to who would be capable of the work. In the off season, around the beginning of January, all crew bosses conduct interviews and hire either friends, friends of friends or strangers. Each year the office recruitment person would send out emails encouraging more hiring of women. Although there was not a specific target number or affirmative action policy within the company for which I worked, I thought it was promising that the company cared about more women being hired. I believed the company cared until it was acknowledged and mentioned through mocking emails from the office that if we did not hire more women than we would have an unhappy male camp of sexually frustrated men. Implicitly, the recruitment office was saying that women were there to work but also there to be for the use and benefit of the 'real' (men) workers at a contract. This in turn generates an unequal gender dynamic within camp.

It has also been mentioned numerous times over many of my seasons that men will become sexually frustrated and therefore more aggressive if there are few women in camp. A female regional manager, Molly, who has worked in the industry for over fifteen years, spoke on the importance of female 'influence in camp':

> I think it affects the morale and the social atmosphere in
>
> camp. I think when there is more women around it is a
>
> more civil place to be. I think people take more care about

how they speak to one another. I think there is less

swearing and less macho ridiculousness that you can get

when you are in that atmosphere. You know *Lord of the*

Flies scenario where it can spiral down easily. I find it

becomes a nicer place to be. People want relationships

and want to hang out with the opposite sex.

Brittany reiterates this perspective:

you need a balance of men and women in a camp because

just guys are too much. Then they get really competitive

with each other and then there is too much testosterone.

Besides the whole camp life, you definitely need a good

mixture of guys and girls for that as well. It makes a camp

happier too. We had more women in management this

season and it worked well because it was a lot calmer. We

didn't really have that much trouble.

Male and female tree planters alike are generally receptive to the idea of equal

or nearly equal gender ratios in their workplaces. As one male crew boss noted "You

wouldn't want all guys [in a camp], it wouldn't make for a good working environment ...

if the girls are few and far between there will be tension in the camp ... I think that the

more balanced ratio, male to female, the better the camp." (Sweeney 2005: 24). Also,

Maya states that it is important to have a balanced camp. In some of the past camps

she has worked in the ratios of women to men were very low. She believes that the significant presence of women

> changes the dynamics of the camp and the dynamics of the crew. You want balance ideally, for sure of men to women because it is a different experience. Guys don't like it, if there are only men there. I think management, having a balanced male and female management also impacts a camp and the dynamics between management as well.

What I find striking is that Maya mentions how men will not like the dynamics of camp without more women. This past season a male supervisor in my company experienced his camp as extremely happy and content because there were a lot of "young, attractive new girl planters". These comments show that women are seen not only as monitoring the social conduct within the camp but also as alleviating men's sexual frustration. Dana discusses her issues with a male crew boss from a previous year who said that "it was good that we hired a lot of girls this year so there wasn't as much competition to get one". As Dana explains,

> for me I was there to work and not there to hook up with guys. I didn't want to deal with the women who were there just to get a guy. Like there was a girl that was there just to sleep with Greg. She wanted to quit and she wasn't

> making any money but just stayed to be with him. Like
>
> sure it is fine for her but it makes other women look bad.
>
> That is why I want to be good at this job. To prove that we
>
> are here planting for more than that.

Dana's comment demonstrates the judgements women may face by their peers if they have a sexual relationship with someone in the camp. Dana finds it acceptable for women to be sexually available in camp as long as it is only a small part of the reason why women are there. If women do not demonstrate a proficiency in the tree planting job then it is assumed they are there for the companionship and not for the work. This in turn is considered to mark women as additions in camp and not as legitimate workers. While on the other hand, it seems that when men have a sexual relationship in the camp their job performance or credibility to the job is not questioned.

Another example of how women lose credibility in camp is through judgements passed on how they demonstrate their femininity. For instance, if a woman was considered 'girly', many women planters would think that she was bound to be a bad tree planter until she had shown she could plant trees. If a woman were to plant a lot of trees, then what she wore or how she displayed her femininity would not be questioned. More to the point, if a woman displayed high sexual interest in the men sexually; if she wore very feminine clothing, or if her physique, then she would be required to plant a lot of trees before she would be seen as a legitimate planter. As Faye has witnessed, "Girly girl planters will not get the respect they want until they plant a lot of trees. Straight up. If you want to wear pink, fine, but don't expect people

to think you are going to plant a lot of trees until you do". We see from this comment made by Faye that women strikingly face judgements from both sides. This point was also reiterated by Brittany's comment made about a fellow woman in management:

> But Krista uses her sex appeal. That's how she gets jobs and I don't think she is above and beyond. Everyone in upper management thinks she is a great crew boss because they think she is hot but I think she is just a good crew boss. She just gets away with things because she just flirts her way into every position or out of every situation.

I responded to Brittany's comment with: "It would be interesting to see how it would affect her position if she had a female regional manager. How would a female regional manager react to her tactics and if they thought she was as a capable as her men regional managers do?" Brittany replied,

> I think probably not. For example, Molly (a female regional manager in Brittany's company but in another district from herself and Krista) is a cool chick but she wouldn't put up with flirting at all. You couldn't flirt with Molly - she is all business. I think the only reason Krista gets back in each year is that they all want to sleep with her. And it seems like they might be able to. She puts it out there that it is an option.

