Flowers in the trenches: the experiences of women in the landscaping profession

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FLOWERS IN THE TRENCHES:
THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN THE LANDSCAPING PROFESSION

by

Paul E. Calarco, Jr.

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Abstract

This research project aims to provide an in-depth analysis of women in the landscaping field. It is important to expand on the literature on nontraditional blue-collar occupations, as more women are moving into these jobs in this 21st century. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2001), the landscape and horticultural services industry is ranked 11th in the top twenty fastest growing service industries, almost two times the average for job growth. This occupation represents a significant, viable and fruitful arena for sociological investigation, as well a fantastic occupational option for women.

Additionally, this research has two ultimate interconnected objectives. The purpose of the qualitative design is to generate new theoretical constructs in the areas of gender identity and work. In the grounded theory tradition, since there is no current data available for this occupation, the empirical data collected might serve as the basis for concept and theory construction (Glaser and Strauss 1965, 1967, 1999). Therefore, building upon the current literature on women and work, this research will provide the potential foundation for a more general study of women within the nontraditional blue-collar occupations.

In addition, the present literature on women in nontraditional occupations has concentrated on numerous occupations to the exclusion of the landscaping profession. My interest in landscaping is two-fold. First, it is intended to examine landscaping and extend the literature on women and nontraditional work. As stated previously, this

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1 There is a projected 43 percent wage and salary growth from 2000-2010 (BLS 2001).
2 Perhaps a new perspective.
occupation represents an additional occupation and ways in which to view the gendered nature of blue-collar work. Furthermore, relating to my feminist principles, I intend this work to provide a forum and a voice to these women whose experiences and daily work lives are complicated by their sex/gender. The dissertation has the potential for impacting broader society, “As this experience is designated and transmitted linguistically, it becomes accessible and, perhaps, strongly relevant to individuals who have never gone through it” (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 68).

The following chapters will provide an examination of the literature on women and work and a detailed description of the research agenda for this dissertation. Chapter 1 introduces and defines the landscaping profession. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on women and work; exploring the intersection of gender and work, highlighting the significance and influence of gender on women’s work lives. Chapter 3 digs deeper into the literature focusing on blue-collar women and additional work related issues e.g., accommodation, treatment, sexual harassment, and job satisfaction. Chapter 4 articulates the methodologies for both data collection and analysis. In addition, this chapter explores the ethical issues that arise when engaging in sociological research and knowledge production. Next, Chapter 5 surveys the day-to-day experiences on the job for the female landscaper. In addition, it introduces the background of the respondents, which helps us to understand how they came to choose landscaping or how landscaping chose them. Chapter 6 focuses on the micro-sociological level digging into sexuality and identity issues respectively, which get compounded by being women in nontraditional blue-collar work. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the contributions of the research and speculates on the future for non-traditionally employed women and gender inequality.
Acknowledgements

This study is dedicated to all of the people who have argued, debated, yelled, toiled, fought, suffered and died for the cause of equality and freedom for all living beings. To the women of my study, I hope that this research provides the intended foundation to illuminate your lives and struggles that you have faced in our male-centered and dominated society and world. We are over a decade into the twenty-first century and the devaluation of the female and femininity endures. And, I present my sincere appreciation for the trust and permission for me to access the many, very private aspects of the lives of the participants in this study.

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Finally, we need to continue to acknowledge that gender *does* exist, continue to address its significance until gender becomes as unimportant as eye color. We are moving forward, as we did have a female presidential and vice-presidential candidate in the fifty-sixth presidential election in the United States; however both candidates were openly critiqued and scrutinized on the basis of their sex/gender, which had absolutely nothing to do with their abilities to complete the job. Connell (1987) sustained that politics and “the practical transformation of the body in the social structure of gender is not only accomplished at the level of symbolism,” but through “social struggle” and the continued changing of definitions (87). I do not think within my lifetime will we see complete equity and unbiased treatment as this would require a structural power shift. The hope is however that this research will be another small axe to assist the chopping away of sexism and all other gender-based: prejudice, discrimination and inequality.

“The fight against sexist oppression on the job cannot be won without allies”. (International Socialist Review 1974)

I hope and pray the world will move in a general sense towards peace and harmony and that my self-sacrifice as a teacher has a butterfly effect in making a contribution to global change. How can we have peace without justice? In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice”. Put simply, No Justice, No Peace!
“He who is only an athlete is too crude, too vulgar, too much a savage. He who is a scholar only is too soft. The ideal citizen is the scholar athlete, the (wo)man of thought and the (wo)man of action.” –Plato
Table of Contents

I  The Plot  1

  Introduction  1
  What is Landscaping?  9

II  Scratch the Earth: Literature Review, Part 1  12

  Gender Ideology and Work  12
  The Shiny Token  15
  Gender Identity and Sexuality  19
  Identity Issues: The Mythical Reality  20
  Man/Woman: A Disputed Dualism  23
  Gender Identity and the Nontraditional Work Setting  25

III  Plant the Seed: Literature Review, Part 2  29

  Blue-Collar Woman: Antediluvian Anomaly as is the Perception  30
  Transition, Initiation, Accommodation and Alteration  31
  Sexual Harassment: Dominance and Sexuality, Sexuality and Dominance  36
  Gender and the Shopfloor  40
  The Job Satisfaction Conundrum  43

IV  From Seed to Blossom: Methodology  47

  Research Design  47
  Sampling Procedure  48
  Interviews  49
  Data Analysis  52
  Ethical Issues  55
  Feminist Methodological Issues  57
  The Male Feminist Dilemma  60
  The Impact of Knowledge  63
  Unrealistic Expectations  64

V  Knee Deep in the Dirt: Findings, Part 1  66

  How Did They Get Here?  66
  The Gendered Terrain  71
  The Capable Token: I CAN do that!  74
  Girls Rule the Earth  79
  Independence, Freedom and the Land of Opportunity  82
VI  The Forest from the Trees: Findings, Part 2 89

   Sexual Harassment: Overcoming the Hostility 89
   Growth Rings (Age) 93
   A Thick Skin: Psychological Armor (Is it Acceptance or Abjuration?) 97
   Chivalry: Can I help you with that? 102
   Situational Identity Management 107

VII  After the Harvest: Conclusions, Speculation and Forecast 120

   Can Seasons Change? 120
   Ripe (and Fallen) Fruit: Future Research 125
   Opportunity in Camouflage: The Blue-Collar Option 129
   Fertilize and Nurture Growth 131

VIII  Bibliography 135

Appendix A  In Their Own Words 151
Appendix B  Note on Objectivity 164
Appendix C  Initial Contact Script 165
Appendix D  Oral Consent Script 166
Appendix E  Interview Guide 167
Appendix F  Sociodemographic Questionnaire 169
Appendix G  Charts / Data 170
Chapter I
The Plot

Introduction

This study will examine the experiences of women within the male-dominated blue-collar occupation of landscaping. Landscaping “is a publicly visible…industry, but the problems women have faced there will, find a resonance of familiarity even with women who work in fields and under conditions that are starkly different” (Eisenberg 1988, 6).\(^3\) The three main objectives of this project encompass an investigation on women’s: entry into landscaping, experiences on the job, and construction/presentations of gender identity.

Through qualitative interviews I compare women in landscaping to those in other nontraditional occupations. The goal of the research is to revisit and investigate identity theory, while expanding on the current literature on women and work. This task proves important as women continue to pursue an increasingly diverse set of nontraditional blue-collar jobs.

This dissertation project, through the analysis of empirical evidence, both supports and contradicts the conventional knowledge regarding women and work. The nontraditional blue-collar occupation of landscaping will serve as a case study adding to the numerous studies of women working in the fields of construction, corrections, fire fighting, lumber, military, and police work. The importance of the landscaping field is that it diverges from the classic studies on nontraditional employment that feature public sector employment examples, e.g. firefighters, police, and corrections (prison guards).

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\(^3\) She refers to construction work in her book.
Due to the lack of any data on this occupation and the exploratory nature of the research, I utilized in-depth, guided, open-ended qualitative interviews. My initial interest in landscaping was fostered through my employment within the field, which spanned five consecutive years during the summer peak seasons from 2000 through 2005. It was through this knowledge, a focus group and a pilot study that enabled the creation of my interview questions. My knowledge of the field was instrumental in rapport building with my respondents and understanding and interpreting their responses. In spite of this, I did not allow that understanding to influence the interviews and questioning; attempting to maintain an unbiased and assumption-less stance during the interviews.\(^4\) However, my subjective perspective is gendered and perhaps a female sociologist would interpret these data in a different way. As with any research contribution, this represents a beginning and urges repetition and building.

Real world experience in the field facilitated the acquisition of respondents. I utilized my own personal contacts within the field to develop an initial base and relied both on snowball sampling and a database that was provided from a group that I located on the Internet, spanning the tri-state area (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut). My initial goal was to interview forty women and my final sample contained forty-five women. The interviews were conducted both face-to-face as well as by telephone\(^5\) from 2002 through 2005. To be sure of the accuracy of this research and its findings, I chose to revisit several original respondents and decided to interview one additional respondent as well to ensure theoretical saturation\(^6\).

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\(^4\) With the exception of one occasion, this is discussed in chapter four.

\(^5\) The methodological indifference between face-to-face and telephone interviews for the non-believers is elaborated in Chapter IV.

\(^6\) This process and its benefits will be discussed in Chapter IV.
Landscaping is commonly a small-scale business and represents a divergence from the current literature where most studies deal with women in bureaucratic, public sector, local or state government positions. Corrections, Police and Firefighting are all bureaucratic positions that are regulated and monitored; with formal structures composed of numerous rules, regulations and procedures. In the landscaping field, although there are college courses and degrees in horticulture, on-the-job experience and learning are unwritten. Bureaucratic jobs also are formal with respect to training procedures and entry. An individual with no experience can begin in horticulture and within a short period become an owner. Women entrepreneurs are afforded an outlet that is traditionally denied them within other blue-collar occupations and the white-collar sphere (Loscocco et al. 1991). The small number of studies of blue-collar work that resemble landscaping in the public domain, as in the case of construction and forestry, require a larger initial investment for entrepreneurs, representing a barrier for employees to transition from worker to owner, however in the field of landscaping this is irrelevant.

The extensive literature on women and work illustrates the disparity between men and women; not only do women make less than men in comparable occupations but superimposed is a gender-based system of sex-stratification. Meaning, jobs are informally characterized as women’s or men’s work and these distinctions are grounded in informal stereotypes and essentialist popular wisdom that men and women are “naturally” skilled at certain types of work. These characteristics, traits and sexist notions of what is seemingly natural to most as the “male” and “female” occupations is built into the social institutions, the very fabric of our society and culture (Acker 1990; Lorber 1994; Smith 1979, 1987a; West and Zimmerman 1987).
Women and men are socially defined because of their sex and gender. Gender-based assumptions are attached to traits, abilities, and occupations as characteristically male or female. Thus nontraditional blue-collar occupations represent an interesting conundrum. What happens when women enter the occupations that are popularly assumed to be *male*? In this situation women are in double jeopardy. They are both in a “man’s society,” and within that society in a “male” occupation. Therefore a woman in a nontraditional occupation can expect a reaction not only within the occupational context, but likely a social reaction as well. As research has illustrated, the male/female dualism is quite powerful and efforts to cross the boundaries are met with social opposition and sanctions (Goffman 1977; Lorber 1994; West and Zimmerman 1987; Williams 1989).

First, I investigate the occupational context, which includes training, accommodation, and task assignments for women landscapers. Women in male dominated fields have noted both positive and negative experiences on the job. Studies note certain male coworkers who taught them the intricacies of the job and treated them as peers, while there were others who experienced imposed barriers (Britton 1991; Chetkovich 1997; Collinson 1992; Eisenberg 1998; Fletcher 1995; Martin 2001). Women in landscaping experience both the chivalrous and the churlish types of men as they are inducted into the field.

Women in this type of work are the extreme minority, which brings immediate attention and recognition. Kanter’s (1977) “double edged sword of publicity,” assisted as women’s presence and actions in the landscaping profession maintained significant scrutiny from coworkers and the public because of their small numbers. Additionally, women’s limited presence in these occupations imposes alienation. For example,
Enarson (1984) documents how female forestry workers did not feel as if they were treated the same as their male counterparts. Women landscapers have similar experiences at work until they can prove their ability and worth to their coworkers and customers.

Second, this study also explores how women landscapers perform their jobs in comparison to their male counterparts due to limited, actual or perceived, physical and emotional capabilities. According to Zimmer, women prison guards “can develop innovative and successful ways to perform the job when they find established work roles inadequate or find they are blocked from achieving success using predetermined definitions of appropriate work behavior” (1987: 417). Every woman in this study noted in some fashion that they could complete any task a man could, perhaps not in the same manner or technique, but the end result would be identical. Moreover, the women also showed their own gender bias in repeatedly referencing that women were much more detail-oriented and artistic compared to men in landscaping.

Finally, the research is driven by the pursuit of utilizing, combining and expanding on the classic works of West and Zimmerman (1987) and Goffman (1977). Identity issues prevail for nontraditional women in both white-collar and blue-collar settings. The identity literature articulates the male-female binary, such that there is a “female” and “male” identity (Connell 1987, 1999; Smith 1987a). This results in an overt distinction between female and male occupations that are devalued and valued respectively (Bose and Rossi 1983; Cassidy 1990; Saltiel 1990; Yoder 1994). Women in male-dominated nontraditional workplaces may be judged according to social standards about their “incorrect” occupation and moreover possess the “incorrect” gender for their
job. According to conventional social norms, women in these occupations are thought to be unequipped for the tasks involved, while men are valued for their masculine characteristics. Problems may arise for women in landscaping because they are violating social assumptions.

As research on culture shows, women often are constructed as sexual objects, regarded as sexual beings, and reduced to the sum of their body parts especially by the media and men (Kilbourne 2000, Lorber 1994, MacKinnon 1979, 1997). Sexual harassment is a risk for women within the landscaping occupation because they are a statistical minority. It has been well documented that women experience these issues in all varieties of workspaces (Enarson 1984; Gruber and Bjorn 1982; Lillydahl 1986; Lorber 1994; MacKinnon 1979, 1987, 1997; Mansfield et al. 1991; Walshok 1981). Sexual harassment can be viewed as a “broad continuum” of ways that women can be made uncomfortable on the job. In addition, this research will attempt to view social harassment in a broader context outside of the work, to the relationships women landscapers have with peers and customers. It is important to investigate sexual harassment because of its extensively documented negative effects on women’s psychological and physical well-being (Crull 1987; MacKinnon 1979, 1987, 1997;). Interestingly, despite the negatives, these women thoroughly enjoy their work and are deeply satisfied with their careers; though rain, snow and other poor weather conditions were a common source of contention.

Identity can be divided into two components: the external or physical expression and the internal or emotional element. Landscaping, like other blue-collar occupations,

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7 This can range from an unwelcome comment or gesture to physical confrontation.
does not allow for a “female” identity in the classic sense, as gender is conventionally socialized (Lorber 1994; Ridgeway 1997; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999; West and Zimmerman 1987). In the conventional view, women are often thought of as frail, weak and helpless, and there are certain types of tasks which impose heavy physical labor burdens, therefore presenting a mismatch. As my exploratory interviews with landscapers reveal some individuals assume that women are incapable of this role. Landscaping work is inherently dirty and grimy. The external expressions of femininity dress, perfume, nails, and hair are not useful or applicable within this workspace. Thus, a woman cannot “be” a woman in the traditional sense within this workspace. These overt expressions of gender/sexual identity are limited for women landscapers in comparison to their white and pink-collar occupational counterparts. Through this research, I explore this compromise and identity negotiation; e.g. How does the suppression of this potentially key aspect of their identity affect their presentation on the job as well as off the job?

An understanding of the ways in which identity is constructed has important consequences for women’s lives within this occupational context. Utilizing in-depth qualitative interviews, I argue that there is a very particular gender distinction made and a binary present for women within landscaping. Meaning, gender plays on two levels in a general sense due to the gendered nature of work and on a deeper level a continuum of femininity for the female landscaper. There are overt distinctions and gendered generalizations made between male and female landscapers as there are in other

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8 Note that this is an incredible assumption that there is a “female” identity in the first place. Postmodern theorists would disagree with a blanket statement, but it serves as an initial gauge from which to initiate my study.
9 Though this is the 21st century, social norms continue to prompt traditional views of the capabilities of women and men.
occupations. Also, through my investigation, I discovered an underlying active “doing” or “not-doing” of gender by these women as they navigate through their daily workday. In addition, I found that on a deeper micro level there exists a continuum of the “female” landscaper identity, as well as a female-binary of femininity. A theoretical construct, derived from my experience in the field of landscaping and subsequent data analysis, is that there is a distinction made between feminine and masculine woman landscapers, described by my informants as the “girly-girl” and the “burly-girl.” These essentialist constructs represent the poles of this continuum of femininity, the former is a hyper-feminine female who is concerned with her appearance, does not want to get dirty, etc and the latter is a more masculine woman unconcerned with these “female” issues of appearance, possessing the more “male/mannish” traits.

Therefore, women of the girly-girl type will have a tougher time within this context than the burly-girl who does not have to worry about feminine identity in this work context. In essence, within this workspace the identity of “womanhood” gets squelched, suppressed, redefined or changed as women take on a career in landscaping. The main question regarding identity is: What types of identity adjustments do women make to navigate their workdays within the “male” milieu?10

Directly related to this question and the negotiation of gender identity at work is my own theoretical construct of “situational identity management.” SIM revisits Goffman’s (1977) “presentation of self” and West and Zimmerman’s (1987) “doing gender” by exploring how women in landscaping utilize and present their gender in a variety of ways to minimize uncomfortable situations and to maximize preferable

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10 This will be explored during the interview, probing experiences when dealing with related issues and circumstances at work.
outcomes. In essence, when they are on the job, there is a cost versus benefit analysis that is being made when engaging with others and gender identity adjustments are utilized depending upon the milieu. In this research, using a biographical approach, I detail the landscaping woman’s complex negotiation of many facets of her personal and gender identities while placing them in a historical and social context.

**What is landscaping?**

It is important to the reader to understand that the term “landscaping” has many connotations and should be discussed briefly. It is a loaded definition as landscaping presents a range of tasks and jobs.

The term, “landscaping” can be used grammatically either as a noun or as the present participle of a verb.\(^\text{11}\) The research utilizes the term landscaping, however it is a loaded term with many different uses and connotes. I will use the term to refer to landscaping as an occupational category. Landscaping is a type of work that people engage in for money; though people do landscape their homes, landscapers engage the labor market for profit. Landscaper, gardener, and groundskeeper are three different terms that are sometimes used interchangeably and may represent the same person at different times during the day depending upon what tasks they are working on. Interestingly, there are no degree requirements to enter this profession.\(^\text{12}\) Up until 2002, The Bureau of Labor Statistics denotes their occupational category as “Landscape and Horticultural Services” and now there is a new industry classification of professional and business services as “Landscaping Services.”

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\(^\text{11}\) [http://landscaping.about.com/od/helpforbeginnersbooks/g/landscaping.htm](http://landscaping.about.com/od/helpforbeginnersbooks/g/landscaping.htm)

\(^\text{12}\) Education will be discussed in the next section.
The occupational group of landscape designer, architect or engineer represents a highly specialized and trained segment of the landscape profession. These individuals usually hold masters or doctorate level degrees and have limited hands-on duties in the field; especially the architect and engineer. The designer job group will not be included in this study unless they both design and install the landscape for customers.

Furthermore, several of my respondents called themselves landscapers, gardeners, horticulturalists, and landscape-gardeners. Bryony described in detail this difference in her own words.

“Because I think the difference between horticulture and landscaping, horticulture takes into account the soil science, the type of conditions plants grow in and some landscape architects are also guilty of only looking at form and not looking at the science involved in whether it’s the right plant in the right place and a lot of landscapers, because they don’t have the knowledge, will go out and buy things that look good at the moment…A lot of landscaping is really land-scraping. It’s mowing and using weed whackers and sometimes even damaging the trunks of trees using a lot of blowers and just getting in there and making a lot of noise and getting the job done and leaving. They don’t care what happens afterward. Horticulturalists on the other hand, they’ll make sure the mechanisms are in place if they’re not there to maintain things every day. They’ll ask, they’ll ask who’s going to maintain this and give some instructions before they leave.”

