BREAKING THROUGH THE CELLULOID CEILING?:
A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL
IN WOMEN IN FILM AND VIDEO VANCOUVER

by

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B.A., McGILL UNIVERSITY, 2000

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the School of

Communication

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

July, 2004

APPROVAL

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Degree: **Master of Arts**

Title of Thesis: **Breaking Through the Celluloid Ceiling?: A Study of the Effectiveness of Social Capital in Women in Film and Video Vancouver**

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ABSTRACT

In a society where culture is increasingly experienced through mediated forms, Canadian women remain severely under-represented as the creators of these products. Today, there is a tendency to take for granted the efforts of past feminist pioneers, and to assume women's ability to access any sphere. However, women make up just 1% of the Director's Guild of Canada, and the film industry is dominated by males in terms of creative roles and positions of authority. In my thesis, I apply Pierre Bourdieu's notion of social capital to argue that social networks provide a key resource for meeting the challenges women face in entering the film industry, taking up the organization Women in Film and Video Vancouver as a case study of an important venue where these networks take form. I contextualize my research by charting some of the social, economic and historical conditions of film production in Canada and in Vancouver. My findings suggest that many of the problems women filmmakers encounter are similar to those of women entering any male-dominated field, but they may be magnified by the specific conditions of this industry. Social constructions of gender and of the artist in Western society also affect the roles that women are taking up within the industry, with many women taking lower-status organizational roles, while men fill roles as creative directors. Women who belong to Women in Film and Video Vancouver have found that the organization increases valuable networking opportunities, which can lead to benefits ranging from personal support, to work opportunities, to government funding. I conclude that WIFVV is an important resource for women filmmakers and that it deserves needs further reaching government support. However, I also find that if the organization is to help change the status of women filmmakers as a group, rather than helping individual women advance their careers, it will have to move into a more active political role as a lobbying force.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to women filmmakers everywhere.
Their tenacity and courage, and their creative work,
have deeply inspired me. This country would
be much poorer for their absence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTRA   Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists

BC   British Columbia

BC Film   British Columbia Film Commission

CBC   Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CFDC   Canadian Film Development Corporation

CFTPA   Canadian Film and Television Producers Association

DGC   Directors Guild of Canada

DOC   Documentarian Organization of Canada

IATSE   International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture
          Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts

NFB   National Film Board of Canada

SAG   Screen Actors Guild

TWIFT   Toronto Women in Film and Television

VIFF   Vancouver International Film Festival

WIFVV   Women in Film and Video Vancouver

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Throughout the course of this thesis, several related terms pertaining to film and filmmaking will be used. For the purpose of this work, I define these terms as follows:

"Films" are meant to describe audio visual works created by independent filmmakers and videographers.

"Movies" are contrasted with films in that they loosely describe American, Hollywood based or financed productions.

"The cinema" refers both to the art and practice of making films, and to the entire body of filmic work that has been produced.

I. INTRODUCTION

WOMEN IN FILM: PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRESENT CONTEXT

The cinema provides an intriguing intersection of forces that makes it an alluring area of study: it straddles the worlds of art and industry; it blurs distinctions between high and popular culture; and it is a powerful medium of symbolic communication that claims authority in representing both the real and the imaginary. In a non-academic setting, men and women may equally look to the cinema to find their dreams reflected, and almost everyone, it seems, would like to make their own movie. However, women are not well represented in film production roles and few have managed to gain positions of authority. The formerly rigid characterization of the artist as male continues to inform real practices within the film industry; while restrictive or ineffective Canadian cultural policy, the globalization of the media and an emphasis on profitable culture bring further challenges.

When I first began thinking about my thesis research I was very interested in LIFT (the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto) and the interconnections between the work of filmmakers who later became Canada's best known, such Atom Egoyan, Patricia Rozema, and Bruce MacDonald. I wanted to explore cooperatives and organizations in Vancouver where similar networks and interconnections might be taking place. My theory was that in the semi-autonomous spheres of independent filmmaking in Canada's urban centers, social networks fostered a collectivist type of film production that stood in opposition to Hollywood's factory model. However, when I started to look for contacts in Vancouver's film community to interview, everyone that I was told to speak to was male. I began to wonder

where the women were.

As it turns out, there are indeed many women who are active in Vancouver's film industry. Not so many are well known to the public because they are not directing, but women are strongly represented behind the scenes, filling crucial roles as writers, teachers, script consultants and producers. Despite this encouraging fact, women still make up only 1% of the Directors Guild of Canada, the unionized professional organization in which membership is critical for a sustained career. Fortunately, when I started to look for the women, I found Women in Film and Video Vancouver, an organization devoted to promoting women working in the film industry. Accordingly, I adapted my original research ideas to look at the social networks that are formed there.

Women first began to really change the face of film production in the early 1970s with the energy of the 1960s social change, motivated especially by the women's movement and "second wave feminism". It is important to remember now that without the earlier hard work of women who made films, and of other women who got them screened, there would not be the same number of women in film today. Women's film festivals, which began in and reached their apex during the 1970s, were a necessary space for women's cinematic work to be cultivated. Women were stimulated by the success of the first in these in New York City and Edinburgh (both in 1972) and festivals were soon appearing all over North America and Europe. While not all of the films screened were either feminist or political in nature, the intentions behind these festivals certainly were. And once films made by women could actually be seen, they could also be discussed, examined critically, and theorized.

Some of the major issues that surfaced in feminist film criticism demonstrate why it is so important for women to have equal access to the making of meaning through cinematic images. The issue of women's representation was brought out in early works such as Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* (1973), Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape* (1974) and by Laura Mulvey's seminal work "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975)[1]. Dominant cinema was said to primarily function through positioning the female as the object of male pleasure; the on-screen woman was seemingly without a subjectivity of her own, her stories rarely told, her actions obstructed and her voice silenced. Feminist criticism can be credited with changing these tendencies, both through the celebration of films made about women and by women, and in changes made by socially aware male directors. However, much of the work done by well-known academics such as Judith Mayne (1981-2) and E. Ann Kaplan (1983) has been to examine films already made by women; other influential theorists such as Teresa de Lauretis (1985), Annette Kuhn (1982), and Kaja Silverman (1984) have also concentrated on what feminist filmmaking does or should consist of. Their theories are important for understanding the issues at stake for feminist filmmakers, but do little to illuminate the continuing problem that women face in even getting access to the camera, whether they identify themselves as feminists or not.

In a similar manner that feminist film studies has, the study of Canadian cinema has tended to focus on film texts in an attempt to measure them against idealized notions of what these films should be. As Michael Dorland (1998) suggests, scholarship in this area has been

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[1] Craig Fischer (2002:172) has referred to the latter as "perhaps the most anthologized piece in the history of cultural studies".

"prescriptive and moralistic," as it attempts both to locate and to create a Canadian national cinema (7). Dorland argues that this tendency arose in the very first collection of academic writing on Canadian film with Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson's *The Canadian Film Reader* (1977) and was established from that point on as the preeminent discourse. Indeed, this focus is more than evident in books such as Douglas Fetherling's collection *Documents in Canadian Cinema* (1988), where a substantial portion of the book (almost one quarter) is devoted to the question of "The Cinema We Need", as expounded by Bruce Elder and then by those writing in reply to his influential essay.

Despite this intense concern for how a Canadian cinema might best be accomplished, the actual ways that these films come into being has not been so deeply investigated; Dorland reports that "after all, in the 'real' world of changing film practices, films did get made, [and] filmmakers did come and go....But as to what actually brought about these changes, why film practices changed, and how films actually managed to get produced, Canadian film studies remained incurious about these questions" (10). Later works that do ask these questions take up aspects of the political economy of Canadian filmmaking, and include books by Manjunath Pendakur (1990), Ted Magder (1993) and Dorland himself (1998)[2]. However, there is still a lack of investigation into the actual conditions of film production in Canada, and of the experiences of those working in this field. There are even fewer studies that consider how the intersection of particular regional locations and gender difference can affect and even limit the ability to produce films. For example, later surveys of Canadian film such as *North of Everything* (2002), edited by William Beard and Jerry White, acknowledge

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[2] Diane Burgess (2003) has drawn attention to the fact that Dorland, among others, purposely "leaves gender aside" in his work on Canadian cultural policy, effectively institutionalizing the absence of gender.

that gender and regional difference are important components of the Canadian filmmaking experience, but fail to devote much space to these issues; the question of regional identity in *North of Everything* is restricted to just one essay that surveys Newfoundland's cinema. In addition, the question of gender is not taken up as a special topic, and is dealt with only through Kay Armatage's overview of the cinematic and academic work of partners Janis Cole and Holly Dale. Furthermore, women filmmakers from the West Coast are to some extent actively marginalized in this collection: Beard and White announce in their introduction that due to space limitations, some filmmakers that one might expect to be featured have necessarily been left out (xxi). As part of this list the editors mention Lynne Stopkewich and Mina Shum, but they do not give their reasons for leaving out these two Vancouver-based filmmakers in particular.

While general overviews of Canadian cinema can perhaps be excused for limiting their discussion of gender or of regional contexts, publications that do take up these concerns rarely explore these ideas in combination with each other. For example, Canadian academic collections that make gender their primary focus, such as *Gendering the Nation* (Armatage et al.,1999) and *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing* (Levitin, Plessis and Raoul, 2003) are either less concerned with regional specificities (as with the former), or are more concerned with taking stock of recent achievements by women filmmakers (as with the latter). Moreover, while *Gendering the Nation* addresses topics under the general heading of "Canadian Women's Cinema", almost all of the authors are writing from their own regionally specific location of eastern Canada, mainly Toronto and southern Ontario, and their subject choices appear to reflect their geographic situations. The same complaint can be made about the

otherwise excellent work prepared by women filmmakers themselves through the organizations Women in Film (Los Angeles) and Toronto Women in Film and Television (TWIFT). The latter, for example, took up the study of Canadian women in the film and television in 1991 with *Changing Focus*, a group of essays written to interpret the results of their 1989 mission to gather statistics. These essays firmly place the issue as one of gender discrimination in a male-dominated profession; however, as members of a Toronto-based group, their essays necessarily reflect a bias towards the industry at hand, with little mention of other regions. Meanwhile, Mike Gasher fully espouses taking a regional position and provides a very strong analysis of the Vancouver film industry's particular political economy in *Hollywood North* (2002); like Dorland and Magder, he leaves out gender issues completely.

FILM PRACTICES IN THE 'REAL' WORLD

In the beginning of the 21st century, the battles of the early feminists may appear for the most part to be both fought and won. Indeed, few Western women growing up post 1970s would consider gender a constraint in entering all but a few professions. However, I believe that in our post-feminist culture we both take for granted the achievements made by women in the past, and we forget that the battle is not yet over. Filmmaker Kavery Dutta, speaking in regard to the feminist environment of Radcliffe College in the early 1970s remarks: "You come out of there unaware of many of the more obvious constraints on women." (Millar, 1988: 89). This statement could be taken as a metonym for the post-feminist decades: the constraints may not be as obvious, but they exist nonetheless. In fact, one reason that the

problematic of gendered access to media is not prominent is because in our small production

output, several female directors in Canada have reached similar heights as men; popular and

acclaimed films by women such as Lynne Stopkewich, Deepa Mehta, Mina Shum, Anne

Wheeler and Patricia Rozema have appeared on our screens in recent years. However, as Pat

Armstrong argues, "the visibility of these high-profile women camouflages the fact that

women are scarce at the top and plentiful at the bottom of the film and television industry"

(1991: 5).

The fact that women's participation in the film industry continues to be neglected as an area

of concern is highlighted by the dearth of statistical data. Given the limitations of interest or

enquiry into women's positions as media professionals, it is sad but hardly surprising that

TWIFT was forced to commission their own statistical survey. The employment data

available through Statistics Canada does provides a starting point, revealing that men

dominate most fields in film, broadcasting and the arts, including authority and management

roles in both Canada and in BC (Statistics Canada 2004). However, professional

organizations such as the Directors Guild and the Canadian Film and Television Producers

Association do not keep statistics on gender representation in their membership,

demonstrating that gender discrimination is of little concern at the highest levels of the

industry[3].

Some investigation into recent filming and exhibition practices in Vancouver confirms that

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[3] Statistic cited previously from the DGC is an approximation. Diane at the CFTPA 's BC Branch Council very
kindly took the time to count by hand the number of women members for me.

all is not what it ought to be. For example, the Directors Guild's listing of current union productions in Vancouver for December 19, 2003 shows nineteen shows in production. Of ten feature films, there is just one female director, and she shares credit as co-director with a man. Similarly, of nine television series, one woman is listed as director. Women do slightly better as assistant directors, taking up 30% of seventy-one positions[4]. However, only four are credited as 1st AD, while nine are 2nd ADs and nine are 3rd ADs. In contrast, women take up 18 out of 20 entry-level Production Coordinator positions. These numbers basically demonstrate that the lower the position in the hierarchy, the more likely women will be found. However, we might also find evidence of a positive trend, in that women in greater numbers may now be entering the hierarchy and preparing to work their way up to director positions.

An examination of the Vancouver International Film Festival's program for 2003 shows better representation of women, although men still far outnumber women as directors. The festival's Canadian Images program consisted of thirty-two feature length films and fifty-three shorts. Of the features, nine were directed by women; three of these women were British Columbians. Of the shorts, fifteen were directed by women, and five of these were from BC. In both cases, women directed approximately 35% of the films shown, and British Columbians directed one third of the films shown by Canadian women. The consistency of these numbers points to a mandate on the part of the programmers; very likely they have a responsibility to exhibit women's work when possible. The higher numbers probably also reflect the fact that films made without union credentials are included, while the Directors Guild numbers refer only to union productions. In any case, the festival offerings show a

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[4] See Appendix I for a break-down of the different roles in film production.

male/female ratio of two to one, reinforcing the fact that men dominate the field of directing. In the face of statistics like these, it is clear that underlying reasons and possible solutions to this discrepancy must be investigated. However, with the exception of TWIFT's study, there has been very little published academic work on the actual makeup of filmmaking communities in Canada; especially with regard to the West Coast. As outlined above, most scholarly research on both Canadian cinema and on women filmmakers has centered on analyzing films that have already been produced, and the theoretical and social concerns addressed therein. The real material experiences and challenges of women attempting to enter a male dominated field must therefore be further explored, and the scarcity of research into this area acknowledged and, in part, rectified.

My research questions are centered on determining how the actual media landscape is configured in Canada and in Vancouver in particular. Which roles are women filling in film production? Why are there so few women directing? What are the reasons for this extremely unbalanced gender representation, and why aren't we more aware of this problem? And finally, how can women meet the challenges of this occupation and transform the media landscape to one that is less dominated by men?

This research proceeds, then, from the basic assumption that women in Canada continue to face challenges in entering the film industry. While much of my research applies to the Canadian situation as a whole, I center on the Vancouver industry as having its own regional-specific identity. Women are under-represented as filmmakers across Canada, but the unique conditions of the Vancouver film industry mean that women there will have different

experiences from those in Toronto, Montreal or Halifax. To discover how women in Vancouver are meeting the challenges they face, I take up Women in Film and Video as a case study, using interviews to learn about women's experiences in the film industry and as members of WIFVV. Women who belong to this organization have recognized that being a woman in the film industry is difficult, and their interviews have provided me with significant insight into the issues as they experience them.

In order to provide the necessary context and interpretation of the information found through these interviews, my theoretical research has necessarily involved several branches of inquiry, which will be more thoroughly explained in Chapter II. The first section addresses the social, historical, and economic contexts of film production in Vancouver. The Canadian film industry's political economy is examined to reveal that structural obstacles may have a role in excluding women from filmmaking. Changes to film production and broadcasting policies have occurred along with changes in the public conception of the importance of art, due in part to neoliberal economics, neoconservatism, and the globalized economy. The evolution of the film industry in Vancouver is also examined in light of its specific conditions of existence.

My second branch of research will discuss some of the social reasons that women are not immediately accepted as creative forces in the film industry. Social constructions of gender and the arts that identify the artist with masculinity are a strong factor; these ideas have roots in the Renaissance and crystallized in the Bourgeois ideology of the nineteenth century. Feminist challenges to this construction have attempted to resituate women within historical

and social contexts, while women have fought to establish themselves as serious artists within the dominant model of art creation.

My third branch of research suggests some recourse against the challenges posed above; I find that theories of social capital can provide a useful point of intersection where concepts such as globalization, communication, and social networks come together. Such theories also suggest a means of overcoming the social and structural challenges women filmmakers face, providing a theoretical base from which a possible solution to the problem of women's participation in film production, media and the arts can be imagined. I therefore apply Pierre Bourdieu's notion of social capital to postulate that social networks provide a key resource for women to meet the challenges they face, both in terms of the emotional support of group-identity, and more tangible rewards such as skill-building and career enhancement.

Chapter III is devoted to methodology. In this section I explain some of the benefits and limitations of qualitative research and feminist methodology, which centers on giving women the opportunity to talk about their experiences. I also discuss my reasons for recruiting and choosing particular participants amongst many potential women, all of whom would add valuable information to this project. Chapters IV and V revisit the theoretical material reviewed in Chapter II, as I use that research to illuminate the major themes brought out in my interviews. Chapter IV deals with women's experiences in the film industry, while Chapter V focuses on their experiences with and opinions about WIFVV. Finally, in Chapter VI, I suggest some conclusions based on these findings.