What emerges from my interviewees' comments on workplace sexuality and gender roles is that there are certain 'acceptable' articulations of female sexuality in tree planting work camps. The women themselves pass judgment regarding their sexuality and work place roles on one another. The categorizations of women are essentially flawed because either way women are objectified. The first objectification of women is sexually. The second objectification of women is as the guardian of the 'morality' and social conduct within the camp. Regardless of which role a woman is classified under, both are seen as being there to support in some way the 'real' workers in the camp: the men. Although women and men regard women planters and managerial staff as competent and capable, they are also seen as 'add-ons' to an already functioning masculine tree planting camp. The women are decidedly falling into either/or stereotypical category rather than being a woman tree planter with a varied self image and perspective. Martha explains her perspective as to how she sees the women in camp, as well as how she sees them as regarded by others:

> There are the women that are boisterous, sexually
>
> promiscuous and sort of considered the 'hippie' free to do
>
> drugs and have sex with whomever. And then there's the
>
> natural outdoors girl with the boyfriend or the girl waiting
>
> for a solid 'shack up' with one guy at tree planting.

In my opinion, women who tree plant are more diverse than reflected in Martha's comments. It is interesting, however, that a woman relies on such stereotypes. She is in no way alone in believing that women within tree planting fall under two stereotypes:

the girl next door and the vixen. However, as shown through other women's responses in regard to their self image, experiences and perspectives in this line of work, they are far more complex and dynamic than this duality.

Although women are not made directly responsible for camp happiness, there is a strong belief in women's influence on the camp in terms of its smooth functioning. More equal ratios of men to women thus have a benefit to the camp that has little to do with respecting women's work capabilities or applying principles of equality – women's domesticating 'nature' is seen as a key benefit to hiring women.

Women as 'Conceptual Men' in Tree planting

When negotiating a viable workplace identity, many women tree planters attempt to avoid the sexual objectification of their body, as Natalie's comments above reflect. Ranson refers more specifically to women submerging their 'female subjectivity' as a way to correspond with being 'conceptual men' (2005: 150). For instance, one of her interviewees would not take a purse a work and wear wide skirts and flat loafers instead of high heels. Ranson states, "in the workplace they wanted to be accepted as and 'one of the boys'" (2005: 150). Also, women interviewed typically avoided the notion that women were physically inferior to men. In order to keep a feminine identity, while not falling into these sexist categorizations, women often try to both maintain their gender neutrality through physical strength and endurance while also exhibiting their womanliness. Therefore, women must maintain their femininity and closely monitor their workplace performances. Reed observes that:

typically, forestry conjures up images of logging, an occupation characterized by physical labour, hard work, danger and even drama. These images are symbols of masculinity in forestry communities, symbols to be admired and even romanticized (2003: 373).

Although tree planting differs from logging because it is does not have as much prestige as logging in most forestry-dependent communities, it remains a masculine-gendered occupation and embodies such traits in men and women (Brandth and Haugen 2000). Tree planting provides young workers from Ontario's urban and affluent middle-classes with an opportunity – possibly their only one – to live and work in the spaces of an iconic masculine-gendered industry: "Males are able to perform in a traditionally masculine fashion rarely required or appropriate in their home or scholarly communities. Females are afforded this opportunity, as well as spaces for empowerment where they prove that they too can thrive in a masculine-gendered industry" (Sweeney 2005). In order to succeed as a tree planter and in managerial positions, women must often perform in a manner consistent with masculine hegemony in the workplace. Women often have different motivations for working as tree planters. Many relish the challenge to dispel stereotypes that tree planting – or forestry work in general – is 'men's' work.

Female tree planters in my interviews, however, echoing sentiments of female forest workers in studies by Reed (2003), Tripp-Knowles (1999) and Brandth and Haugen (2000), discuss the ongoing need to justify their presence to male counterparts. Many

women found tree planting provides sites for empowerment and a way of testing themselves and their bodies a difficult task (Sweeney 2005). Where practical forestry work has excluded women on presumptions that they lack physical strength, tree planting differs, as mental and physical endurance are relied on more than brute strength. Tree planting requires a certain amount of strength, with which males are initially perceived to be better equipped. However, Sweeney regards the mental strength of tree planting to be just as important as the physical strength thereby levelling the gender stereotypes. This, he argues, allows for more equitable and objective evaluations of success (Sweeney 2005: 23). Yet, how is success defined and measured? In tree planting, success is measured in how fast a planter can plant the most trees. If men are planting more trees and doing it faster, they will be regarded as the more successful planters, at least by the companies' measurements of who are the 'top planters'. Women and their physical strength are measured in comparison to their male colleagues yet such a comparison sets the male body as standard and the female body as deviant. The universal, individual and 'gender neutral' tree planter is utilized by tree planting companies and the planters themselves to promote more woman planters in the work force. But this tree planter is actually gendered male, reflecting Acker's arguments about workers being invisibly gendered male (see chapter 3). Further, the gendered structure of our society and thereby the workforce creates implicit barriers for women to overcome.