Furthermore, another respondent, Alyssa who called herself a gardener went as far as noting landscaping as being a negative occupational classification; for her it was the “L-word.” Landscaping was viewed as more of the maintenance side of the field; lawn mowing, etcetera and horticulture and gardening, much more intimate and intricate. The study will look at women in the gardening, grounds keeping, horticulture and landscaping jobs as one group since the Bureau of Labor Statistics makes no such distinctions, but it should be recognized by the reader with hopes of provoking further research into this distinction.
This dissertation focuses primarily on landscaping in the northeast region of the United States. It is an important distinction to make as the tasks of a landscaper vary according to region and climate. For example, in Arizona a landscaper may specialize in rock gardens, where grass and lawns are nonexistent. The research set forth is exploratory in nature, with the hopes others will follow with future study in other parts of the country.
Chapter II
Scratch the Earth: Literature Review

Gender is known as the main differentiating feature for individuals within human society (Connell 1987; Lorber 1994; Smith 1987a). It is central to our identities as human beings. Gender is a primary master status, as it imposes a distinction above all other notions such as: race, class, status, age and power. Whether a society is traditional or modern, gender provides its benefits and disadvantages to individuals. The influence of gender (like race and age) is generalized because our gender is presented before we can assess any of these other qualities of the individual, as a result, serving as a way to distinguish individuals as either male or female, as well as forming crosscutting intersections with other social differences (e.g., race, age, class, religion, sexuality)\(^\text{13}\). It is impossible to associate with another individual without noticing gender and re/acting “appropriately”. It is also nearly impossible to separate the union of gender and work.

Gender Ideology and Work

Gender inequality is embedded within the workplace, which acts via rules, protocols and structures that are infused with gender stereotypes (Kanter 1977; Acker 1990; Britton 2000). The workplace is structured in such a way that certain positions, with respect to gender, are accorded differential remuneration, privilege, autonomy and access to resources (Martin 1994). It is important to look at how these structures are both produced by “doing gender” as well as through social psychological processes of interaction. West and Zimmerman note the power of gender as an ideological apparatus, “which produces, reproduces, and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category. An

understanding of how gender is produced in social situations will afford clarification of the interactional scaffolding of social structure and the social control processes that sustain it” (1987, 147). Consequently, culturally gendered processes are deeply embedded and engrained within all societal institutions. Ridgeway states that this inequity is “continually reinforced by sex categorization in workplace interaction, the spread of status value affects the performance and reward expectations associated with the job” (1997, 226). All work-related procedures require interaction on some level; therefore gender can easily enter the process, allowing the subsequent biases to pervade important decisions and in turn influence working conditions and (potentially) depress women’s occupational attainment.

The model of statistical discrimination postulates that employers are prone to make assumptions that are generated by the institutionalization of gender stereotypes (Bielby and Baron 1994; Ridgeway 1997). This model asserts that the employer will have a different conception of what men and women can accomplish for the same line of work due to institutionalized gender-based stereotypes. Research has established that ‘sex typing’ and prestige are important aspects that are existent in the ‘collective conscience’ (Bose and Rossi 1983; Saltiel 1990). This influences how individuals view occupations and individuals within this milieu. Consequently, sex labeling affects the labor queue’s transfer to gender queues but correspondingly affected are the stereotypes held by employers, coworkers and customers (Reskin and Roos 1990). Simply, when employers rank workers, men hold a higher status and consequently the most desirable jobs go to men.

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14 “Hiring, job searches, placement, performance evaluation, task assignment, promotion, and dealing with customers, clients, bosses, coworkers, and subordinates all involve direct or indirect interaction” (Ridgeway 1997, 231).
15 In this research, customers will engage in these types of behaviors when evaluating women for jobs.
Furthermore, the sex typing of jobs stifles women within the workplace. Martin (1994) explains the process of ‘gender importation’ where these sex-based assumptions are taken from the conventional wisdom and take a place in the structure of work and respective assignments given to workers. Thus, employers do not simply utilize a general belief of “worker” when creating positions within the hierarchical structure. A common assumption made is that women are more appropriate or wired for emotional labor or “emotion work” (England and Folbre 1999). The conventional wisdom holds that women possess a natural instinct for nurturance and consequently those occupations that are dominated by women tend to possess an emotional and or social interaction component (Leidner 1991; Enarson 1993; England and Folbre 1999; Hall 1993; Hochschild 2000).

Berger and Luckmann (1967) offer an explanation of a process that operates to perpetuate stereotypes that can be used to explain the gendering of jobs.

“The reality of everyday life maintains itself by being embodied in routines, which is the essence of institutionalization. Beyond this, however, the reality of everyday life is ongoingly reaffirmed in the individual’s interaction with others. Just as reality is originally internalized by a social process, so it is maintained in consciousness by social processes. These latter processes are not drastically different from those of the earlier internalization. They also reflect the basic fact that subjective reality must stand in a relationship with an objective reality that is socially defined” (149).

Consequently, these dynamics at work produce gender inequality and “…a gender understructure that encompasses both ‘overt decisions and procedures’ and ‘the construction of images, symbols, and ideologies that justify, explain, and give legitimacy to institutions’” (Steinberg and Jacobs 1994, 93). For that reason, women are perceived as square pegs for the round hole for particular jobs. Gender is not only used as an organizing principle at all levels of the work environment but at all levels of life.

16 See also Acker 1990; Britton 2000
The Shiny Token

Kanter’s (1977) path-breaking *Men and Women of the Corporation* details the nature of social relations for women in the male-dominated corporate sphere. Male managers, who were the vast majority, caused certain problems for the female ‘tokens’ in terms of visibility, polarization and assimilation. First, women were noticed as different from the norm and next division was created between the token and the rest of the staff. This heightens women’s visibility and creates social pressures on the token through “conversation, questioning, gossip, and careful scrutiny” (Kanter 1977, 212). I wish to assert that these phenomena may apply to any male-dominated work setting, not just white-collar jobs, as this point will be explored for the blue-collar women of the landscaping profession.

The token/outsider is a representative of her group, of women as a whole “not just themselves” (Kanter 1977). Thus women in nontraditional employment settings can be considered tokens and as a result deviant because of their gender. The concept of “double-deviant” suggests “…that token women deviated first, from the master status of gender by virtue of their femaleness and, second, from occupational norms by virtue of their occupational pursuits” (Yoder 1994, 151). These women and other deviants face structural, cultural and interactional barriers in the male-dominated workplace.

Importantly, the token is easily differentiated from her counterparts but must endeavor to have her achievements noticed (Kanter 1977, 216).

Research has illustrated that when women take on non-traditional occupations they are continually questioned by coworkers regarding whether they can be successful (Deaux 1984; Enarson 1984; Martin 1994; O’Farrell and Harlan 1982; Swerdlov 1989).
And when these women succeed they are not *normal*. Consequently, errors or mistakes made by the token women have the potential to severely impact their work climate. Swerdlow’s (1989) study of train operators documented that errors made by men were overlooked, lasted a few days and then were forgotten, but similar mistakes lasted years for women. Acker (1990) states the reasoning fundamental to this recognition, as “most of us spend most of our days in work organizations that are almost always dominated by men. The most powerful organizational positions are almost entirely occupied by men with the exception of the occasional biological female who acts as a social man” (139). The catch-22 for women is that they will be acknowledged for both their failure and success, though the former is more difficult to shake off, success is much more difficult to attain and tightly guarded.

Chase and Bell (1990) studied school board members where female superintendents are present. Their research centered on the opinions of the ‘gatekeepers;’ those who are in a position to hire, evaluate, or have the power to position someone into the appropriate networks, for example superintendents, school board members, etc. Chase and Bell found that these individuals were supportive of the female superintendents but also inadvertently recognized that they were in positions of ‘deviance’ requiring ‘special qualifiers’. The *qualifiers* are nicknames allowing the gatekeepers, coworkers and the public to reconcile their uneasiness with women in these traditionally male positions. A poignant interview with a gatekeeper states the female superintendent’s nickname of ‘ironpants;’ though “…she may be judged competent (she is as tough as a man) this oddity requires comment…the nickname confirms that the standard for leadership is masculine” (168). This quote reminds me of many news
reports during the Obama / Clinton presidential debates making comments with regard to her “pantsuits” and I heard anecdotally public perception of her as a masculine woman. In attempts to combat these notions, she even asserted to the media that her particular pantsuit was made of asbestos to withstand the heat of the debate. As both the gatekeepers and even female social actors themselves communicate and or hold these beliefs, feelings, and ideas; the result is a perpetuation of a gendered social hierarchy.

In their study of law firms, Kay and Hagan (1998) assert that the top positions of partner are typically reserved for men. Women are able to break through the ceiling by engaging in behavior and work ethic that ‘disconfirms’ the traditional gender stereotypes. “…There is a particular kind of a woman lawyer…while men are valued for traditional corporate family values, women are rewarded for breaking convention in giving priority to work outside the home, bringing in corporate clients, and endorsing the goals of the law-firm culture” (728, italics mine). Their main point is that if women wish to succeed within this organization they must make sacrifices that do not have to be made by men. For example, if men would like to have a family and children, their outcome with regard to gaining partnership within the firm is the same; but for women this would impede their path to success. Consequently, women within these occupations must not only work harder and outperform their male counterparts, but must also make many more sacrifices (e.g., family and personal relationships) to gain comparable positions (See also Hochschild 1997; Lumsden 1995; Pierce 1995; Spencer and Podmore 1987). In addition to the sacrifices noted above, women must also consider opposition to the structure or modification of their behavior to fit the hegemonic male standard.17

17 This phenomenon / process will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.
Goffman (1977) presented the conventional 1960s and 1970s public perception of a woman’s place in society, as “organized around a married, breeding pair; that broadly speaking the social roles of men and women are markedly differentiated, this incidentally, giving to women the lesser rank and power, restricting her use of public space, excluding her from warfare and hunting, and often from religious and political office” (306). The irony surrounding this seemingly archaic and sexist belief is that its remnants continue to exist whereby reproducing a male dominated social structure. Thus making it difficult for women to attain opportunities similar to men, and even if they do it continues to be at a negligible frequency. The point may be perceived as an overstatement or generalization with respect to women’s rarity, however even though the gap has been narrowed for selected white collar occupations and academics, parity with respect to gender is much less pronounced and grossly disproportionate in the non-traditional sectors.

Berger, Wagner and Zelditch (1985) posit that individuals have internal performance, status and reward expectations for themselves and others that are anticipated via prior institutionalized beliefs. Social psychological research has confirmed that a double standard for competence does exist, as women are consistently held to a higher standard of performance than men in task groups (Foschi 1996). The illusion is that the structure is perceived by many as “the way it is supposed to be,” as “natural” and supported by virtual consensus. West and Fenstermaker (1995) explain that “for efficient subordination, what’s wanted is that the structure not appear to be a cultural artifact kept in place by human decision or custom, but that it appear natural—

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18 For more on Expectation States Theory and the development of status hierarchies; See also Berger, Fisek, Norman and Zelditch 1977; Wagner and Berger 1993.
that it appear to be quite a direct consequence of facts about the beast which are beyond the scope of human manipulation” (19). Unquestionably, if women are constructed as emotional, intuitive, nurturing, less competent beings, then women will not be thought of as being appropriate for certain tasks and jobs; therefore these cultural constructions have material consequences\(^{19}\).

**Gender Identity and Sexuality**

My discussion of work shows the presence and product of a gendered social and occupational structure. However, it is essential to articulate the social construction of inequality through the formation, manifestation and perpetuation of gender identity. This section will discuss the social construction of identity by exploring the deep-rooted nature of our conceptions about men and women and how we come to view and construct sex difference. Gender is commonly perceived as an immutable feature, a set script, one feminine and one masculine, representing polar opposites. It is important to elucidate the problems caused by the dualistic construction of gender, (the either/or, all or nothing views) which imposes great strain on anyone who ventures outside of the “appropriate box;” in the case of this research project, the pressures exerted on those women working in a stereotypical male nontraditional occupation. Ultimately, the construction of gender and sexual identity has definitive consequences, because women must encounter a variety of compromising situations, which are not present for (hegemonic heterosexual) men\(^{20}\) outside and within the occupational realm.

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\(^{19}\) This line of reasoning will be discussed in the next chapter on identity.

\(^{20}\) There are men who do not fit the “male” model who also face similar situations; but are nevertheless privileged as men. Risman and Schwartz (1988) note the “ghettoization” of homosexuality.
Identity Issues: The Mythical Reality

We are socialized beings that exist in a world of meanings, values and deeply embedded procedures of interaction. We are who we are and act/react the way we do because of a complex and continuous process of socialization as we make our daily round. Gender is socially constructed in a complex interplay between various social institutions working to produce and perpetuate a gendered society\textsuperscript{21}. Risman and Schwartz (1989) provide diverse perspectives on how family, work, social and intimate relationships contribute to the creation of gender identity. Consequently through this promulgation, people \textit{unintentionally} hold certain stereotypes and values regarding what are appropriate behaviors for men and women. West and Zimmerman’s (1987) important work, “Doing Gender” provides a detailed description of the process of gender socialization from a micro-process level. They view gender as a recurrent quality that is present within day-to-day interactions. In Western society there is a clear continuum of culturally accepted behaviors for men and women that are followed for the most part. Though there are exceptions, social sanctions inhibit most people from moving outside of the \textit{appropriate} box. West and Zimmerman (1987, 128) argue “things are the way they are by virtue of the fact that men are men and women are women—a division perceived to be natural and rooted in biology, producing in turn profound psychological, behavioral, and social consequences.” We can observe how the ascribed nature of gender imposes

\textsuperscript{21} The agency and social structure debate will be addressed in this footnote briefly. I advocate the latter perspective in this paper and as a sociologist. I regard agency as an illusion as it is limited by our position in the social structure, intersectionality (race class and gender), social commitments, and the social contacts and interactions we have had during our life course. Therefore, agency, choice, free-will, whatever term you wish to utilize; due to social norms, role expectations and consequences we will behave accordingly situationally. However, the inherent sociological shortcoming is that there are always exceptions, and the author does not imply that this is deterministic logic, but an alternate explanation of social reality and the exceptions represent a small proportion of the population (e.g. sociopaths, psychopaths, social deviants, etc.).
certain norms and expectations for behaviors by looking at those who break the rules.
The roles that are predominantly taken by men and women become ‘gender marked’ and
in the process ‘special qualifiers’ may be used in order to separate these deviations from
the norm, for example “female” doctors and “male” nurses (West and Zimmerman 1987,
Williams 1993).

Further, Ridgeway posits that a process of ‘sex categorization’ occurs in every
conversation, but is unseen because it is “deeply rooted in the cultural rules that organize
interaction” (1997, 219). This condition suggests that there are different modes for
interaction between people of the same and opposite genders. The important notion
forwarded is that women and men may be socialized from birth with particular roles and
expectations that are reinforced through ‘gendering’ situations. If you are expected to act
in a certain manner, so you shall act. However, as it is stated above, there are
exceptions.

What better ways to view this social construction, than to have lived as both man
and woman or to be a woman who “looks” like a man. Jan Morris underwent gender
reassignment surgery after realizing that he was a woman in a man’s body. Jan, who
used to be James, notes a distinct social difference post surgery.

“We are told that the social gap is narrowing, but I can only report that having, in
the second half of the twentieth century, experienced life in both roles, there
seems no moment of the day, no contact, no arrangement, no response, which is
not different for men and for women. The very tone of voice in which I was now
addressed, the very posture of the person next in the queue, the very feel in the air
when I entered a room or sat at a restaurant table, constantly emphasized my
change of status (1974, 166).

22 It is not my intention to make the reader feel that we are impossibly trapped in gender socialization and
interaction rules. Some may argue agency does exist but I feel that these are simply attempts at explaining
the perpetuation of gender inequality.
23 Garfinkel (1967) documents the life of a transsexual, man to woman transition, and the learning of
gender presentation.
That is what is powerful about gender is that someone can “biologically” change gender, and through social practices and interaction bodies are altered (Connell 2002). Schilt’s (2006) current research supports these ideas in her study of female to male (FTM) transsexuals who experienced greater rewards and respect than they did as women, as long as their transition was discrete. Highlighting, as will be discussed further the structural disadvantages present for women, especially within the context of nontraditional work.

Similar to Jan, Betsy is treated differently because she is a woman who does not “look” like the social standard for woman. Lucal (1999) documents her personal gender dilemma of being a woman and experiences repeated “social misattribution” of her gender. As she states:

“I am a woman who has been called ‘Sir’ so many times I no longer even hesitate to assume that it is being directed at me. I am a woman whose use of public rest rooms regularly causes reactions ranging from confused stares to confrontations over what a man is doing in the women’s room” (781).

Gender has far reaching effects, for Betsy, it is a careful walk on eggshells in unfamiliar territory when looking for a restroom to use or when using her credit cards. According to Connell (1987), though there are different kinds of femininity, there is one “cultural package” or standard for women that is maintained through the mass media. To counter her appearance Betsy feels forced to overemphasize her feminine features, to make her gender unmistakable.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) aptly sum up the socially constructed character of our gendered lives, as “the world of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives. It is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by
these” (20). Therefore, what these examples illustrate that it then does not matter if it is “real” or biological, it is an illusion of sorts, it is the general beliefs that these social differences exist that are most important towards determining our gender destiny.

**Man/Woman: A Disputed Dualism**

Gender is commonly perceived as an immutable feature, feminine or masculine, as composed of polar opposites. Through this research I wish to depose and dispose of the dualistic construction of gender. It is quite a difficult task to rid ourselves of this line of thinking as it is deeply entrenched and socialized within our culture. According to Ridgeway (1997) because “Once sex is constructed as a simple roughly dichotomous distinction, its constant use in interaction keeps it always accessible in people’s minds” (220). Gerber (2001) provides an illustration of the bipolar characteristics for the “ideal woman” and “ideal man” (See Appendix G). I will discuss the formation and the consequences of this dualistic model of gender. It is important to discuss the trouble that this dualistic construction, (the either/or, all or nothing views,) imposes on women, especially those who take on traditionally male roles.

Connell (1987) posits that our lived experience is through a ‘gendered prism’ that is a product of history, social location, formal and informal learning. In contemporary Western culture the social and cultural conception of gender is based on the biological differences between the sexes imposing ‘social polarizations,\(^{24}\) from which the standard for comparison has always been “man” (Lacquer 1990). Lacquer also noted that even though “some women exceed some men”; there is only one sex, man. Where you are

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\(^{24}\) Bem (1993) also posits a polarized view, two groups: male and female as polar opposites.
positioned as male or female incorporates certain expectations and assumptions. According to Goffman (1977)

“what is ‘essential’ to, and characteristic of the two sex classes…(these are)…the ideals of masculinity and femininity, understandings about human nature which provide grounds at least in Western society for identifying the whole of the person, and provide also a source of accounts that can be drawn in a million ways to excuse, justify, explain, or disprove the behavior of an individual or the arrangement under which (s)he lives, these accounts being given both by the individual who is accounted for and by such others as have found reason to account for (her or) him” (303)

A good example is the popular self-help book, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, which highlights these socially constructed differences between men and women. Gray (1992) posits that the sexes are worlds apart and that in order to understand and to have clearer communication with the opposite sex one must know what world they are from. It was an easy task to accomplish, as these differences are deeply embedded culturally as natural. There is a current proliferation of the *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* attitudes towards gender, which continue to construct and stress the “innate” differences between men and women. Chodorow (1994) argues against the construction of all-purpose theories, positing the unique, diverse and distinctive nature of gender experience for an individual. Additionally, Connell (1999) notes that the experiences we have and the actions produced as a result do not always fit simply into the dichotomy.

These models apply to the work context. In a similar way they apply to individual categorization, as there exists “women’s work” and “men’s work.” However, when women enter men’s work they hold the “incorrect” gender and there is another way in which to describe the incumbent in the position. For example, the dichotomy of “one of

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25 Bold and italics mine.
26 See also Lorber 1994 for more of the social constructionist argument.
the guys” or “overly feminine” is offered to explain the gender identity of women in the male dominated space of business school (Kilduff and Mehra 1996). The authors note a conscious negotiation of gender and presentation as women are forced to take on a complex identity by moving between roles. As noted above, the baseline or standard in the workplace has always been male, so women entering “male” occupations thus place their identity in question both socially and possibly internally as well.

**Gender Identity and the Nontraditional Work Setting**

A woman in a nontraditional job is therefore forced into complex role situations, actively negotiating identity within the male milieu. Engineering represents an occupation that has a long-standing low female to male ratio. For example, according to the United States Department of Labor (2002c), women represent less than six percent in mechanical engineering. This occupation has a clearly delineated, deeply ingrained characteristically male culture. As Kvande (1999) states, “the graduate engineering profession is indeed closely connected to hegemonic masculinity, due to a heavy representation of technology and because management has many connections to the current hegemonic ideals” (308). The author investigates the dilemma of identity negotiation as women are seen to compensate for their gender or challenge the gender norms, with the former becoming ‘one of the boys’ or ‘social men’ and the latter resisting and maintaining difference. As I will illustrate, identity management can pose a problem for some women in nontraditional occupations, especially those who are unable

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27 Similarly, the dichotomy of “one of the boys” or “social men” is offered to explain the identity constructs of females in the male dominated profession of engineering graduates in Norway (Kvande 1999).
28 Kanter (1977) similarly notes four roles, which a token woman might adapt: mother, seductress, pet, and iron maiden. Each has consequences but simultaneously illustrates the complex nature of the female role.
29 See also Dryburgh 1999; McIlwee and Robinson 1992 (engineering studies).
to cope with the discrepancy and handle the change. The next chapter will move further into the issues of adapting to the “male” or “masculine” occupational culture.