I believe that this research has application to determining more effective cultural policy, and as such will be shared with the filmmaking community, women's groups, and government bodies. By opening access to film production to more women, a broader range of voices and topics will be expressed, and Canadian society as a whole will benefit.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

The study of contemporary women filmmakers in Vancouver would not hold any meaning

without an understanding of the particular social, historical and economic contexts of their

situation. In the following section I will discuss some of the literature that helps situate that

context, moving from a broad history of Canadian arts and film policy to a discussion of

women making films in North America and how these policies would affect Canadian

women, and finally to the specific political economy of Vancouver's film industry. I then

examine feminist theories of gender to outline some of the basic issues that women have

encountered in entering the workforce. I also discuss gendered social constructions of the

artist to illustrate how women often experience the workplace when seeking careers in the

arts.

Arts and Feature Film Funding Policy in Canada

State interest in indigenous Canadian contributions to the arts in general appears as a

relatively recent phenomena, and state support of feature film production is even newer.

However, serious feature film production in Canada was not possible until federal arts

funding policy conceived of the cinema as an important industry, worthy of state support. A

discussion of the contemporary situation of Canadian filmmaking must therefore take into

account the emergence of policy on the arts and on film production. For many theorists, this

type of policy owes its materialization to the strong recommendations made in the *Massey*

Report (1951), an archetypal call for government support of a nascent Canadian culture.

George Woodcock is one of many theorists to discuss the importance of the Massey Report

in bringing about Canadian arts policy. In *Strange Bedfellows: The State and the Arts in*

Canada (1985), Woodcock charts the evolution of Canadian support for the arts from a mid-

century upswing of public interest and government spending, to the increased attacks in

political and economic quarters in the 1980s that resulted in major funding cutbacks and

changes. Woodcock credits the *Massey Report* as having created "an entirely new situation

for the arts in Canada," and to have fostered a newfound support "of Canadians towards the

artist as creator and performer" (51). The government-mandated investigation determined

that state-support of the arts was necessary to reduce the advance of detrimental and invasive

American popular culture. As a result of the recommendations made in the report, the Canada

Council, Canada's federal arts funding body, was established in 1958, with other institutions

such as the CBC's television service (1952) soon to follow.

An important concern of Woodcock's in *Strange Bedfellows* is the growing tendency for arts

funding policy to expect a return for investment, as the benefit of the arts to society is

increasingly determined according to an economic framework. Woodcock strongly argues

against what he calls a culture industry approach to the arts, which puts emphasis on

commercial entertainment media and on the profitability of works on the free market.

Proponents of the culture industry approach see the arts as "an unjustifiable financial

extravagance"; funding is reserved for those institutions or individuals that contribute

positively to the economy by making a profit (Woodcock 1985: 129). While the *Massey*

Report recommended a culturalist, rather than culture industry, approach to the arts, recent

changes to arts policy can be attributed in part to the globalization of culture industries and

the dominance of neoliberal economics. Woodcock is adamant in his viewpoint that the arts should be fostered as first recommended in the *Massey Report*, since "the real contribution they make to the community, the contribution that is the very reason for their existence, is ignored in the equation" of the culture industry approach (129). In other words, the arts by their very nature can not be judged in economic terms, because their worth is measured not in material, but in cultural gains.

Woodcock's assessment of the arts in Canada contains some significant defects -- for one thing he appears to have strong right-wing tendencies himself. He is openly supportive of the federal Conservative party and is also extremely opposed to Marxism and its application to the study of the arts, thereby denying the productive role of artists and supporting the myth of artist as genius individual. However, Woodcock both provides a good history of arts funding in Canada, and an excellent example of the "cultural" argument of the arts as made by Canadian academics and policy makers. He also makes some sound predictions as to the future direction of Canadian arts policy. Specifically in regard to film production, Woodcock cites structural changes to the National Film Board, the CBC and the Canadian Film Development Commission (now Telefilm Canada) as severely limiting the potential for indigenous Canadian productions. As Woodcock accurately foresaw, "[h]owever much officials in the CDFC might be interested in the artistic approach of a film, its potential for commercial success will be their real criterion, and therefore we can fairly expect the inferior Hollywood project, once the regulations have been satisfied, to seem preferable to the more intellectual and commercially difficult" Canadian film (139).

Another viewpoint on Canadian funding policy that focuses more specifically on feature film

production can be found in Ted Magder's extensive survey, *Canada's Hollywood* (1993).

Magder examines the history of feature film production in Canada from the early 1900s

onward, and provides a comprehensive discussion of the changing Canadian social and

political climates that have shaped how the film industry is imagined and practiced. Magder

also acknowledges the importance of the *Massey Report* for establishing Canadian arts

policy, although unlike Woodcock, he is not entirely uncritical of its aims. Magder refers to

the report as "a sombre, almost mournful, appraisal of the adverse effects of commercialized

American culture on the Canadian psyche," pointing to the report's inherent high-brow

cultural bias (62). While Woodcock would probably agree with the report's aversion to

popular culture forms, Magder shrewdly points out that this attitude made the Commission

unable to imagine support for indigenous, private film production. Instead, the *Massey*

Report recommended that the NFB continue in its role of interpreting Canada to Canadians,

and that it should be alone in this role, despite the public's preference for commercial fare.

Magder argues that as the political and social climate began changing in the late 1950s, both

state interest in and private lobbying for a private feature film industry in Canada became

more pronounced. With the creation of the CBC's television branch in 1952, a market had

opened up for private film producers; however, they were limited mainly to short films and

television commercials. The NFB continued to dominate film production, and was seen as a

rival by private producers, who wanted to compete for the government film contracts that the

NFB was entitled by legislation to produce (102). Groups such as the Directors Guild of

Canada, the Association of Motion Picture Producers and Laboratories of Canada

(AMPPLC) and the Association professionelle des cineastes (APC) [an association formed

by alienated francophone NFB filmmakers] had all begun to put pressure on the state to

support private filmmaking with public funds. The Canadian government was meanwhile

concerned for several reasons about the dominance of American cultural forms in Canada,

not the least of which was the large sum of Canadian consumer dollars being spent on

American movies. For the most part, these dollars returned to American sources. Magder also

points to the nationalist upswelling in Quebec as causing the Canadian state to desire a

strong, unified Canadian cultural identity (114). At the same time, the cultural bias against

popular culture had shifted, so it was no longer unreasonable to connect this cultural identity

to popular forms. "To the postwar generation in particular, film, television, radio and the new

media in general did not pose an affront to aesthetic and cultural values; in fact, they were

seen as promising avenue where viable employment did not foreclose the possibility of

creative expression" (Magder 1993:114).

In answer to these many concerns, the Liberal government initiated the Interdepartmental

Committee on the Possible Development of Feature Film Production in Canada (1964-5)[5].

Secretary of State Maurice Lamontagne had announced the intention to investigate the

possibility of a state-supported private film industry in 1964, on the occasion of the NFB's

twenty-fifth anniversary. Magder reports that in general, "[a]lthough he ardently defended the

extension of state support to cultural development, Lamontagne also endorsed the principle

that, first and foremost, the state's role was to facilitate greater cultural production by the

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[5] The departments and government agencies included were: the Finance, External Affairs, and Industry Trade
and Commerce Departments, and one representative each from the Bank of Canada and from the NFB.

private sector" (121). Therefore, when the Interdepartmental Committee recommended establishing the Canadian Film Development Corporation, the state's emphasis was on the economic implications of helping such an industry get started. However, the cultural component was still an issue. Magder finds that when the CFDC Act passed in 1967 and the agency was subsequently set up in 1968, the "underlying policy objective ... was to achieve sizeable monetary returns on investment in feature films with 'significant Canadian content' " (131). Therefore, the program's success "was to be measured by two criteria simultaneously: CFDC-backed films would have to show a profit and they would have to contribute to the articulation of a Canadian cultural identity. It would become quickly apparent that these two objectives were not necessarily mutually compatible" (131).

Michael Dorland's *So Close to the State/s* (1998) is another examination of Canadian film policy that stresses the conflict between economic and cultural goals. Much of what Dorland covers restates what has already been said (in my opinion, better and more thoroughly) in Magder, although Dorland's focus is on Foucault's notion of governmentality and the discursive formation of a feature film industry. However, Dorland's work contributes to an understanding that Canadian film policy has historically existed in tension between economic and cultural concerns, as articulated through a discourse of state power and nationalism. Dorland indicates that the confusion between which is the primary purpose of a Canadian cinema, and the argument over what that purpose should be, has followed Canadian film production along most of its course. While Woodcock bemoans the changes that led to cultural agencies focusing on financial gain, Dorland, like Magder, shows that economics were in fact a motivating factor from the beginning. Indeed, by their second meeting the

Interdepartmental Committee had decided that the economic reasons for building a Canadian

industry were paramount, and that the cultural gains, while important, were to be secondary

(Dorland 1998: 94). However, the cultural goals were not abandoned entirely, and continued

to inform a significant thread of the discourse on Canadian feature film production. The

academic attention to Canadian cinema as an art form, which began in the 1970s, and the

self-identification of independent Canadian filmmakers as creators further complicated the

matter (Dorland 1998: 11). Filmmakers would most likely prefer to both express themselves

artistically and to meet with commercial success; however, funding policy has tended to

suppress creative works that do not fit into popular commercial moulds. Telefilm's official

web site in fact currently states that:

> the overall goal of the Canada Feature Film Fund is to increase Canadian
> audiences in theatres for Canadian feature films, aiming to capture 5% of the
> domestic box office by 2006. The spirit and intent of the Canada Feature Film
> Fund's development, production and marketing programs (the Main
> programs) is to encourage the making and marketing of Canadian feature
> films that have high box office potential, while supporting a range of genres,
> budgets, companies and regions.

As noted by both Woodcock and Magder above, the goal of a high box office potential is not

necessarily compatible with artistic or cultural goals.

Despite the tension between the economic and cultural goals of filmmaking in Canada, both

Magder and Dorland ultimately decide that the economic was, and continues to be, more

compelling for policy makers. Over time then, as first the CFDC and more recently as

Telefilm Canada, the federal film agency has worked at creating policy that could best ensure

commercial success, and worried about cultural value afterward. The feature film industry

was imagined from a policy perspective as one type of production under advanced

capitalism; discourses of Canadian cultural identity as expressed through the cinema have complicated the issue but have not become the dominant discourse.

Canadian Arts Policy and Women

The previous discussion of Canadian arts and film policy reveals the complicated position that the cinema has, existing somewhere between art and industry. However, the works by the authors considered above do not address gender, or how policy that favours an economic over a cultural approach to the arts can negatively affect women. Some scholars have argued that in fact, changes to policy that require profitability and favour a commercial approach tend to work against the balanced inclusion of women in art and film production. Alison Beale (1999) discusses precisely this problem, arguing that while Canada presents itself as a progressive leader in minority representation, changes in government policy regarding employment equity have not achieved their intended results. Beale locates the reason for this failure partly in the gendering of culture and cultural practices, but also in Canada's relationship with global markets. As suggested by Woodcock, the neoliberal ideology, which situates cultural products on the global market among so many other goods, places indigenous artistic production at a disadvantage. At the same time, the globalization of markets and other components of late-stage capitalism, such as the dismantling of social programs, means cultural policy is essentially directed at maintaining and expanding that system. As Beale asserts, the "current phase of globalization with its well-known effects on markets and welfare regimes is one in which cultures are treated as exploitable resources and citizens downgraded to consumers" (440). In this environment the non-commercially based arts are not a significant area of government concern, while information and communication

industries that can further the ends of consumerism are actively promoted. The tendency to

reduce or restrict funding of non-commercial film is another result of this attitude, as

financial recoupability has become a strong concern of funding initiatives. Moreover, even

funding to commercial forms can be withdrawn if the benefits are not overwhelmingly

apparent, as has been the case recently with the suspension of BC Film's programs[6].

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Beale argues that women are affected by these policies in several respects. Direct cuts to arts

funding will limit women's overall access to arts production regardless of equity laws.

Secondly, women's representation in the culture industries is largely in part-time, non-

guaranteed employment. Beale locates another harmful aspect of the direct cuts to programs

that support minority representation, saying that " 'new citizenship' as an ideology

aggressively opposes the recognition of the special needs of women and minorities, or of the

special privileges of men" (443). In addition, the cuts to many social programs can be read as

class and gender based. Beale points to reprivatization and cuts to funding for "health,

education and training, child care and unemployment" as having significant effects on culture

workers and on women (442). All of these factors can be read as contributing to the lack of

women in positions of authority or leadership in arts production, despite their overall equal

presence in the labour force; Beale finds evidence from Statistics Canada that men dominate

"technical occupations, as musicians and composers, and as directors for music, theatre and

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[6] A February 24, 2004 press release by BC Film announced that due to "unprecedented budget constraints," the agency would be engaging in a "comprehensive review of programs and services it offers to the film and television industry in British Columbia". "Direct provincial funding to the Society has decreased from $4.5 million in 1995/96 to its current level of $2.28 million for fiscal 2004/05" (BC Film 2004).

dance, film and broadcasting" (445)[7]. Beale concludes that Canada's "progressive" labour policies merely serve to disguise the inequalities enforced by our recent policies concerning the arts, social programs and trade, based as they are in the economics of globalization. The consumer model of society and the practices of globalization must therefore be critically examined in order to reframe women's role in society today.

The Material Conditions of Film Production

Woodcock, Magder, Dorland and Beale provide some of the necessary structural context of arts production in Canada. For information on the actual mechanics of creating a film, I turned to *Making It* (Barbara Hehner and Andra Sheffer, 1995) the self-proclaimed bible of Canada's film and television industry. *Making It*, now in a format revised and updated from an initial 1987 version, contains a wealth of practical advice and information for those Canadians who want to make their own feature films. Essays written by industry professionals range from guides on how to finance a production, to how to make a budget, to how to get theatrical release. I have found this book useful for breaking down some of the different roles within the film industry and for getting a basic idea of how the industry is run. Much of this information has complemented and enhanced my sections on the political economy of the film industry, including funding and distribution.

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[7] Current statistics confirm that this pattern has not changed: data from the 2001 Census tells us that out of 19,005 Canadians who listed their profession as Producer, Director or Choreographer of the arts, 11,640 were men and 7,360 were women (Statistics Canada).

WOMEN MAKE FILMS

B. Ruby Rich is an American critic who has been active in supporting, observing and critiquing women's involvement in cinema since the early 1970s. She has acted under many roles, including curator, critic, lecturer, panelist and festival organizer. In *Chick Flicks* (1998) Rich describes her own experiences coming of age during the "Second Wave" period of feminism in autobiographical prologues to a collection of essays she wrote on feminism and film during the 1970s and 1980s. *Chick Flicks* is invaluable for its documentation of key issues that arose, such as women's representation, subjectivity and sexuality, and for its outlining of the key players. Rich's prologues also provide both necessary historical context and a delightful insider's view of the period. In addition, this collection provides a good sense of the challenges that women filmmakers have faced in the areas of financial backing, distribution, and critical attention[8]. While today's women filmmakers may not face these challenges to the same degree (though they certainly still exist), Rich's book makes clear that the feminist agenda was instrumental in bringing about the mainstream distribution and screening of films made by women.

Unfortunately, as Rich points out, the 1980s brought in the politics of the Right and the harsh backlash against feminism (particularly in the United States). At the same time, as ideas of gender equality have reached general acceptance, women of more recent generations may take the past achievements of feminist pioneers for granted, not recognizing the continuing importance of feminist concerns. In today's less politically charged times, it can be argued

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[8] Merely being acknowledged at all has always been a problem for women filmmakers;

that women filmmakers are more likely to be aiming for critical and market success to sustain a career than to be making political statements.

In the conclusion to *Chick Flicks*, Rich claims that in fact, feminist film "as a term and a practice has lost its meaning over the decades. Today it would be difficult to describe such terrain apart from the cherished memory of film professors or veteran filmmakers, people who came of age in the seventies and responded to its power back then" (379). If the feminist project does retain any relevance, it may be sublimated into less direct modes of expression; Rich contends that among filmmakers, the "feminist legacy rests with feature filmmakers who have taken on the lessons of power learned in the seventies and the lessons of sexuality learned in the eighties and applied them to fantasy and narrative" (380). In my research I am therefore not concerned with examining films made by contemporary women to weigh their feminist content; rather, I look at today's women filmmakers as the heirs to the earlier feminist tradition in terms of their ability to make inroads into a male-dominated field.

Canadian Women Make Films

In their groundbreaking essay "Women in Film & Canadian Women's Cinema" (1973), written to precede Canada's first women's film festival, Kay Armatage and Linda Beath link the emergence of women filmmakers in Canada both to the women's movement and to the new materialization of home-based film production. The authors point out that despite a strong documentary tradition through the National Film Board, in Canada "[f]eature film production was virtually non-existent until the early 1960s and women's participation in the

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critical acclaim is an even greater improbability.

industry was rare" (172). Canadian women who worked in film, whether as actors or in other roles, mainly went to the United States to find work. However, Canadian women found a strong source of state support beginning in 1974 with the National Film Board's Studio D, an all-women production unit. *Gendering the Nation* (1999), a collection of essays focused on films made by Canadian women, brings Armatage back to the topic almost thirty years later. Working with coeditors Kass Banning, Brenda Longfellow and Janine Marchesault, Armatage's collection offers valuable insight into the now defunct NFB branch. In addition, this book provides one of the few sources of theoretic work on this important moment in Canadian history. Of particular interest to my work is Elizabeth Anderson's essay, "Studio D's Imagined Community," which examines the evolution of the NFB program. Anderson takes the position that state interests of solidifying a national identity became entrenched in the women's studio, so that the types of films produced here often reflected state interests. Anderson also discusses Studio D's ultimate failure to represent and include all women, despite attempting to do so with the New Initiatives in Film program (1991-1996).