Pateman (1986) and Acker (1990), as discussed in chapter 3, explain that a central problem of liberalism for women is its fundamental abstraction of the individual

from the body. This abstracted individual, also used to define 'workers' in apparently gender-neutral workplaces, however, reflects a male norm or standard. In this context, many women tree planters feel compelled to construct and maintain a competent work place identity based on the assumption that they are 'conceptual men' (Ranson 2005). Women present themselves to the tree planting work environment as abstracted 'workers', in part by emulating male 'styles' and behaviours which are presented as "organizational expectations and simultaneously proclaimed gender-neutral" (Ranson 2005: 150). This effort to act as a 'worker' can be seen in Patty's comments:, "in tree planting I find that I become a lot more masculine than I am in my 'normal' environment because I find that it is respected more". What Patty does not like about tree planting is the:

> masculinities and the pressure to be very masculine in a way that is competitive. It can be very…sometimes it can just be a very hostile environment. They can be like 'ya I am a man I am gotta toughin you up'. And it is like you know it is ok that you are tired right now or you are emotional right now and you are not having a good day. Sometimes the lack of compassion sometimes just because they [male colleagues] are trying to put on a tough act. But I think the way that males are socialized to be a lot more competitive and to push push push more than females so they are much more robot like. I think

males historically have been pushed to work hard and all about efficiency while women are socialized to be more emotional so women don't have as much internal support to really high ball. The motivation has not been a priority for women. I think if you were to take out all the ways in which we are conditioned then I think more women would high ball.

Women who make it clear – through style of dress and attitude – that they do not pose a threat to the male-based 'expectations', mute the salient aspects of their femininity (Ross 2006). For instance, Natalie who mentioned previously in this chapter that she maintains a 'respectful' way of dressing, covering her body in hopes that she will not be objectified, also describes a scenario of disavowing her physical inferiority:

as a female I feel uncomfortable when I can't do things physically that the men can do. For example, when you and I got stuck in the back of block with the all terrain vehicle (ATV), we didn't know what to do because we couldn't lift it up, we couldn't fix it and we couldn't get it out of there. We weren't strong enough. A few of the men in management came in and got the ATV out of the block. In our camp we were probably a couple of the strongest females and we couldn't do it. I am definitely

uncomfortable and get really frustrated if I feel we are not

able bodied.

Natalie implicitly refers to being able bodied as having the same strength and capability

to get the ATV out of the block as men do. However, because I was also part of this

scenario I have another perspective. A few of our male co-workers did go to the back of

the block to retrieve the ATV, however, in doing so they had another ATV which they

used to drag the broken ATV out of the block. It had nothing to do with physical

strength but, in my view, the availability of equipment. Regardless, Natalie felt that she

had failed to be 'able bodied' and capable of getting the ATV out of the tree planting

block of land. Brittany also expresses her discontent with being viewed differently on

the job because she is female. She expresses,

> when you are a female and are doing things like getting
>
> quads unstuck, being muddy and fixing various [pieces of]
>
> equipment around camp, it is just different for people to
>
> see. Like girls being dirty all the time. I love getting into
>
> the mud and getting things unstuck. That is the job and as
>
> a deliverer you have to get in there and get things done
>
> and that proves things very quickly. I can fix quads (ATV's)
>
> and it blows people's minds. I would be under a quad
>
> (ATV) and all greasy and people would be taken aback
>
> whereas if a guy was doing the same thing they would be
>
> like whatever. We are doing the exact same thing in the

exact same job and people are blown away — it is really

weird.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored how women viewed their bodies and roles within

a tree planting camp. Interestingly, I noticed that women kept mentioning that one

attraction to tree planting work was the benefits of losing weight, eating whatever one

wanted and becoming 'fit'. Women gain a sense of empowerment through the effect of

tree planting on their bodies that reflects the slender and taut ideal which

simultaneously causes them to struggle with body image outside of tree planting. The

pressure women feel to maintain and control their bodies is witnessed in the group of

women interviewed who all comment on their happiness and willingness to lose weight.

Bansow and Roth express an important perspective on women and their body images:

> we cannot, nor should we hope to, disconnect women's
>
> esteem and self-worth from their bodies; to do this would
>
> be to fall into the trap of dualism. We must instead
>
> acknowledge the body's essential connection to self-worth
>
> and acknowledge that all bodies are constructed. There
>
> can be no choice, individually or collectively, as to *whether*
>
> female bodies are constructed, but there can, to some
>
> extent, be choice as to *how* they are constructed (2004:
>
> 261).

In contrast to the almost uniform appreciation of tree planting's effects on their weight and body image, there were diverse reactions to the sexual objectification that occurs in a tree-planting camp. Some women felt that they wanted to feel attractive within the tree planting camp and did so through attracting men's attention and approval[8]. Other women mentioned the importance of maintaining a professional respect level in both conduct and appearance. This variation in perspective was found in both female management as well as women tree planters. It is interesting to note the distinctive perspectives of women regarding their gender and their relation to work. This in turn was reflected in the section discussing how women were seen as important to the camp in order to keep sexual frustration of the men down and to help keep the conduct of the camp in check. Women's roles in exercising social control in the tree planting community is a reflection of broader cultural and neoliberal values that privilege notions of family, community, and responsibility, simultaneously categorizing these as feminine values and tasks. I claim that the notion of women as the social control of tree planting camps is profoundly problematic for women because it places women in a gendered typecast. Lastly, the concept of women as conceptual men is reintroduced but more specifically in relation to a gender neutral body and worker. However, what is critically analysed within this chapter is that the work place of tree planting is not gender neutral but a work place that maintains masculine hegemony.

---

[8] Although I did not have a direct question asking the women their sexual orientation, all of the women I interviewed identified themselves as heterosexual at some point during the interview.