Lumsden’s (1995) study of autobiographies, articles and oral history, describes the lives of ten women in the male-dominated field of journalism between 1920-1940. She details the impact of the “oppositional dualisms” and the negotiation of identity, which ultimately drove some of these women into a schizophrenic state. A psychiatrist’s account of this phenomenon is cited, because “women outside the home had wholly adopted masculine methods and attitudes, a mindset that undermined their psychic and professional independence” (Lumsden 1995, 915). We must remember that this was a period when women were new to the field, were represented in small numbers and it is likely that anyone would manifest uneasiness adjusting to the new setting, situations and rules. As another psychiatrist noted, “women have lived so long in the belief that they are the inferior part of mankind that it is still hard for them to accept their equality, no matter how firmly they seem to demand recognition as equals” (915). Similarly, Epstein (1970) states, “For the girl, ambivalence and ambiguity arise from the contradictions posed by images of the female role, and American society’s values of equality and achievement. The stresses stemming from this complex of role- and value-conflicts are major factors in the career development of women, particularly at the points of initial decision, entry, and measurement of success” (20).

The “sex-role spillover” theory can be used to explain this phenomenon, which posits that an occupation with a high concentration of one sex becomes inextricably associated with the dominant group (Nieva and Gutek 1981). As a result of the association, the workers within these occupations also rationalize these tasks as gender
appropriate. Consequently, these gender displays\textsuperscript{30} come to be seen as natural or as part of workers’ identities. Leidner (1991) notes “the actual features of the jobs do not themselves determine whether the work will be defined as most appropriate for men or women. Rather these job features are resources for interpretation that can be drawn on by workers, their superiors, and other audiences” (174). Therefore, once men and women are situated in their particular jobs, they will give gender-appropriate meanings to their work and will come to see their required work behaviors as congruent with their gender (Leidner 1991).

To encounter a nontraditional woman is an infrequent occurrence. Ridgeway (1997) building upon this notion, cites the need for ‘gender disconfirming situations,’ which are circumstances that counter the conventional wisdom (e.g. women in nontraditional occupations). These disconfirming situations, if they occur frequently enough, will change what is commonly thought regarding a person, job, etc. Moreover, Williams (1989) presents evidence that gender identity is maintained despite the expectations for individuals within nontraditional work settings who ‘cross the sex role divide’ to assume the opposite identity. In her study of female marines and male nurses, Williams finds that these individuals are masculine and feminine respectively; supporting my research which explores the continuum of the female identity\textsuperscript{31}. Therefore, the only way women will be accepted in nontraditional settings is increased numbers of women pursuing this type of labor.

\textsuperscript{30} “If gender be defined as the culturally established correlates of sex (whether in consequence of biology or learning), then gender display refers to conventionalized portrayals of these correlates” (West and Zimmerman 1987, 130).

\textsuperscript{31} The female continuum alluded to here will be explained in the next chapter.
As discussed in the preceding chapter, the intersection of gender and work positions women for difficulty. Although we are now in the twenty-first century, post the advancement of civil/equal rights, female workers continue to be unconsciously/consciously and informally/formally stereotyped, alienated, relegated, stifled and harassed because of their gender. The next chapter will examine the blue-collar work setting and the exceptional blue-collar woman. It is within these settings where they are represented in much smaller numbers, compared to their white-collar counterparts and are also within a job conventionally considered the antithesis of appropriate, “men’s work.”

32 In addition, intersections of race, age and sexuality further impose hardship for women (Collins 1990, 1998).
Chapter III
Plant the Seed: Literature Review, Part 2

Nontraditional occupations for women are described by the United States Department of Labor (2002c) as those consisting of no more than 25 percent women. Such a male-dominated occupational context presents a variety of issues for women workers. The movement of women into nontraditional occupations marks the lessening of the boundaries of the past. However, as with any other structural changes, the changes in conventional wisdom, attitudes and accommodations occur at a much slower pace. This situation in paid work is analogous to Arlie Hochschild’s (1989) “stalled revolution” in the household division of labor, such that society’s perception of what type of work is “appropriate” for women and men still lies in the past. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the occupational structure reflects the conventional knowledge in society (Martin 1994). As Acker (1988) states, “though the totally dependent housewife is now a minority, few married women escape some periods of economic dependence and the ideology of the male breadwinner and the housewife may persist even as the reality recedes” (485).

This chapter will examine research on women within the blue-collar occupational domain. It is important for the reader to understand that contemporary issues within the occupational structure and personal circumstances of landscaping women have a historical basis. Therefore, I will present evidence of the historic and contemporary presence of women within blue-collar jobs. Next, it is important to also review the literature from which I have drawn comparisons and found thematic support from my data analysis. I will also discuss the impact of women on blue-collar occupations and the adaptations/adjustments made by women in the process of accommodation to this new
domain. Women within these occupational contexts deal with many issues that are not present or even relevant in the white collar workplace; therefore an assessment of the literature regarding levels of job satisfaction for nontraditionally employed women is important in order to provide a basis to understand why women continue to engage work that has inherent negative social consequences. Finally, sexuality tends to become intertwined with work; as a consequence sexual harassment is an issue for women in any workspace, but holds an especially perverse character within the blue-collar context where women are not only exposed in different ways but are outnumbered in a primarily male milieu.

**Blue-Collar Woman: Antediluvian Anomaly, an Incorrect Perception**

The women in nontraditional blue-collar occupations represent an interesting case. Women represent a small minority in these positions and these jobs are also characteristically male, meaning that the descriptions, responsibilities, traits and public perception of the standard worker are male, really a hegemonic (heterosexual) male. The hegemonic male is assertive, strong, tough, aggressive, successful, “good-provider”, independent, in-control, (sexually experienced) and unemotional. Even though blue-collar occupations are considered to be “characteristically male”, the United States Department of Labor (1993) documents that women have been employed within this context for well over a century. For example, let us consider the female slaves who worked alongside of men on the plantations in the Southern United States during slavery. Furthermore, Bose (1987, 2001) uses 1900 census data to document that women were

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33 Also, accusations of lesbianism.
engaged as laborers; however those positions were often located in the informal sector of the economy, as unpaid positions in family businesses.

Gluck (1987) documents the wave of women working in factories to supplement the family income during the Great Depression (1930s). Rosie the Riveter, the poster-woman for women factory workers to support the World War II efforts also serves as a classic example of the blue-collar woman (Milkman 1987). The conventional wisdom espouses particular roles for women and men and the infrequency of ‘gender disconfirming situations’\textsuperscript{34}, allows for the perpetuation of the stereotype that few women are in these types of jobs.

There are more women currently within these jobs than may be commonly perceived. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002b), there are millions of women in the various nontraditional occupations, only nine percent are female in the landscape and horticultural services industry\textsuperscript{35}. Why does society continue to maintain a stereotyped perception of the women within these industries? I will attempt to illustrate this cultural lag by presenting research documenting the experience of women within various nontraditional occupations\textsuperscript{36}.

**Transition, Initiation, Accommodation and Alteration**

The reaction to women in nontraditional occupations has often been less than accommodating; “when ‘new women’ enter a situation dominated by men, it is the women who must invent and adopt patterns of accommodation” (Swerdlow 1989, 381).

\textsuperscript{34} Ridgeway (1997) those situations which provide a basis for changing conventional stereotypes—e.g. a woman in a “male” occupation.

\textsuperscript{35} Also this statement and these statistics are likely to undercount women’s participation in the labor market; missing those women working unofficially (informal economy, family business, unpaid, etc.)

\textsuperscript{36} The illustration will only be from the perspective of my respondents. In essence, the description will represent only a partial explanation which may urge the further exploration of this topic.
In commercial aviation, Davey and Davidson (2000) documented training as a “rite of passage” and the subsequent process of attaining acceptance. Consequently, women have to learn the culture, to adapt, and understand the rules for interaction and expectations which are based on the male worker; and the women in this situation are the other, the trespasser. Their initial experiences on the job might undermine job success and psychological stability. Many researchers note that the reluctance of men to train women, therefore hindering women’s performance, ability to advance and also reducing job satisfaction (Deaux 1984; Enarson 1984; Martin 1994; O’Farrell and Harlan 1982; Swerdlow 1989). In a study by Swerdlow, women transit workers “certainly did experience resistance and hostility from some male coworkers and supervisors…that intentionally or not, undermined feelings of competence” (1989, 376).

The problem may not be intentional, as this is the way that “everyone” has been trained for the particular position. It is likely the problem is systemic and inherent to the organization/workplace. The “generic training,” or gender-neutral training for prison guards leaves women corrections officers in male prisons unprepared for the actual situations they will encounter (Britton 1997; Yoder and Aniakudo 1997; Zimmer 1987). This process is not gender-neutral but geared for “an officer,” that standard incumbent being male. This common model for training “may actively undermine women’s ability to succeed on the job by denying them information about both formal and informal techniques for handling inmates” (Zimmer 1987, 422). Britton (1997) concludes “gender is present at the level of organizational policy, paradoxically enough, through its explicit absence” (808). Therefore, gender-neutral policies may ultimately hurt women through inappropriate and insufficient training in nontraditional occupations.

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37 Similar for police officers (Martin 1980).
The association of masculinity with certain skills and abilities “can, in turn, be an ideological weapon in the exclusion of women from male-dominated (blue-collar) jobs” (Acker 1988, 482). As noted in the last chapter, biological differences serve an ideological function as a justification for social gender inequality; this carries over to the blue-collar workspace as these myths can serve to justify the disproportionate exclusion of women from this milieu. Goffman (1977) notes “the physical differences between the sexes are in themselves very little relevant to the human capacities required in most of our undertakings;” and this would in fact be applicable if we were engaging in wrestling and fist-fighting everyday of our lives (319-320). Importantly, the blue-collar workplace does differ from that of the white-collar because there is a physical component and at times there is heavy lifting, digging, climbing and so forth. Consequently, the belief is to deem these jobs as “masculine” and “male” because to be a “man,” is to be stronger and capable of “hard labor.” This logic is flawed because most of the time there are machines and alternative modern means to accomplishing these difficult tasks that most men could not complete without assistance (Deaux 1984).

Zimmer (1987) documents that women prison guards “can develop innovative and successful ways to perform the job when they find established work roles inadequate or find they are blocked from achieving success using predetermined definitions of appropriate work behavior” (417). In spite of this, it is the conventional belief that these types of jobs are for men, are too hard for women, and are unfeminine. This logic not only maintains things as they are, but also inhibits the inclusion of women in the system (e.g., through the gendered teaching and socialization for these types of tasks). As Britton (1997) aptly states, “although there were very few violent incidents in the men’s
prison on a day-to-day basis, the threat of violence was often used to restrict the assignments of women’ correctional officers

Stereotypes and statistical discrimination serve to exclude women from certain tasks. Surely, a stronger human being may be more suited for certain tasks but to denote these as male or female is incorrect, for example women bodybuilders could easily crush most men in any contest of strength, making them better candidates for jobs with heavy lifting.

Ultimately, this delineation of roles can impose enormous social pressure to conform to these gendered expectations. Gerber notes in the case of police officers; “these pressures can be so extreme that women officers describe them as their greatest source of job-related stress” (2001, xx). Interestingly, activists in the early 1900s utilized conventional gender stereotypes to negotiate for equality of opportunity for women police officers such “that women’s compassionate nature would make them better than men at performing some police duties, such as handling crime, handling female and juvenile cases, and protecting the moral and physical safety of women and girls in public” (Appier 1998, 3). According to Zimmer (1987), women prison guards utilize different strategies compared to their male counterparts when dealing with the prison population. Women utilize a nurturing role and engage in “emotion work,” when dealing with male inmates “listening to inmate problems, discussing their family relationships, assisting them in letter writing, and helping them make plans for their release” (421). This strategy works for the women who may be ultimately unsuccessful with the “traditional” methods of prisoner population control (Zimmer 1987).

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38 See Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts 1995; Zimmer 1987, for similar accounts.
39 It has been noted above that women’s exclusion and underutilization diminishes job satisfaction.
40 See Goffman 1977 p.320-322 for an elaborate description the bimodal distribution of strength, size, etc for men and women; also its impact on social situations.
41 Martin citing (Morash and Haar 1995; Wexler and Logan 1983)
In the nontraditional areas of construction, transport and other trades women negotiate identity at work to find a “fit” between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. Brewer (1991) observes gender identity as a ‘managed accomplishment’ that policewomen must achieve and that is “not necessarily an automatic reflection of sex or culturally defined roles” (231). To be seen as normal, one must display in accordance with their sex category and major deviations will be met with social query and recourse. Carey (1994) indicates “a ‘thick skin’, coupled with a sense of humour, and acting as ‘one of the boys’ are all necessary prerequisites for gaining respect in a nontraditional setting” (116). To be successful is to fit in with your peers in the nontraditional job and to “sustain a tough, assertive demeanor” (118). Highlighting this point, Walshok (1981) notes, “given that most men, and blue-collar men in particular, have had much less opportunity to see and define women in multidimensional or varied roles, women…in order to cut it, you have to go along with the norms of the dominant group” (232). Consequently, within nontraditional occupations men are free to present themselves without thought of consequence or risk, whereas women in these settings are likely to experience threat and criticism creating an apprehensive sense of identity.

As a result, women within nontraditional fields also have a more difficult time negotiating their daily round compared to their white-collar counterparts. Sexual important difference

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42 According to Connell 1987: Hegemonic masculinity is the culturally dominant form of masculinity and Emphasized femininity is the culturally dominant feminine identity. These are terms used by Carey (1994) in her descriptions. Also note that the author is noting that Northern Irish women engaged in nontraditional manual work.


44 Simply, men are free to be and act naturally without conflict, unless they too violate the heterosexual masculine norm.

45 Britton (1997) cites two studies that male corrections officers are not limited or inhibited as female correctional officers are in male prisons, as the men’s “presence is usually welcomed by inmates, administrators, and staff (800).
Sexual Harassment: Dominance and Sexuality, Sexuality and Dominance

Sexual harassment represents a complex phenomenon, severely affecting women’s work lives. I first provide a historical overview of sexual harassment and its implications for working women to ground the contemporary observations that are made during the course of the research. The next section explores the intersection of sexual harassment and the blue-collar workplace. Sexual harassment is a fairly new term coined in the 1970s; in 1980 the Equal Opportunity and Exchange Commission outlawed it in an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Though on the books, it took 11 years for it to be ‘officially’ recognized as a problem. The issue of sexual harassment was sticky, as the claim of sexual harassment was and is victim-based; thus the allegation of sexual harassment is based on an “interpretation” of the aggressor’s behavior. Additionally, claims of sexual harassment can be explained away as misinterpretations and are troubling for the victims as they must prove and defend their case. The 1991 Anita Hill vs. Clarence Thomas Congressional testimony brought national attention to something that women have dealt with and may have repressed for years. This case set a new precedent for the pursuit of harassment claims. Prior to this case, individuals and the courts did not take sexual harassment seriously, probably because of denial, disbelief, disregard, and—I assume all of the above.

Sexual harassment is a complex phenomenon and Lorber (1994) provides a description of this condition.

“The defining criterion for sexual harassment is that the behavior is inappropiate for the situation; what should be a gender-neutral situation is turned into an unwanted sexual situation, and the initiator or instigator has power, which makes it difficult for those subject to the harassment to protest, leave, complain to others, or take action without jeopardy to their own status. The immediate reaction to gender and sexual harassment is likely to be discomfort, anger, feelings of
powerlessness, inability to work, or feeling demeaned. These feelings may be suppressed if the person feels he or she has no choice but to continue in the situation or relationship” (250-1).

Sexual harassment involves both power and sexuality. As described previously, a central component to the constructed social identity is the assumption of women as sexual beings. MacKinnon (1987, 1997) posits that sexuality is core to women’s subordinate status and men’s domination over women. According to MacKinnon, “sexuality⁴⁶ in and of itself is domination. She argues against the common view of sexuality as a neutral domain; sexuality is infused with power, and this power constitutes the very distinction of masculine/feminine. Thus the very content of masculinity is to sexually desire and to have power over women, as the content of femininity is to be sexually desired by and subordinated to men. Moreover, the content of gender and the content of sexuality become intertwined and we can see this phenomenon expressed in the linkage of the two in the word ‘sex’

As MacKinnon (1987, 1997) argues, it is only by understanding gender, sexuality and their relationship in such terms that we can make sense of so many aspects of present and previous societies. In our society the pervasiveness and content of pornography, the similarities in content between what is understood as ‘normal’ male sexual initiation and sexual harassment, and the similarities in content between what is understood as ‘normal’ heterosexuality and rape. These social conventions spill into the workplace and can make women’s work lives difficult to manage.

Sexual harassment is a troublesome phenomenon and represents a variety of actions. Crull (1987) notes two prototypes of sexual harassment “quid pro quo harassment” and “atmosphere harassment.” The difference between the two types is

⁴⁶ She implies the social norm, heterosexuality.
either forcing sexual acts with power or creating an uncomfortable environment for work, respectively. The harassment experienced by women in landscaping I hypothesize to fit into the latter category as found in Crull’s review of women in nontraditional jobs. Moreover, Crull posits that competition may influence “sexual behavior toward women” (243). I will explore this further from the perspective of female landscapers.\footnote{Future work is urged by Crull to include the perspective of men, perhaps my next project.}

Women not only experience trouble via tasks and assignments within the nontraditional sector, but also there is a high incidence of maltreatment and sexual harassment in this occupational context (Chetkovich 1997; Eisenberg 1998; Enarson 1984; Gruber and Bjorn 1982; Lillydahl 1986; Mansfield et al. 1991; Martin and Jurik 1996; Walshok 1981). The presence of pornographic and sexual material in the workplace is common within the blue-collar context; e.g., calendars, magazines, movies, playing cards, and sex toys. MacKinnon (1987, 1997) posits that the pervasiveness of pornography is also viewed as a means through which sexuality is socially constructed. It constructs women as things for sexual use and constructs its consumers (men) to desperately want to possess women.\footnote{Parallel to Wolf’s (1992) argument regarding the beauty myth, constructing beauty and inciting men to seek and possess beautiful women.} Through pornography, gender inequality becomes both sexual and socially real. It is only by understanding gender, sexuality, and their relationship that we can make sense of so many aspects of present and previous societies (MacKinnon 1987, 1997).

Both women and men in subordinate positions face discrimination. As an example, Britton and Williams (1995) provide an analysis of the restrictions on gay and lesbian military personnel and posit the ‘institutional and cultural privilege’ afforded to the ideal typical soldier: the male heterosexual soldier. But for men this is superficial in
comparison to the documented extent and enveloping character of what women experience and must cope with on a day-to-day basis. Research indicates that sexual harassment is more likely to cause gender discrimination and then be reflected in decreased job satisfaction (Padavic and Reskin 1990; Ragins and Scandura 1995).

According to the United States Department of Labor (1993) stress is the leading hazard for working women\(^49\). Sexual harassment in the workplace serves as a source of stress\(^50\). A link exists between sexual harassment and a variety of other serious health problems; “anxiety, nausea, headaches, high blood pressure, sleeplessness, and ulcers” (U.S. Dept. of Labor 1993, 186). Quantitatively, Ragins and Scandura (1995) also note that blue-collar women experienced more harassment than their white-collar counterparts and were less likely to dispute and take action against the offense\(^51\). Interestingly, research finds that the hostility, harassment and paternalism did not force women to change their occupational decision (Walshok 1981; Padavic and Reskin 1990).

Sexual harassment and the potential threat of violence have both a conscious and unconscious effect on women’s lives within both the white and blue-collar arenas. Men may go about their daily work rounds undisturbed while women may have to question their presentation of the self and identity. Walshok (1981) concludes “there is less sexual harassment when people can find a common basis for interacting, some kind of sign or social cue that suggests to a person how to come on to another in a particular situation” (232)

\(^{49}\) It is not to say that the leading cause of death for men in the US does not continue to be an issue, but the stress imposed on men is not due to sexual harassment.

\(^{50}\) “Stress is one of the 10 leading work-related diseases and injuries identified by NIOSH” (U.S. Department of Labor 1993, 185).

\(^{51}\) Response rate 59%, of the 365 employees, 185 female typed, 46 integrated, 120 male-typed (80 white collar, 40 blue-collar).
Gender and the Shopfloor

When looking at the blue-collar context it is clear that there is a particular or distinct masculine culture. Collinson (1992), documents that within the male dominated masculine shopfloor culture, a premium is placed on hegemonic masculinity. To be a man is to act a certain way, to have certain views and to place a premium on dominance and unemotionality. A common example is the presentation of masculinity in the act of “shoptalk” within the context of male workplace culture. Men, according to Collinson (1992) think of themselves as ‘sexploiter’ and there is a constant battling of ‘words, joking, swearing and snubbing women’ (123). The masculine context becomes upset with the entry of women, as a new mode for behavior and interaction are imposed. Swerdlow (1989) notes that the “acceptance” of women co-workers is “not as equals” but sexual objects; it becomes a complex matrix of gender, sexual and occupational identities.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence present significant problems for women in occupations and social space in general. It is an especially tough situation when men dominate the workplace. Within the context of nontraditional blue-collar employment the numbers of women are so low that they are likely to be in many uncomfortable situations alone, sometimes the only woman working with an all male workplace. Furthermore, just being a woman on the job, they contend with issues that are not present for their male colleagues. For example, women corrections officers in male facilities must also contend with intentional harassment from inmates like public masturbation that male officers do not experience (Britton 1997).
As Collinson (1992) noted, “on the one hand, the men tend to swear profusely in the counter-culture (at work). On the other hand, outside work in the presence of women, workers insist that it is a ‘mark of respect’ to refrain from swearing” (117). Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts (1995) document for nontraditional women “a universal experience was of being protected from some of the harsher aspects of the job, social and physical;” for the simple reason they were women (30). As one female worker noted, “I think I’m thought of protectively…they treat me with kid gloves. They won’t swear or let me lift anything” (Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts 1995, 30-31). The situation clearly is tough for both men and women as the playing field is altered with the presence of women. It is not just women working with men and simple coworker relations but also at times the situation becomes coupled with sexuality. Consequently, sexual identity complicates the prevailing complex conditions. Enarson aptly documents the complicated nature of the intersection of sexuality and work in her study of women in the forestry service.