Another important source that addresses women filmmakers from a Canadian perspective is *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing* (2003), coedited by three Vancouver-based academics and filmmakers: Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis and Valerie Raoul. This text is the result of a forum and festival that the women produced in 1999 which sought to "take stock of what has occurred, what has been gained, and what directions feminist film theory has taken since the early 1970s" (3). Within this collection, I have found several essays useful for adding to the history and current conditions of women filmmakers. These include an overview by E. Ann Kaplan; a discussion of aboriginal women filmmakers in BC by Michelle La Flamme, and

Diane Burgess's self-described "attempt" to assess the legacy of Studio D.

FILM PRODUCTION IN VANCOUVER

While the sources discussed in the previous section contribute to an understanding of the

Canadian climate, the specific conditions of film production in British Columbia must also be

considered. Mike Gasher (2002) argues that in the Canadian context, to speak of one national

cinema is to be artificially monolithic. Film production in BC has a particular history and

socio-cultural context that exists in relation to other cinemas within Canada, but is not

identical to them; geography and the policies of both federal and provincial governments

over the past century have made BC's experience unique. Like Beale, Gasher is also

concerned with how culture intersects with the globalized economy, paying particular

attention to Vancouver's role as "Hollywood North". While Beale argues that any type of

artistic production is severely threatened by neo-corporate economic policy, Gasher shows

that the provincial government in BC has always treated film production as an industry rather

than a cultural resource. "Historically ... the BC government has perceived cinema as a way

to attract immigrants, capital investment, and tourists; encourage tourism by British

Columbians within their own province; advertise its industrial products around the world;

and promote education pertaining to health, safety, and conservation roles" (24). BC was

being used as a filming location as early as 1899, and Victoria was producing films to attract

business to the province by 1908.

The BC government began to court Hollywood producers in earnest in the late 1970s, with

the establishment of a film office under the Ministry of Tourism. As Gasher notes, at that

time the "promotion of a BC film industry was meant to be an exclusively economic

development initiative designed to attract foreign capital and create local jobs" (69). He adds

that "[l]ocal producers had to wait for another decade for provincial government assistance in

making indigenous films, but even then, the industrial perception of cinema in British

Columbia prevailed" (69). Therefore while Victoria was trying to convince Hollywood

producers to build permanent studios in BC, they rejected the idea of assisting local

filmmakers through government spending.

However, several studies of the BC film industry conducted during the 1980s concluded that

"some kind of provincial government investment was necessary to maintain British

Columbia's viability as a film location" (81). When the ruling Social Credit party acted on

recommendations of these reports and established the British Columbia Film Commission in

1987, it was with the economic potential of indigenous production firmly in mind. Gasher

maintains that the focus of BC Film since its inception has been on promoting industry; this

focus was sharpened in 1999 when funding criteria changed to include financial recoupability

(91). The industry-based economic model means the constraints faced by women filmmakers

in Canada may be magnified in British Columbia. Private investment and public financial

backing alike remain economic rather than cultural concerns. Film production is not

primarily seen as an important medium of symbolic communication which local women (and

men) should have access to, but as Beale states, a pathway towards greater investment and

consumer spending.

A less academic but still useful overview of Vancouver's film scene can be found in David Spaner's *Dreaming in the Rain* (2003). Spaner, a film reviewer for *The Province* newspaper, provides a lively sketch of Vancouver and the personalities who have connected that city to the movies. He moves from a discussion of early, visiting Hollywood actors, to would-be stars who left Vancouver, to the influential directors and actors whom he feels finally made sustainable film production a possibility. According to Spaner, several factors had to come together before independent film production was possible in Vancouver: the trained crews and infrastructure brought about by the U.S. service industry in the late 1980s; locally-based film students who were determined to make features (as came out of UBC in the early 1990s), and a base of well-trained actors who were willing/able to stay the city (as came out of the Gastown Studio and Langara College's Studio 58).

Spaner's text often appears somewhat "light" in terms of research, but it is interesting for this thesis in two regards. First, because he points to the importance of networks for starting up the independent film scene which he refers to as the "West Coast Wave," particularly in regards to UBC's film program. Secondly, Spaner finds that Vancouver is remarkable for women's strong presence. "It's not that Vancouver has more female filmmakers than other movie-making cities, but what distinguishes it from Toronto, L.A., or New York is that most of its benchmark films have been directed by women" (186). Given that percentage-wise women still fill few of the director's roles, Spaner's comment poses an intriguing angle for research into how women experience careers as filmmakers in Vancouver, and what strategies they are using to overcome occupational challenges.

GENDER AND THE WORKPLACE

So far I have outlined some of the structural constraints that may shape women's participation in film production. However, there are also ideological and social constraints that may be at work, influencing our perceptions of how gender role roles are actualized at home and at work. Collections such as *Women and Men* (Nemiroff 1987) and *Gender Basics: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Men* (Minas 1993) provide an invaluable introduction to some of the basic issues occurring in modern society under the patriarchal system. While essays in either collection may appear somewhat dated, due to the many positive changes that women now enjoy in the workplace and in the home, these texts are important in their focus on outlining key gender issues. Since women have begun to enter into film production relatively recently, the basic problems surrounding gender, the workplace and family are most relevant in investigating their experiences. Both Nemiroff and Minas have therefore helped situate my research among fundamental feminist debates regarding women's continued struggle for power, recognition and choices.

Essays on women and the workplace have been extremely helpful in contextualizing the themes brought out in my interviews, particularly the contribution by Hilary M. Lips in *Women and Men*. In "Women and Power in the Workplace," Lips looks at the problematic of stereotyped gender roles and the continuing influence these stereotypes have in limiting power for women entering the workforce. Power is variously defined by Lips as "the capacity to have an impact on one's environment" (403) and "the ability to influence others' actions (408). The three key stereotypes that work to limit women's power in the workplace are: that

women are incompetent (especially at jobs requiring mathematic or technical ability); that women are physically weak; and that women are "quiet, soft-spoken and polite" (413). Lips says it necessary to challenge and ultimately change these notions if women are to increase their power and advance beyond basic entry level positions. Since Canadian women in the film industry are rapidly filling entry positions but not many are filling authority positions, this argument is relevant to understanding why this may be and also how it can be changed. Essays in the Minas text that are useful to an examination of women in the film industry also center on issues of careers, family responsibility and child rearing. I look at articles by Susan Crean and by M. Rivka Polatnick for an exploration of the difficulties many women face in balancing a career with children, or in attempting to choose one over the other. Lips also refers to the "double-shift" problem (women that have careers and are also responsible for all the housework and child-care) as limiting women's potential power. This problem is complicated by society's different expectations of men and women, particularly when it comes to parenting.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE ARTIST

Social constructions of gender roles are seen to follow particular patterns when specific types of work are examined. This may seem most obvious when considering that men in Western, capitalist society have dominated certain occupations such as political or business leaders, technical positions or in sports. Theorists such as Griselda Pollock (1986), Janet Wolff (1987), and Bette J. Kauffman (1995) have demonstrated that Western culture also supports a socially constructed myth of the artist as being necessarily male; this ideal centers on an

individualist persona pursuing innate talent under adverse conditions, and whose work is accordingly placed at high value.

Film production in many cases must be viewed as an industrial process that is necessarily collaborative, involving the division of labour into the work of many specialists (from writing to sound, to lighting, to set design), who all cooperate to create to a cohesive product. However, in both artistically based independent production and in large scale commercial production, the combined work of these many (or sometimes few) specialists is popularly attributed to one person – the film director, whose overall vision of the film is equated with the visual artist's authorship. The dearth of women in directorial positions, or at least the lack of recognition *for* women in these positions and for their work, is related in part to how the artist has been socially constructed.

Janet Wolff argues in *The Social Production of Art* (1981) that the contemporary "myth" of the artist as a solitary creative genius, working from individual talent and marginalized from society, is a historically specific construction with ties to the rise of capitalism in Europe. The full realization of the myth of the artist as distinct creative individual can largely be attributed, Wolff claims, to art production's relation to other forms of work under capitalism. Wolff uses Marx's discussion of the arts in the *Grundisse* to show that under early capitalism, cultural production was not yet integrated into the market or controlled by the owners of industrial production, and therefore retained its specificity while other labour became alienated from the worker. Artistic work thus "becomes seen as an ideal form of production, because it appears free in a way in which other production is not" (17). An

additional factor comes with the ending of the direct patronage system, which left artists,

writers and musicians "free" to create works without being under the direction of their

sponsors, although rather more precarious financially (18).

In opposition to the romantic perception of the artist, Wolff suggests that artistic production

must be situated in the actual historical, economic and social conditions in which it occurs.

One strategy is to deny the division between artistic and other types of work, in part by

recognizing that all types of work require basic creativity. In addition, artistic work must be

located within the structures that make its creation possible; these include the necessary

technologies; social institutions such as schools and galleries; the recruitment and training of

artists; patronage systems including modern day indirect systems; mediators such as critics,

publishers and curators; and economic factors (35-48). Wolff believes that more

consideration must also be given to the social values that determine taste, trends, and

aesthetic values, and to the role of the audience in interpreting artistic works. In regard to my

research, the significance of these factors in determining 'how' and 'when' art can be

produced is even more apparent when one adds the final question of 'by whom', because as

previously noted, the romantic myths surrounding the artist and art production have centered

on a male subject.

Griselda Pollock is another well-known theorist who has examined the structural blocks to

women's participation in art production, arguing that to merely readjust the canon by adding

in ignored female artists is to "endorse the social giveness of woman" (1988:9). Instead,

"feminist interventions demand recognition of gender power relations, making visible the

mechanisms of male power, the social construction of sexual difference and the role of

cultural representations in that construction" (9). Pollock calls for a combination of Marxist

and feminist theories to expose the social constructions that have kept women out of art

production, allowing for considerations of class, gender, race, sexuality, and other

components of the complex relationship between dominant and dominated groups. "Art is

constitutive of ideology; it is not merely an illustration of it. It is one of the social practices

through which particular views of the world, definitions and identities for us to live are

constructed, reproduced, and even redefined" (30). Like Wolff, Pollock exposes and rejects

the central myth of the artist in modern, specifically bourgeois, ideology, which is linked to

greater assumptions about masculine and feminine properties. "Creativity has been

appropriated as an ideological component of masculinity while femininity has been

constructed as man's and, therefore, the artist's negative" (21). The myth of the artist as male

genius therefore contributes to different valuing of the genders and helps reinforce the

patriarchal system as a whole (24).

Despite the advances made by the women's movement in all fields, the myth of the artist still

perseveres, reproduced in our institutions and in popular consciousness. Bette J. Kauffman

(1995) has studied the ways that contemporary women artists have challenged the social

perception of the artist as male and have worked to integrate feminine roles in the family

with work as artists. Kauffman has found that while women in Philadelphia and New York

have successfully navigated around institutional deterrents against the pursuit of art careers,

they are constantly in danger of running aground on the myth of the male artist on one hand,

and the stereotype of the amateur "lady painter" on the other. As she explains it, the "woman

artist as dabbler or 'lady painter' descends from Victorian notions that well-brought-up women should be generalists, proficient in a number of useful, refined, but not too intellectually demanding activities, rather than excelling in one" (95). In consequence, women artists to this day are viewed in light of this stereotype, while serious art creation is attributed to the male who is characterized as being "independent, highly individuated, and dedicated to his work above all else" (95). Women are not seen as having these attributes, or the necessary dedication to art, because of their more compelling dedication to family and children.

It is important to recognize that Kauffman's focus groups came of age in the 1960s and early 1970s, before feminism and equity laws had made any real changes to academic policy. However, the study is valuable for its insight into the challenges that women artists have faced and the legacy that social attitudes about gender and art has left. In terms of film production, at least one study suggests that filmmakers also struggle to position themselves within the dominant model of artistic production. Lisa Henderson has done extensive ethnographic research on graduate students at New York City's "Grad Film" (1995). Students in this graduate program navigate between the art world and the domain of popular culture, craving critical and financial success but concerned over losing distinction as artists whose "personal vision" must be expressed in their films. Henderson reports that although "many students become accomplished technicians, the program is designed to train writer-directors, a position virtually all Grad Film students aspire to" (149). While this study has not been analyzed for gender differences, the fact that "virtually all" students aspire to the writer-director position suggests that women in film also strive to identify themselves in terms of

the creative genius model. Henderson's work shows clear links between the prevailing myth of the artist in traditional art and film worlds, although a follow-up case study with particular attention to gender is required.

GLOBALIZATION, COMMUNICATION, AND THE TYPES OF CAPITAL

Access to film production and other cultural work is, as Beale has shown, gendered in terms of work and leadership roles. It is also largely class based, since only those with sufficient education and resources can pursue art careers. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) has described the accumulation of these resources as "cultural capital". Cultural capital, made up of material objects, institutional practices, and embodied states, is joined by social capital (networks and social connections), and economic capital to regulate society. According to Bourdieu, "the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of the world, which governs its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices" (242).

Bourdieu's position in proposing cultural capital is that "natural aptitude" can not wholly determine academic success or failure, and that economic theories that only consider differing economic investments in education can not adequately explain the discrepancy. Instead, different success rates can be attributed to hereditary knowledge, which is passed down largely in symbolic form. Bourdieu argues that because of its symbolic form, cultural capital is disguised as an accumulated value and is perceived as "legitimate competence"

(245). He concludes that "the share in profits which scarce cultural capital secures in class-divided societies is based, in the last analysis, on the fact that all agents do not have the economic and cultural means for prolonging their children's education beyond the minimum necessary for the production of the labor-power least valorized at a given moment" (245). Given that training in the arts and in film production are both highly specialized and expensive post-secondary pursuits, it is unlikely that women below a middle-class background will have the necessary cultural capital to even consider entry into these fields. The globalization of national economies only serves to increase this divide, as the welfare state is steadily dismantled and the gap between rich and poor continues to grow.

Bourdieu's conception of social capital, like cultural capital, is also useful for examining the role of communication under globalization. Bourdieu says social capital accrues when individuals are members of groups and benefit from their positions as members. The profits that arise from the accumulation of such capital can be both material and symbolic, such as the prestige associated with exclusive group membership. Relationships are maintained through exchanges of communication and investments of time and commitment. "The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of communication he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected" (249). Social capital extends the resources available to an individual through "the multiplier effect implied in concentration" of these resources, resulting in the enhanced collective capital that belongs to a group (249).

Bourdieu explains that group membership can take form for many reasons, including inherited membership through belonging to the same family, class, ethnicity, etc., or it can be formed purposefully such as in clubs or associations. In each case, the group is formed through perceived commonalities between the members; but at the same time, the relationships are never indelible and so group membership is maintained through the constant articulation of common interest. Networks that give rise to social capital are not static but are continually negotiated and reinforced, and are aimed at "establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term" (249). This theory of social capital suggests that women filmmakers would benefit from establishing networks with each other and with other groups. Such networks would potentially help women increase and share knowledge, make visible their presence in the community, and give them the necessary connections to pursue careers in the arts. While the globalization of the culture industries sees a large mass of communication networks mobilized to produce economic capital, the durable, invested relationships that produce social capital could succeed in opening up access to media.

An alternate but related theory of social capital can be found in *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam's well-known investigation into civic engagement in America (2000). Putnam defines social capital as "the measurable number and density of a society's human connections and memberships that connect us in civil society" (McLean, Schultz and Steger 2002: 1). However, many theorists have criticized Putnam's analysis of social capital and declining civil engagement in the United States as ignoring important social and historical factors. Many of his detractors are concerned that issues such as globalization, neo-liberal economics,

and the right-wing attacks on social and cultural spending are not addressed. For example, both Manfred Steger (2002) and R. Claire Snyder (2002) see clear links between conservative politics, neoliberal economics, and diminishing social capital for less privileged groups. Snyder in particular demonstrates that women's social capital has been purposely attacked in order to limit their attempts at increased participation in society; she places blame on the right-wing political and economic agenda for declining social capital in the United States. Snyder's argument also suggests that Putnam might have got the equation between social capital and civic engagement backwards: it may not be that declining social capital brought about a decline in civic engagement, but that a distrust of the political system, as brought about by New Right attacks on democracy, has caused the erosion of social capital networks. While Putnam's theories about the formation and the workings of social capital are therefore less useful for an analysis that seeks to investigate social and historical contexts, the ideas of those who critique his work do contribute understanding how this relationship might work.

While the analyses cited above are concerned with the United States in particular, Beale has also shown that national policies must be looked at in the context of globalization. Policies and attitudes based in American society are exported around the world through their dominance in the globalized system. Theories of social capital therefore provide a useful point of intersection where concepts such as globalization, communication, and social networks come together. Membership in groups where durable, mutually beneficial relationships are established, and social and material benefits can accrue over time, can be an important resource for women in the arts, and an important avenue for resisting limitations

brought on by globalization and neoliberal economics. If these factors have worked to erode social bonds and ties to community, by increasing social capital women may be able to work against that challenge.