As discussed in chapter 3, gendering of the workplace occurs through organizational hierarchies and power structures, the re-enactment of gendered social expectations in the workplace, barriers to women in the opportunity structure, and workers' gendered expressions and activities The reinforcement of gendered identities by both women and men in tree planting reflects the overall culture of forestry, as described by Reed (2003, see chapter 3). The traditional of forestry masculinity was identified as an important barrier for women because women were unlikely to overcome these stereotypes and be taken seriously (Reed 2003). One's physical presence influences worker–regulator interaction. One interviewee from a forestry government position of Reed's explained:

> There's a girl (of twelve staff) who works in Timber and
>
> she's young, she's small, she's feminine, how seriously do
>
> they take her? You know, in comparison to dealing with a
>
> guy who's six foot four, and got a beer belly that still
>
> hasn't changed all that much they're pretty rugged dudes
>
> (2003: 385).

So while there were more openings for women because of policies to be employed in regulatory positions of government forestry positions, they faced subtle but detrimental barriers and exclusions. As Reed observes, qualities such as "girl" "young" "small" "feminine" were used by the interviewee to illustrate the challenges faced by women who entered the forestry workforce even in government jobs (2003: 385). Similar words are used to describe many of the bodies of women who tree plant. However, when

these quotations are considered alongside assertions of men's physical stamina, work ethic, ability to face danger etc.—these descriptions of women as "young", "small" and "feminine" appear to illustrate how women fall short.

As we have seen from the past two chapters of analysis, women partake in and reinforce their gendered identities within their work place. In short, my findings are comparable to Reed's conclusions that the discourses and practices of women in forestry are socially embedded within local and societal values and norms while the planters also have other cultural perspectives from which the women derive their identities. My findings were similar to Reed's (2003) interviews with women in forestry employment as we both uncovered contradictory ideas about inclusion and exclusion and appropriate feminine and masculine behaviours. As Reed states, "Women's adoption of cultural norms and values associated with forestry reflected and reinforced their own marginality" (Reed 2003: 387). However, unlike Reed, I would contend that this is due to the neoliberal perspective on work and individual effort most women tree planters have adopted.

Conclusion

As I explained in my introduction, the purpose of this research was to explore and illuminate the varied ways women negotiate gender and identity in one specific male-dominated and masculine workplace: a tree planting camp. One important goal within this exploration was to gain more insight into women's expressed reasons for pursuing non-traditional work. What compels women to engage in tree planting and what makes them stop?

To develop a clearer understanding of how female tree planters negotiate gendered identities in northern Ontario, I spent four months as a participant observer in a tree planting camp, and conducted twenty-two in-depth interviews with women involved in tree planting. I also drew on my previous six seasons working both as a tree planter and as part of the management team. This study has been successful in showing the various perspectives and discourses women tree planters engage in regarding gender equity, mentoring, body image and sexual objectification. It has also showed the nuanced approaches women engage in when negotiating gender in this distinct line of work.

I found that women tree planters believed that women were as capable at tree planting as men, and could move into management positions if they wanted to. The women I interviewed focused on their own individual effort as key to success in tree planting, and while they accepted that men might be physically stronger than themselves, they downplayed this difference. Mental effort and individual determination, making an effort to 'prove' that they were capable, were understood as

necessary for success in this field. Many women also spoke of the workplace as an equal place where gender does not influence job performance and/or production.

Simultaneously, interviewees also voiced a clear understanding of the restrictions placed on them by others' beliefs about gender and tree planting work. They spoke of assumptions that men were physically stronger, or that there was only one way to lift a box of trees. They also noted that the one management job that women were most highly represented in - tree checking – was seen as low status. The interviewees spoke clearly of the sexual objectification in which they participated as well as discouraged.

How does the ideal of gender neutrality manage to sit side by side with the sexual objectification? The way in which women reconcile this contradiction needs to be considered. It presents a classic 'double bind' in which "the self is torn in two mutually incompatible directions" (Bordo 1993: 199). On the one hand women are encouraged to be in control of their bodies and to maintain a gender neutral position within the work force of tree planting. While on the other hand, women are sexualized and deemed worthy of the male gaze through feminine clothes and 'virtues' in a tree planting camp.

Neoliberalist rhetoric focusing on individual effort and achievement and downplaying the contributions of gendered social and organizational norms and structures to individual experiences was one way in which tree planting women made efforts to reconcile this contradiction. I critically engaged my own perspective as well as those of the women interviewees to reflect on the neoliberalist rhetoric. How does the

neoliberalist rhetoric both help foster and hinder women in the reforestation work force?

The gendered spaces of work places such as tree planting are maintained through everyday activities like speech, jokes, sexual objectification and gendered stereotypes. The women I interviewed, however, focused more on their own beliefs in gender equity and independence in negotiating gender in the camp, rather than on how the men's comments and jokes within tree planting made them feel marginalized. Those women who had moved into management positions relied on their own determination, experience and knowledge to continue in tree planting. Almost all of them, however, mentioned other more experienced women as role models and mentors, whose presence and specific advice helped them cross barriers. Women almost always however, saw any gender barriers they faced as surmountable through individual effort, with support from other women.