“This ambiguity and uncertainty is the most important point. Neither women nor men are of one mind about the proper relationship between sexuality and work or about the most effective model of accommodation. It is a puzzling time. Many women—and some men—are rethinking what femininity and masculinity imply and what they want from work. Though she wants to be ‘accepted as myself,’ one thoughtful woman is not so sure what that acceptance means: ‘I’ve probably tried to be one of the boys, which is a good way to get the work done but it is not good for myself…because I lose half myself. I lose the feminine part of myself…anyway, I would like to see women working in the woods and men accepting how we would work in the woods, as women’ (1984, 85).

In comparison to traditionally employed women, their nontraditional counterparts experience worse working conditions, lower levels of satisfaction, higher levels of stress, and sexual harassment (Mansfield et al. 1991). Rosell, Miller and Barber (1995) found that in 103 fire departments nationwide in the United States, women firefighters who

52 Italic mine.
53 This study compared tradeswomen, transit workers and school secretaries; utilizing mail questionnaires.
were sexually harassed were more stressed, afraid to come to work and used more sick leave to avoid work than non-sexually harassed women. Although sexual harassment can rear its ugly head in all jobs, Walshok (1981) points out that

“The problem of sexual harassment appears to be far more direct and ‘up front’ in the blue-collar environment than in an office environment, where it is often veiled in innuendo and polite suggestions. The blue-collar milieu both encourages and discourages this kind of behavior because it is characterized by rougher language and more physical aggressiveness. Thus a woman who is aggressive and uses obscene language may be seen as an easy target, but she can also use the tolerance for this kind of behavior to her advantage” (259-60).

A theory to explain these behaviors is that incumbents within the male-dominated blue-collar workplace may be accustomed to certain customs, which can be classified as uncomfortable or hostile by female employees.

As MacKinnon (1997) posits, the link between men’s domination and sexuality is evidenced in pornography, sexual harassment and rape as they become normalized masculine behaviors. The expression of ‘masculinity’ in various ways helps to maintain a gendered workplace (Reskin and Padavic 2002). A study conducted by Ely (1995) demonstrates that the discomfort experienced by nontraditionally employed women is dependent upon the presence and concentration of other women on the job. In this study of law firms, when the concentrations of female partners was higher (fifteen percent or more), gender differentiation was not as severe and women were less likely to experience identity issues in the workplace, relative to firms with a lower percentage of female partners. In spite of the data, within the nontraditional blue-collar setting, women are likely to be employed in small numbers experiencing extreme differentiation due to an imposed (albeit unintentional) masculine standard. How do women deal with a male centered workspace? They just do!
The Job Satisfaction Conundrum

The nontraditional workspace presents an interesting conundrum, despite the negatives illustrated above; it seems that women who can find their place within the blue-collar context seem quite satisfied with their employment. Why are women not flocking in droves to the variety of opportunities in the blue-collar sector? There seems to be a social construction of the negatives and anti-blue-collar sentiment in society. Blue-collar jobs are projected to be places that are not appropriate for women. This interplay is discussed by Yoder, the “expected costs can discourage underrepresented people from pursuing non-traditional occupations…if people project negative outcomes for women in token settings, will women avoid these settings?” (1994, 158).

O’Farrell and Harlan (1982) seem to support this sentiment as they compare women in traditionally male craft jobs with women in traditionally female clerical jobs. They found that fifty percent of women in the study expected harassment if they were to shift from a traditional to a non-traditional blue-collar occupation. Social pressures on women to conform to gender standards for work generates

“a jumble of nerves, self-doubt, and contradictory emotions about tackling the new job. Warnings from friends and families—often lovers and husbands—about the extreme physical demands in store added to…anxieties. Sometimes, too, there were subtle warnings of ‘lost femininity’ in store, and the future seemed altogether too much, too risky” (Enarson 1984, 19).

Harassment of women by men is a pervasive issue in the blue-collar workplace (Appier 1998; Enarson 1984; Gruber and Bjorn 1982; O’Farrell and Harlan 1982; Mansfield et al. 1991; Street et al. 2007; Swerdlow 1989). Palmer and Lee (1990) find that male co-workers report favorable treatment by other male employees as opposed to
women who report unfavorable treatment at work. Furthermore, Street et al. (2007) investigated gender differences in sexual harassment of military personnel and it was not only found that women experienced higher frequencies of sexual harassment, had an increased likelihood of all types of sexual harassment and being a woman meant the greatest risk of the worst types of sexual harassment but it meant that women would also be privy to the negative mental health consequences respective of those experiences.

It would be assumed that all of these real and ‘expected’ costs would diminish women’s interest in the nontraditional settings, but women continue to make their way. It is likely for landscaping these perceptions may discourage some women from entering, but for those who have a passion for this type of work, even the most undesirable conditions could not drive them away. It may have an immediate emotional effect (e.g., getting upset) but does not “drive” out women as they continue to work in these settings and move into these jobs. Padavic and Reskin (1990) found that “experiencing harassment and hostility reduced women’s liking for their…jobs, but it showed no appreciable impact on their interest in plant work” (625).

Ironically, harassment and related difficulties are not listed as the reasons causing women to be dissatisfied with their occupational choice. Rather it is the feeling they are not being treated as “workers” but as women first. Grant, Garrison and McCormick (1990) present evidence that increased satisfaction of women police officers is related to their “perceived utilization,” such that they have equal access to special assignments and training. In a review of the literature they note that policewomen are often assigned to

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54 Men are not exempt from experiencing sexual harassment and it has been noted that at high levels of harassment for men, associations with negative mental health were stronger for men than women. However, the frequency and likelihood of these experiences are either quite low or in my opinion perhaps other spurious variables are responsible for the data outcomes for men (Street et al. 2007).

55 For the work conditions (like the outdoors) or the monetary remuneration.
non-patrol tasks\textsuperscript{56} and are underutilized,\textsuperscript{57} therefore not treated as their male counterparts, not treated as “police officers” (Grant et al. 1990; Martin 1980). Assignments distributed on the basis of gender are not uncommon and when the woman incumbent realizes this she can feel considerable stress and dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction diminishes when women have a sense of equality in their position and assignments.

The challenge lies in staying power for blue-collar women. If women enjoy their work, the cons of the nontraditional setting are outweighed by the pros for women who stay in these fields. Lillydahl’s (1986) findings maintained that women in nontraditional jobs ultimately were satisfied with their jobs despite the negative experiences. Furthermore, “in the absence of hostility, women were more satisfied with the blue-collar craft jobs than with the white collar clerical jobs” (O’Farrell and Harlan 1982, 261). In addition, “Statistics show that, on average, female workers in non-traditional jobs can increase their earnings by 20 to 30 percent through employment in the skilled trades\textsuperscript{58},” (United States Department of Labor 1991). Monetary remuneration is not the sole motivation for women entering these types of jobs.

Nontraditionally employed women were attracted foremost by the high wages but also noted their work as “challenging, interesting and satisfying” (Lillydahl1986, 320). Similarly, the new entrants to United States forestry service noted challenge, exertion and ‘that good tired feeling’ as an upside, things not found in many other employment sectors (Enarson 1984). Interestingly, a common thread enhancing overall job satisfaction is the social support of male coworkers (Enarson 1984; Lillydahl 1986; Walshok 1981). However, Padavic and Reskin (1990) found that ‘socially congenial working

\textsuperscript{56} They cite (Jenerett 1977; Horne 1979, 1980; Price 1982)
\textsuperscript{57} They cite (Hoffman 1980)
\textsuperscript{58} Also noted by Swerdlow (1989).
relationships” did not strongly influence women’s job choice. There are many questions as to why women choose the landscaping profession and remain in this type of job. I wish to explore what negatives, if any, do these women have to overcome and/or tolerate during their careers?
Chapter IV
From Seed to Blossom: Methodology

This chapter will describe the research techniques and procedures utilized, relevant ethical issues, as well as provide a dialectical account of the implications of feminist knowledge production.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was utilized for this case study of women in the landscaping occupation, which should complement the existing literature by providing a potential modification of identity theory. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a grounded theory strategy was utilized for data collection and theoretical formulation, which is a reflective process of analysis. It is a constant process of analysis during data collection representing affirmation, confirmation, rejection, and the rebuilding of concepts and theory. I feel that this approach provides a powerful method for data analysis and the creation of new theoretical classifications. Furthermore, the data was collected through the use of in-depth qualitative interviews; as well asking respondents a series of basic demographic questions. The current literature on women in blue-collar, nontraditional jobs does not look at the landscaping field in particular, which possesses many unique characteristics when compared to its counterparts. The intent of the research is to provide preliminary empirical data and an initial theoretical framework to enrich the deficient literature and make a contribution to the work on women in blue-collar occupations.
Sampling Procedure

The data was collected in the format of formal, qualitative semi-structured interviews with women in the landscaping field. “Interviewing rescues events that would otherwise be lost…most of the significant events of people’s lives can become known to others only through interview” (Weiss 1994: 2). My sample included owners, laborers and specialists who all have had hands-on experience in the field of landscaping. The manual labor, hands-on experience is important, and most owners will have to work in the field at some point. The sample was generated through using nonprobability-sampling techniques to yield forty-five women in the landscaping occupation. Due to the difficulty of locating women within this field I first relied on convenience sampling to locate available subjects I knew personally and then used snowball sampling to generate additional contacts. This type of sampling technique makes use of available respondents and then seeks new contacts via the initial interviewees. Based on a pilot study, I attempted to construct as much as possible a balanced sample in terms of levels, length of employment and types of landscaping jobs: owners and workers. For the purposes of this study I felt that these were the most important variables to gain a profound initial understanding of women in this type of work.

The pilot study consisted of six interviews and these respondents served as my initial contact pool from which I began to generate my sample. In addition, I initially used the telephone directory to solicit professional companies for additional respondents. Convenience sampling worked successfully. For example, a respondent was recruited by my soliciting her at a job site while she was in the process of installing flowers near my residence and from her contact I was put in touch with two additional landscapers. Also,
through extensive Internet research I came across an organization whose founder provided me with access to their database of women in horticulture in the tri-state area. This gave me the ability to expand the scope of my research beyond the New York Capital District. The most significant problem associated with research that utilizes these sampling methods is the inability to generalize the data and findings. However, the lack of any literature on women in landscaping diminishes the argument against my use of nonprobability sampling techniques.

**Interviews**

The interview schedule incorporated questions regarding family background, education, work experience, subjective and others’ perception of those experiences, identity, and sexual harassment (see Appendix E). The open-ended nature of the interview schedule allowed me to follow the subject’s responses with appropriate questions to maintain an active flowing interview. Utilizing this method, “the interviewer explores many aspects of his (the) interviewee’s concerns, treating subjects as they come up in conversation, pursuing interesting leads, allowing his imagination and ingenuity full reign as he tries to develop new hypotheses and test them in the course of the interview” (Becker and Geer 1970: 133).

A ‘flexible format’ was employed for the interviews; the interview guide questions were not followed directly. The interview itself directed the conversation and for each question to allow “…interviewees to speak freely in their own terms about a set of concerns” (Lofland and Lofland 1995: 85). According to Lofland and Lofland (1995) these narratives should be *contoured* by the respondent, allowing the subject to guide the
interview and the researcher to use follow up probing in order to obtain the appropriate depth and information (81-82).

The first of the interviews was in the context of a two-woman focus group interview because they worked together on the job. This interview was quite productive in providing rich data because each of the women served to stimulate the thinking and memory of the other. In addition, this open forum facilitated creation of the initial interview guide. The subsequent interviews were conducted on an individual basis either face to face or via telephone and each served to provide similar depth of content.

Methodologically, it has been noted that the impersonal nature of the telephone interview may inhibit respondents from fully answering questions and hinder responses to questions of a sensitive nature (Weiss 1994). In my comparison of the transcripts I found no differences in the data provided by my respondents either face-to-face or over the telephone. Actually, the telephone interviews lasted on average thirty to forty five minutes longer than the face-to-face interviews.59 What may have accounted for this lack of difference was my awareness of the importance of rapport building prior to requesting sensitive material. I have explored this point and determined technological and structural reasons as well the researcher’s qualitative interview skill. The interviews lasted from one-half to two and one-half hours.

“Although the time taken by most interviews decreases as the theory develops, the sociologist still cannot state how long all his interviews will take because a new category might emerge at any time; this emergence will call for lengthy open-ended conversations and prolonged observations within some groups” (Glaser and Strauss 1999: 76).

59 My determination is that people are not only much more comfortable talking on the phone today than in the past, but it was much easier for my respondents to schedule a block of time on the phone than it was to meet somewhere. They did not have to drive to and from the interview; many used their lunch breaks or time when they arrived home from work in the evening. I am currently working on an in-depth methodological note to discuss this further.
My goal was to have a genuine rapport with my respondents and to foster an atmosphere of ‘mutual understanding.’ During the study, the pre-interview call was the most critical. It was important for my respondents to know my background; a few times the question arose: “Why is a guy interested in such a topic? It was then my turn to indicate my professional training, genuine interest in the field, and years of experience in landscaping (See Appendix C). The initial briefing facilitated my ability to gain the trust of my potential respondents. Most of initial these conversations lasted 15-40 minutes as respondents were intrigued by this information and many administered their own interviews of me. I was sure to fully explain the intent of my inquiries, to deal with the issue of my sex/gender category, and ultimately to make the participants as comfortable with the research process as possible by answering any questions they had pertaining to the study.

It was critical to move beyond my gender and provide enough support to shift my respondents’ initial assumptions and perceptions of me from the “creepy guy” to a serious social researcher. The two important details to make this shift were that I was a seasonal landscaper myself for five years and the accolade of being the first male recipient of a Masters Degree in Women’s Studies at The State University of New York at Albany were all that my respondents needed to hear. The appreciated that I had a deep understanding of their occupation and second it is my perception that they yearned for an outlet to discuss their work lives with someone and make their voices heard (as it was my promise to them).

A few instances demanded further probing into areas of a sensitive nature or to provide deeper clarification of sensitive material; this requires a genuine bond with the
respondent. In addition, to ensure validity several respondents were given copies of an abridged dissertation manuscript for critique.\textsuperscript{60} I agree with Weiss (1994) one hundred percent that, “It is our responsibility to make their lessons known;” with as much accuracy as is possible (131).

In the grounded theory tradition, as interviews were conducted they were transcribed and analyzed in an attempt to produce general categories. “Comparing as many differences and similarities in the data as possible tends to force the analyst to generate categories, their properties and their interrelations as he tries to understand his data” (Glaser and Strauss 1999, 55). As discussed above, utilizing the grounded theory approach the interview schedules and direction of the research changed as new data were collected, analyzed, and applied to the current framework to support, contradict or direct the focus in a new direction. The interview guide went through three stages. The initial creation after the focus group, a second revision during the process of the pilot study and a final guide was created at the completion of an analytical note after interviews were completed. This process will be discussed further in the next section.

\textbf{Data Analysis}

The interviews were all tape recorded and transcribed verbatim to assist the analytic process. Grounded theory was utilized throughout the research process. The basic premise is that the data collected then guides the subsequent interview sessions through continually analyzing, ‘reflecting’ and reanalyzing the data. The essence of grounded theory is that the data collected will advance the investigation and inform the consequent theoretical construction (Glaser and Strauss 1965, 1967, 1999). To aid in

\textsuperscript{60} This was also utilized to secure a bond with my respondents, to make them feel that they are a part of the research process.
data management, coding and analyses I utilized Atlas.ti which is a qualitative data analysis software package. Atlas.ti facilitates the selecting, coding, and annotating of text. Atlas.ti also allows for the construction of a graphical network of selected passages, which provides a visual aid for the establishment of a relationship between concepts and the data, thereby assisting with data analysis. This program simplifies the physical, by hand process of coding transcripts and serves as a virtual file cabinet accelerating the analysis and provides instant recall for particular data points for examples and quotes when supporting hypotheses.

Through the pilot study data I was able to create a basic framework for understanding the field of landscaping as well as a foundation for the evolution of the interview schedule and techniques for the interview itself. The necessary changes were made to the interview guide to include the new facets of inquiry that have been discovered in the course of analysis. The justification for these additions is directly related to my theoretical assumptions and hypotheses. Some of the revisions included adding questions regarding early work and family histories, age/cohort differences, and also guiding my decisions regarding the sampling of respondents. After completing my analytical note that had a sample size of twenty one women, the interview guide was not changed. However, I modified the ways in which I engaged the actual interview. I was much more flexible and comfortable with the instrument, allowing the interview to take a natural course; facilitating the openness and comfort of my respondents. Allowing them the room to tangentially debrief me on their deepest life and work experiences, while I facilitated this cathartic outlet for my respondent’s experience, I was carefully monitoring the responses to be sure every area and theme was touched upon. Additionally, I became
aware of several areas that I needed to probe deeper to gain a greater understanding: identity, sexual harassment, and education. Theory, according to Glaser and Strauss is a process, an ever-developing entity, not a perfected product (1999: 32). Therefore, it is difficult to presuppose all of the categories, due to the character of the investigation.

Important to grounded theory is the use of the comparative method during the course of data collection and analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1965, 1967, 1999) noted the use of comparison groups to maximize credibility of the research. The use of these groups “draws the observer’s attention to many similarities and differences among groups that are important to his theory” (Glaser and Strauss 1965: 8). I compared the different job categories (gardener/landscaper, owner/worker) while connecting the analysis to social demographics, age, work and family histories, all of which are important to uncover any lines of similarity or difference between the women on any of the indicators and categories. Glaser and Strauss also note the importance of cases that do not support the classification scheme:

“When a negative case is found in a different group, and since a group is an indicator of a set of structural conditions, while reformulating his hypothesis the analyst compares the set of conditions under which it existed to the set under which it is encountered in order to find the particular structural condition(s) making for the change—which condition(s) can then be taken account of in reformulating the hypothesis. This analytic strategy is far different, more powerful, precise, and informative than comparing positive and negative cases within a single structure” (1965: 8).

The data constantly drove the theoretical arguments, and the use of comparison groups facilitated the analytic process. The use of comparison groups ultimately enabled me to generate an ideal classification scheme. It helps to situate my research within the literature through the creation of testable categories and theory for future investigation.
As a researcher I wish to honor the pact made with my participants to construct their accounts accurately. “Because meanings are contextual and interactively produced, it would be as fallacious to assume that all people in audiences always resist to posit them as spectators who are necessarily at the mercy of the properties of the texts themselves” (Ferree et al. 1999, xxvii). We are solely interpreters of our subject’s interpretation of reality, and are only afforded our own standpoint. Forty-four interviews were conducted from 2002 through 2005. Since, I was hesitant to publish the results a half-decade following data collection, as well to ensure the accuracy of my findings, I decided to interview one additional respondent for good measure. Moreover, I decided to allow my respondents, to view the findings prior to publication for their personal feedback and critique. In addition, I have assigned pseudonyms to each of my respondents to protect their confidentiality as well to maintain a human connection to their stories.

My goal is to produce knowledge and theory for this particular social location and setting. As “the theorist’s task is to make the most of his insights by developing them into systematic theory. His sociological perspective is never finished, not even when he writes the last line of his monograph—not even after he publishes it, since thereafter he often finds himself elaborating and amending his theory, knowing more now than when the research was formally concluded” (Glaser and Strauss 1999, 256).

**Ethical Issues**

Ethical considerations are critical to research that utilizes human subjects. As scientists we must assure both our subjects’ protection and our own protection as well. My research involved no deception and complete disclosure of the project’s aim was made prior to the consent procedure. The process of interview solicitation provided the
potential respondents and/or informants with a brief description of the research (see Appendix C). Once initial contact was made with a respondent, a meeting or telephone call time and date were set. I then began each of my interviews with a reading of the informed oral consent script (see Appendix D). The study and consent script have been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University at Albany, State University of New York. In addition to reading the informed consent, I began the interviews with a short description of my position, goals and knowledge of the landscaping profession. I would tell the respondents about my academic career: that I was a student and this was my dissertation project. I would state the goal for this project is to fulfill my Ph.D. requirements and later to publish portions or the entirety of the research. As discussed earlier, the participants needed to feel comfortable speaking candidly, as a portion of my research dealt with very sensitive work related issues of inequity, sexuality and harassment. These topics had the potential to bring to the surface negative emotions and feelings. As an interviewer I needed “to bear in mind that sensitivity, tact, and respect for the respondent, always important, are essential with a respondent who displays pain” (Weiss 1994: 128). As a researcher it was my responsibility to be aware of these possibilities and to express my genuine interest in the topic and allowing for an empathetic ear.