III.   METHODOLOGY

This research is primarily based on qualitative methodology as conducted from a feminist perspective. Although I necessarily employ some statistics in order to situate the problem of women's participation in the film industry within the context of media production in Canada, relying merely on quantitative results would not have provided me with the information I was searching for. I have used qualitative research to gain a better understanding of the particular experiences of women who are actually working in the field, since the goal of this project was ultimately to discover which strategies could be useful for women to achieve greater representation in film. In the following sections I explain further why I believe that qualitative and feminist methods were best suited for this research. I also explain my choices regarding my case study, sample size, and participants.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

David Wainwright explains that "qualitative research can be characterized as the attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and 'definition of the situation' presented by informants, rather than the production of a quantitative 'measurement' of their characteristics or behavior" (Wainwright 1997: 1). Researchers use qualitative methods such as interviews, ethnographic observation and discourse analysis, using participant's beliefs and experiences to understand larger theoretical concepts. According to Wainwright, qualitative methods "offer an important link to some of the main concerns of sociological thought, addressing questions of power, ideology and subjective meaning" (1997). This brief

summation of qualitative methodology's uses is therefore directly applicable to the study of women's participation in film production, where questions of power and ideology inform the limitations of their presence in this field, while subjective meaning describes their experiences in confronting these structures. Since the issues I am investigating are based on social relations, it would be difficult to address them theoretically by using quantitative data alone.

However, while qualitative methods may seem most preferable for my work, the critiques of this approach must be considered so that the research is conducted with as much integrity as possible. Wainwright notes that qualitative researchers "may be viewed as suspect in terms of their reliability and validity, particularly when compared with the more 'scientific' methods available to the quantitative researcher" (1997: 1). David Silverman (2000) agrees that issues of validity and reliability are central to the critique of qualitative research, due to a perceived lack of scientific method. A major reason for this perception is the fact that "there is no agreed doctrine underlying all quantitative social research. Instead, there are many 'isms' ...for example interactionalism, feminism, postmodernism and ethno-methodology" (2000:8). However, it is the researcher's failure to be objective and the tendency to impose meaning that is the most dominant critique of qualitative methods. These problems manifest as observer bias, in which the goals or beliefs of the researcher unduly influence his or her reading of the findings. Of course, it is impossible to completely remove these influences; the problem of observer bias must therefore be self-reflexively addressed throughout the research process.

Being aware of the possibility of observer bias is one way for the scholar to avoid criticism of qualitative research findings and still benefit from the deeper understanding of social relationships that these methods potentially allow. Wainwright considers that reflexivity is the key to establishing the credibility of the research; since the results can not be measured for "validity" as in quantitative scientific research, the researcher must employ scepticism throughout the project -- both of one's own motivations and those of the participants. In my own research, I have attempted to avoid observer bias through constant reflection on my motives behind the particular path of this project, and on my approach to the research process. In my interviews I tried to make clear that while I was interested in hearing the women talk around certain themes and issues, I was not trying to elicit a particular response. For example, when I asked if a participant felt that she had faced occupational challenges because of her gender, I made clear that she should say no if she did not feel this was the case. This strategy has also helped me avoid another problem that Silverman cites: that of including only "telling examples" (175). As my data chapters will show, I include responses that both support and question my ideas, in an attempt to gain a better over-all picture of the situation.

FEMINIST APPROACHES TO SOCIAL RESEARCH

In order to describe what is meant by a feminist methodology, it is first necessary to define feminism. Feminist film critic Annette Kuhn (1982) says the term can be broadly defined as "a set of political practices founded in analysis of the social/historical position of women as subordinated, oppressed or exploited either within dominant modes of production (such as

capitalism) and/or by the social relations of patriarchy or male domination" (4). Feminism is therefore not one unified theory, but a set of theories arising from these basic tenets; a feminist research methodology can be said to be one that works in awareness of the different social realities of each gender in the patriarchal system. Feminist-centered research most often relies on qualitative methodology as the best way to access knowledge through individual women's experiences, instead of imposing meaning onto them as has been done under patriarchal society. As Susan Speer (2002) explains, "[m]any feminists reject 'masculine' notions of objectivity, value neutrality and scientific detachment because they are thought to reinforce the objectification, exploitation and subordination of women" (784). Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland (2002) add that "[f]eminist knowledge is grounded in experiences of gendered social life, but is also dependent on judgements about the justice of social relationships, on theories of power and on the morality of social investigation" (3).

Since my research is grounded squarely in an investigation of one particular aspect of gendered social reality, a feminist research methodology seems most relevant. However, it is important to recognize that the criticisms of qualitative methods in general are often magnified when a feminist approach is taken up. For one thing, Ramazanoglu and Holland note that by "being openly politically committed, feminists are charged with failing the test of producing generally valid and authoritative knowledge"(3). In addition, the very fact of the researcher/participant relationship implies a power hierarchy that can affect research results. For example, Speer claims "the moderator's opening question is routinely treated as a test question by the respondents, to which there is a right and wrong answer. Therefore, they treat their response as something that may have potentially negative implications for their

identity" (2002: 797). To combat these potential threats to valid research results, women who participate in research studies are encouraged to speak about their own experiences with as little interference as possible. "The overriding concern is to avoid imposing the researcher's own analytic categories and concepts on what respondents say, and encourage them to 'assert their own interpretations and agendas' " (Speer 2002: 784).

In my research I have attempted to follow Speer's advice; while I asked some specific questions that were directed along my research interests, I did not try to find specific answers, as noted above. In addition, I have chosen to quote the women directly whenever possible in my data chapters, in order to bring in their voices, rather than my interpretations, as the main source of information. In regard to the potential power hierarchy that Speer refers to, I believe the nature of the research allowed for a fairly balanced power ratio between myself and the participants. Although the women varied in terms of their careers, in general their ages and education levels were similar to my own[9]. I do not think, therefore, that these women relied on my approval to stabilize their own identities. I also do not think that any of the women tried to impose a reverse power relationship by dominating the course of the interview. In each case I would say the participants treated me essentially as an equal, but one with different areas of knowledge. In the following section I will elaborate on these participants and the mechanics of my methodology.

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[9] I was 31-32 at the time of the interviews. A summary of the filmmakers' profiles follows on pages 47 and 48, or see Appendix II for participants' statistical data.

WOMEN IN FILM AND VIDEO VANCOUVER: A CASE STUDY

Women in Film and Video Vancouver is an organization dedicated to improving the careers of women working in film and video in Vancouver through professional development workshops, networks, and increased awareness, recognition, and support with the industry itself. The organization was formed in 1989 and has since gained over 700 members (including a number of men) from all areas of the industry, including but not limited to writers, directors, actors, producers, editors, and camera operators. WIFVV receives some funding support for its programs from a number of government agencies and private sponsors; its principle supporters are ReelWest and Telefilm Canada while other important sources are BC Film, CBC\BC, CHUM TV, the Directors Guild of Canada British Columbia (BC District Council), Global TV, Kodak Canada and the Rainmaker Entertainment Group (WIFVV 2003 \Sponsors). However, WIFVV does not receive ongoing funding from any source and must therefore seek support on a program to program basis. The organization is run by an elected Board of Directors who work on a volunteer basis, while administrative costs are covered by membership fees.

The research question most central to my project is to find out whether communication and social networks can provide women with a significant resource for meeting the challenges of entry into film production. My research addresses the Canadian situation as a whole, but focuses on the specificities of the Vancouver film industry. For these reasons I have focused on WIFVV as a case study as being the most likely location that such networks might exist. My objective was therefore not to learn whether social capital exists at WIFVV; rather, I

acted on the assumption that it does. Instead, I have tried to determine how social capital

works by assessing the importance of networks to filmmakers, and the quality of support that

WIFVV is able to provide.

I have built my case on a fairly small sample size in order to constrain my research to

manageable proportions, choosing to interview ten women about their experiences as

filmmakers and as members of WIFVV. Silverman (2000: 291) notes that researchers who

rely mainly on interviews may be in a danger of ignoring the greater understanding of social

interaction that observation can bring; however, in my case it would take my own

involvement as an insider of the film industry to observe how women face and meet

challenges in that field. Even if I was able to do this, my findings would still depend on my

own subjective experiences as a woman and my interpretation of other women's subjective

experiences. The interview, therefore, remains a useful tool as long as reflexive attitude and

attempt to avoid observer bias are strongly adhered to.

A possible criticism of the small sample size is that a few women are made to express the

feelings of all, therefore essentializing women's experience and ignoring potentially contrary

results. Accordingly, I have tried to ensure that a variety of viewpoints are included to

provide the broadest picture possible. (In addition to the ten filmmakers, I also interviewed

two other women for added perspective; one has worked with many women filmmakers

through CBC, and the other is an aspiring writer/director and a current WIFVV member.) It

is my hope that the diversity of the participants will create a well-balanced study, despite the

small sample size. The women chosen hold a variety of positions within the film industry and

are at different levels of success in their careers -- some are just starting out in film while one or two are at the pinnacle of the Vancouver industry. Some women were chosen because they hold or have held specific positions within WIFVV, such as the President and the director of the Mentorship program. Others were selected more randomly, through connections to friends or through suggestions made by other participants. In these cases I have tried to maintain the diversity of the sample. For an additional perspective I have also included two women who are not current members of WIFVV; one is a former member and the other has never joined. Finally, I acknowledge that none of the participants represent all or any other women, and can only speak of their own experiences. I therefore look at themes that arise from the interviews rather than taking any statement as absolute fact or evidence.

The respondents were recruited by telephone and by email. Except for two telephone interviews, the interviews took place either in the participant's offices or in public coffee shops of their choice, depending on the participant's preference and her time restrictions. This allowed each participant to speak from locations that were either neutral, but familiar or on her own turf, thus minimizing any power imbalance the researcher might hold. Meetings generally took between 30 and 45 minutes, and consisted of both a demographic survey and a structured but opened-ended interview period. With one exception where two business partners were interviewed as a team since they "do everything together", the meetings took place in a one-on-one context.

Of the ten women interviewed, three were between 26 and 35 in age, while seven were between 36 and 45. Three women had children and one was pregnant at the time of the

interview. All of the women held at least a Bachelor's degree, and four held Master's degrees.

However, just three women received degrees in film, while the others held their degrees in

other areas, having mainly moved into the film industry from related fields such as theatre,

creative writing and journalism. For the purposes of this paper, I have opened the definition

of filmmaker, which is usually reserved for a film's director, to also include the producer,

since either position may actually initiate and control the creative process. All of the women

listed several occupations within the film industry, such as writer and producer; writer and

director; actor and writer, but there was a majority of women who listed producer as their

primary position.

On average, the women I interviewed had been in the film industry in some capacity for nine

years, and members of WIFVV for six. Three women were current board members and two

were former board members. Other organizations that the participants belonged to include

Cineworks (4), Video In (1), the Documentarian Organization of Canada (DOC) (3), Praxis

(3), Medianet/Victoria (1) and Women in the Director's Chair (1). Many of the women

supported projects of their own with related work within the film industry; several taught at

film schools, one worked for the NFB, one worked full time as a camera assistant and

directed and had edited her own film over eight years in her spare time. In terms of union

involvement, two women belonged to the Directors Guild, two belonged to branches of

IATSE, one belonged to ACTRA and SAG, and two women belonged to or were eligible to

join the Writer's Guild.

As I have already stated, my intention in limiting my sample size was to restrict the data to a

manageable level while still providing a range of opinions and experiences broad enough to

draw conclusions from. I believe that the diversity of this sample, as outlined above, provides

a significant basis for investigating the conditions of women's participation in Vancouver's

film industry.

IV.   WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

Women have already been shown to be under-represented within Canadian and Vancouver-based film industries. However, many women are in fact working within the arena of film production; it is therefore appropriate to investigate how this minority functions -- the challenges they face and their strategies for meeting these challenges. In this chapter I will discuss the experiences of some women who are currently working in film in Vancouver to show how the problematic of gender interacts with, and is complicated by, issues of economic stability, labour, family, and creativity to create a particular encountering of social reality. These issues manifest as both obvious, material influences and as more subtle, but still real, social attitudes and perceptions.

IS GENDER LIMITING FOR WOMEN?

Women do not take a large portion of the positions in Vancouver's film industry. The question may asked whether this is due to limitations imposed on women because of their gender, or whether it just happens that few women wish to enter this particular field. Current statistics (Statistics Canada 2004) suggest that the former proposition is correct, as it becomes immediately apparent that a large number of women are indeed entering into film jobs -- they just aren't filling many authority positions. In a society where feminist ideas of equality are at least paid lip-service, the ways that women actually experience gender discrimination may occur as subtle limitations rather than overt blocking. In my research I have been interested in learning more about the complicated relationship between social

perceptions and actual results in the media landscape. Accordingly, one of my first questions for my respondents was whether they felt that as women they had suffered particular occupational challenges.

Since all of the women I interviewed were either members of WIFVV or had worked with the organization, I expected that most would agree that being female had been limiting in some degree. However, while all of the women thought my research was timely and important, not all agreed that they had faced any obstacles as women themselves. In fact, most were more likely to feel that a general underlying gender discrimination exits, but that they had not personally experienced it. As one woman explained, while she does believe women face special challenges, "I think there are similar challenges to say, people of colour or minorities in general, where it doesn't mean the doors are closed by any means." Another woman answered, "I've certainly never been prejudiced against …No one's ever said, 'oh, you can't do that because you're a woman.' It's not like that at all". Where women find problems do arise is in a general lack of support; participants listed difficulties in finding financial backing or partners for their ideas, lack of role models, and lack of mentorship within the industry. Problems more specifically connected to gender included not being accepted as an authority figure, or not being seen as being one who could successfully see a creative project through to completion. Popular social perceptions about gender issues therefore are therefore translated into the available roles within the film industry; the way this translation occurs has much to do with the specific social, historical and economic particularities found within Canadian filmmaking.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

Questions of gender are interconnected with the dynamics of the film industry itself, which is

a high-paced, financially high-risk operation. The economic reality of independent film

production in Vancouver therefore affects the women working there, adding nuances to

gender concerns. There are many small companies working on independent productions in

Vancouver, all competing for extremely limited funding resources. Although the city is

primarily a "service" market, hosting productions from the United States, these productions

usually import their key players from home and mainly employ Canadians in the technical

crew. The independent film-making sector, in contrast, develops and produces Canadian-

based works, instead of hiring themselves out to service Hollywood-based productions. This

type of work is much more risk-oriented for investors; as one woman said bluntly about the

company she works for, "We don't do that, so we starve." All of the women I interviewed

were involved in independent Canadian film production, which is the case for most of

WIFVV's members.

Funding difficulties for Canadian filmmakers in general may be even more evident in the

Vancouver industry, where historically little government support for local productions has

been given, either at provincial or federal levels. At the provincial level, Gasher maintains

that for most of BC's film production history, the government has been less concerned with

promoting a local film culture than with attracting foreign investors and capital into the

region. This has meant encouraging "runaway" productions from Hollywood and elsewhere

for almost all of the past century, but especially since the 1950s. In terms of the federal

funding opportunities through the CFDC/Telefilm Canada and the NFB, Gasher finds British

Columbians in the past were at a disadvantage geographically, as "location neutral" funding

tended to center on Ontario and Quebec productions (2002: 62). Regional offices with

production capabilities were established in Vancouver by both the CBC and the NFB, but

production was limited and had to be approved by central authorities in Toronto and

Montreal, respectively. Meanwhile, American based companies dominated the distribution

systems in Canada, so few films produced in BC were likely to ever be screened there

(Gasher 2000: 59-64, Pendakur 1990). Geographic distance from the distribution companies

of Montreal and Toronto also affected funding possibilities. Filmmakers are not able to

access funding from Telefilm without distribution deals in place, and as Spaner notes

Canadian film distribution is centered in Toronto. Significantly, an "eastern company will

back established directors such as Lynne Stopkewich or Anne Wheeler, but is more likely to

back first-time Toronto filmmakers than first-time Vancouver filmmakers" (Spaner

2003:169).

While distribution and screening time for Canadian films remains a key issue, the

establishment of BC Film in 1987 meant new support for locally based productions on the

West Coast. Gasher believes the agency has in fact "been a central factor in the emergence of

an indigenous film tradition in British Columbia" (93). Although the economic motivation in

establishing a film industry was foremost, funding initiatives favoured high concentrations of

BC and Canadian talent, which allowed local filmmakers to produce locally-based creative

works. "Preference was given to productions based on literary properties that originated in

British Columbia and to projects that qualified for eight out of ten points under the Canadian-

content definitions used by the capital cost allowance program"; in addition, "BC Film required applicants to exercise a minimum of 50 percent of financial and creative control" (86). However, Gasher also points out that funding cutbacks and revised funding policy at BC Film have since reduced some of the promising potential for West Coast filmmakers by easing some of the focus on BC owned and developed works, and introducing financial recoupability as a partial requirement (91). As discussed in the section on arts policy in Chapter II, filmmakers who receive funding from Telefilm are also expected to show some return on the government's investment, and government funding increasingly depends on broadcasting guarantees. Furthermore, fiscally conservative governments in both provincial and federal venues have continued to cut back all sources of government funding to the arts (Woodcock 1985, Beale 1999). As discussed in Chapter II, these cutbacks have arguably caused an overall detrimental effect for women's participation in the arts, limiting the overall number of projects funded and thereby women's portion of that number (Beale 1999:43). For example, BC Film has been one of WIFVV's key sponsors; funding cutbacks to the government agency will no doubt severely impact the women's organization's ability to offer programs.

Government sources are, of course, just one type of funding; the private sector is another area where filmmakers may find investors. However, several essays in *Making It* (1995) make clear that private investors from outside the film industry are difficult to come by. In "Developing a Property," authors Lael McCall and Richard Craven explain that the high risk involved in financing film projects makes many potential investors wary. "Not surprisingly, independent financiers in the private sector often look at film and television development

proposals with horror, not only because putting money into projects at early stage is a very high-risk R&D process, but also because they cannot determine how to quantify the value of something they can rarely understand" (25). The "horror" may be magnified if a woman is at the helm of a project. Responses from participants suggest that since not many women have traditionally been active in the industry, women as a group have been considered inexperienced and without the necessary skills to pull off a film. Women as individuals are therefore asked to prove themselves before they can be trusted with carrying a project, especially at the creative end.