This neoliberal discursive emphasis on individualism, and seeing other women's presence in management as reflecting gender equality, reassures one into thinking that struggles over the social transformation of the gender order have become obsolete (Lazar 2007). For post feminists, this is a time for celebrating women's newfound power and achievements. As Molly, a regional manager of the north-western Ontario district of a tree planting contracting company revealed, when I asked if it was difficult to get into a management position in tree planting: "No it wasn't. At first I moved into being a checker and I was in forestry [in University] so.nope it wasn't difficult but I also had good people advocating for me. I did three years of crew bossing and it was never

questioned and as long as I wanted to do it – it was there for me". While it is important to acknowledge the social, economic, and political achievements of a growing number of young women in many industrialized societies today, there is a need also to exercise critical reflexivity on the matter. One of the problematic assumptions of neoliberal discourse is that women can 'have it all' if only they put their minds to it or try hard enough. This is reflected on women tree planters' emphasis that tree planting requires mental fortitude and determination, rather than physical strength. This reframes women's struggles and accomplishments as a purely personal matter, thus obscuring the social and material constraints faced by different groups of women. Ironically, this represents a backsliding on (second-wave) feminists' efforts to put the 'personal as political' on the social agenda (Lazar 2007).

I have also come to realize that within tree planting, gendered social expectations and larger gender norms and structures are both replicated and magnified. Despite being an institution with a gender balance that is nearing 60/40 (male/female) across Canada (Sweeney 2005), the institution of reforestation continues to both conform to and bolster male dominance. If women's entry into male occupational turf is largely premised on liberal assumptions that women are the same as men, it follows that women themselves must 'manage gender' in order to fit themselves into existing organizational cultures and structures (Rubin 1997). Women are willing to identify with male tree planters rather than addressing the macho tree planting identity in which men perform their reforestation work. A woman's willingness to submerge her feminine subjectivity corresponds to her willingness to see herself as a 'conceptual man' (Ranson

2005). In the work place, women work to be accepted as 'one of the boys'. Acting like a man in order to achieve work place recognition and rewards, however, is not necessarily the same as identifying with men (Ranson 2005).

Many women commented on the importance of having other women as mentors in tree planting. Others noted the challenges of being the only woman on the management team, and feelings of exclusion from 'the old boys club'. The support of other women was key to many women's success as tree planters and in management. I understand this as reflecting the idea that women do not completely embrace the neoliberal emphasis on individualism and the idea that gender equality has been achieved.

I also found that tree planting women enjoy the weight loss and physical fitness that results when they tree plant. As I explained, this simultaneously sexualizes them in men's eyes, while they enjoy the feelings of strength and fitness. Importantly, women do not feel they have to control what they eat while tree planting. Women's bodies also come closer to conforming to the ideal female body shape. Women are both empowered by this, while supporting an ideal that they will find difficult to maintain when not tree planting.

Overall, I have presented an examination of how women are impacted by dominant notions of individualism, gender and social control in the male-dominated world of tree planting. Like other male-dominated workplace, and even those where there is more gender equity, women are expected to fit a 'gender-neutral' worker ideal. Recognition of the challenges of making women 'fit' links to a broader critique of the

liberal feminist view position that gender equality means treating men and women the same (Ranson 2005: 148). In particular it does not address the equal-treatment dilemma posed by such events as motherhood, which is the 'embodied challenge to liberal philosophy' (Ranson 2005; Rothman 1994).

While motherhood does not directly affect women in tree planting per se, some of my interviewees explained that they left tree planting or would not continue much longer because they wanted to start a family. This is similar for women in male-defined professions such as engineering. In tree planting, however, this is partly due to the gendered aspects of the work, as well as to the transient and remote location of the work. Women find themselves in a workplace in which a discourse of gender neutrality masks clearly masculine expectations about work performance and career progress.

There also seems to be an inward-looking focus, and contentment only in the achievement of personal freedoms and fulfillment evident throughout the interviews with women tree planters. Most women look at the inequalities between men and women as a personal matter. They see gender as insignificant to the work dynamics within a tree planting camp, and they do not see it as structural. Yet, this is not the case. Whether they are aware of it or not, neoliberal, individualized discourse prevails in many women's perspectives on their tree planting experiences, which disengages them from the gendered aspects of the structure of tree planting work imposed on them.

As Brandth and Haugen stated: "gender often seems to be very solid, embodied, linked to our sense of self, and a part of the world we take for granted. But gender is

also very contingent, unstable and open to challenge. These aspects are what make gender an interesting phenomenon for social scientists to study" (2000: 344). Since men and masculinity are usually treated as the norm in our culture, men's portrayals are often reflected in the organizational structures of work places. Representing the norm, masculinity does not seem to be anything distinctive, and this is the way in which men have rendered invisible their privileged position (Brandth and Haugen 2000). When gender is not addressed, it is often considered to be gender-neutral. As Acker states: "gender is difficult to see when only the masculine is present" (1990: 163). Hence, the organizational structure is represented as gender neutral but actually represents the masculine behavior and perspective. When principles we use to organize the social world appear as obvious, natural and objective, Bourdieu calls this experience 'doxa' (Bourdieu 1991). The experience appears not as a result of choice, but as something that happens naturally. The masculine gendering of forestry and in particular reforestation could be seen as an example of doxa (Brandth and Haugen 2000). Once someone questions that which is taken for granted, conditions for change emerge (Brandth and Haugen 2000). It is my hope that in discussing gender issues in the workplace with women tree planters, both myself and my interviewees have raised our own awareness and provided some impetus for change.

The limitations of this study consist largely in the sample of women interviewed. In particular, the study was limited to one area of one province in Canada – northern Ontario - and many of the women interviewed worked for the same company. I found participants to interview through word of mouth and personally asking women if they

would be willing to participate. Building my interview sample this way created a homogenous sample.