In addition, my participants were assured complete confidentiality of their responses. For the purposes of analysis and publication, all names were replaced with pseudonyms and places described were changed to protect identities and maintain confidentiality. That is a reason why I allowed my respondents access to the final project to assess for themselves the innocuous nature of the presentation of data. There were two
cases of my interviewing owners and workers of the same company, and I was very
deliberate in the handling of these cases and the confidentiality assurance was made clear
and is guaranteed for all respondents so they may feel free to provide unconstrained
responses. It would be virtually impossible from the research presentation for even those
respondents who knew each other to be able to make identifications to specific people
and or companies.

I also found that my final question allowing respondents to talk about anything
they wish provided closure to the interview process. It not only provided any additional
discourse the respondent might have on her occupation but empowered her with the
feeling of control and agency. Furthermore, following the interview I then turned off the
cassette-recorder and talked to the respondent about her experience with the process; here
I was able to again assure them of their confidentiality and be assured of their support of
my research.

Feminist Methodological Issues

It is essential that researchers first acknowledge their positions within the
institution of knowledge production. As we are researching those topics, perspectives
and experiences alien to our own reality we must become conscious of our own position.
Moreover, we cannot assume the accuracy of our interpretations and theoretical
construction because as a researcher we are situated within a particular position and
social context that ultimately shapes our point of view. In the words of Reinharz (1992)
we need to maintain:

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61 The importance of this final question will be discussed in the next section.
62 This allowed me to answer any questions they might have had and to solicit additional respondents for
the sample and allow for the possibility for a follow-up interview should any additional questions need to be answered.
“A reflexive attitude toward the entire research process from ‘problems formulation’ to ‘write up’ gives rise to psychological questions (why did I do this study?) and contextual issues (what were the interpersonal or structural effects of doing this project?)…as projects proceed, new experiences are interwoven and new voices heard. The work process of the research becomes an integral component of the issues studied. **The process becomes part of the product.** This approach is humble since the ‘findings’ are housed in the project’s specific features, rather than claimed as disembodied truth” (212).

First we must address and deal with the issues surrounding the production of knowledge in general. We must realize that the production of knowledge in and of itself can be exclusionary. The controllers of knowledge production need realize their position within the system such that it perpetuates a certain structure of inequality, a structure of privilege, a structure of exclusion. “Sociology functions simultaneously as part of the ruling apparatus and as a site for contesting relations of rule” (Collins 1998, 90). As Seidman (1998) aptly noted, as we contest these relations of rule, in the end our contestation in and of itself becomes part of the ruling apparatus. Wherever there are ideas there are interests, wherever there are claims to knowledge there is also a claim to power. We always want to know who is making the claim? Why are they making the claim? What are they getting out of the claim? What is the impact of this created knowledge and thus production of truth on the world? Ruth Hubbard (1992) clarifies the questions I pose above, as she states “scientists do not just hold up a mirror to nature. They use something more like a coarse sieve through which fall all the things they don’t notice or take to be irrelevant. The intellectual labor of scientists consists of constructing a coherent picture of the world from what they sift out as noteworthy and significant” (51).

Sociology claims however to be a general form of knowledge, but if we look at the knowledge produced by sociology we can argue that there is and has been a
masculine structure to sociological knowledge production. Is has been recognized by feminist social researchers that sociology has been preoccupied with public social life social institutions, bureaucracy, markets, economy, corporations; reflecting a masculine bias. In sociology, men have been and are part of this world and as stated above we see the world from a vantage point and that gets reflected in their sociology. Feminist sociologists have also noted the neglect of the world of women, the world of the private domestic familial household, the child-rearing and occupational female world (Lofland 1975; Ferree, Lorber and Hess 1999; Smith 1987a, 1987b). Smith (1987a) argues that the only way for us to understand a socially constructed world is to ‘know it from within’ and therefore she calls for a feminist sociology that places women’s lives at the center that facilitates the creation of their own forms of knowledge that represent their experiences, values and everyday lived experiences. To also aid in this purpose I have added a query where the respondent can present any material she might think is useful to the public. The responses to the final question were tape-recorded as well and converted into their own appendix section, which is my token of appreciation for the participants (see Appendix A). In addition, this is a key tenet of feminist research, to provide a voice for the voiceless—I feel it is my duty to provide that forum for each and every one of my respondents in their own section. Some of the respondents may not appear in the body of the analysis thereby the appendix allows for their recognition in the project. My respondents were quite surprised to be asked this, and had no problems having their thoughts and opinions in writing; their chief concern was if they were saying the “right”

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An example from Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) “This object is society as part of a human world, made by men, inhabited by men, and, in turn, making men, in an ongoing historical process. It is not the least fruit of a humanistic sociology that it reawakens our wonder at this astonishing phenomenon”(189).
things. I assured them that anything they said from their heart was all that I could ask of them to provide.

The Male Feminist Dilemma

Furthermore, I must acknowledge my maleness and privilege at the inception of this research, but also my feminist standpoint and objectives for this study. I feel it is necessary to acknowledge a recent publication regarding men conducting “cross gender” research. I am in agreement with Schilt and Williams (2008) that men can and do make significant contributions to the literature on women, while simultaneously challenging the gender order and “binaries that organize our world” (225). I further agree that some ethnographic research may be more difficult to conduct as a male, e.g. restroom etiquette for women, or as they note, sorority houses. What I do not agree with was their emphasis on the major reactions both socially and culturally to studying gender and women’s studies; their emphasis on “social opprobrium” is not only going too far but their piece is entirely out of touch with contemporary sociological inquiry and the twenty-first century. Perhaps I am the exception to their rule, but have never received negative reactions nor was there ever a barrier, other than my initial rapport building with my research participants. As illustrated earlier with the curiosity of my interest in gender studies by my respondents and their questioning of my intent and goal of the research. However, once they were aware of my intentions and credentials, they were quite happy and willing to participate.

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64 See interview guide.
65 My academic career choices have always been commended based on my gender. I feel that as a male feminist and gender specialist, I am not limited but ultimately more marketable within a patriarchal social structure.
As a researcher I must be careful not to impress my feminist viewpoints on my respondents; this is especially relevant during the process of data interpretation—to not assume anything. Moreover, though it is important to acknowledge these notions and perspectives, it is not always necessary to conduct an intensive taxonomy prior to action. As Butler (1995) states:

“The claim that every political action has its theoretical presuppositions is not the same as the claim that such presuppositions must be sorted out prior to action. It may be that those presuppositions are articulated only in and through that action and become available only through a reflexive posture made possible through that articulation in action” (129).

The feminist standpoint can be a vehicle towards freedom and equality for all people, if you are working on developing theories that privilege the women’s standpoint than you are ultimately helping all of society (Hartsock 1997). I acknowledge my presuppositions but enter each interview setting with a feminist standpoint. The purpose of each interview is to enter into a conversation with the ultimate goal of empathetic listening and understanding. Furthermore, the most important goal of my study is to realize and represent correctly the position and standpoint of my research participants. One might argue that my knowledge will be produced by an “outsider;” someone who has no familiarity with or undergone these particular experiences. However, I feel the key to this argument is true empathetic understanding. This may provide me with fuller accounts of these experiences based on my standpoint and questioning. Arguments may be made regarding a man conducting this research, such that he may be unable to elicit rich data because of the lack of a gender connection to the subject and material.

66 There was an instance of this while conducting the pilot study. An issue arose where I assumed that my respondent would perceive sexual harassment negatively and she surprisingly noted that she would welcome a “sexual” comment if it were positive. So I am much more aware of my own stance during the research process.
Interestingly, I initially felt this way prior to conducting my research and found the opposite result. My participants were more than eager to provide me with extended descriptions of quite sensitive information and also allowed for the probing and delving deeper into this “uncomfortable” subject matter.67

Through my training in the Sociology of Gender and Women’s Studies I have acquired the tools necessary for this task. Possessing an extensive background in feminist theory, methodology and research allows me to appreciate and value the perspectives and experiences of my respondents. It has been noted that even the most well-intentioned and informed feminists may have trouble conducting qualitative research. “Notwithstanding this concern for mutual understanding, feminist interview-based research is unable to guarantee that the interviews will not be misunderstood or rejected in the research process…’gender is not enough’”(Reinharz 1992, 25-6).

Recognizing this, I found it important before each interview to make my participants fully aware of the subject matter and the objectives of the research (See above ethical issues).

Moreover, I feel that my gender-specific perspective may be viewed as a positive trait, enhancing data collection, analysis and theory building. For instance, I may have acquired fuller accounts based in my naiveté. My lack of awareness of the woman’s experience first-hand affords me the lack of assumptions based on that experience.

Simply, not knowing what it is like in these situations, I cannot assume, therefore my respondents must tell me.

67 Eg. Issues of sexual harassment, sexuality, death.
The Impact of Knowledge

On the other side reflexivity urges the researcher to consider the effects and impacts of the research throughout the process. As the research nears completion, the questions arise and it gets more troubling. Social theory and social analysis is part of an ongoing struggle in society to understand and to shape society. The social conflicts are not solely pertaining to material power, distribution of resources, class conflict, etc. It is also about discursive conflicts; the ‘contestation’ of the discursive revolves around conflicts over how to define, how to think about something, which view is right or should be promoted, who has the authority to speak about certain issues. The argument is that theory and social analysis are situated and we always theorize and analyze the world from a perspective. The ideas that are produced about the world are going to be stamped by the ways we are in the world which are ultimately going to be a part of the world and to shape and form the world (Seidman 1997). The main precept of the contention is that when ideas are present there are interests, ideas then translate into desires and when claims to knowledge are made there is also a claim to power.

Knowledge is socially productive and there is an integration of knowledge and power. Wherever there are ideas, there is interest and desire, wherever there is claims to knowledge there is claims to power. We are interested in who is making the claims and what are they acquiring as a result of the claim to knowledge. There were “commodities” riding on the claim to knowledge by sociologists, on the establishment of a scientific knowledge; there were resources, institutional legitimation, institutional support, department expansion and status in the academic realm. According to Seidman (1997), “Cultural elites produce representations and discourses which shape images of self and
community and political struggles”(141). Elites, politicians, bureaucratic institutions began to investigate and invest in sociology becoming a science because the discipline could provide “power” to these constituents. I hope this research accurately reflects my participants and my true intent to empower blue-collar women. I would like to close with a quote from Bordo:

“Academics do not usually like to think of themselves as embodying the values and preoccupations of popular culture on the plane of high theory or intellectual discourse. We prefer to see ourselves as the demystifiers of popular discourse, bringers-to-consciousness-and-clarity rather than unconscious reproducers of culture” (1997: 346).

Unrealistic Expectations

As a neophyte researcher I feel we have unrealistic expectations towards our dissertation work that we are going to be the next XYZ, in my case, Erving Goffman or Cecil(a) Ridgeway. It is this idea that in and of itself made it difficult for me to wrap my mind around this dissertation work. How would I be compared to _____? What will people think? How much will my committee dislike? Am I good enough? Do I deserve this? It took me about nine years to have the confidence in not only my prose, but to finally whole-heartedly accept myself as a sociologist period. I have always found myself on the defensive side of the podium and can now finally feel ready for the final

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68 In some ways the academe has expectations that in some ways are difficult for some to even make it to the level of ABD, let alone complete an original research project. One terminal graduate student colleague noted to me before their leaving the program that they could not wrap their minds around not being able to complete their best work “all the time” . I found that quite interesting and that comment always stuck with me, in that I took that student’s comment and decision and used it as a mantra to ALWAYS strive to do my best work, my personal best within the constraints and expectations; if I happened to fall short then I would deal with the consequences as they came. I personally feel achieving a doctoral degree is less about ability, though above average intelligence is by default a requisite, but it is more about commitment to a long term goal, and making a tremendous personal sacrifice, especially in the area of opportunity cost, in the world of capitalism and materialism some are unwilling to bear that proverbial cross. How did I make it this far? The answer is not so simply but in addition to average intelligence, being part of a phenomenal department with equally exceptional role models, fantastic mentors, fellow graduate students role models (many of whom who have established themselves in the academe), personally possessing an unwavering commitment, determination, perseverance and lastly having phenomenal cheerleaders at every turn.
defense of this project. My findings, though in the grand scheme of the world in general, the disciplines of sociology and women’s studies, these are minor additions; no ground breaking or front page news worthy items. However, the project in and of itself demonstrates my knowledge of the discipline, my ability to follow the guidelines of both the scientific method and American Sociological Association and to ultimately produce an original research project.

My initial anticipated expectations were sustained through this research; landscaping yielded complementary and supporting data to the existing literature on blue-collar women, yet having its own unique characteristics. However, I do caution the reader as noted above that the exploratory, non-random, qualitative nature of this research render the results ungeneralizeable to the general population of female landscapers in the United States. However, using grounded theory and reaching relative theoretical saturation I will report empirical generalities found within the data. The next two chapters present the findings of this research study. Chapter 5 presents the data and analysis on the women’s narrative of their background, work history and experiences. In addition, the chapter will highlight both the positive and negative consequences of being a woman in a male dominated work environment, e.g. sexual harassment and chivalry. As well, the chapter will highlight that despite the negative experiences, women in landscaping are quite satisfied with their jobs and that landscaping provides many opportunities not present in other occupational contexts. Chapter 6 explores sexual harassment, coping strategies and identity theory; exploring the gendered nature of their lives in and out of work. Finally, Chapter 7 provides summary as well hypotheses for the future of women in nontraditional employment.
Stereotypes, attitudes and views regarding gender and occupations have their origins to a degree in socialization and are also conditioned by daily experience. The traditional thoughts and assumptions of the landscaping field are clearly stated by Camellia:

“Landscaping has a problem with not being recognized as an official profession. So it’s very much a guy with a pickup kind of view that most people have of landscapers.”

As discussed earlier, stereotypes are built into the conventional wisdom and consequently deviations from the norm will be recognized. For women in the landscaping profession, their presence alone represents difference. Therefore it proves difficult for them to avoid scrutiny and simply they are easily noticed.

**How did they get here?**

While women’s experience within the context of their employment and occupational context represents the main query, it is important to understand how the women came to choose such a rare career with regard to their gender. To provide a full account of the female landscaper, I decided to take a life-history, narrative, or social biography approach to my interviews. Prior to discussing how and why they ultimately “found” landscaping as a profession, it is important to understand who these women are. The best way to understand an individual (or any other social phenomenon), we must understand the links between history and biography (Mills 1959).

The data supported my initial gender-biased hypothesis (and what most lay people may believe) that I expected the women who do “men’s work” to be (and *were*) more likely to have been tomboys growing up. Yes, almost all of the women in the study
were self professed tomboys growing up. It is important to define the term to avoid confusion and assumptions. It didn’t mean that they were anti-female, stereotypically butch/masculine, what we think of as the polar opposite of feminine, but they simply engaged in activities that were and still are thought of as “male”: e.g., playing in the dirt, with bugs or farm animals, hiking, stickball, etc. Also, this categorization does not imply that they did also not engage in “female” pursuits as many of my respondents did; they enjoyed playing with (“Barbie”) dolls, makeup and pretend house play. Dahlia serves as representative example of the women in the study:

“Yes, very much so and our family was always divided, the boys and the girls, because it was just I think easier for my parents to break us into two mini families and so it would always be like the girls were the girls and the boys were the boys, but I was the one that would always cross the line and like I’d be with the girls, but then I’d want to do what the boys did because they kinda had more fun I thought than we did so I was involved with a lot of things with my brothers, playing sports, whereas my other sisters were not playing sports and even in terms of the horticulture, planting trees and things like that. I always participated in that with my dad.”

In addition, almost all of the respondents were active in the brownies, girl scouts and or sports. Often, it was said their sports and athletic participation was a co-ed experience, especially to those respondents forty and over, when they were growing up there was not the same opportunity to engage in organized athletics as exists today for young girls. These early childhood pursuits had an ultimate impact on their career choices as the majority noted that they wished to have jobs that kept them in touch with nature and to be outside. A connection with nature and the environment was not only a common thread of importance but a source of job satisfaction for every single woman in

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69 Even when a woman in the study did not call herself a “tomboy” specifically they were all engaged in some the activities considered under the auspice of a tomboy. For example, common activities for these women were playing in the dirt, working on farms and related tasks like hiking. Biking and Girl Scout membership were mentioned by the respondents though they are not under the “tomboy” umbrella, they deserve mention as they are both “active” outdoor pursuits.
my study. They made it a point in their interviews that they did not wish to be restricted to the confines of a white (or pink) collar job and constricted by wardrobe. Just as Elodie stated immediately when asked what she enjoyed about her job, “Being outside. Not having to wear pantyhose.” Furthermore, all of the business owners, with the exception of one, made it clear that what they hated most about their jobs was the office work and book-keeping components.

Individuals in society take different roads to get to their destination in the work world. As Walshok (1981) notes, “the process of moving into jobs is a complex interaction of personal orientations, structural opportunities and events, and probably a certain amount of luck” (134). There are many paths and notable differences between how these women first became involved in the landscaping industry.

College education is the current norm in the field; especially for the specializations: ornamental horticulture, plant science and landscape construction. However, there are no mandatory credentials to work in the field. The only required certification needed, to my knowledge, is for pesticide application. The 1993 U.S. Department of Labor Handbook on Women Workers notes that women’s overall college enrollment increased 15 percent. The trend continued, between 1999 and 2009, the number of women enrolled in postsecondary education increased forty percent, exceeding the rate for men by five percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). This may represent a possible shift within the social structure and the occupation towards credentialization. My data illustrates quite clearly that all of the women, with the exception of two, have advanced levels of higher education. All of the women interviewed that were established in their careers all have continued their education, as it
was their passion and interest to know as much as they can within the field. Hanako clearly notes the common trend of continuing education within the landscaping profession

“…there’s a lot that I have yet to learn, a lot of certifications that I’d like to achieve…The letters, they mean a lot in today’s society.”

It helps for these women to be “overqualified” and “overeducated” as noted previously in the other male dominated fields, the ability to prove to their potential customers that they are not only capable of completing the tasks but possess expert knowledge.\(^70\)

The women in the study have varied work histories, which can be compartmentalized in one of three different routes, voluntary/involuntary choice, and or serendipity. One group of women decided to go to college for horticulture and during their college tenure gained work experience. Other women had some of their first jobs in the business as laborers and learned their presently held skills on-the-job. As Ione, a twenty year veteran to the business provides a description of her early beginnings in landscaping, moving from mowing lawns and annual flower planting with her first employer to working in a maintenance capacity, doing edging, pruning, and those types of tasks. She was immediately promoted to an autonomous position after a short period of time as she states:

“The second company, the first year I was just dumped on a job site and told to do it and you had to figure out how on your own. After the first year he just cut me loose and said go do it. I had to estimate the job, I’m like “But I don’t know how.” He said, “you will learn” and I did. And you learn fairly quickly (she laughs), it was sink or swim, he just threw us in and that was it, you’re on your own, do it. Most of the times it came out ok.”

\(^{70}\) This point will be discussed further in this chapter.
In addition, some respondents had very little choice in their profession and were either born or married into professional horticulture. As did Camellia who began her career at a family owned nursery where she experienced fast-track mobility:

“I went from laborer, knowing nothing, to the manager in five years…I learned everything I know about the industry, starting that way. From plant knowledge…to retail, to customer service, IPM, organics, chemicals.”

Presently, she is working for a landscaper as an office manager, a customer representative and a landscape gardener. Linnea, in the early years played an active part in laboring but takes a more traditional female role in the family business, handling the bookkeeping. Although she notes:

“…there was a great part of me that wanted to help him (in the field), when we were low on labor…So it helps if you can get out and be part of the productive part, than part of the excuse-making part…so after a couple of properties I could pretty much go on my own.”

Finally, some women began their landscaping careers later in life through a series of interesting turns and also gained their knowledge on the job. These women came from the white and pink collar occupations, as well, several were unemployed and landscaping was “just” a job at the time and grew both literally and figuratively on them.

Nydia, like many others had little or no experience at the beginning of their work lives in the landscaping industry. She is well on her way towards expertise and autonomy, with only five months in the business she has learned enough about her job and supervises a crew of her own. She discusses the intricacies of planting flowers:

“Plant flowers, its not just planting flowers, its not just sticking them in the hole, you have to arrange it to look good…but the guys think it is, that’s the way guys think it is, dig the hole, stuff it in, dig the hole, take it out of the planter, pop it in, dig the hole, take it out of the planter pop it in… I’ve learned to pay attention to detail, that’s very important.”
Overall, interviews parallel Walshok (1981) who notes that it seems that the work experiences and the consequent presentation of opportunities “…seemed more crucial to the development of their vocational interests than advance planning, preparation, or reinforcement from a teacher, parent, or counselor” (132). Simply, landscaping and horticulture found most of the women through ascription, opportunities or accident.