Material and Social Considerations of Competition

The competitive nature of the film industry means that women are struggling to assert themselves not just against men, but against other women. Competition for jobs was one theme that surfaced frequently in my interviews, and one that is directly related to the economic conditions of the Vancouver industry. Tanenbaum maintains that the intense competition that often occurs between women is a direct result of gender roles in the patriarchal system. She finds that in the workplace and in essentially all areas of life, "our restrictive gender roles, combined with our relatively new liberties, create a confusing environment that sets us up as adversaries -- and we have to compete with each other if we're ever going to succeed according to the rules of the mixed-up game we are living" (2002:26). One respondent's reference to this issue suggests several ways that competition among women is potentially damaging to their success in the film industry. This young producer felt that women who appear skilled are threats to other people, and they therefore need to "stay under the radar" until they can safely demonstrate their true abilities, including letting other

people take credit for their work until their positions are secure. "That's where I usually see 90% of the women get bumped off. They take the higher road, I mean, they do things to announce themselves, you know, to get what's justifiable theirs in terms of pay or credit, and sometimes you have to see the bigger picture." Without knowing when the time is right to announce themselves, women who follow this advice would be constantly projecting an image of themselves as less than they are. (It is also questionable as to whether a man in the same situation would be expected to hold himself back, or if he could safely claim due recognition.)

Competition among women also means that some women may be unwilling or unable to share what they know, restricting the mentor relationships that could help women starting out. All of the participants agreed that mentorship is very important in the film industry, although not all agreed on how to achieve it. Time concerns and the fear of being "hit up for work" also seem to be factors on whether women are willing to share their knowledge and support. One woman strongly believed that Canadians in general do not support mentorship because they fear someone else being clever. Another participant felt that mentorship does sometimes exist, but that a relationship must exist where the mentoree has volunteered time to the mentor first. A third participant thought that mentorship can often occur, and discussed how she had benefited from mentor relationships in the past. However, she acknowledged that the demands of a film career might limit her own capacity to be a mentor: "The only unfortunate thing is I wish I could do more than I can. If I can't see my family I realize I can't offer my time to people in the industry".

Another negative consequence of competition that one participant hinted at is the subsequent

use of sexuality as tool. Two women I talked to brought this up more explicitly, saying

"everybody has their schtick [to get ahead], and the people we don't like, they come by and

use their sexual prowess". While the use of sexuality may help some women get their

projects off the ground, it does nothing to counter a prevailing perception that women don't

know what they are doing in the film world. (It is significant that none of the participants

advocated such an approach.) This last example also demonstrates that the economic

structure of the Canadian film industry can actually work to support traditional gender roles;

with limited opportunities for advancement, some women may resort to behaving in the way

the patriarchal system expects and demands them to. Power based on sexuality is both

fleeting and unstable, acting only in reflection of the more permanent power held by the male

who temporarily bestows in on the female.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND WORK

Being Listened To: Problems with Authority

Despite the challenges, women are finding ways to enter the film industry in many different

capacities. Women may find, however, that they have difficulty rising above a certain level,

as Lips suggests:

> It is becoming clear, then, that having broken down many initial access
> barriers, women ... often find that they are still far from the centres of power.
> Having dealt with many of the formal barriers to career participation, they
> find themselves blocked by less tangible but equally frustrating obstacles.
> They feel invisible. They feel (and they are often right) that no one takes
> them seriously. (1989: 407-8)

Women in Vancouver's film industry have experienced precisely this problem, according to

some of my participants. When asked about gender challenges, one member of a female production team responded, "We often wonder what it would be like if one of us was male; would we be taken more seriously? Because a lot of guys [in the industry] are our age or younger, and there's just a certain feeling that they're taken a little more seriously than we are." Her partner added, "You know, we're women, we run our own company, and we get called 'girls' all the time, and that reference really drives me nuts."

In order to reach a position of authority, a person must be respected and be acknowledged as having the necessary skills to assume that position. This person must also have the ability to have an impact on his or her work environment, and that of others. Not being respected as a person with authority in the film industry can result in a wide range of problems, from not getting a shot filmed a certain way to not receiving the necessary funding to get a project developed, to being passed by for opportunities to move forward. As some of the participants' comments demonstrate, the problem of being listened to is one that, in fact, frequently comes up. For women directors or producers working in mainstream industry productions, this problem may arise in part due to the fact that technical crews are very much dominated by men; many of these men have been working in the industry a long time and are used to working for and with men. One participant suggested, "I think it may have to do with the fact that most crews are male based, and the way that crews are based hierarchically, you still have a kind of little army, and in a sense, ...the director is considered the general. So women running all-male crews, it's still a bit of an odd feeling." Movie-work, as opposed to independent filmmaking, may therefore be less attractive to women because of the small potential for breaking through such concrete hierarchies.

Several participants explicitly framed the problem of socially constructed gender roles within the film industry in terms of authority and respect. One participant explained that as a woman, "you don't automatically get listened to like a young, creative guy might". As an example of this problem, one woman claimed that, "You can be as intelligent, gifted and experienced as a man beside you, but they don't like the fact that you're young and blond. Or there's a certain respect that still tends to enter the equation, or a certain lack of respect". This may result in limiting women's ability for advancement within the industry, where opportunities to move up a level are more often awarded to young men than to young women.

While the above situation suggests large-scale industrial productions, independently developed projects can also suffer from gender stereotyping. The problem of not being respected was brought up by another respondent, who noted "if you're going to direct, you have to start with people willing to invest in you, in advance". In terms of financing, the director is often considered a "promotable element" (Dent-Cox 1995: 160); having a proven name often means a better chance of the film's success, and therefore investors will be more likely to commit funds to a project with a known (and probably male) director in place. Women who get hired to direct or who receive government support to pursue their own creative projects are those who have the respect garnered by being able to "come fully loaded to the table". According to one participant (a twenty-year veteran of the industry), "as a woman you have to go out and acquire great volumes of experience and clout" before this can happen.

The two women I interviewed who run their own production company in fact brought up the issue of authority and respect as being the major area where they have encountered gender-related problems. One of the participants reflected, "I think there's a little bit of a problem with [men] taking orders from younger women. That's definitely been an issue --- I think it's an odd situation. It's uncomfortable." Her partner went on to explain that in their experience, "the way a woman has to deal with a man, and the way a woman has to deal with a female in the exact same situation is really completely different." This problem manifested most clearly for the partners when they hired a male camera-operator who would not agree to follow any direction from the women. Their solution was to suggest two possible ways of doing things, either one of which would be agreeable to themselves, but to let the camera operator choose. As a result, "the camera guy did everything we wanted him to do and more, …and it was all because we treated him like he was the one making the decisions." In contrast, on another project where these women hired an older, more experienced female director, this woman "could not have been more supportive," and became a type of mentor to the business partners.

While these two experiences are not meant to stand in for all crew relationships, they do highlight the ways that some women have experienced gender issues in terms of authority. The women's strategy of inventing two possible solutions for every task, just so their camera operator would assist them, may appear to be tedious and unnecessarily accommodating. It is not so surprising, however, given that gender roles are still in transformation. As Lips explains, a "person's exercise of power is also affected by what she and others see as appropriate behaviour" (409). Women may avoid directly exercising power because it is not

appropriate behaviour according to the stereotype that women should be "quiet, soft-spoken and polite" (413). The social construction of woman as being soft and gentle does not complement the figure of the powerful women giving orders to a large (or even tiny) crew. Indeed, a woman who acts against the stereotype may risk her authority due to the negative reaction of others. As one participant remarked, "I think [Canadian filmmaker] Patricia Rozema said it: that if you know what you want on the set, you're a bitch, whereas a guy is just asserting himself, or being a director".

The Myth of the Male Artist

As demonstrated in Chapter II, the ways in which contemporary women experience the art world are historically informed, and are grounded in the bourgeois ideology that arose in relation to capitalism. My discussion of theories by Pollock, Wolff, and Kauffman showed that the qualities associated with the artist are also those that are associated with masculinity, particularly being "independent, highly individuated, and dedicated to work above all else" (Kauffman 1995: 95). The bourgeois formulation of the woman as being primarily a mother continues to hold sway, with the qualities of femininity defined in opposition both to masculinity and to the artist. Entrenched social perceptions therefore continue to have real effects on gendered experience, despite the overall progress made by the feminist movement.

Pollock claims that at the root of the common perception of the artist as being male is this basic attitude: "Men create art. Women have babies" (1988: 21). She explains that in essence, the artist is thought to have an innate talent that must come out in his work, expressing his natural genius. The woman, however, has the innate need only to reproduce. While overt

claims to biological determinism have been hotly contested during the past few decades,

there is evidence that a basic assumption of the male artist in film exists, and that Pollock's

arguments about the gendering of art can also translate into film production roles. The

possibility that this idea has resonance in Vancouver's current environment is in fact

suggested by comments made by several of my research participants. One woman told me, "I

do believe that there must be a subconscious withholding of support for female directors,

because the preponderance of directors is so very much male. ...it's still there, the perception

that the hot young director is probably gonna be male. That's a really strong perception".

Another respondent stated, "I know a lot of women who are directors, you know they direct

their shorts, and they don't get paid for it...But the higher up the ladder, you get lower

amounts of women." A possible explanation for this situation, as suggested by yet another

participant, was that "male directors seem to have a bigger sense of entitlement -- you know,

'I should be allowed to make my movie' ". According to this participant, women are more

likely to wait to be given opportunities. However, comments made by another participant

suggest that even when the desire to advance is articulated, women may still be passed by in

favour of their less-experienced male colleagues.

As noted in the Introduction, female directors in Canada make up just 1% of the Directors

Guild. The perseverance of the artist myth in film circles may contribute to the explanation of

the low numbers. Henderson describes how the artist myth has been reproduced in film

school and hence in the film industry, contending that the students she interviewed:

> claim their identities as artists, not as cultural functionaries or
> businesspeople, and they base their claim, however tentatively, on that very
> rarefied and individualizing quality called vision. Although they long to
> appeal to a sizable audience, they also long to be recognized for their

distinctive aesthetic contributions, their ability to do something not
everyone can. (1995: 164)

Henderson connects the prevailing conception of the writer-director found in film school to

the rise of "auteurism" in the post-studio dominated "New Hollywood" of the 1960s and

later. Auteurism may be described as the conception of the film as "the product of a singular

artistic vision among a handful of school-trained directors in the independent production

system" (162). These directors are perceived as having the education required to pull all the

elements of the film together, and the skill to communicate a unique vision to the audience.

Angela Martin points out that auterism as a concept originated in France as an artistic

alternative to mainstream cinema; significantly, the term is resolutely gendered male. All the

auteurs first identified were men, partly because women directors did not have the required

body of work necessary for identifying a unifying, personal artistic vision (Martin 2003: 32).

Auterism therefore ultimately works to replicate social constructions of the artist in the

medium of film. The fact that there are not many women directors and even fewer "auteures"

may be related to the lack of recognition for women's work, and the perseverance of the artist

myth through auteurism.

Gender Stereotypes and Job Positions

Social constructions of gender therefore appear to influence perceptions of what women can

or cannot achieve in the film industry, and accordingly have an effect on the types of roles

women take up. While there are not many women directing in Vancouver, there are many

that are working as producers; in fact, of the 70 companies that belong to the BC Producer's

Branch of the CFTPA, 30 have a woman as either their principle owner or in partnership as

principle (Scott 2004). Producing entails finding the funding for a project and overseeing that

project to ensure that it meets artistic, financial and time goals. The producer's role is seen as more of a business position than a creative one, although creativity is certainly an asset. According to Alexandra Raffe in *Making It* (1995), the producer is ultimately responsible for the success or failure of a project, since that person has made all of the hiring decisions and overseen the orchestration of the elements (6). A producer therefore holds a good deal of responsibility, but there are stages of the production process where a woman can prove her skills. For example, if she can find the investment to work on developing an idea, she may then be trusted to continue on with the project.

Several participants' comments revealed that a combination of factors probably influence the methods that women use to gain entry into the film world. One woman explained that "producers are by and large a little more behind the scenes, so I think women find it a little more easy to access that end of filmmaking, because it's less touted as a forerunner position". Tanenbaum notes that women are often forced to advance careers in less direct ways than men are, because they lack the same opportunities "to compete and excel" (2002: 27). She believes that "women are more 'behind the scenes' because we have few, if any legitimate areas in which we can openly compete -- forcing our ambitions for power, money, and control underground" (27). In the film industry, women may indeed find that they are not given opportunities to compete for authority positions. However, once women gain entry behind the scenes, they have the chance to demonstrate their abilities in less high-profile, high-risk situations. The participant who was cited earlier as believing women aren't often trusted in creative roles pointed to the clear results that production work offers as a way that women can break into film careers: "If a woman is good at organization and she starts

working as a production coordinator, or whatever, she can stand out like that. Nobody has to listen to her because there are quantifiable results. If a show comes in on time, if a show comes in on budget, there's evidence right there; her duties will speak for themselves."

Working behind the scenes may be a useful strategy employed by women working in the film industry, but there is a risk that they may not be recognized for their work. There is also some risk that perceived organizational skills may limit women to office administration-type work. Lower level positions such as the Production Coordinator, for example, are mainly filled by women and are often low-status jobs with a fancy-sounding titles. In Making It (1995), Tom Dent-Cox describes the production coordinator as an "unsung hero working quietly in preproduction ... whose impeccable organizational skills must be matched by an ability to keep cast, crew, and you [the producer] smiling" (171). In light of this description, it is not very surprising that one of my participants derisively referred to this position as being "basically a glorified secretary". Significantly, in the DGC list of December 19 2003, eighteen out of twenty PCs listed were women, by far the highest concentration of women in any position.

In contrast, other participants' statements suggest a positive movement away from at least one stereotype that, according to Lips, has limited women's power in the workplace. As one participant noted, "they're willing to let women do numbers and organize, that's the new thing." Another participant added that currently, "especially in the financial end, there's lots of women, because we can sell, we can broker deals, we can communicate". Lips observes that women have traditionally been considered "beings who cannot deal with numbers and are too muddleheaded to balance a checkbook" (413). This attitude may have until recently

been active in the film industry; but their recent trust to take care of the financial details in such an economically risky setting means that some women are being granted a great deal of power. This development also suggests that attributes traditionally associated with and encouraged in women, such as the successful use of verbal communication and the ability to organize and take care of details, can be transferred into less traditional roles with greater access to power.

Stability and Family Concerns

The types of jobs available to women within the film industry are affected by economic considerations and by social perceptions of gender roles; the work conditions of the industry itself are another important concern. Entry into the film industry is done largely through volunteer work; after one has put in enough time and proved to be responsible, skilled, and reliable, one may be hired onto a paid position. One participant who works as a camera assistant, for example, volunteered for one year before she found a paid position, although she had gone to film school. Resources must therefore be found to support the person while she is volunteering, and she must usually take a second job. Once a position has been secured, however, problems can arise such as projects that fall through, gaps that occur between projects, and twelve-hour days or longer on set when projects are underway. Socially constructed gender roles in combination with issues of stability and family responsibility are therefore particularly worthy of examination.

One participant theorized that there are not many women filmmakers because many women probably feel they need to take the more stable jobs in the management and administrative

positions. She pointed out that:

> Being a director is a very unstable life. You have to go where the work is,
> you have to leave at the drop of a hat, you have to be away for however long
> you have to be away. And you never know where the next job is coming
> from. And once you reach a certain age, for women that's kind of a pain in
> the ass.

Certain jobs within the film industry may be especially risky in terms of financial stability.

One participant, discussing work as a new producer, commented that "every labour law is

broken. You float your wages to cash down your team; you work each and every day with no

compensation; you're producing a show, and then you're not." Another woman concluded,

"You have to enjoy the instability more than the stability, because you know that you're

doing what you want to do. Otherwise it's hell".

As one industry insider speculated, some women may just not be willing to put themselves

into such an unstable work environment, preferring to seek jobs with guaranteed hours and

wages. An obvious problem for women facing this unstable lifestyle is with family and

relationship concerns -- the problems of instability are greatly magnified when children and

family are factored in. The myth of the male artist, grounded as it is in social constructions of

gender, nonetheless brings up the important issue of women who both make art and have

babies. Most of the women that I interviewed agreed that that their career had influenced

their decisions regarding children and relationships. One participant asserted: "As a woman,

you seem to have two choices - either to have your kids young or to have them as late as

possible, in terms of where you sit in your career". In my small sample, this dichotomy

appeared to be in effect. Of the ten participants, only three have children; two of these

women have children that were starting to grow up before their mothers entered the film

industry. One of the women has been able to organize her schedule to work at home two days a week, and to be at home when her elementary school-aged daughter comes home from school. A fourth woman was pregnant at the time of our interview; she told me that she had waited "as long as humanly possible" to have a child, making sure her career was secure enough first: "I've waited until I'm 35 ..., which is the big dangerous turning point where it starts to get risky. And most women I know don't have children."