Another significant limitation, especially given my findings about sexuality and the sexual double standard in the camps was that all of the women I interviewed identified as heterosexual. Therefore, perspectives from women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or queer are not present within this thesis. Interviewees with such women may have brought forward much different views on male heterosexuality within the camp, as well as different views on gender discrimination. This reflects a sample of women that were not interviewed nor given an opportunity to discuss their experience within tree planting camps in northern Ontario.

This study focused on the myriad ways in which women tree planters negotiate their gendered identity within a bush camp. Primarily, I have discussed how women maintain their identities in the face of formal and informal barriers in the workplace. In part, this study was motivated by my inability to find any contemporary literature on women in tree planting. As well the personal nature of my work involvement in tree planting had me curious to investigate, critique and engage in the work environment of reforestation. After reflecting on my experience as a woman in this line of work, I wanted to address my perspective of the experience combined with other women's participation. It is a unique and distinct job that has become a 'rite of passage' for many university students in Canada. I wanted to look at why women are involved, what makes them stay in this line of work, and what is the experience of being involved in the capacity as a tree planter but also moving up into managerial positions.

The review of feminist liberal ideology reveals that it assumes the sameness of all women. It has allowed middle-class, heterosexual, western, white women to represent their partial experiences as universally shared by all women, thereby ignoring the material conditions and needs of non-western, non-white, lesbian, disabled and poor women around the globe (see hooks 1984; Lazar 2007). It is imperative for feminist scholars, therefore, to be mindful of the pitfall of liberalism and avoid replicating it. Within this research, all the women are white, and university educated. Therefore, experiences cannot apply, for example, to other seasonal work which may be dominated by men and women of colour or by working class men and women. This work is chosen by these women versus thrust upon them. As well, there is typically far less imbalance between bosses and workers than in workplaces where the workers are from less privileged backgrounds. I did have concern that in choosing this topic, I recall the emphasis on white women's experiences. However, because of my experiences as a woman tree planter and managerial staff, I have the credibility in this discussion pertaining to women in this line of work. It is also important to note, as I did in my introduction that tree planting workers in British Columbia and other provinces across Canada may come from a different demographic, and that historical studies of tree planters may have more marginalized workers as their focus. The majority of the women interviewed including myself are from middle class, heterosexual, western, white identities which in turn perpetuate the problematic continuance of such feminist research. Yet, this research contributes to the study of seasonal, manual work of reforestation in which many women are considered secondary and/or minor to this

labour force. Looking at this work we see the nuanced perspectives and experience women have in tree planting in Ontario.

In future, this study could be expanded to include a closer examination of women's experiences in higher positions of silviculture contracts. Are there fundamental differences in individual experiences across Canada? Also, a larger exploration of the ways workplace sexuality is constructed and maintained would be helpful. Future explorations might look at the varied ways women condition and control their bodies in the workplace. It would also be interesting to discuss the varied ways in which men daily negotiate their identity in tree planting camps.

While my study is partial, it makes a very important contribution to sociological and feminist analysis of women in non-traditional work places. The emphasis women placed on how they become 'fit' during tree planting, and how they enjoy this bodily change is also important. Through engaging with critiques of liberal feminist ideals and neoliberal rhetoric, my study shows that tree planting women recognize gender inequity but emphasize individual effort and individual responses to the barriers such inequality erects against them. Tree planting is also shown to be reflective of theories of how gender inheres in organizations. Negotiating gender, for women tree planters, is a complex practice which avoids gendered structures, while working around them, relying on neoliberal rhetoric of individualism and competition, camaraderie with and support from women mentors, and experiencing a body that is both freed from and upholding female   bodily   ideals.

Works Cited

Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations" Pp. 299-321 in *Feminist Foundation Toward Transforming Sociology*. Edited by Kristen Myers, Cynthia Anderson and Barbara Risman. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication.

Adler, P. A., & Adler, R. 1987. "Membership roles in field research" in *Qualitative research methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. 1994. "Observational techniques". Pp. 377-392 in *Handbook of qualitative research.* Edited by N. K. Denzin & Y S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Andersen, Margaret L. 2003. *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspective on Sex and Gender.* 6th ed. United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publ.

Andes, Nancy. 1992. "Social Class and Gender: An Empirical Evaluation of Occupational Stratification." *Gender and Society 6*, 2: 231-251.

Armson, Ken. 2001. *Ontario's Forests: a historical perspective.* Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Press.

Armstong, Pat and Hugh Armstrong. 1981. *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregate Work.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewert.

Babcock, L. and S. Laschever. 2003. *Women don't ask: Negotiation and the gender divide.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bansow, Susan A. and Amanda Roth. 2004. "Developing a Theory of Physical Liberation." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues.* 28, 3: 245-265.

Barcic, Maureen A., Valerie M. Howard and Darlene F. Zellers. 2008. "Faculty Mentoring Programs: Reenvisioning Rather Than Reinventing the Wheel" *Review of Educational Research.* 78; 552-588.

Benoit, Cecilia M. 2000. "Women, Work and Social Rights." *Canada in Historical and Comparative Perspective.* Canadian Cataloguing in Publication.

Bodner, John. 1998. *Slash Romance: an ethnography and occupational folklife study of an Ontario treeplanting camp,* Unpublished M.A. Thesis, (Department of Folklore, Memorial University, St. John's, NFL).

Bordo, Susan. 1993. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body.* Berkley: University of California Press.

Boucher, Priscilla. 1993. "From Living Off the Forests to Living In the Forests: A Feminist Proposal for 'Life-Enhancing' Forest Based Economy" in *Northern Visions: Northern Futures*, edited by Toni Fletcher and Deborah Poff. British Columbia: UNBC Press.