Furthermore, it was through their initial (and sometimes multiple) employment positions where they learned the necessary skills allowing them vertical mobility in the industry. A number of the respondents own their own business and a few since the initial interviews have moved on to start their own successful small business. Now that we know where these women came from and how they came to find this occupation, we can move to their experience on the job.

**The Gendered Terrain**

As discussed in the literature review and as is obvious to even the novice sociologist; the social order has a logical way of being organized on many levels. And gender itself is not simple; I prefer to think of gender as a construction, a process and relationship. Gender is one of the most significant and overt ways in which society is structured, those cases that deviate from the norm and are readily recognized as anomalous.71 Highlighting Kanter’s (1977) research on tokenism and virtually every piece on women in work, the respondents in this study all acknowledged that they were perceived as different while simultaneously acting according to the gender standards,

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71 This study focuses on Western-based norms and culture. However, it should be acknowledged that every culture around the world is structured with inherent gender codes.
following the appropriate rules set for their gender by the conventional norms in our society. Sharon aptly states,

“I mean outside of work women and men are different, but I think when it comes to sharing the same job and I don’t know, I can’t quite explain it. I don’t know why the many different guys I’ve worked with acted the way they did, you know but (she laughs)...I mean in a way it’s because I am different, you know that I’m not one of the guys”.

As well Hanako noted, “You know I am a girl”, highlighting that she was different in some way, in the context of explaining away gender differences by asserting herself as so. A significant finding was that these were not exceptions but the rule for the women that I interviewed, every single woman in some way shape or form identified themselves in a gendered context.

On a methodological level, I expected overt gendered presentations, pro-feminist accounts and deliberate gender bias; however when I pursued below the superficial levels of explanation that was initially provided by the women, probed towards deeper inquiry into their identity constructions, this was not what I received at all. Yes, the women knew their position as women and they knew they were treated differently because of it. However it seemed they did not see beyond those basic and standard gendered social constructions, and they were not only conforming to cultural expectations but reproducing it. Simply, the women knew they were the minority, figured out the path of least resistance and accepted it. There were only two women in the study that acknowledge being feminist, active in pursuing a pro woman, anti sexist agenda.

The data pointed towards similarities between the women and racial ethnic minority issues. Racial minorities find themselves in difficult situations and experience

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72 Moreover, we will see later that the women will try to be one of the guys as well, walking the identity tightrope.
identity issues because of the immense social pressures and negative stigma present in a white dominated hierarchical structure. Therefore, these women, even though they were all white, being socialized in a patriarchal society, the women in the study showed this negative affect towards other women, hence themselves. As Linnea, who is the co-owner of a large landscape company, highlights this gendered bias against her female employees when stating that women are “different,” that women foster and call for a different appropriation within the company.

“I think when you employ women there’s more emotion than you would tend to think, you know you don’t get calls from guys crying on your shoulder but you get them from women.”

“Gender-appropriate behavior” is important because violations may raise questions at the individual level: questions regarding character, motives, and predisposition (West and Zimmerman 1987: 142). Therefore, women who take on traditionally male positions are questioned not only about their motives, but also their ability to complete the respective tasks successfully.

Women usually have to go above and beyond the call of duty to prove their knowledge of the field, sometimes both intellectual and physical capacities. Crisanta points out directly, as eighteen other respondents did that there is a constant examination and questioning of their competence in the field.

“Well, I think that generally the assumption is I have to prove I have plant knowledge and people test me more than I noticed them testing a male counterpart…(I’m) not at all well received when it comes to any kind of physical labor in the garden. I’m not a small person, you know, I’m 5’7”. I’m of average height and weight and I’m 42, I’m in excellent health but if I jump down in the hole to move the bush, they get very upset about that.”

Indirect data analysis points towards a self-loathing, which is common among racial-ethnic minorities who do not like themselves on some level because of the negative stigma attached to their status. I did not come upon this notion early enough to visit the connection directly; the closest my data gets towards this negative affect is the gender bias as illustrated below.
The token/outsider is a representative of her group, of women as a whole not just themselves (Kanter 1977). Thus, women in nontraditional employment settings can be considered tokens and as a result deviant because of their gender. The concept of “double-deviant” suggests “…that token women deviated first, from the master status of gender by virtue of their femaleness and, second, from occupational norms by virtue of their occupational pursuits” (Yoder 1994: 151). The common statements from customers and passersby to the women in the study are: “You, you are going to do that? Are you sure you can handle it? Have you ever done that before? An interesting point made by many respondents was the skepticism came from both men and women. Sharon encapsulates the mutual sentiment of over thirty respondents by stating:

“Questioning your abilities, I often hear that too. Are you going to be able to do that? Can you handle that? Just like the same type of thing, they don’t think I’m going to be able to do the job and that’s why I like to make sure that I can and I try my hardest to do it”.

These women and other deviants face structural, cultural and interactional barriers in the male-dominated workplace. As Kanter (1977) showed, the token is easily differentiated from her counterparts, but must endeavor to have her achievements noticed (Kanter 1977: 216). The landscaping woman is always noticed, always scrutinized and questioned. A woman in the white-collar arena can disappear into the forest of cubicles, whereas the landscaping woman is outside for all of the public to view, examine and most often interrogate, as will be discussed in the next sections.

**The Capable Token: I CAN do that!**

Gender differences and stereotypes are clearly embedded within the conventional wisdom. As illustrated by the repeated (almost daily) questioning of the competence and
ability of the women landscaper. Every woman in the study noted that the public and especially men were hesitant and skeptical about their abilities and knowledge to complete various tasks. Female landscapers engage their work in the same manner. They work very hard both on and off the job. As Leilani states,

“I take courses, I take probably three courses a year. I’m always taking courses at college. I’m always going to lectures. I’m always reading books. And one of the things I love so much about this profession is that you can never know it all. There’s always more to learn, always learning.”

Continuing education is a common thread for most of the women in my study, especially the younger cohort, in obtaining certificates, taking college courses, attending workshops and acquiring pesticide application licenses. Consequently, women within the male dominated occupations must not only work harder and outperform their male counterparts, but must also make many more sacrifices (e.g., family and personal relationships) to gain comparable positions (See also Hochschild 1997; Lumsden 1995; Pierce 1995; Spencer and Podmore 1987). In addition to the sacrifices noted above, women must also consider opposition to the structure or modification of their behavior to fit the hegemonic male standard.

Women in this study usually feel forced to go above and beyond at times to prove their physical or professional prowess; for example, performing tasks as fast as possible or to utilize esoteric horticultural knowledge. As is similarly noted in the literature about tokenism, there is a need for the token to prove their abilities to the doubting Thomases. It is imperative for the token to prove their abilities because they are representing their entire group or category to that particular audience (Kanter 1977). One of the principal struggles for a woman within a nontraditional occupation like landscaping is the constant disbelief and doubt which represents a persistent daily hurdle. Zinnia’s story is one of
more than thirty I could have chosen to include here\textsuperscript{74}. Her example is by far the greatest and most ironic as the disbelief comes from her own husband.

“I don’t know. Many times I, what I hear the most is, ’you can’t do that.’ I hear that, I heard that constantly last year…You can’t do that and I was there with a saw and I was there, you know…even after I did that whole job, I was surprised that my husband says to me…’Well, how are you gonna be able to do it again?’…From men and women, from men and women. I might be digging something in. I think that there are just as many women who are skeptical about you being able to dig a hole that big and move that plant as there are men.”

The women employed in nontraditional occupations will be continually met by skeptics. These individuals lack confidence in their abilities because they have no other experiences to have them think otherwise. Similarly, when Ione is working on a larger contract demanding a larger crew, she is forced to hire additional temporary labor (men).

To encounter a woman landscaper is an infrequent occurrence and to encounter a woman that is the crew leader or owner is even less. Here she describes the reaction of a customer to the crew on the job site:

“You mean people commenting. It happens fairly often. And usually what would happen when I had a guy who was running the crew for me, especially if it was a new customer, they would go and talk to “him” (quotations for emphasis) thinking “he” (quotations for emphasis) was the boss. He would have to say “you gotta talk to her.”

“\textbf{And what was their reaction?}”

“Oh (she pauses for a second) Oh! (she then laughs as she tells me the rest of the story and several others).”

\textsuperscript{74}Nydia had an interesting theory that is important to include as several respondents considered age in their reasoning and understanding of the customer and public’s negative perception of female landscapers. Several thought that it was the “older men” who were set in their traditional ways. However it may be a social class as well.

“I’ll tell you, most of the time it’s the customer, just to generalize, the customers that don’t take to me right away are white-collar men, think they can do everything themselves (she laughs) between the ages of 35 and 45; I get the old guys who are you know puttering around the house, retired 10 years ago, decide they want to fix something or add on, they’ll talk to me like “Oh she’s a specialist, no problem.” It’s odd for me to see that because most of the people that are 35-45 grew up with the feminists and they still talk to the men.”
There are similar instances noted by all of the women in the study, the harrumph of doubt exhaled by men, most often after finding out that the woman is the crew-leader, manager or owner. Camellia summates

“Well, sometimes I get: Is your boss around? And then what do you say. And when I was at the nursery, if people didn’t like our policy they would demand to speak to the manager. I would just put the phone down and then pick it back up (we both laughed during the interview). But what would their reaction be? Just what you would imagine, you know the harrumph kind of thing: “You, are the manager, I’m never coming there.”

According to Ridgeway (1997), what are needed are more of these gender-disconfirming situations to break the embedded stereotypes and the female landscaper is a fantastic archetype to assist in the breaking of conventional myths.

Ironically, even though all of the women in the study “are” able to successfully complete the masculine/male tasks\(^75\) that are more commonly done by men; they get channeled by executive choice to engage the more gender “appropriate” tasks and in some cases, the most undesirable of tasks. As noted previously, some women have chosen this career; others have simply ended up there. Consequently, in addition to being thought of as an outsider, not wired or built for this type of work, there exist particular tasks and jobs that are gendered within the landscaping profession. As Reseda states:

“When you’re going in there to do flowers as opposed to doing something more physical, I think that they (the customers) just assume you know what you’re doing. You know, if I were in there saying ‘I’m gonna go take your tree down’ or something like that they might look at you a little odd.”

However, most of the women note there are (or were) certain tasks allocated to the female staff. Women are not only channeled into the “female tasks” but this usually

\(^75\) And have mentioned that they have done these other tasks in various capacities, pruning, mowing.
means doing the “shit work”\textsuperscript{76} and this is not only figuratively but literally in an example that Sharon details:

“...the customer has a very nice landscape and a dog who likes to crap all over the landscape, which you would think that when you spend that much money on a landscape (a person with a nice house like that should either not be lazy and let their dog shit in the yard or pay somebody to walk it if they have that much money) or take it out on the road and they don’t want dog crap all over the place then its their dog, their responsibility that’s how I feel. Its one thing that we do landscaping and take care of your lawn but we aren’t dog keepers, we don’t clean up after dogs, we’re not a dog cleaning service and I understand that for the mowing guys they have to mow and that it can go through their tires and this and that, well it was supposedly for their ease of working that the dog crap had to be picked up and it got handed down from then because they didn’t want to do it. I’m not gonna do that, I’m don’t wanna, you know, and of course I didn’t want to do it but I’m not the type of person that usually complains so I get stuck with those type of jobs. A couple of weeks after that, like last time we were at their house the grass on that one strip was like three feet tall, so I called in and told them that it needed to be mowed and then I hear Jim (the owner of the company) on the radio, when the mowers were trying to explain why they hadn’t mowed it, he was like there’s supposed to be a dog scooper somewhere around there for the girls, which we didn’t know the dog scooper was bought for us to use, it’s their dog scooper for their dog and I feel that if the guys need to mow there then they should pick it up if it’s in their way because it’s not in mine”.

Landscaping is following a similar trend documented as occupations feminize, there is the subsequent ghettoization of certain tasks and jobs (Reskin and Roos 1990). We see occupational segregation in the landscaping field as gardening, planting and maintenance are the tasks that are designated appropriate for women. For all of the women in this study working as laborers, these duties make up their daily job details, with the exception of the owners and Ione who markets herself as an expert in corrective pruning.

\textsuperscript{76} The most undesirable tasks that are below the male staff, picking up dog feces, garbage, weeding are common tasks assigned to women.
Girls Rule the Earth

All of the women of the study found others making assumptions about them. Calantha, as well most of the women in the study were at the top of their employer’s list because of their training and education relative to their male counterparts.

“I was still just a college student and my employer was very knowledgeable himself, has been in the field for years but when he wanted something done right, some of the more meticulous jobs, maybe it was because I was a female too but (she laughs) that’s what he looked for”

Almost all of the women also made generalizations about men and several employed reverse discrimination in their hiring of labor. I have found that the owners of their own landscaping companies actually hire more women; because of this, only use men as supplemental labor for larger, heavier work. Accordingly, many of the women in the study made statements that their male counterparts are deficient in the “female” traits such as the qualities of neatness, detail orientation, artistic sense, and an eye for balance. Ione does, as just about every woman in the sample, explains her experiences on the job through a gendered lens and making comparisons between men and women at work by arguing that women “do it better” than men:

“It’s finesse work what we did. You know, you want it to look really nice, nice when you’re done; the edges have to be neat, no footprints in the bed, you don’t throw your cigarette butts if you smoke, you know that kind of thing. You have to be able to edge in a straight line, which unfortunately a lot of guys can’t do.

(we laugh together)

I have found in the years that I’ve been working, most of the time the girls are neater than the guys. They guys ‘ell get it done quicker but the girls will be neater, neater in terms of the overall job being done…we’ll sweep off the stones if they’re in the bed; where lots of times the guys don’t even see the stones in the bed…the guys would just walk away and leave it and its like “excuse me, you know the customer paid a lot of money for that”…I think it’s a basic difference between men and women, they (men) see it more abstractly than we do…whereas the girls are always trying to be tidy or something.”
So as men (and conventional society) are gender stereotyping women, landscaping women are likewise stereotyping and compartmentalizing men according to the popular heteronormative hegemonic standards. Women highlight in this gendered workspace the recurrent theme of the existence of a “fragile male ego”. When women rule, it upsets the traditional gender hierarchy; men are said to be very sensitive to having a woman in charge, initially at least. The women with more experience in a supervisory position specifically explained that they were very careful with new male employees. One common tactic was to not push the men too hard, while simultaneously letting them know who was the boss. Several women were cognizant of the “way” they asked the men to do things and if the men were hesitant had a variety of tactics to win their support. Jasmine describes two different strategies of dealing with difficult male workers.

“Well, I would in those instances specifically, you know, sometimes I’d try to use humor to sort of win them over or make them see that, I think one time I actually had to have a conversation with somebody and say, “Look, I’m in charge, you know, this is my project.” But I, other times, you know, I’d try to just be more sing-song with them and try to win them over and hope they don’t have a lot of attitude towards me and see that I’m not trying to be holier than them, I just want to get the job done.”

Some of the women had male business partners (usually their husbands), that too seemed to facilitate male laborers “knowing their place” and position. When Kiki experienced any difficulty she would have her husband “get on the radio” and reiterate the directives. Age did play a role in this situation as well; younger women had a much

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77 It was interesting that several women in the study did note not treating men and women differently, but those particular women too noted examples of male attrition. The more flexible women seemed to note not having trouble with men on the job.
more difficult time with male helpers. Older women noted specifically being afforded more respect by the men they worked with. Ione details the differences, when

“I was younger and they were closer, the laborers were closer to my age. At that age they had trouble with the woman as a supervisor. I don’t find that so much now, I think more because I’m older, I’m more like the mother to them. I have had a few experiences with different aged boys and men who it took a while for them to realize that I really am the boss when I’m on a job.”

Men are seen by the women in the study (as conventional wisdom espouses) as having greater physical strength, ability to work harder and faster; thus they latch onto these socialized gender differences. However, women supervisors must acknowledge the gendered nature of their workspace when working with male subordinates. I did also find an interesting difference with respect to the male-subordinate dynamic. There were several women that mentioned working with Mexican and Central American helpers, these women went out of their way to note two major differences to American males. The first was relational; these men never questioned the authority of the female supervisor, always displayed deference and never showed any disrespect (or engage the sexploiter role as will be discussed later). In addition, the women also cited these workers to be extremely focused and hardworking and lower rates of turnover. I think this is very interesting and would make a quite interesting study on masculinity

Conversely, the women do possess the race card; therefore they hold not only the supervisory position but also the dominant hierarchical position being white.

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78 It would be interesting to consider the cultural differences between Hispanic and American males working with female supervisors in the blue collar context. To explore the notion of Hispanic “machismo”, hyper-masculine role that is discussed quite frequently regarding this population. I hypothesize that perhaps for this population of immigrant workers it may either be not present and a dynamic of class and location in American culture, it is present but dialed down because of the men’s immigrant and or work status or perhaps the Hispanic machismo is simply a socio-cultural media construction due to stereotypical presentations in the media.

79 All of my respondents identified as white, with the exception of a single respondent noting she was multi-ethnic: “White/Asian/Native American”.

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Finally, the women in the study are confident that they can do the same job as men, if not better. The majority of women believed that women “did it better” than men, they were cleaner, more detail oriented and artistic than their male counterparts. Darlene saw it, as many other did, as biological innate differences “I think it’s a basic difference between men and women, they see it more abstractly than we do; where the girls are always trying to be tidy or something.” In addition, women understood their limitations but figured out their own techniques; perhaps the task will need to be completed in a different manner than men, than the way they were trained. Many respondents describe women today are not limited by their lack of strength relative to men, can complete the same tasks, however with modifications or the use of different tools. Just as women in police work or corrections described utilizing different tactics, so do female landscapers use different techniques in how they complete tasks and manage (or rule\textsuperscript{80}) their workspace. Moreover, the female supervisors and business owners all cited there was an advantage to having men on their crews to literally and figuratively “lighten the load”, to have the men there to do the heavy work and to “balance things”. Ayanna went further to acknowledge that “it might be hard on the guy” if he was with a predominately female crew.

\textbf{Independence, Freedom and the Land of Opportunity}

Landscaping is commonly a small-scale business\textsuperscript{81} and diverges from the majority of the literature on blue-collar women that examine large scale, public sector employment, e.g. firefighting, police and military work. Furthermore, as a career option

\textsuperscript{80} There were two respondents noting that “girls rule” and the notion of “girl power” was also noted by one respondent.

\textsuperscript{81} There are many large companies as well; I did interview several owners of multi-million dollar companies. However, I did not engage company size as a distinction or pursuit, though I will make several notes in this chapter.
landscaping offers women significant autonomy and vertical mobility relative to the blue-collar examples noted above and greater potential relative to the white and pink collar economic sectors.

Though landscaping is a largely owner-operated and small scale business, there are many very large companies, multi-million dollar, inter-state outfits. In those large settings, women may be sought after as companies may wish to extend opportunities to women to promote diversity.\(^82\) Hanako describes her opinions on Affirmative Action and equal opportunity:

“One of the reasons that I think that I got that internship was because I was female. I was interviewed by the largest landscape company in the United States, they had branches all over, I chose the Florida branch because I wanted to complete my internship during the winter months but the person who interviewed me was out of the Florida branch and that actually the only interview I’ve ever had. They had offered two internships to people and I guess he had done over 25 interviews, they two of us that they offered it to we were both female, we were not aware of any of the male student who got the offer but I think that might have been partially it, the largest company, they were looking for some females, they only had one account manager that was a female and she was new to the company so I think they were looking for a little bit more into the you know trying to get the E. O. E’s goin’ (she laughs)…Even at the present time; I’ve had competitors offer me positions with them and have not even met me.”

Furthermore, landscaping represents a type of work that many people do not aspire to do, whether you are male or female. It is not a job that children state as their dream job, or what they want to be when they grow up. It is a physically demanding occupation; it does not require post-secondary education\(^83\), however a certain level of general mechanical and plant knowledge are needed. For those who wish to own their

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\(^82\) In addition, companies may wish to add women in order to exploit their labor. As I have discussed women working for companies may be assigned to “different” tasks; typically women are assigned to planting flowers, mulch and cleaning; a clear and distinct movement towards the feminization and ghettoization of certain tasks as will be discussed later (Reskin and Roos 1990).

\(^83\) Though as previously noted in the chapter, from my data, female landscapers are over-educated relative to their male counterparts and engage continual education, re-education and credentialization.
own business or specialize\textsuperscript{84}, higher education and credentials are highly recommended, especially for the case of women who have to “prove” themselves day after day. As Delphine notes: “I would like to say that it’s a no brainer, it’s definitely not rocket science.” Access to on the job training, a short learning curve and profound entrepreneurial opportunities make this occupation extremely accessible to motivated and hard working women; provided they do not mind dirt, the outdoors and backbreaking physical labor.