Issues of family and careers have of course been central to the feminist movement, proving to be problematic for any almost any woman choosing to enter the work force. M. Rivka Polantik (1993) frames the problem of women who pursue careers and have children in terms of the ideology surrounding motherhood. Women may be grudgingly accepted into recognized careers, but they are not given the resources to continue these careers if they choose to have children, since motherhood has been woman's socially prescribed role. Polantik claims that "the higher-status professional jobs frequently demand a work-week commitment closer to the 72-hour figure. Men can hold these jobs and also father families only because they can count on a 'helpmeet' to take care of children and home" (503). Women traditionally have not found the same type of help, and are forced to take care of both children and careers. As Susan Crean (1993) writes, "the division of labour in the home and the organization of the work force create a disincentive for men and career women to engage in child-rearing. As more women have entered the work force the social expectations for motherhood have simply expanded to include that work, effectively leaving modern women with two-full time jobs without the support services obviously required" (514). In addition, time taken off from a career to give birth is not easily regained, while the careers of

other women and men continue to advance.

The participant who was pregnant at the time of our interview referred to this problem in regards to the film industry, commenting that she would be interested to see the effect having a child would have on her career, and that of a friend who had recently given birth. In regards to her friend, this woman believes, "She waited the right amount of time; she waited the amount of time I did, and established herself. ..But instead of directing a lot, maybe directing TV, she's gong to have to direct maybe one film every two years or so, which is what many female directors do." And, reserving exception for the lucky woman with a "house-husband", another participant felt a woman could not commit to both children and a career in film. "It sounds so negative and unfeminist of me, but you can't do it. You cannot have kids and do this job. Or at least you can't do this job to the best of your ability to be competitive, and have kids. Unless you're superhuman."

With progressive attitudes towards shared-parenting becoming more common, women with partners may find the challenge of attempting to balance family with a film career is manageable. However, the nature of the film industry, including long hours, constant travel, and varying amounts of work mean that people within the industry may find relationships difficult to support. Often these occur with other film industry professionals, which would make commitment to a family even more difficult to maintain. One participant observed, "everyone you know is in this community; because you work all the time, you can't build relationships outside it." Another woman added, "I don't have children yet, I'm not married, and it's been a lot easier for me to sustain relationships with people who are also in the

industry, because they understand the insanity of the kind of work that we do." The two

youngest women I interviewed also brought up this problem, commenting that they did not

know "a single couple with kids" where both partners worked in the industry. However, the

participant who was pregnant during the interview does work with her husband as part of a

producing/directing team, so there will be at least one brave couple venturing this challenge

soon. Whether the woman and her husband will be able to sustain their creative partnership

with a child, or will have to rely on their industry-related jobs remains to be seen.

Women with partners face significant challenges in incorporating families with careers, but

single mothers face an even more difficult task, particularly since funding to daycare has

been cut. As Beale (1999) argues, recent government policy that is set on dismantling social

programs has had particularly harmful effects on women; social support programs such as

health, education, unemployment insurance and daycare can be crucial to any parent pursuing

a career. Without such support systems in place, women must often resort to part-time, low

paid work (Polantik 1993: 503). The problem is amplified in certain sectors of the film

industry. As one participant asked, "the set, which is often 18-hour days, how is it possible to

make that more friendly? I haven't heard of on-set daycare, except for the big actors and

actresses". If outside support is not available, women may be forced to choose between a

family and a career in film, or to seek more stable jobs within the film industry.

Women who do attempt to juggle children and a film career may face further challenges

within the industry, as they may not be perceived as being fully committed to their work.

When asked if gender was a potential occupational challenge, one single mother answered:

> Having two children made [entry into the field] especially difficult. A lot of
> women that I met who had made it did not have children, and my mentor

> did not have children. ...That's probably the sort of thing that any woman in the work force faces...But that's a big issue for women because it's the guilt of not being able to be at home, and the guilt of not being able to do a good job, full time, on what the boss wants you to do, which is work a 12-hour day.

This problem can occur whether the boss is male or female, and women who do not have children themselves may not be sympathetic to women who do try to do both, as suggested by this participant's reference to her mentor. Two younger participants without children acknowledged that they themselves have been impatient when trying to accommodate women with children. One recalled that she felt a woman she had worked with seemed to constantly running to the telephone to check on her child, and therefore did not seem committed to the project.

The problematic of balancing children with a career is therefore clearly one area where gender can have a strong influence on women's entry into or success in film careers. Some women may choose not to have children at all, while others wait and then put their careers on hold, risking being left behind. Those with children may be perceived as not being fully committed to film projects. However, even those without children may be viewed with suspicion, since they may choose to have children at any point[10].

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[10] The physical ability to give birth is not necessarily a requirement for this decision: one participant relayed a interesting "trend", currently popular among Toronto's female filmmakers, of adopting Asian babies when past childbearing years.

SUMMARY

In looking at the experiences of some of Vancouver's women filmmakers, it is clear that the material conditions of filmmaking are deeply dependent on social constructions of gender and work. Vancouver's relatively recent transformation into a major film centre means that women directors and producers are still fairly rare, and many occupational challenges have yet to be fully surmounted. The concerns of any woman seeking to enter a male-dominated field are here, in addition to the most basic problem of attempting to balance a career and family. It is also clear that some of these issues are amplified due to the specific nature of the film industry, including unstable work patterns, incredibly long days when work is available, and the need to travel to find work. Material concerns can also affect what types of jobs women take up within the film industry, which may result in women occupying administrative and office roles over less stable, but more rewarding, creative or authority positions. This tendency is further magnified by social constructions of the artist and the common perception of the "hot young director" as being male, which can influence people both within and outside of the industry to withhold support from female filmmakers. Women that do succeed here must therefore have access to significant personal and external resources, and also face difficult decisions on how to pursue careers in film.

V.   SOCIAL CAPITAL, NETWORKS AND WIFVV

In the previous chapter I outlined some of the ways that gender issues manifest in Vancouver's film industry, based on the experiences of some of the women who work there. This chapter will focus on the strategies and tools that women may find useful in meeting occupational challenges. In particular, I propose that social networks can be an extremely important resource, providing emotional support, allies within the industry, and access to other resources such as the opportunity to build skills, funding opportunities and acknowledgement of work. I examine the Women in Film and Video Vancouver organization as a case study of an organization where social networks are fostered; my research in this area is directed in understanding how this organization functions and its importance to women filmmakers in Vancouver. I also look at the accessibility of WIFVV to determine whether this resource is actually available for all women equally.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Living as we do in an advanced capitalist society, theories of capital can be useful in assessing how power is distributed. As discussed in Chapter II, Bourdieu argues that capital can not be understood as just the accumulation of material profit based on labour, but that the subtypes of capital must also be considered. Cultural capital and social capital may be less apparently material in nature, but they can nonetheless be accrued for a person's benefit and are therefore worthy of study. If, as Bourdieu states, "the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent

structure of the social world" (1986: 242), then a person's power, or ability to affect his or her environment (Lips 1987), depends not just on access to financial resources but also to cultural knowledge and to social networks. However, as discussed above, these relationships are neither permanent, nor guaranteed, and must therefore be carefully maintained. As Bourdieu puts it, the "existence of a network of connections is not a natural given, or even a social given, constituted once and for all by an initial act of institution"; instead, it is actualized by the efforts of its members to produce and maintain useful social relationships (1986: 249). Strategic relationships are therefore of extreme importance for establishing collective power through the accumulation of individual strengths.

Bourdieu's theory of social capital suggests that group membership may be a crucial resource for women who wish to transform their work environments and increase their personal power. Individual women may face challenges in entering the film industry, but by pooling their collective resources they have a greater potential for achieving change. Lips argues that networks are necessary for changing the work environment for three reasons: group membership can provide support for women who feel isolated in their situations; it can allow women to access important information held by other members; and it can "provide a significant source of encouragement for more women to enter certain fields" (1987: 412). In addition, group identity can provide a strong political base from which to lobby for institutional change. In Vancouver, WIFVV attempts (in varying degrees) to meet all of these needs; it is arguably the single-most concentrated resource for increasing social capital available to women filmmakers in that area.

WOMEN IN FILM AND VIDEO VANCOUVER

An Overview of the Organization

WIFVV describe themselves as "a non-profit society of professional women founded to support, advance, promote and celebrate the professional development and achievements of women involved in the British Columbia Film, Video and Television industry" (WIFVV 2003). Although there are other Canadian and international branches of WIFVV that it is affiliated to, the Vancouver organization is an autonomous body. It is a growing but fairly new operation, founded in 1989 after a group of women met to discuss the experiences, challenges and limitations of women working in film "both as performers and technicians" (Matysiak 2001:74). WIFVV is structured through its body of members who pay an annual membership fee; its current membership numbers about 740. The organization is governed by an elected Board of Directors who contribute their time on a voluntary basis. There are currently two paid staff members who run the office and the administration of the organization (WIFVV 2003).

In order to fulfill its mandate of supporting, advancing, promoting and celebrating women in the Vancouver industry, WIFVV offers a variety of programs and events (WIFVV 2003/programs). Programs include the Breakfast Club, a monthly meeting where members and nonmembers meet and exchange ideas and information in an informal setting; Walking Talking Heads, where members go on field trips to other members' work places for added insight into the industry; The Exchange, a mentorship program in which WIFVV arranges for members to meet with eight "experts" of their choice in one-on-one settings; Career Café,

evenings featuring round table discussions and informal networking opportunities with expert

panelists; and the Producer's and Director's Workshops, weekend professional development

seminars. WIFVV events include Summer Shorts, an annual festival of members'

contributions in short films of all genres; Martini Madness, a party held on the opening night

of the Vancouver Film Festival; Flash Forward, a networking opportunity where members

are invited to kick-start their careers by setting and accomplishing goals in a short period; the

Spotlight Awards Gala, an annual event in celebration of the achievements of Canadian

women in film, television and video; and a Holiday Gala.

Board members are responsible for running the various programs and events offered through

the organization. Funding for WIFVV occurs mainly through membership fees; government

and corporate sponsors may support events on a time-to-time basis, but there is no on-going

funding support. Catherine Matysiak (2001) argues that this has both negative and positive

effects; with no guaranteed on-going source of support, the organization must continually

fundraise and lobby for sponsors to keep programs running. However, since WIFVV is not

reliant on government sponsors, cutbacks in spending may not be as harmful as to some other

arts organizations. Nevertheless, this aspect can not really be considered "positive" since as

Matysiak herself points out, corporate sponsorship tends to be offered to better known

organizations and events (88). As an example of this conundrum, one participant that is a

former board member told me that she had wanted to establish an on-going scholarship for

one WIFVV program, but that they hadn't found the necessary funds since "it just wasn't

high-profile enough for the big money sponsors". Funding issues are therefore an ongoing

concern for WIFVV; I will discuss some of the ramifications of this problem later on in this

chapter.

Women's Experiences of WIFVV

My assumption in taking up WIFVV as a case study was that social networks are an

important resource for women. However, I believed that women probably joined the

organization to help overcome career challenges and that social networks arose as a

secondary benefit. In actuality, however, just one woman that I talked to explicitly named

career limitations as a reason for joining, saying, "I …honestly found I was not being given

equal opportunities that some of my male counterparts were being given -- it was to level the

playing field". Despite this partial motivation, this participant's primary reason was that she

was a newcomer to the industry and wanted to meet other people in that field, as she came to

the realization that her existing friends did not share similar experiences: "I really wanted to

make friends with people who had something in common with me professionally". Almost

all of the women provided similar reasons as their primary motivation for joining WIFVV.

For example, one participant told me, "I moved to Vancouver in '99 after eight years in Los

Angeles, and my time in LA was very isolating. I didn't really have a feeling of community

there. And when I came to Vancouver it was one of my major goals, to really meet people

who were like-minded."

Another participant, whose response is remarkably similar, suggests that getting to know

other people may be the primary motivation for many of WIFVV's members:

> When I came to Vancouver I really didn't know anybody in the Vancouver
> industry. And literally within three days of my arrival I went to a Breakfast
> Club meeting at WIFVV. I was all of a sudden confronted with fifty other
> people who were just like, 'I just want to know people.' So we all got to

know each other.

This last statement also supports the idea that in addition to easing the sense of isolation that women feel in moving to a new city or new occupation, networks can be indispensable for easing a similar sense of isolation that can occur when women enter a male-dominated profession (Lips 1987: 412). This idea is supported by the comment of another participant, who believes networking "also gives you a sense of self-worth. You know, 'I'm not in this alone.' That really helps bolster confidence." All of these statements also point to the initial stages of establishing social capital, as outlined by Bourdieu: by joining WIFVV and participating in networking events, women establish relationships that can then lead to collective benefits, although this may not be their primary motivation.

It is significant that the two women I interviewed that do not currently belong to WIFVV are not members mainly because they believe that they can find better networking opportunities elsewhere. These two women are co-owners of a production company that focuses on documentary videos for television. As partners in a fledgling company, these women can at this time only afford membership in one organization, and believe they would find a more useful network in the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC). In this case, social capital is still important, but it is being built on a relationship based on a common type of production rather than on gender.

Other reasons for WIFVV membership that were brought up by my participants include rewards based on the collective resources of the group. For instance, one woman cited the emailed newsletter that is sent out to members as being her primary reason for belonging to

the organization. These emails contain valuable information including where jobs might be available, which people are rising up in the industry, and who is making what types of productions. As noted by Lips above, access to information is one of the reasons that networks can be important to women, and professional knowledge is an important resource for changing women's role in the workplace. In addition, while networks may be initially formed for support and a sense of community, they often lead to more tangible rewards such as job opportunities.

With regard to the importance of networking to building a career in film, one participant explained, "If you don't get out there and network, ...you might as well close down. The whole industry is run on who you know." Another woman commented, "a lot of this business is schmoozing. ...I know a lot of people that spend all their time socializing." Informal social networks can be important assets in the film industry since much of the business is based on relationships and personal contacts. Social gatherings and informal settings where the threat of competition is minimized may be paramount to establishing trust relationships which can then lead to work. Another participant explained the reason for this more fully, saying:

> It's inevitable, just because you have such tight timelines, and it's not a
> conventional employment field where you can actually grow into a
> position...They like to know who they can trust and rely on to work with.
> So because of that, if you know people and if you have those networks, and
> you're trustworthy, then you will get employment more frequently.

The fact that business networks grow out of social networks therefore suggests that women who have the strong support found in community or group membership will have a better chance of finding employment. The size and strength of their social networks will then determine the amount of social capital they have access to (Bourdieu 1986: 249).

A Cutting Room of Her Own: Is WIFVV Necessary?

Networks are clearly important to women in the film industry for several reasons; they provide emotional support, they multiply the resources available to an individual, and they can lead to employment opportunities. The question may be raised, however, as to whether networks among women in particular are necessary, or whether networks among film professionals in general would be sufficient. The fact that WIFVV exists implies that many women in Vancouver believe that an association devoted to women in particular is important. To find out why this may be so, I asked participants whether women need their own space within the film industry, and why they believe that networks between women might be meaningful.

The most basic reason that my participants cited for needing a separate place within the film industry is simply that there are still so few women working in the key positions. The problem of women finding their place in a male-dominated industry was often articulated by these women. As one participant commented, "I think networks among women are excellent as a starting point, because you want to feel safe, and that you're going to be given your due. And sometimes a woman in a group of men, who might have similar or less experience, the woman will not necessarily be heard as clearly by the group as individual men." Another woman had a similar observation, saying "You know, walking into a room full of women...it is more comfortable. You can speak up more readily, without being afraid of being mocked. Although I don't know why I say that, you know, men don't normally mock me."

Other participants' comments suggest that this fear is rooted in the different early

socialization of boys and girls in school, the effects of which carry on and are reproduced in

later stages. One respondent stated,

> I noticed in film school that many of my female colleagues were intimidated
> to step forward in an environment where men were also competitive with
> them. They didn't really vie for attention to get questions answered or get
> access to equipment … I felt a lot of women were really reticent to get in
> there and have their questions answered in that environment.

Of the other two women who attended film school that I interviewed, one brought

up a similar concern. This participant relayed that in the chaotic atmosphere of film

school, getting access to equipment was very difficult. As a result, she fell into

organizational and production roles. "In retrospect, I should have been shooting on

those projects, because I had as much experience as anyone else. But I wasn't given

the support to do that."

Lips explains one reason that women feel less comfortable speaking up among men is that

they have lack confidence in their own abilities, having been conditioned under the

patriarchal system to do so (1987: 409). She also describes a socialization process, whereby

girls (and women) are expected and trained to be quiet and polite, while boys are expected to

be aggressive (413). In relation to the reticence to speak up in mixed situations, the WIFVV's

skill building workshops may offer women a less-intimidating environment for professional

development than one where men are also involved. The effort to provide women with better

access to media through women-centred training facilities has precedent in the NFB's Studio

D; in Vancouver, artist-run centres such as such as Women in Focus, Reel Feelings and the

Vancouver Women and Film Group all emerged during the 1970s to meet this need

(Anderson 1999: 45-6). While WIFVV's mandate is not to train women but to encourage/aid

those already in the industry, its professional development programs are in some aspects the heirs to these early efforts. One woman compared such programs to an all-women's snowboarding or driving school, where women can learn in a "safe environment"; "the women there feel empowered because they are together". Once the critical skills are gained, they can move with more ease into a professional setting where men are also present.