Bourdieu, P. 1991. *Language and symbolic power.* Cambride, U.K.: Polity Press.

Brandth, Berit and Marit Haugen. 1998. "Breaking into a masculine discourse: women and farm forestry" *Sociologia Ruralis*, 38, 3: 427-441.

Brandth, Berit and Marit Haugen. 2000. "From lumberjack to business manager: masculinity in the Norwegian forestry press" *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 343-355.

Brandth, Berit and Marit Haugen. 2005. "Text, body, and tools: changing mediations of rural masculinity" *Men and Masculinities* 8,2: 148-163.

Brodie, Janine. 2008. "We are all equal now: Contemporary Gender Politics in Canada" *Feminist Theory*. 9: 145-165

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble: and the subversion of identity.* London: Routledge.

Castelnuovo, S., & Guthrie, S. 1998. *Feminism and the female body: Liberating the Amazon within*. London: Lynne Rienner.

Castelnuovo, S. & Guthrie, S. 1994. "The significance of body image in psychosocial development and in embodying feminist perspectives" in *Women and sport: Interdisciplinary perspectives.* Edited by D. Costa & S. Guthrie Champaign: IL: Human Kinetics.

Chase, Susan E. and Shulamit Reinharz. 2001. "Interviewing Women" in *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Chesters, Liz. 1994. "Women's Talk: Food, Weight and Body Image" in *Feminism Psychology.* 4: 449.

Choi, Precilla Y.L and Nanette Mutrie. "Is 'Fit' a feminist Issue? Dilemmas for Exercise Psychology." *Feminism & Psychology.* 10, 4: 544–551.

Cope, M. 2002. "Feminist Epistemology in Geography" Pp. 43-56. In *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods.* Edited by. Pamela Moss. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Cyr, Helene. 1998. *Handmade Forests: the tree planter's experience*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Press.

Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln, Yvonna S. 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dimitriadis, Greg and George Kamberelis. 2005. "Focus Groups: Articulations of Pedagogy, Politics and Inquiry." In *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Edited by Norman K.Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Dowling, C. 2000. *The frailty myth: Women approaching physical equality*. NewYork: Random House.

Duhaime, G. 2004. "Social cohesion and living conditions in the Canadian Arctic: From theory to measurement." *Social Indicators Research*. 66: 295-317.

Dunk, Thomas. 2003. *It's a Working Man's Town: male working class culture*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Eagleton, Terry. 2000. *The Idea of Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Ferguson, Kathy E. 1984. *The feminist case against bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Fontana, Andrea. 2001. "Postmodern Trends in Interviewing". Pp. 161-175. In Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method. Edited by Jaber f. Gubrium and James A. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and punish*. London: Allen lane.

Geddes, Maryanne and Rosalind Lockyer and Marina Robinson. 2004 "A Literature Review Pertaining to the Employment of Women in Northwestern Ontario" in *Prepared for the Paro Centre for Women's Enterprise.* Retrieved October 10, 2007 on http://www.paro.ca/assets/PDF%20NW%20WOMEN%20LIT%20REVIEW.pdf

Gelder, Ken. 2007. *Subcultures: Cultural histories and social practice.* New York: Routledge Press.

Hargreaves, J. 1994. *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*. New York: Routledge.

Hayter, R., T. Barnes and E. Grass. 1993. *Single Industry Towns and Local Development: Three Coastal British Columbia Forest Product Communities.* Lakehead University Centre for Northern Studies. Research Report No. 34.

Henry, Miriam and Suzanne Franzway. 1993. "Gender, Unions and the New Workplace: Realising the Promise?" *Pink Collar Blues: Work Gender and Technology.* Edited by Belinda Pobert and Bruce W. Wilson. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Heynen, Nik and Harold A. Perkins and Parama Roy. 2007. "Failing to grow their own justice? The co-production of racial/gendered labour and Milwaukee's Urban forest." *Urban Geography.* 28, 8.

Hooks, b. 1984. *Feminist theory: From margin to centre.* Boston, MA: South End Press.

Jones, Stacy Holman. 2005. "Autoethnography: Making the personal political." In *Sage Handbook of Qualitative.* Edited by Norman K.Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Jorgenson, J. 2002. "Engineering selves: Negotiating gender and identity in technical work." Management in Communication Quarterly. 15, 3: 350-380.

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss and Barry A. Stein. 1979. "The Gender Pioneers: Women in an Industrial Sales Force" *Life in Organizations*. New York: Basic Books Inc.

Kanter, R. M. 1977. *Men and women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books.

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1976. "The Impact of Hierarchial Structures on the Work Behaviour of Women and Men." Pp. 259-277. In *Feminist Foundation Toward Transforming Sociology.* Edited by Kristen Myers, Cynthia Anderson and Barbara Risman. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication.

King, Ynestra. 1989. "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology" *Healing the Wounds.* Philadelphia: New Society Press.

Klausen, Susanne. 1998. *Female in a Forest Town: Women and Work in Port Alberni.* Report prepared for the Port Alberni Women and Work Project. 41: 199-235.

Kneeshaw, Daniel and Christian Messier. (1999. "Thinking and acting differently for sustainable management of the boreal forest" *The Forestry Chronicle*. 75.6: Nov/Dec.