The mental demands of the field, beyond organizational and management skills, are not taxing. For all of the women in the study one of the main positive aspects of their work was the freedom from an office and constraint of standard bureaucracy. The outdoors and the fresh air were at the top of the list. In addition, many women who had worked “indoors” hated the redundancy and regularity of that type of work. Every single woman in some way acknowledged a fondness of a diversity of tasks and the change that comes as they moved from job to job. Marx spoke of alienation and loss; this is one occupation that provides a connection to the work, many women noted the sense of accomplishment at the end of a job, e.g. to transform a space, to create and see the results of their labor\textsuperscript{85}.

Every woman enjoyed the physical challenges the job posed, several specifically stated that most people go to the gym after they go to work, and in the landscaping context their workout is part of their job. Elodie assists my transition into discussing the

\textsuperscript{84} For example, pest management with pesticides, or the greener option IPM: integrative pest management, pruning, flowers, landscape design, etc.

\textsuperscript{85} I wish to include the voice of Lillian who specifically acknowledges the alienation that others experience with their work: “I get to create and get to see a lot of change and sometimes people are doing the same repetitive thing over and over again don’t really get to see what happens with the energy they put out there and so you get to see what you are doing.”
entrepreneurial possibilities landscaping offers. She discusses below what she enjoys about her job, the creative aspect and outlet and her take on female business ownership.

“Being outside. Not having to wear pantyhose. That’s like a big factor. Being outside when the weather’s nice, you know, seeing, creating something beautiful. Like enhancing people’s lives, you know. My partner and I had a lot of fun writing our mission statement for the business, it was a way for us to identify who we are as women and as business owners too, as a company and, in fact, our logo is an image of a woman. We get tons and tons of compliments all the time. We go to trade shows and there’s nobody that has a card like ours; nobody has a picture of a woman on their card. My partner and I aren’t like, you know, it has to be women centered. We’re not into that. We just, we just feel that women can do anything men can do and we’re two women and we felt it was important to have an image that represented us. So we found this really great image from the 1920’s of this, this farmwoman, and we picked it as our logo.”

More than half of my respondents are now owners of their own businesses, as several women made the successful transition since the study began. The entrepreneurial outlet for women that is traditionally denied them within other blue-collar occupations (and the white-collar sphere), for example expensive start up costs and for a majority of women the lack of access to loans may serve as barriers (Loscocco et al. 1991). However, landscaping does not have these common barriers as Linnea started her business with “the money I had in my pocket” and Lillian was into her first season as a business owner with no difficulty. Actually, she went on to state that at this point she could not (and did not) take on all of the business that was available to her because she had made a conscious effort to keep her company small. For this occupation, the tools and supplies needed are minimal; the most expensive component noted by my respondents was the truck or van. Many women made use of their current vehicle until they could afford a work truck, and rented or borrowed larger vehicles as needed.

There was one major hurdle for the women when they were pondering going out on their own and starting a business, themselves. One woman I spoke with had been
pondering making the move for years, but just could not do it. She did not want to leave the comfort of a regular paycheck and importantly health care benefits for the unknown. The entrepreneurial women did note being very anxious and scared to go out on their own. However, once they made the decision to plant the seed, things just grew exponentially for them. Furthermore, all of the women found that they learned all they needed to know from their previous employers and work experience as Danica colorfully explained:

“I decided that I could very easily start my own business judging from the bosses I’ve had and what idiots they are, the inefficiencies and what not. I said, “If they can make money, then I can make money.” So, I decided to go it on my own and I just advertised the first year in the phone book and a couple other places and then it was word of mouth from there so I’ve never had to advertise which is really nice. I always have more work than I can handle and I do turn away some now.”

Kalina adds a note about the minimal financial investment and ease of transition to business owner:

“It wasn’t difficult at all. As a matter of a fact, I’m doing it on, the work, the shoestring of an old work boot. It’s really a very simple business to get going. I don’t think I want to tell everybody that, but it really is!”

There was not one woman who experienced difficulties or significant barriers, only success. I do not want to paint entrepreneurship to be all flowers, more so bread and roses, it is indeed hard work. It does take persistence and perseverance as Leilani describes her feelings about the arduous and constant process of building the business:

“I had this idea that I was going to have all this time off. I was going to have all this money and I used to say, I don’t say it anymore, but I used to say that if I knew how difficult it was going to be, I wouldn’t have done it…I think most people do think that, you know, the boss has, has it easy and it was a shock to realize that the boss really works harder than anyone else…still to this day I think that the employees don’t realize how hard I’m working because I’m not on the job with them…starting out it’s really been hard, to accumulate all the tools and the
trucks and the equipment...all of the office equipment. That’s been a really long process to build the business up.”

A significant facet of autonomy mentioned by all of the women in the study with children, runs counter to the “time bind” commonly experienced by working mothers (Hochschild 1989, 1997). The balance of child rearing and family responsibility was an easier task; either the women are able to work their schedule around their children or most often as many women noted, they will simply take their children to work. Zinnia describes her experience:

“Absolutely, I find it very easy. There are days that are crazy, I have a lot going on, but I can work my schedule around my children and living on Long Island, that’s pretty important. You know, my kids are in the garden. I take them with, I have girls. I only have two daughters. I take them with me anytime I go someplace.”

Also, the age of the child was not important to women as several women in the study also brought newborns along to work. As Jasmine recounts not only a time when she was still nursing her child but highlighting several points made about stereotypes in this chapter:

“Back when my son was born, was first born, I brought him with me every day, in part because I wanted to be with him and it was my business and I was also nursing, I nursed him forever and at that time, I had two young men, they were real country boys, I was a real education for them. I think having a woman as a boss and they were real country boys. They weren’t terribly sophisticated. They were good workers and I really liked them and they were planting a tree and I was holding, actually holding the baby breast feeding and you can do it discretely and these two young boys were so accustomed to it, I mean they probably never saw it in their lives and then they were so accustomed to it by the end of the season, they were planting a tree, I’m standing there nursing my son and helping them say like “Okay, the tree is crooked, you know, tip it this way, do this, da-ta-da.” And a car went by and they figured out what was going on, so then they drove around the block again, had their window down and said something, and these two country boys, like yelled something out at them:

“What’s the matter, haven’t you ever seen somebody nurse or something.”

86 As well, the topic of chivalry that will be discussed in the next chapter.
…I’ve also told the women who work for me that if they have a baby and they want to keep working for me, that I would accept that, that they could bring their babies and that we’d all pitch in and help out, that that is acceptable to me and I don’t think too many work places would tell you that and I feel pretty strongly about that because I don’t think there is enough support for moms with babies and nursing and all of that which is a quirky thing and my customers loved it when I brought my baby. They were excited and even their neighbors would come over to help take care of my kid while I worked and they were totally supportive of, taking breaks to breastfeed and having the baby on site. I didn’t have anybody complain, at least to me. So that’s another, different twist.”

Since my initial interview with Sharon, not only did she start her own successful landscaping business with her husband, but we serendipitously crossed paths while she was out working. Amidst the many flats of petunias and marigolds in her vehicle was her own little flower, her child in his car seat. It is rare to find an occupation outside of the home that affords the opportunity for mothers to spend the day with their children. Every other blue-collar job that has been studied and referenced does not afford this level of parental autonomy.87 Ironically, we see here another example highlighting that a “stalled revolution” continues, though these women are “ground-breakers” in their work, they are making strides in the public sphere, economically, however they continue to be responsible for the majority of the household labor and child-rearing responsibilities (Hochschild, 1989).

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87 I cannot think of any other job at all blue, pink, or white collar that affords this type of flexibility.
Chapter VI  
The Forest from the Trees: Findings, Part 2

This chapter will explore the on-the-job experiences of the landscaping woman from a micro level of analysis. First, I will examine their subjection to sexual harassment and advances at work and then move deeper into an understanding of their strategies for dealing with this very difficult interactional context. Second, I will assess the relationships of these women with their male counterparts at work in relation to the prior literature on blue-collar women. Finally, I will discuss the relationship and contributions of my research to both dramaturgy and identity literature.

Sexual Harassment: Overcoming the Hostility

As documented in Chapter 3, there is a high incidence of maltreatment and sexual harassment in the nontraditional occupational context. Moreover, within the context of nontraditional blue-collar employment, women’s numbers are so low that they are likely to be the only woman in many situations, similar to the white-collar token literature discussed in Chapter 1. The women of the landscaping profession have to contend with additional elements not experienced by their white-collar counterparts on the job. For female landscapers, the intersection of gender and sexuality is omnipresent as Crisanta cites that “men don’t deal with those kinds of things”.

The landscaping women are out in the trenches, literally, for all passersby to observe. Consequently, it is not just employers and customers to contend with but the public presents an element of risk. In the conversation with Linnea about harassment, I asked her if she could recount how many times she experienced any form of harassment or hostile environment issues while working. Her comments were echoed by every single woman in this study.
“Yeah, probably four or five times a season. Like when you’re out planting annuals, you know there you are bent over in a bed and somebody shouts a comment. You get whistling and whatever, but you just let it go over your head. If you don’t, it’s human nature for people to act like that.”

More than half of my respondents noted physical approaches by strange men in public spaces. In the case of Nydia, the situation was met with a confrontation. As she describes this incident:

“Horn beeps, gestures and gawking driving by they think it’s Ok. They think nothing’s wrong with this! OK, one day we were at Alfredo’s, we’re sittin’ there and I just had about enough of this guy was across the way beepin’ saying “higher, higher,” like to raise my butt higher, you know. So finally I went like that (she waves her middle finger), he goes out of his way to come into Alfredo’s to tell me that he was not trying to; that he was just trying to pay me a compliment and that “I” was rude! What is that? That’s sexual harassment to me, at that particular intersection, it was non-stop, non-stop! I was getting sick of it!”

It is important to take a moment to discuss the legal definitions regarding sexual harassment. First, is the above incident as detailed “sexual harassment” or something else? In terms of the legal definition of “sexual harassment”, it is not because it is officially a workplace, employer-employee or employee-employee phenomenon. However, if we think about the situation above literally, it “is” harassment, and is brought upon the women while at work and is as a result of their gender and denotes unwanted sexual affirmations and advances. Consequently, landscaping women are dealing with, in my opinion, a double-layer of sexual harassment on the job. Furthermore, they are unprotected by any official legal body unless the confrontation turns physical, e.g. assault. Second, as noted previously there are two types of formal sexual harassment forwarded by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: quid-pro-quo and hostile environment. The female landscapers of the study with the exception of four did not
experience actual advances, and luckily for these women, they were minor physical confrontations that were evaded. Every single woman experienced issues of sexual harassment, though they may not even consider it as such. As Ione notes being a different kind of person,

“I’m sure that I have but I’m a different kind of person. I’ve always worked with men; I come from a family with five brothers. I don’t take those things as sexual harassment that some people might jump at the chance to sue for, but I’ve never been seriously harassed. You know, no one has ever threatened my job if I didn’t do something or pressured me to do anything. You know you always hear comments; most of them are with humor. I would say there’s extremely little sexual harassment in this field.”

During the interviews it was difficult to elicit examples of sexual harassment from the women. I would ask the question in a very straightforward manner: This may be uncomfortable; I would like to ask if you have experienced any instances of sexual harassment? More than half of the time, I would get a very quick negative response, a simple “No”. I learned during my pilot study that there are two overlapping reasons that explain why women provide this prompt negative response. Either they do not understand the definition of what sexual harassment actually is and / or they have experienced these issues so many times and for such a long duration that they simply have become desensitized to the negative nature of it all together. I learned during the initial interviews that I must then probe further by first defining exactly what I meant by harassment and to providing particular examples, after which all, every single woman in the study would state affirmatively, yes those types of things did happen to me and recant their initial denial of harassing incidents during their employment as landscapers.

88 I found this very troubling, as many of the women had quite serious, legally defined examples of sexual harassment.
There can be many reasons as to why; I will discuss this complex theoretical question throughout this chapter.

Whether it is by the public or their male co-workers, female landscapers are made to feel uncomfortable at work. A hostile environment was common for nearly every woman in the study, but nearly all of the respondents did not necessarily perceive these situations and incidents as negative. My understanding based on the data is that the women had altered their sensory perception of the situation as they had spent more time in the field. As a coping strategy, the women, because they enjoyed their jobs did not allow men to ruin their career paths and paychecks. For example, the display of sexually explicit material (e.g. pornographic pictures, magazines, and calendars) by employees in lockers and in public areas is common to many male dominated settings (Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts 1995; Chetkovich 1997, Eisenberg 1998; Swerdlow 1989). Several women in the study had sexual material placed purposefully for their viewing. In the most vulgar account, Sharon had a penis drawn on her assigned pair of pruners, it had her name written on it and after hours one of the men drew the sexual image. She described

“…yes its funny now but the guy’s a jerk, a guy who was married and has children.

“You knew who it was?”

“Oh yeah, oh yeah, and I confronted him about it, everyone else at the garage knew it was him, everyone else you know talked to me about it, was like ‘he’s a jerk’ and ‘I know how you feel’ and ‘I can’t believe this happened to you’ and some of them could have been covering for him or whatever but I knew that guy was guilty.”

This woman is expressing a retrospective selective perception of the situation, as virtually all of the women did in the study. When brought back and forced to recollect the experience and describe it in great detail, the respondents were very particular about how
upset and angry they were during the ordeal. However, in the present tense and current situations the women have these coping mechanisms in place to allow them to simply brush the experiences off without any psychological trauma as was experienced earlier in their careers. The next section will further detail the time component with respect to age of the landscaping women.

**Growth Rings (Age)**

Age is an important factor in perception and actual frequency and degree of harassment experienced by female landscapers; this section will focus on the intersection of gender and age. During the course of my analysis I realized that there were notable differences between my respondents’ experiences and reactions to harassment based on their age. Blair-Loy (2001), as well as others, noted that “historical events differentially affect the structural opportunities and interpretive frameworks of different cohorts” (692). The data support this type of cohort effect acting on the women’s interpretations of their interactions, occupations and lives. However, I am not convinced that this is the sole explanatory tool in understanding the intersection. In addition to the history or cohort effect, this phenomenon can be interpreted or understood more accurately as will be demonstrated as what I would like to call “ageist sexism”. Meaning in our society women are devalued and treated poorly based on their gender, furthermore younger women are more highly prized for their sexuality; as women age in our culture (and worldwide), their sexual value decreases. Following suit, younger women experienced greater levels of harassment on the job and older women less.

The findings will be discussed in terms of the older group (>38) and the younger group (< 38). The younger group in the study were predominantly in their early twenties

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89 Citing Mannheim 1952; Whittier 1995.

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According to the data, the younger women do experience a greater frequency of on the job harassment; as Zinnia, age 34, said it happens “millions” of times.

Methodologically, it took deliberate probing to get at examples of sexual harassment from the older cohort. Common responses when asking women about harassment were that it did not occur at all or that it happened infrequently. Almost all of the older women when asked to think about their earlier experiences on the job, they would recall that it was very frequent and they used to be quite bothered by it.

Highlighting both of these points, when asked about harassment on the job, forty six year old Jasmine instead of talking about herself, comments about a younger worker’s difficulty dealing with harassment and speaks about blowing off advances. I was then forced, as in every interview with an older landscaper, to probe, in order to gain an understanding of her early work experiences relative to the present time. As I had anticipated and was the case for the others, she had forgotten how she used to feel, she too used to get upset and like the others in the study, early on it was no laughing matter.

“Well this one gal in particular gets really angry some days. She just, she’s got a short fuse anyways so, but she’ll really get pissed off. I just, I, I guess I’m older, I’ve seen so much of it and I just laugh.

Did it used to bother you?

I think it used to bother me more. I think I’ve gotten more hardened to it and, every once and a while it does get me angry, I feel like, “Oh, for heaven’s sakes, grow up.” Or how low brow or, you know, I just think it’s so stupid and immature.

When it made you, it makes you angry did it make you like upset or sad too?

Well, I mean, I, maybe a little sad like that’s, that’s where those people are at that, you know, that’s, and it also makes me sad that women are still viewed like, you know, as something, as an, you know, and obviously as a sexual object or as an object.”
Moreover, there are different standpoints on what constitutes sexual harassment for the women of the two cohorts. Linnea, thirty-eight years old, explains that some women may be more sensitive to harassment than others.

“We’ve had some instances where it’s not necessarily, it’s implied or well maybe it’s more interpreted on the woman’s part or a guy might say you look nice today and she’s thinking sexual harassment. Where that probably wasn’t the case but it still takes, you have to have the mindset that every little thing that somebody says isn’t harassment. They just might be commenting, “You look nice today.” …You get whistling and whatever, but you just let it go over your head; it’s human nature for people to act like that.”

The data shows that the younger women in the study experience the harsh reality of sexual advances more often and are constantly under siege; whereas, the older women in the study have already been through the gauntlet and do not have as many vivid notions and current instances of sexual harassment as compared to their younger counterparts. On the other hand, the younger cohort was “angry”, “pissed-off”, “upset”, etc. at these approaches and made it quite clear very quickly.

I was blindsided by one particular discovery during the course of this research. I made the assumption that all advances would be perceived by women as negative. Several unexpected comments arose from three of the older group of women as illustrated vividly by forty-five year old Camellia. She was very clear that she would welcome positive and affirming sexual compliments.

“Yes. Yes. That and nice cleavage (she laughs) which I don’t consider harassment.

Why not?

“Well because in my job, my cleavage shows and if someone thinks it’s nice I guess that’s better than if someone thought it was ugly.”
There are several explanations for these differences: history, selective memory, socialization and/or desensitization. First, the time period in which the older women were entering the occupation was in the 1980s. It was a much different climate for women in the workplace. The rules for social interaction between men and women were much different as the lines for appropriate versus inappropriate behavior in and outside of the workplace were just beginning to be drawn. Second, it may be that these women have decided not to remember certain events for their own protection, perhaps as a coping device. The younger cohort consequently was more bothered by these approaches (many were within days of the interview) as they were very fresh in their memory, than their older counterparts. Moreover, the members of the older cohort may not interpret sexual harassment in the same manner as the younger cohort as their definitions of what is and is not acceptable are different. As women in the “older” category are receiving less sexual attention on the job as they had received earlier in their career. Consequently, it may be all of the above working together; it represents the complex intersection of history, socialization and age. Early on in their career women are inundated with these harassing situations, they are quite bothered and have emotional responses to the negative stimuli. As they continue on the job they begin to develop their own individual coping strategy to deal with the harassment. And simultaneously as time passes, their sexual and physical “value” clock is ticking, diminishing as do the frequency of previously unwanted advances, which for some women in the study asserted now are appreciated reminders of their attractiveness. Furthermore, it could be none of the above. Women

90 Even further, this research did not examine, and it ultimately would be very difficult to understand the circumstances underlying why women might leave the job. I would hypothesize that sexual harassment may be one factor that does drive some women away from this and other types of blue collar work. The exploratory nature of this research leaves this stone unturned for future research.
may simply tolerate this unwanted behavior to avoid confrontation or resistance from coworkers. Calantha states

“It used to like really bother me, but not so much anymore. Not sure if it’s because I got to know the guys. Is it worth bringing up because I have to deal with these people? I depend on them to fix my equipment and if I start something about their poster. I have to weigh that piece.”

Luckily, no women in the study were victims of physical sexual assault while on the job. It was understood by the women in the study that the threat is real and does provide real levels of stress and ambivalence, whether they are on the job or off. Several of the women were placed in extremely compromising situations where dangerous assaults had the potential of occurring. However, these women were able to talk and in one case, punch their way out of harm’s way. Understanding that a potential for disaster exists is important as this is something that men working in the field (or in general life course experience for that matter) do not have to consider at all91. Therefore, men may go about their daily work rounds undisturbed while women may have to manipulate their presentation of the self and identity, and constantly worry about the potential threats in order to avoid harassment and potential victimization.

A Thick Skin: Psychological Armor (Is it Acceptance or Abjuration?)

Women must find a way to traverse the gendered occupational terrain to avoid negative outcomes. Similar to Yount’s (1991) study of coal miners, I wish to highlight the various coping strategies landscaping women use to deal with sexual harassment and

91 In all of my years, over a decade in the field as a landscaper and a man in every other aspect and context, I have never experienced sexual harassment. Street et al. (2007) notes the male experience of sexual harassment as being significantly less compared to women in the military, and my study urges a comparison of men and women.
other difficult situations at work. Every day, even multiple times during the same day, the landscaping woman has the potential of a negative experience on the job. How do these women deal with the constant barrage upon them from their superiors, colleagues, customers and the public?

As described in Chapter 3, women in this study, as in other blue-collar fields, have described a process of toughening up. Learning the trying not to be so sensitive and to be one of the boys. Zinnia details just that by saying

“You have to be a little thick skinned. I’m pretty thick skinned. I mean people say things and I don’t really pay that much attention, but there are always people who say things…I wouldn’t know how to put it in a number. It happens very often...How many times a season? Oh, I’d have, at least a dozen, maybe twenty.”