Another reason that women need a space within the film industry is to provide a venue for showcasing women's achievements in the field, and thereby encourage more women to join in. During the 1970s and '80s, women's film festivals filled this purpose, demonstrating for the first time that women as a gender group, rather than just one or two notable exceptions, were fully capable of producing this type of art. As B. Ruby Rich puts it, early women's festivals "weren't a 'ghetto' for women's film, to which individual women or their distributors could decide whether or not to submit their work, calculating market odds to determine if a booking would help or harm mainstream prospects. Instead, they were the only chance, like those signs for gas before crossing the desert -- in this case, emerging from a century-long desert" (29). Rich finds that these festivals were, in fact, "the public face of feminism. Here was proof positive that women were capable of something big, had made great films, and then -- due to sheer sexist injustice -- had been denied recognition, relegated instead to obscurity, early retirement, and the withdrawal of backing" (30). As previously noted, women's festivals and subsequent critical work, both in academic and popular circles, have led to a great increase in the number of films made by women and public awareness of them.

In Canada, the Women's Film Festival of 1973 was the first effort at providing a venue for

women to exhibit their work. In the current post-feminist era, however, women's film festivals have all but vanished. Currently, the festival in St. John's, Newfoundland is the only large-scale annual Canadian event still in operation. Unfortunately, its location does not make it the most accessible event, particularly for Vancouver area residents. Studio D, another important early resource, had a mandate for producing socially conscious documentary films by and about women, and supported many emerging women filmmakers during its twenty-two year run. In later years, however, a combination of budget cuts and a post-feminist social environment have limited the forums dedicated to women's films, and Studio D was eliminated in 1996.

In addition to the loss of such women-centered spaces, our American-dominated distribution system means that only a few Canadian films make it to theatres each year, and only for short runs in specialized markets. In consequence, while some women may have benefited from past equity-based funding initiatives by agencies such as Telefilm, the overall number of films released by women remains low. Venues where women's work is promoted are therefore critical for their wider success. WIFVV contributions in this area provide a crucial area of support and potentially increase the prestige of individual women by association. WIFVV does not put on any large-scale screening event, but it does host several events aimed at promoting and celebrating women's films, such as Summer Shorts and The Spotlight Awards Gala (WIFVV 3003/programs). WIFVV therefore works to partially fill the gap left by the disappearance of women-centered initiatives for producing and exhibiting film.

A further reason that having a separate space for women remains important is that women are not alone in their attempts to activate social capital. Several participants mentioned that an "Old Boys Club" has traditionally held power in the film industry, and has been a major force for keeping women out of power positions. As Bourdieu explains, people with inherited social capital, such as that which comes through a family name, "are able to increase all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections" (250). It can be argued that men in a patriarchal system have one type of inherited social capital, and therefore men in the film industry can more easily build connections between each other. However, by strengthening social bonds, women may be able to capitalize on gender in a similar way. One participant saw WIFVV as creating the necessary venue to build networks between women through social practices in much the same way that men have done. As she explained, "guys hang out together, and do things together ... and it gives them an opportunity to evaluate each other professionally in a non-professional environment." By participating in social events through WIFVV, women are able to do the same in a non-competitive environment, and then build on those experiences.

MEASURING UP: TAKING STOCK OF WIFVV PROGRAMS

WIFVV Program Strengths

Since there are a variety of related goals in WIFVV's mandate, I found it relevant to examine which programs may be most helpful for helping women meet career challenges as filmmakers. Given that each woman interviewed had her own individual needs, it is not surprising that the responses differed accordingly. For instance, some responses focused

directly on skill-building seminars in particular areas of interest, such as the Producer's Workshop or the Director's Workshop. Others mentioned career-boosting programs such as Flash Forward. I have found that despite these differences in opinion, overwhelmingly the participants based their answers on which programs they felt provided the best networking opportunities, especially the opportunity to meet with women more advanced in their careers in an informal setting. Programs including the Breakfast Club, Career Café and Martini Madness fall into this category, although the latter is a WIFVV sponsored film festival party and therefore is not a structured event. However, several members listed Martini Madness as being particularly important since it is well attended and attracts attention to the organization in association with Vancouver's most elevated film industry event (the VIFF). According to one member, the strength of these types of event is that "they have a reputation of being fun, and people go there with a good attitude." In addition, "everybody knows they're there to talk business so it's a fun place to not be surprised to exchange business cards."

The Exchange, WIFVV's mentorship program, was also frequently mentioned as an important initiative. The mentoring committee chooses six women from a list of applicants to participate each year; the committee works to arrange one-hour meetings with eight film industry professionals of each candidate's choice. Members therefore have the opportunity to meet with and receive advice from people within the industry whose work they admire, but whom they may never otherwise get to meet. The benefits of this program range from realistic advice, to inspiration, to a potential future relationship of some sort. As one participant declared, "It's really a little astounding to me, and surprising and fabulous, that people will actually sit down and talk for an hour!...I think the exchange participants will

then also have a little bit of a connection with them and not just the knowledge that they get

out of that one hour."

Different programs therefore meet different needs, and WIFVV can provide a number of

resources for women starting out in the industry. When I asked participants if WIFVV has

been effective in helping women meet career challenges, the answer was ultimately that this

depends on the needs of individual members, and what they are willing to put into the

experience. For example, while Flash Forward was extremely helpful for some participants,

others felt that such offerings are completely unnecessary because their own personal

motivation to advance is so high. However, the diverse range of program and events offered

means that members are likely to find at least one of them useful if they are willing to put the

effort in. As one participant said, "I really have to credit WIFVV because they do an

awesome job of getting people together in a whole variety of ways, and because of that I've

met people who can in turn help in making connections. But I think there's also a certain type

of person who will take part and take advantage of those networks."

Taking the Next Step: Active Participation and Board Membership

Several of the participants I interviewed made the most of their experience by running for

and acting on the Board of Directors. This experience tends to amplify the networking

opportunities that general membership can bring. For example, one participant noted that as a

Vice President she had been able to gain access to a broader sector of the industry than as just

a member. She stated that:

> Because I was on the Board, I think, I was at more of those industry
> functions; I had greater entrée into some of the kind of closed-door

situations for the upper levels of the industry in this city. And it was a wonderful way to go in, because I wasn't just pushing myself as a needy filmmaker, but I was representing an organization I was really proud of.

Another participant told me, "I was on the Board for three years so I probably was on the Board with up to thirty different women in the upper echelons of the independent film business in Vancouver. ...I have a really strong network now."

The chance to prove skills to industry professionals in a low-risk environment demonstrates the importance of the expanded networks that participation on the Board allows. Bourdieu proposes that in building social capital, the advantages of group membership can occur in both material and symbolic form; the latter type occurs through the prestige that group association can bring (1986:247). Both types of benefits are in evidence among the women that I spoke to who are or who have been actively involved with WIFVV. For example, women who work together on the Board come from all different sectors of the film industry and have the opportunity to build future working relationships in many areas. Work opportunities may come as an immediate result; in fact, one woman told me that all of her paying work in film has come directly out of connections made through serving on the Board. Women may also choose to recommend women they have worked with at WIFVV, thus indirectly increasing networks. In addition, the prestige of working with WIFVV may translate to other rewards. One participant relates, "if you can prove yourself within that organization, a lot of people see that; there's a high visibility, and those people will then give you greater weight in the future....And I think that has certainly helped me; I've had much more success with broadcasters and government funding agencies since I was on the Board of WIFVV."

Suggestions for Success: WIFVV Programs and Women's Needs

Another way of looking at the effectiveness and importance of WIFVV to women filmmakers in Vancouver is to examine its programs in light of the needs identified by the women working there. I asked the participants if they had any suggestions for women starting in out in the industry to increase their chances of success; the responses point to areas where WIFVV is already strong and also to areas that could be improved. However, some of the responses also highlight the fact that WIFVV is necessarily limited in its ability to change women's place in the film industry, and that greater structural changes are required. The suggestions made by my participants fell into two basic categories; the first is the building on and taking advantage of resources, while the second involves changing personal approaches and behavior.

The first category most clearly relates to the benefits offered by membership in WIFVV, and usually centers on the ability to build relationships. The relationships listed include personal work relationships, mentorship, and networks. In regards to personal relationships, the two-woman producing team felt that their partnership is one of the strongest factors in their success. As one of the women explained, finding a business partner with the same goals, outlook and dedication can mean easing the burden of a highly stressful job, and also allow differing skills to complement each other in combination. The partners told me that many people in the industry in fact seem jealous of their business relationship, and that many women have asked them how they found a partner. Another participant asserted that working with a permanent team of women with rotating positions was the best formula for success for women filmmakers. Whether members actively seek partnerships or not, WIFVV appears to

provide the space for women to meet and build relationships (of varying type and degree) in

a comfortable environment. These relationships can arise through social events and informal

group meetings such as Martini Madness or the Breakfast Club; through direct programs

such as the Producer's Workshop or the mentorship Exchange; or through volunteer and

Board work. In this area WIFVV is very strong, although women's success in building

relationships through the organization depends to a large degree on their own ability to invest

their time and energy here.

Another area that the participants brought up in relation to the building on and taking

advantage of resources is education; this does not necessarily mean an academic education

but rather a good knowledge of the industry, how it works, and what is happening there at the

current moment. One participant stated: "I think being a sponge is one of the best things you

can be...look at every piece of information lying around as something you can use one day."

Another woman added, "Don't be afraid to ask questions, and to ask people to have some of

their time and talk to you....I think there's a lot of formal education that can give you a

background, but really the practical experience is what will get you ahead." WIFVV can be

particularly helpful for building that education in several ways, including access to a wide

variety of women in the film industry. The emailed newsletter was also cited as being

especially useful by two participants; by paying attention to these announcements women can

both learn about what is happening in the industry on a regular basis, and find specific

information as to contacts and work opportunities.

In the second category of suggestions, participants placed a strong emphasis on personal

attributes and behavior. I found that the attributes that women referred to have resonance with the artist myth; although they do not see the artist as being only male, there does seem to be a tendency to see the real artist as having an innate talent waiting to be released. Identifying with the artist myth, as Kauffman has found (1995), is one way that women in the arts can find the necessary strength to follow a difficult career path. In my research, some of the responses suggest that women in film may also use this strategy. One woman felt that government initiates at funding filmmakers were not successful because they "have no idea of the personality they are looking for, what the skills are that their people need to succeed. An interesting film is not enough. Everyone has an interesting film." Another participant stated that people that are "supposed to be" in the film industry instinctively know it, and should be prepared to trust that knowledge: "If you really belong in the film industry you know it on the inside, and so I think, don't argue with that voice, but be ready to apply yourself, and be ready to take the lumps." A third response was that women "need to really think about why they want a film career. And more than just the consequences of your path, but what you want to do there…Finding that originality and nurturing that voice is crucial."

Interestingly, the suggestions in the second category also both draw on and seek to challenge social constructions of gender and work. In addition to asking women to know why they are pursuing film careers and what their goals are there, participants mainly felt that women should be more assertive and to persevere in their goals. Asking women to be more assertive and to persevere essentially means to disrupt the socialized qualities associated with gender, as women take on an active role instead of the passive one traditionally assigned to them. As suggested by earlier responses, there is a very practical reason for doing so in the film

industry, where quiet voices are unlikely to be heard. One of the women framed this problem especially clearly, saying, "I think women often find themselves in that situation where they could really do better if they would only stand up and fight. If you want to direct, direct. Stop standing in the shadows, you know? Like, why are you being the women behind the man; what's in it for you?"

However, as previously discussed, some women do voice their career goals and still do not find the same opportunities for advancement as their male colleagues. This situation can cause women to become disheartened with the film industry and to distrust their own abilities. As one participant expressed it, "As a filmmaker, I feel that my self-confidence has been busted. I've been very affected over the long haul. Comments by several of the participants suggest that membership in WIFVV can be a crucial step in building self-confidence, which may therefore lead to more assertive behaviour by women who feel entitled to recognition for their skills. Participation in programs such as Flash Forward, for example, has been cited as being particularly useful for those women who need to "kick-start" their careers. However, there is still the problem of how far women can actually get in film careers, despite their willingness to ask for what they want. As Lips points out, asking women to change their behaviour will not result in effective change unless they have resources to back them up, such as support from a network of coworkers, and from the employing organization. Accordingly, a strategy of increasing women's power within male-dominated fields "should not focus mainly on the behaviour of individual women. Rather, a more useful focus is on finding ways to increase women's access to resources, and to change the culture's image of femininity so that it is no longer synonymous with weakness or

incompetence" (1987: 411).

Lips claims that women do not often fill authority positions in male dominated fields because they do not have access to the resources that give power. These include the ability to give rewards or punishments, and also include "legitimacy, expertise, personal attractiveness or likableness, and the sheer amount of information one can muster to support one's arguments" (408). Since Lips was writing during the 1980s, it can be argued that the cultural image of femininity has now changed to some degree. WIFVV is an important venue for activating this change in regards to filmmaking, since women are celebrated and promoted here. However, the structural reality of government funding to the arts under the neo-liberal state has the most to answer for; it should be the responsibility of government to ensure that women have access to organizations such as WIFVV, and that women achieve equal representation within the arts. WIFVV is therefore just one organization whose programs seek to rectify some of the limitations this system brings. However, access to the resources available there must still be addressed.

IS WIFVV ACCESSIBLE?

According to all of the women I interviewed, WIFVV is a significant resource for women in Vancouver's film and video industry, and it is important to members that it survives as a self-sustaining organization. Given the instability of the film industry, however, I was curious as to whether the annual membership fee and other program costs may deter some women from

joining[11]. It seems possible that those women who actually need WIFVV the most would be excluded from its benefits, especially when the limitations imposed by gender are compounded by those associated with class and race.

The issue of membership fees brought mixed results from my participants, since these fees are essential for keeping the organization going. One former Board member explained that keeping the organization solvent was, in fact, the most important consideration in raising fees a couple of years ago. Accordingly, while most women are of two minds about the costs, there is a tendency (especially among Board members) to worry about this problem but to decide that, in the end, women will find a way to pay the fee if they really want to. One reason for this attitude is because the film industry itself is so unstable; the feeling is that if a woman can't even find the money to join WIFVV, she'll never find the money to fund a project. Part of this attitude comes from WIFVV sponsors such as Telefilm, who according to one participant, "don't like people getting things for free". Another reason that participants thought women would find the money to join is that the overall value of membership and the programs offered is very high in comparison with other organizations (such as professional development seminars offered through film schools). However, limited funding from sponsors in both public and private spheres ensures that membership fees and program costs will continue to rise, and may restrict entry to those with better financial means.

Current WIFVV members who are either part of the Board or who have acted on it in the past feel that there are ways that women can recoup the money invested in WIFVV membership. One woman stated: "I would say that if I was going to squeeze up the money, if I was just

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[11] Full membership for the Vancouver area is $107.00 per year. "Geographically distant" members pay $43.00.

starting out and it was a tough amount of money to come up with, I would try to do it but I would also try to get every cent out of it. Because you can put that money in, …and advance your career like crazy, if you show up and put the energy in." Another participant pointed out that some of the programs cost very little but afford good networking opportunities; for instance, the Breakfast Club is free, while the Career Café costs just ten dollars. Furthermore, one woman asserted that just by taking advantage of the emailed information (free with membership), a woman could find eventual employment: "You pay one hundred and fifty dollars, you volunteer on one gig, you get to know people, and all of a sudden there's probably a paying job within six months or so. So really, it's a pretty small investment."

Despite these reassurances, there is evidence within my sample that membership fees are a deterrent for some women. At the time of my interviews, one participant had never joined WIFVV and one had belonged for just one year in the past, although both women support the organization and have participated in some of the events. Their decisions are a direct result of the membership fee. Another participant wanted to join WIFVV for years before she could afford to, and in fact her business partner's mother eventually paid for her to join because she believed it was essential. Ironically, this participant's career took off soon after joining, and she has since been too busy to enjoy the networking opportunities she originally wanted to pursue.

While the women above either chose to spend money elsewhere or did eventually find it another way, the demands of the film industry may be such that only women with a certain amount of privilege will be entering this field. As one participant observes, "filmmaking

itself is still largely white, middle class to upper-middle class people." The problem, she

points out, is "how people can sustain paying for their college or their university education,

and also bear the cross of making their first short film. Or even gaining access to going to

university or college or whatever, how many people can afford that?" The demographic of

the film industry reproduces itself within WIFVV itself, according to past president Tracey

Friesen (Matysiak 2001: 100). Matysiak claims that WIFVV has in fact "discussed this

problem and expressed concern that it may not be addressing all women in the film and

television industry" (2001: 100-1). However, WIFVV should perhaps take greater initiative

in dealing with this problem. Indeed, a prime critique of second-wave feminism is that issues

of race, class, and sexuality were often ignored and all women were taken to have a basic

experience based on common gender (Lourde 1993, Kaplan 2003). This critique has also

been extended to institutions and organizations aimed at increasing women's representation,

including Studio D (Anderson 1999: 44, Burgess 2003: 428).

Cultural Capital

Although my sample size is not large, and certainly should not be taken to represent all

WIFVV members, some similarities that occurred across the sample should be not be

ignored; these similarities occur despite the differences in age, experience, success, and job

description. For one thing, as the participant quoted above pointed out, filmmaking remains

largely in the hands of the dominant class and race. Indeed, none of the women I interviewed

appeared to belong to an ethnic minority[12]. However, Canada's commitment to

multiculturalism as a mode of national identity may mean that some opportunities are

actually opened up to women of colour. For example, one participant pointed out that

Chinese-Canadian filmmaker Mina Shum has acknowledged advantages she has gained

through government initiatives to support marginalized voices in film (also quoted in Spaner

2003: 136). On the other hand, such initiatives do not necessarily spell out greater inclusion,

as Anderson argues in her discussion of Studio D. Anderson finds that Canada's official drive

towards a national identity based on unity in difference actually works to obscure the realities

of difference; in consequence, government initiatives to open up representation may be read

as "token" efforts at best (2000: 54). Despite the very real difficulties in increasing inclusion

without being tokenistic, WIFVV may therefore want to consider expanding its mandate to

renew efforts to include women of colour.