Lazar, Michelle M. 2007. "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis." *Critical Discourse Studies.* 4, 2: 141-164

Lorber, J. 2006. "The Social Construction of Gender" Pp. 276-283. In Inequality Reader. Edited by Szonja Szeleny and David B. Grusky. Westview press.

Lorber, J. 2001. *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*. Los Angelas: Roxbury.

Macdonald, Doune and Jan Wright & Gabrielle O'Flynn. 2006. "Being Fit and Looking Healthy: Young Women's and Men's Constructions of Health and Fitness." *Sex Roles*. 54: 707-716

Maguire, Jennifer Smith. 2002. "Body Lessons: Fitness Publishing and the Cultural Production of the Fitness Consumer." *INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT* 37: 3–4.

Marchak, Patricia. 1983. *Green Gold: The Forest Industry in British Columbia*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

McDaniel, Susan A. 2003. "Social Cohesion and Gender: Reflections on Tendencies and Tensions" Canadian *Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologies*. 28: 43-50.

Merleau-Pointy, M. 1962. *Phenomenology of perception*. London: Routledge & Keegan. (Original work published 1945).

Miller, Leslie J. 1987. "Uneasy Alliance: Women as Agents of Social Control." *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie.* 12, 4: 345-361.

Mies, Maria. 1993. "Feminist Research: Science, Violence and Responsibility." Pp. 36-54. In Ecofeminism. Edited by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. Ecofeminism. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.

Moller Okin, Susan. 1999. "Justice, Gender and the Family." Pp. 313-330. In *Feminist Philosophies.* Edited by Janet A. Kourany, James P. Sterba and Rosemarie Tong. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Simon & Schuster Company.

Mueller, Steve. 2008. "Getting Tree Planting Fit" *Canadian Silviculture.* February 2008.

Oldford, Gordon. 1987. "Silvicultural Contracting: Ontario's Shift to the Private Sector" *Canadian Forest Industries,* 107,7: 454-456.

Olesen, Virginia. 2005. "Early Millennial Feminist Qualitative Research, Challenges and Contours." Pp. 235-278. In *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Edited by Norman K.Denzin and Yvonne S. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). 1994. *Policy Framework for Sustainable Forests* (Toronto: OMNR).

Pateman, Carole. 1986. "Introduction: The theoretical subversiveness of feminist." *Feminist challenges.* Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin.

Pateman, Carole. 1988. *The Sexual Contract.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Ranson, Gillian. 2005. "No Longer 'One of the Boys': Negotiations with Motherhood, as prospect or reality, among Women in Engineering" *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology.* May: 145.

Reda, Mary M. "Autoethnography as research methodology?." *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 11, 1: 177.

Reed, Maureen. 2003. "Marginality and gender at work in forestry communities in British Columbia, Canada" *Journal of Rural Studies,* 19: 373-389.

Reskin, Barbara F. 1988. "Bringing the Men Back in: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work." Pp. 278- 298. In *Feminist Foundation Toward Transforming Sociology.* Edited by Kristen Myers, Cynthia Anderson and Barbara Risman. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication.

Roberts, Delia. "Women Tree Planters" *Canadian Silviculture.* February 2008: 26-28.

Rothman, B. 1994. "Beyond mothers and fathers: Ideology in a patriarchal society". Pp. 139-157. In *Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*. Edited by E.N. Glenn, G. Chang and L.R. Forcie. New York: Routledge Press.

Rubin, Gayle. 1975. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." P. 157-210. In *Toward and Anthropology of Women*. Edited by Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Salverson, J. 2001. Change *on whose terms? Testimony and an erotics of Inquiry*. Theatre 31 Press.

Shilling, Chris. 2004. *The Body and Social Theory*. London: Sage Publication.

Southcott, Chris. 2003. *Women in the Workforce in Northern Ontario. 2001 Census Research*

Paper Series: Report #8. Prepared for the Training Boards of Northern Ontario.

Retrieved October 10, 2007 on

http://www.fnetbcfne.on.ca/English/Reports/report8-eng.pdf

Smith, Barbara. 1982. "Racism and Women's Studies" *But Some of Us Are Brave*. Old Westbury Press: Feminist Press.

Snitow, A. 1990. "A gender diary." In Conflicts in Feminism. M. Hirsch and E. F. Keller (eds.). New York: Routledge.

Spradley, J. P. 1980. *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Sweeney, Brendan. 2005. *Cultivating Communities of Practice': Work Cultures in Northern Ontario's Tree Planting Industry*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis (Department of Geography, Queen's University, Kingston, ON).

Sweeney, Brendan & John Holmes. 2008. "Work and life in the clearcut: communities of practice in the northern Ontario tree planting industry" *The Canadian Geographer*.

Tedlock, Barbara. 2005. "The Observation of Participation and the Emergence of Public Ethnography." In *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Edited by Norman K.Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Tripp-Knowles, Peggy. 1999. "The Feminine Face of Forestry in Canada." In *Challenging Professions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Women's Professional Work.Edited by* Elizabeth Smyth et al. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Wall, Miriam. 1993. "Women and Development in Northwestern Ontario." *Provincial Hinterland*. Halifax: Fernwood Press.

Warren, Karen. 1997. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Indiana: Bloomington Indiana University Press

Williamson, Karla Jenssen et al. 2004. "Chapter 11 Gender Issues" *The Arctic Human Development Report*. Retrieved October 10, 2007 on www.thearctic.is?AHDR%20chapters.htm

Wilson, S.J. 1982. *Women the Family and the Economy*. Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Press.