While the lack of racial representation among women filmmakers is an important issue, I

suspect the class issue may be an even more insidious and further reaching problem. As

Bourdieu argues, cultural capital is accrued through inherited cultural assets, which are

largely class-based (1986: 244). It is also centered in a family's value of education, and in

their ability and willingness to provide education to their children. Two people with the same

degree of intelligence but different histories and social situations will therefore have varying

degrees of cultural capital. In my research, the issue of cultural capital becomes evident when

looking at the education level of the participants. It is most striking to realize that all of my

participants have received at least one Bachelor's degree, and four out of the ten have

Master's degrees. As Bourdieu reminds us, cultural capital becomes "material, active capital

only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a

stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production" (247). The conclusion

suggested by the participants' uniformly high education levels is that in the battle to enter this

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[12] This is a personal opinion, based on observation only, and should therefore be treated with flexibility.

male-dominated field, only those women with a considerable degree of capital will be successful in finding positions.

The high levels of education found in all my respondents suggests that cultural capital may be almost as important as social capital for building a career in film; the skills and resources necessary for successfully pursuing one or two university degrees implies good levels of intelligence, family support, and financial security. It may be pointed out that many people take a practical and not an academic route into film, gaining entry through volunteer positions and working their way up. In fact, all but three of the women I interviewed took this route. However, their high levels of education in other fields may have given them an added edge that other women are lacking. In addition, other personal resources such as being attractive and likable (Lips 1993: 110), can also be attributed in some part to cultural capital, since the measurement of these qualities may change according to different social trends. Knowing how to be likable and attractive may in that case also be class-based.

The issues of cultural capital and class bias in the film industry are probably beyond the scope of WIFVV to address, unless it takes on a more active role as advocate. In Vancouver, the current provincial government's attack on social spending will most likely only serve to increase the divide, as access to education becomes more and more difficult to achieve for the less privileged. Given that WIFVV relies largely on membership fees to survive, it is unlikely that it will be able to offer staggered membership fees or regular scholarships. The issue of class and access to WIFVV remains a difficult problem that the Board may have to examine more deeply in the future, if the organization is to continue to recruit new members.

SUMMARY

Bourdieu's theory of social capital provides significant insight into the importance of networks for increasing individual power through group membership. With regard to women filmmakers, social capital theory suggests that women can build on and multiply their personal resources by combining them with those of other women working in film, in order to meet the occupational challenges raised in entering a male-dominated field. The organization WIFVV provides women filmmakers with an important space in which to build community and networks, develop and improve professional skills, and make career advancements. However, access to the organization may be difficult for those women who need these resources the most, especially those who also encounter race and class discrimination.

VI.   CONCLUSION

Writing in 1973, Kay Armatage and Linda Beath proclaimed that "Canadian women's involvement in film production has been inevitably linked to the history and growth of the film industry in Canada. Feature film production was virtually non-existent until the early 1960s, and women's participation in the industry was rare" (Fetherling 1988: 172). In this examination of the Vancouver film industry, a similarly applicable statement can be made by changing "Canada" to Vancouver" and the "1960s" to the "1990s". As the literature reviewed in the course of this thesis has shown, women filmmakers are inevitably grounded in particular social, economic and historic contexts. In Vancouver the necessary context for filmmaking has included the development of foreign-based location filming; university and trade school programs; provincial policy that supports funding for filmmakers and the establishment of BC Film. As David Spaner points out, women filmmakers from Nell Shipman to Sandy Wilson to Lynne Stopkewich have been the driving force behind some of Vancouver's most important moments in film production; where women go from here also depends on their particular social-historical context, including the resources available to them and their ability to take up these resources to transform their social reality,

CONTRADICTIONS: WOMEN AND FEMINISM

In the final analysis of my research data, a number of contradictions have that warrant further examination. These contradictions are in fact emblematic of both women filmmakers' positions in the film industry, and of the Vancouver industry as a whole. Both the film

industry and the women who work in it are struggling with a constantly shifting terrain, where the next step is never guaranteed but must be carefully negotiated.

One of the most troubling contradictions to arise in my data is the tendency for women to downplay the occurrence of sexism in the film industry. This is especially surprising since they are (for the most part) members of a women's professional organization. As noted in Chapter IV, many of the respondents did not agree that they had actually faced gender discrimination. Some women were hesitant to relate their difficulties in entering the field to gender, since it is challenging for "everyone". In their interviews, however, participants became increasingly aware of structural limitations and were able to articulate how men use unequal access to power to remain in control. The unwillingness of women to criticize the industry for its unfair gender practices suggests that individual women may be afraid to "rock the boat" and limit their chances for advancement by being too demanding. This may also relate to the internalization of gender roles, with women tending to keep quiet as their (traditional) position requires. However, as Dranoff (1991: 64) argues, individual women must see themselves as part of their gender group and situate both success and failure within the social structure. This means both recognizing the real limitations that they face and working with other women to change power relationships.

The ability to change the media environment to include women may in fact hinge upon the renewal of a feminist agenda among women filmmakers. While in many cases the mechanics of this workspace can be theorized in terms of labour relations and equitable work practices, Annette Cohen (1991) argues that there is also a question of "voice", which allows the

articulation of difference. Dranoff extends this idea to demonstrate that a key way of changing societal perceptions and hence power relations is to open access to diverse voices: "Reports on the status of women standardly recommend that the media be required to depict women less stereotypically, in order to help women break out of their preconceived notions. However, it is those women who understand the destructive and limiting character of the stereotypes who must undertake the task" (1991:61). This statement implies that it is women with a feminist agenda in particular who must gain access to power positions in the media. Unfortunately, these women may also be those who are most alienated by the film industry's gender hierarchy and therefore unwilling to work for change in that venue. Given the ambivalence that many of the respondents demonstrated in regard to feminist action, the question arises as to whether increasing the number of women filmmakers in the field will actually produce a body of work that is more socially conscious than that produced by men. However, I believe that the more access women in general have to communications media such as film, the greater the chance that a feminist voice will emerge.

A further contradiction which emerges is that between art and industry, or between film and movies. As previously noted, the women I spoke to are mainly involved in independent Canadian productions. Many identify with the artist ideal and have the ultimate goal of realizing their own creative projects. However, in many cases filmmakers gain experience and their living by working in large-scale industrial productions. It is perhaps not clear, then, whether women are joining WIFVV to ease entry into the film industry or whether they are hoping to build the connections to create their own films. It is my opinion that there is no easy separation of the two goals, since the reality of Vancouver's industry is that independent

work cannot take place without indirect industry support (Spaner 2003, Gasher 2002). Indeed, there are clearly pragmatic reasons that women would seek employment in the film industry before attempting their own contributions to art. However, there are also good reasons for women to wish to remove themselves from movie-type production where a clear hierarchical structure exists, to an atmosphere where new types of filmmaking practices can be explored -- such as the collective format with rotating job positions as suggested by one participant.

WOMEN IN FILM: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The implicit disavowal of feminism as a platform from which to achieve change by some WIFVV members also brings to light some of the limitations of social capital. If social capital is being sought out only to benefit the individual, then women as a group will not be able to challenge men's domination of the media landscape and effect lasting change. As Dranoff states, "Sisterhood is essential if change is to be made. Women at every level of every working environment must make a special effort to work as a team and advance the cause of other women...Women will not succeed as individuals unless we succeed as a group (1991: 64). Some changes are therefore warranted at WIFVV to ensure that women's participation in film production increases. There is also a need for both the organization and the film industry to be more inclusive of women from outside the dominant race-class privilege. However, if a focus on effecting overall change within the industry is to be initiated, WIFVV will have to move into a lobbying role, which it has so far avoided. A very good reason for its aversion is no doubt because of the organization's reliance on industry

sponsors for a good share of its funding. This problem points, in turn, to the need for government policy which supports fair gender representation in the film industry. Such policy would then free women filmmakers from industry objectives.

Recommendation 1: Lobby Government

In order to strengthen WIFVV as a lobbying force, the organization first needs to acquire more clout, based on the strength of its members. One participant noted that as an incoming Board member, one of her concerns was how to attract "senior members" of the film industry, meaning those women who do not need the resources that WIFVV has to offer, but whose presence could add prestige. As Bourdieu explains, agents who are "richly endowed with capital" in all its forms "are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections" (1986: 250). In addition, "their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive" (251). WIFVV should therefore be actively recruiting well-known women to act as spokespeople, who could then use their status to push for concessions from government.

An immediate goal would be to gain ongoing funding for the organization that is not tied to specific programs, which would then allow WIFVV to increase its accessibility through staggered fees and scholarships. WIFVV could also press for institutional change at the government agencies that help fund filmmaking, such as BC Film and Telefilm, to ensure that rewards are distributed equitably. Increased funding for film in general, and for gender-based initiatives in particular is also called for, meaning a reversal of the current trend of strictly reducing or eliminating both (such as the closure of Studio D in 1996).Levitin, Plessis and Raoul (2003) point out that in consequence of this funding failure, "[w]hile there are far

more women making films today than ever before, the numbers can be deceiving. The battlefields of the film industry are still strewn with the stifled ambitions of women directors who manage to produce only one film" (10).

Another area where more government support is required is in distribution and exhibition. Many theorists correctly point to the greater accessibility of filmmaking equipment brought about by digital technology as having the potential for more marginalized voices to speak out. Filmmakers without distribution and broadcast deals in place, which are often dependent on the support implied by government funding, are likely to be left with nothing more than a well-crafted home movie. As for exhibition, the Canadian government has danced around the topic of screen quotas for essentially the entire century of film production, but American made films still take up 95-97% of our screen time. A more assertive attempt to bring Canadian films to the screen is necessary for both women and men filmmakers to keep the independent film industry active.

Recommendation 2: Lobby Industry

As mentioned above, the decision to lobby industry could have detrimental effects on WIFVV, as private concerns may not feel comfortable with an overly political organization, and may therefore withdraw funding. In fact, private industry will probably not make any changes in terms of equitable hiring and wages that it is not forced to by law. Again, this is one issue that a stronger, more vocal WIFVV could take up with government. However, there are areas that could be worked on directly with industry representatives, such as greater access to benefits and job security. Better promotion policies based on equity at the Directors

Guild, for example, would help women advance in their careers. The CFTPA could likewise be lobbied to create more stable work environments for its members; currently there is no producers' union, so women moving into production roles have no job security. Another idea that would help women with families is the implementation of on-set daycare as suggested by one of my participants.

Recommendation 3: Create Strategic Alliances

A final recommendation for WIFVV is that they create strategic alliances with other organizations to both increase their lobbying potential and to address some specific needs of women filmmakers in Vancouver. Such needs include opening up the types of work available in the film industry to include creative roles. At the time of our interview, then-president Roslyn Muir told me that one of her personal goals for the organization was to increase the numbers of women directors. One way to do this is, as Muir suggested, is for WIFVV to work more closely with the Banff Centre's Women in the Director's Chair program, where each year eight upcoming women take part in an intensive 17-day workshop led by established women directors. A strong alliance with this program would also highlight the solidarity of women filmmakers across Canada. WIFVV could also develop relationships that would address the privileged access to film production amongst women, such as by cooperating with organizations like Vancouver's Indigenous Media Arts Group in both special projects and ongoing programs.

SUMMARY

Women enjoy many freedoms today that would not have been possible without the women's movements of the past century. When we realize that women still have hardly any impact on the North American media environment, however, we realize that the fight is not yet over. According to the women filmmakers I spoke to, networks are an essential component of the film industry, where many business deals are born of casual meetings at bars, parties and industry events. Membership in a recognized and respected organization like WIFVV gives women the chance to increase the size and the quality of their networks, and may also increase their individual resources. The activation of social capital is therefore an important strategy for not just increasing the number of women filmmakers in Vancouver and Canada, but for ensuring that their share in the media landscape continues to rise. However, while social capital is an important resource which can increase women's potential for success in film careers in many ways, it cannot be relied on as a fix-all; neither can it be expected to form on its own without a hospitable environment. All social policies that negatively affect women's ability to pursue careers in the arts must be reconsidered or women will continue to have to choose between careers and families, or to choose stifling stability over creative work. Finally, organizations like WIFVV need not only the continued, but further reaching support of government funding bodies.

The filmmakers I met inspired and amazed me by their dedication, perseverance, and positive outlook, as they struggled to realize their personal visions. Many readers of this thesis will find the current situation depressing at best, but still these women continue on. It is my hope and belief that with their help, we will see even more women joining them in the near future.

APPENDIX I: **Outline of Film Production Roles**[13]

Director:
Oversees and directs the creative process by which a story or idea, as formulated in a script, is transformed into an audio-visual work. The director is responsible for bringing together all the creative elements necessary to realize this conception, including actors' performances, photography, set design, and music, and "participates in moulding and integrating them into one cohesive dramatic and aesthetic whole" (DGC). The director is active from pre-production through post-production, and will participate in casting, script changes, photographic style and editing decisions.

First Assistant Director (1st AD):
Is the director's primary administrative assistant and "is responsible for maintaining optimum coordination among crew categories and performers in order to maintain the pace required by the shooting schedule as set by the [director]" (DGC). Responsibilities mainly center on organizing pre-production and filming so that the director's job will go smoothly. Duties may include preparation of shooting schedule; daily scheduling of actors and crew, including rehearsals and production meetings; location management; crowd control; and management of subordinate assistants. The 1st AD may also direct the placement of background action in the film.

Second Assistant Director (2nd AD):
Assists the 1AD in performing his or her duties as assigned by him or her. Duties include management and distribution of documents and paperwork including cast schedules, scripts and script changes, daily production report and call sheets; management of transportation for crew, staff and equipment; organization of catering, hotels and other needs; and acts as liaison between the 1st AD and the production office.

Third Assistant Director (3rd AD):
"Acts as an assistant responsible to the 1AD with special emphasis on floor and set duties." (DGC)

Producer:
Responsible for overseeing all components of a film production, beginning in the earliest stages with buying or commissioning a screenplay and then finding investors to finance the production. The producer hires the cast and crew, including the director; secures distribution deals; oversees the production process; works with publicists on promotion; and is responsible for delivering any investment returns.

Production Manager:
Acts as administrator for the producer, and is responsible for organizing any necessary financial and legal details. This includes the preparation and management of the film's budget, including changes, and the preparation of production and expense reports throughout.

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[13] Terms are compiled from definitions given in Raffe (1996), Dent-Cox (1996) and the Directors Guild of Canada website. See Bibliography for full reference.

He or she also oversees the negotiation of union contracts; equipment rental and stock purchasing; and insurance coverage.

Production Coordinator:
Acts as assistant to the Production Manager and is responsible for the coordination of all necessary elements of the Production office. Duties include setting up the office including equipment and supplies; preparation and distribution of cast schedules and call sheets; travel requirements including visas, medical insurance, etc. for all cast and crew; ordering and delivering equipment, film stock, etc.

APPENDIX II: Participant Profiles

Age	Education	Years In Film	Capacity	Years WIFVV	Other orgs	Union	Children
26-35	BA Economics	3	Producer	3	Media Net	No	Yes (1)
36-45	BA Cr. Writing	4	Writer/Producer	8	Praxis, Cineworks	No	Pregnant
26-35	BFA Theatre	8	Writer/Producer	0	DOC	No	No
26-35	MA Journalism	7	Writer/Producer	1	DOC	No	No
36-45	BFA, MFA Film	10	Camera, Director	9	Cineworks	IATSE 669	No
36-45	BFA Theatre	8	Actor, Writer Story Editor	8	No	No	Yes (2)
36-45	MA PoliSci	5	Producer/Publicist	3	Cineworks, DOC	Public Service CFTA (NFB)	No
36-45	BFA Theatre	20	Actor, Script con, Writer, Director	4 1/2	Praxis, Women Director's Chair	ACTRA, SAG Equity eligible Writers Guild	No
36-45	MA Film	15	Writer, Director, Set Designer, Producer	10	No	DGC IATSE 891 Writers Guild	No
36-45	BA Poli-Sci, BFA Film	16	1st AD, Writer, Director, Producer	14	Cineworks Video In Praxis Out on Screen	DGC	Yes (1)

APPENDIX III: Survey Questions

Name:_____

Age Group: 18-25;   26-35;   36-45;   46-55;   56-65;   65+

Attended Film School?   Yes   No   Location:_____

Years in Film Industry:

Professional Capacity: Writer   Director   Editor   Producer

                             Sound   Lighting   Camera   Other:_____

Years in Women in Film?

Member of other organizations?   Cineworks   Video In   Other:

Union member?   Director's Guild   Writer's Guild   IATSE

                     Other:_____

Children?   Yes   No

APPENDIX IV: Interview Questions

Describe your journey in becoming a filmmaker.

Do you feel that as a woman you have faced special challenges entering this field? If so, which in particular?

Why did you first join Women in Film?

Has membership in WIFVV helped you overcome any occupational challenges, and if so, how?

Do you feel networks among women specifically are particularly helpful or necessary in this industry?

Do women need a separate space/organization within the film industry?

Which WIFVV programs do you feel are most effective?

Could membership fees/program costs deter women from participating?

In your opinion, has your career choice affected your plans for family/relationships? How have you negotiated between career/family needs?

What is your opinion on the importance of mentorship?

Do you have any suggestions that could help women succeed in this profession?

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