To be successful in a job and career is to fit in with your peers. The nontraditional blue-collar job landscape pushes women to deal with a harsh and at time unaccommodating workspace. In her commentary documented in the previous section, Jasmine doesn’t quote her having a thick skin per-se, but like many others, she doesn’t take it seriously, laughing at it in the present tense. However when I probed and asked that she go back to the time in which it happened, when she was younger, as for all of the women in the study, it was quite a troublesome and difficult time in her career. Moreover, as Ione, highlights and was stated earlier in the chapter is what many other women in the study noted, you have to be a “different kind of person” to work in this environment. Every woman in the study has her own type of psychological barrier that she has developed over time to protect her from the negativity while at work. As well,

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92 She noted three archetypes: Ladies, Flirts and Tomboys; Ladies disengage from the situation, Tomboys engage the situations and Flirts engage in feminine ways. The data of this research revealed only variants of the Lady and Tomboy coping strategies; as the respondents either used avoidance or participation strategies depending on the situation. All of the women in my study avoided any type of proactive flirtation on the job.
Hanako was hyposensitive with respect to her interaction with men “you have to have the mindset that every little thing that somebody says isn’t harassment”. She went on to detail that men were simply being men and that some women were just “looking” to make mole-hill comments into proverbial mountains. It is also interesting, that in not so many words Hanako, as well as virtually all of her counterparts in the study constructed women in stereotypical and socially prescribed ways; “since women are (hyper-)sensitive and emotional, we cannot be that way at work, we must put our feeling and emotions aside and deal with it.” And that complex negotiation is highlighted by Yolanda in her statement, “I want to be strong, but there is only so much a person can take until the skin is rubbed thin…in terms of being one of the boys is a survival skill, to make your place there.”

Although the women in the study described these incidents as unwanted, twenty five percent of the women likewise noted participating in or telling sexually explicit jokes themselves as part of an assimilation strategy. Danica discusses having gendered conversations with men, such that there are, “differences, sure. If it’s an issue or going to be an issue, somehow they’ll read that in your face or your eyes or the way you carry yourself and they’ll prey on it naturally.” Women are altering their presentation to reduce problems, issues and to stave off difficult situations. In another attempt to “be one of the guys”, Calantha describes in detail:

“I mean I can talk dirty mouths as much as the next guy next to me and sometimes I have just to be there.”

“Dirty mouth? What do you mean?”

“You know, I mean talking about, oh, you know, just cussing and dirty jokes and, you know, they’re not offended by me being in their presence nor am I, so I throw it right back at them. They can say, talk about sexual jokes and things . . .
“A lot?”

“Yeah, well I mean that’s what they do so I’m not there to change anything. I mean we all share the same space as far as time off when we’re all together in, you know, the break room. Oh yeah, a lot. I mean I, I think I allow them to do that because I don’t feel, I don’t separate myself from them, I don’t act embarrassed or I don’t, oh yeah, I mean I, I can turn them beet red if I want to.”

As noted previously, we must consider the intersection of age. Hence time in the field is important, the more time a woman has in the field, more harassment is experienced which fosters the development of that tougher skin. Enabling the women to deal with these instances with greater ease and simultaneously as she is naturally aging, her social desirability decreases and the frequency of these instances, causing harassment for many reasons to disappear into the landscape (both figuratively and literally).

Finally, it must be acknowledged that women in the landscaping profession may be constructing difference. The expression and acceptance of ‘masculinity’ in various ways helps to maintain a gendered workplace. Thus, female landscapers who actively participate are ultimately contributing to their own domination (Reskin and Padavic 2002). This tolerance and participation in the hostile environment: by having a thick skin, by not saying thing, by not reporting sexual harassment may get these women through the day, but it facilitates and fosters a masculine and uncomfortable workplace for themselves and other women.

If we consider that harassment depends upon interpretation, these women are making an active and deliberate choice to “not” view and interpret their world in a particular way; to cover their ears, disbelieve, turn the other cheek, or take it head on and contribute their own “dirty joke” to the conversation. Landscaping women by choosing to put on this armor at work in whatever form, as noted above, are making the choice to
ultimately accept these negative situations, to normalize sexism and harassment that are, as they described in other areas of their life unacceptable\textsuperscript{93}. There was the exception of the women who owned their own company and for that very reason desired to have power and control of their workspace. However, these women cannot control the commentary and actions of those outside e.g. customers and the public.

All of the women in the study agree that it is unacceptable, but they tolerate it to not “make waves” and to avoid being viewed as sensitive by their male counterparts. Theoretically (and metaphysically) I must ask the question, is it useful to accept that things cannot be changed, that boys will be boys? Or is it their consequent rejection of the right to equal and just treatment at work? In my sociological opinion, not only have we as a society allowed several steps to be taken backward towards gender equality through inactivity and complacency, but it is also in an interactionist way that women themselves are contributing to their own subjugation. For example, consider a professional model that allows advertisers to utilize sexualized images of them, is this empowering as the woman is engaging the situation freely and being provided with monetary remuneration, or is she ultimately subjecting herself, and on a deeper level, all other women to continue to be perceived in sexualized and stereotypical ways and ultimately continue to contribute to the negative perception and treatment of women. The same analogy can be made here within the blue-collar occupational context, the female landscaper that does not speak up, that does not stand up for her rights to an equal and hostility free workplace, even going further to “participate” by contributing to the conversation, is simply allowing for the continued male-domination and sexist ideologies

\textsuperscript{93}Ironically and paradoxically, all of the married and cohabiting women also noted egalitarian domestic spheres, equal gender norms at home; but at work allowing unequal treatment.
to prevail. Outside, in general and within the context of the data obtained in the study, I have witnessed the abandonment of some of the most important ideals of the feminist movement. Women have simultaneously gained and lost ground, Hochschild (1989) denotes a stalled revolution, a decade into the twenty-first century the revolution has not only stalled but sputtered to a halt, and we have a contemporary re-evolution of gendered spaces.

Chivalry: Can I help you with that?

In this section, I move to another dimension of the relationship between men and women at work. As noted previously, common within male workplace culture is the act of “shoptalk” about women in various forms. It has been well documented that within a patriarchal society women are also afforded certain traditional acts of kindness. The classic examples are men: opening the door for a woman, helping a woman with packages or not allowing a woman to pay on a date. There are two behavior sets; that of chivalry, which denotes the positive side and the “sexploiter,” which can be viewed as the negative side of the behavioral dichotomy (Collinson 1992). In addition, research shows that women at work are evaluated not only on their professional competence but also in terms of sexual attractiveness and appearance (Spencer and Podmore 1987). The gendered occupational social landscape (pun intended) becomes a complex matrix of gender, sexual and work identities. As Ayanna noted “we get pet names, like in Susie and her weed maids”.

94 Women have both been forced to take on masculine traits of independence, strength, dominance, etc. but at the same time all of the stereotypical feminine traits still remain. Therefore, raising the bar of social expectations for women, women must be able to do it all. Masculinity has evolved as well, but not the content of this particular research.

95 Chivalry: words and actions implying respect and reverence for women. However, this assistance also implies women’s frailty, weakness and / or inability to complete a task.
So, not only do men refrain from acting in the overtly mighty masculine manner at times, but they will also take on the prince role\(^{96}\) by helping their female coworkers. As Malva sustained very clearly, along with twenty three other specific notes by my respondents about their work relationships with princes who would do their work for them, to go out of their way to help their helpless colleagues:

“They see you doing something, and they know you can do it and they run over and push you aside and do it...which for the most part doesn’t bother me too much.

**Do they still do that?**

Yea, oh yea. I had a guy that did that today. (she laughs) That big lawnmower that I had to start, it does not start, there is something wrong with the choke and he pushed me aside, I pulled about ten, twelve times and he pushed me aside and did it his way, he did about five more pulls and it was going. I have come to find out, you just have to keep at it.”

In addition, many women in the study explained situations whereby male coworkers would protect their female counterparts from harassment. Blanche describes a very gallant male subordinate aiding the damsel in distress by

“I had the one, the one summer we had a very large black man who he wouldn’t let anybody even look cross-eyed at us while you were bending over planting flowers. He was always trying to chase everybody down everywhere we were. So, he totally respected me, would’ve done anything I asked him to do, did anything I asked him to do. We had a really good, a good relationship.”

Thereby, men’s identity struggle within the workplace culture ranges between ‘sexploiter\(^{97}\)’ and prince charming. The act of sexploiter and chivalrous prince are not an either / or phenomenon; meaning a man is neither a sexploiter or prince, but both. Being one or the other is situation specific, a product of what will be discussed in the next section as ‘situational identity management’. Men might act in these gallant ways under

\(^{96}\) E.g. Chivalrous: a polar opposite to the sexploiter / misogynist

\(^{97}\) Collins (1992) uses the term sexploiter to describe this side of the dualism. A sexploiter imagines himself as a sexually insatiable, rapacious lover, sexually incontinent, lascivious
certain circumstances and in other conditions and situations this may not be the case. It may be that men will maintain the chivalrous acts (and a helpful attitude) when they are directly dealing (e.g., face to face interaction or in a partnered/direct coworker situation) with women laborers; but behind the scenes, without women present or in other situations, there may be a difference.

Highlighting this point, those chivalrous princes morph into their “sexploiter” modes as the social situation changes. Peri and many other women landscapers in the study easily recognized how men altered their conversational patterns when they (women) are present or when women suddenly enter a room without warning:

“Yeah, we tell, there’s dirty jokes going around all the time, their talking about, “Oh look at that one when we walk down the street” that kind of stuff. It doesn’t bother me. I’ve been around it, you know, all my life. In the park when I worked there, you know, the guys, if you rode with the guys, “Oh, look at that one, look at the hotty at the pool, look at that.” That doesn’t, it’s never bothered me.”

“How often does that take, what was like the frequency of that kind of stuff going on?”

“The hotty at the pool was about every day… I hear it maybe once or twice a week when they’re coming back and I overhear them talking about it pretty much amongst themselves. The dirty jokes, same thing… if they do see me walk in, a lot of times, “Ops, sorry.” And they quiet down about it, but it doesn’t bother me so.”

“Do you find that happens, like they’ll kind of cut the chatter down when you get near?”

“I felt it more last year because the two guys that were working for us, cause I was pregnant, I didn’t really go out as much, so the two guys that were working for us didn’t know me as well cause I wasn’t on every job with them as I had been in the past, so if I sat down, if they were to have lunch by chance and I sat down to have lunch with them, I didn’t, I felt like they weren’t having the same

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98 However, this question cannot be answered by this dissertation but should be presented for future research on masculinity.
conversation they’d be having if I wasn’t sitting there, so, but I mean nothing was ever, nothing bad, just every once in a while you felt like oh they’d be talking about something else if I wasn’t sitting here.”

The majority of the women in the study find their male colleagues, at least in the beginning, are overly helpful. If it were anyone else, specifically another male colleague, they probably would not have helped out\(^99\). Further, taking on the prince role, several women describe situations where their male coworkers have protected and shielded them from unwanted public advancements. In addition, deeper introspection and analysis of the data illustrate that over time male coworkers are more sensitive to working with women, more chivalrous and once they have worked long enough and these women have become one of the boys; a proverbial Pandora ’s Box is opened and censorship is all but gone. However, it does not mean that in exterior social situations these men will not defend the honor of their female counterparts. As not only the author but a male landscaper, the “sexploiter” side is quite difficult to get at through the data collected from the women. Only casual encounters were seen through my data, with a few serious incidents discussed in the prior section on sexual harassment. Thus overall there is but only a minor foray and display into the “sexploiter” side of gendered interaction for men\(^100\). However, I personally know that this side exists. I worked in the landscaping field, thousands of hours, with dozens of male employees. My own personal anecdotal experience supports prior research and the current assertions regarding the male dynamic and presentations at work. During the course of my employment, the conversational content and topics regarding women who worked for the company and women in general

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\(^99\) Having a decade of hands-on experience in the field, I have never been asked if I needed help with any of my duties as a landscaper.

\(^100\) The research project focuses on the gendered dynamic and management of the female identity, the male dynamic as discussed in the literature can been seen and is supported by this research.
and for the most part were of the hyper-masculine variety, following along the hegemonic male expectations regarding women. It is not to say that every male engaged in conversation in this sexist and misogynistic manner, but it was the rule rather than the exception. The morning radio station was usually pinned to Howard Stern for example, and the entire day also feeling like a real life episode in the analysis and discussion of women. Landscaping women are only allowed a small peek if any into the male circle, they may be “allowed” to participate; they think they are “one of the guys”, but that is only a perception. It is more, from my experience, a way of men dealing and coping with female intrusion into their workspace. My hypothesis, and urges for future research, is that men tolerate women in this space to a certain extent, allowing them some room, allowing them superficially into their circles but at the end of the day they are still women. Moreover, if these women happen to be “attractive” there will always be behind the scenes shop talk about these women even if they have “proven” themselves to be occupational equals. Men at work are wolves in sheep’s clothing, meaning they will present themselves positively to women or if women stay around long enough and work their way into the male inner-circles, the men will still perceive these women as women and treat them as such, even if it is not directly towards the women. Sharon discussed a situation where a man ultimately shows two sides, she was helped (though she asserts very strongly that she did not ask for any assistance) repeatedly by a male coworker and she found out through “the grapevine” that same coworker was complaining to the boss about doing this extra work for her. Linnea, a co-business owner with her husband talks about one of these circumstances when a female laborer was placed on an all male mowing crew:
“We had employed a woman a long time ago, but I know some of the guys that worked with her got kind of upset that they were the one’s that had to lift the gate on the back of the trailer. It wasn’t so much a complaint from her it was that they were doing more manual labor than they would have because they didn’t work with a man. I mean they worked around it but it was just kind of a complaint and then they were off doing what they had to do.”

Many women made similar commentary in the study feeling the perception of dissent being built within the workplace when the boundary between co-worker and crew-member are crossed, when men perceived women as getting a “free-ride” and an “easier time”\(^{101}\). Moreover, as expected, I found dissent to build when the boundary between co-worker and crew-member are crossed. As detailed in an interview, a malecoworker complained to the owner of a company about a woman who was a member of their landscaping crew; the man for whatever reason would not talk about these issues directly to the woman. He complained that she was not “pulling her weight” and that “he was doing the majority of the heavy work”. Further, during the course of my research there were several companies that featured an all female staff, where this of course was not even an issue at all\(^ {102}\). The situation clearly is tough for both men and women as the playing field is altered with the presence of women. As discussed previously, it is not just women working with men and simple coworker relations, but also, at times, the situation becomes coupled with sexuality and sexual identity complicates the prevailing complex conditions.

**Situational Identity Management**

In this section, I wish to discuss additional facets of the micro-level interactional structure of landscaping. Ridgeway (2009) documents the importance of acknowledging

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\(^{101}\) This cannot be answered fully without interviews with men.

\(^{102}\) However, all of these women at one time worked with and or for men and shared those experiences noted above.
that gender operates on multiple levels: macro, institutional, interactional and individual. In addition to the sex typing of jobs and the consequent segregation into different niches for men and women, the overall perception of the nontraditional occupations is still masculine. The experience for women in male-dominated occupations, especially the blue-collar context, consistently represents a negotiation of their gender identity, what I call “situational identity management”.

This places women in a distinct dilemma in balancing the double identity of working in a traditionally male occupation and maintaining their femininity. Especially in the case of blue-collar jobs, “there is little room in the non-traditional work for the trappings of ‘femininity’: jewellery, long finger nails, high-heeled shoes and fashionable clothes are incongruous” (Carey 1994, 119). Sharon, in her experience as a supervisor, identifies a distinction between the “girly-girl” and the “burly-girl.” This conceptualization represents the opposite ends of the gender identity continuum for women. The “girly-girl” is one that is on the feminine side of the continuum. Here she explains this ideal type:

“I’ve had a couple different girls...one of the girls that really sticks out in my head, the first day she came to work she couldn’t believe that she had to get her hands dirty and she had a hard time all day she wanted to wash her hands, she was putting makeup on in the truck she was just a really girly-girl... had the nail polish and was doing her makeup in the truck and always washing her hands, couldn’t get dirty, was wearing nice clothes to work, couldn’t get on her knees, didn’t want to get her jeans dirty...a definite girly-girl.”

The response was very common for women in the study. You are either on one side or the other—a feminine woman or a masculine woman.

103 If they have one, as we will discuss, some women are “masculine” women; they are women who do not espouse “feminine” traits. It is the hope that this research and idea sparks further investigation on gender identity construction.
The “burly-girl” and the “girly-girl” embody the extremes of the female side of the gender continuum. Within my working theory of situational identity management, the women at these poles are immobile, static or gender frozen; thus unable to navigate between both “masculine” and “feminine” roles. These individuals are likely to have a difficult time with nontraditional occupations and/or likely difficulty in the public space of the “real” world in general. As discussed in the literature review, there are hegemonic cultural standards. Goffman (1979) highlighted the presence of a ritualized subordination embedded in advertising images, and they are so pervasive they have become normalized and it influences not only our expectations but we ultimately perform accordingly. Interaction is gendered, and a gendered script has become institutionalized and we learn to send signals to follow the codes for a positive exchange outcome.

The women of my study, like most people speak of the existence of a dichotomy, but when I deconstruct their life-course and behaviors on and off the job, and their ultimate understandings of the world, a continuum emerges. Williams (1989) presents evidence that gender identity is maintained within nontraditional work settings, however to cross over, is not to automatically assume the opposite identity; as there is a much more complex gendered exchange. Consequently, these nontraditional women are managing their gender identity on the job: situationally.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) describe the process of how an incumbent undergoes a transformation when entering a new milieu:

“the individual internalizes the new reality, but instead of its being her reality, it is a reality to be used by her for specific purposes. Insofar as this involves the performance of certain roles, she retains subjective detachment vis-à-vis them—she “puts them on” deliberately and purposefully. If this phenomenon becomes
widely distributed, the institutional order as a whole begins to take on the character of a network of reciprocal manipulations” (172).  

As previously noted in the chapter, a complex coping strategy exists at work for the women within the landscaping profession. They are in a job that is scripted for men, must learn to perform the tasks, negotiate on the job and take on the role expectations of men, while not being wholly accepted by men, or even other women. In addition, then off the job, they can return to “normal” gendered scripts and presentations.

Situational identity management focuses on the performance of gender at work. There are two facets of SIM, for the women who negotiate their own gender identity at work and also can be presented during difficult times at work. When placed in stressful or taxing social situations at work, these women will negotiate their gender identity. West and Zimmerman (1987) present the situation of,

“lesbians and gay men concerned with passing as heterosexuals can rely on these indicators for camouflage; in contrast, those who would avoid the assumption of heterosexuality may foster ambiguous indicators of their categorical status through their dress, behaviors, and style”(145).

The essence of SIM expands on West and Zimmerman’s notion of “ambiguous sex indicators,” such that an individual, the female landscaper, is able to mask their gender identity by presenting the appropriate gender cues, as to not evoke inquiring minds (1987: 145). The landscaping woman is in a proverbial gender camouflage, her occupational attire and presentation is visually ambiguous; she decides during a personal interaction what about her gender to disclose, not to disclose or to fabricate. As I will illustrate, this presentation of both gender and sexuality are important aspects of identity negotiation for the majority of the landscaping women in the study.

104 All statements denoting gender were changed from male to female, as noted by italics; highlighting the fact that classic sociology was unwittingly sexist by researching and presenting material by, from, and in the male perspective.
When first contemplating the data and theoretical implications, I made the assumption that a burly-girl, a masculine woman, would not need to make identity adjustments and may have an easier time in blue-collar work as they fit within the bounds of gendered social expectations. Landscaping being a “male” occupation, a more masculine woman seems a logical fit. However, a lesson learned through this research is always attempt to look beyond the “obvious” and always work towards refuting hypotheses. Roselaine and twelve others noted specifically that the masculine woman in landscaping is an outcast: “I see a lot of rough (Burly) women in the industry and I don’t think they have to be that way because they’re not looked on very well that way.” Even though they are in the “wrong” occupation as a woman, they still must fit within the hegemonic female standards. Crisanta sustains the importance of beauty: “Let’s see. My partner and I work together often times and people will say, “Well we want to deal with her, she’s the pretty one.” In theorizing about this phenomenon, physical attractiveness is still important, even to a woman doing blue-collar work. We see this play out discussed earlier in advertising and the media.105

All, with the exception of several106, of my respondents, made an effort to note that they were not “like” their landscaping personas all the time. Thus, highlighting that not only was there an active negotiation of identity, but that they adhered to generalized standards set for women in American culture. Most often it was through subtle notes regarding their off-the-job performances, sexuality or other feminine / conventional preferences. Many women went further to assert to me that they liked to be girly, to wear makeup, jewelry and engage other standard and or even hyper- “feminine” pursuits. A

105 For example, Russ Meyer, a classic filmmaker portrayed powerful female characters, however they were simultaneously eroticized depictions of women and women seeking sexual satisfaction.
106 Four in total.
number went out of their way to tell me that they might not care about their looks at work but outside of work they were “normal” women. They did not wish to be stigmatized, be a part or associated with “those” other types of women, the “not normal” women, work was work and outside of work they were still “women”. Nydia was very specific regarding her occupational identity negotiation, as most of the women did, such that she “…can go out and I don’t care if I get dirty”, proud of her success and abilities in her field and then later in the interview went on to describe herself as “really girly, you know princess girly”.

A majority of the women in the study discuss the perception of the public in thinking they are “butch” or “lesbian” because they are doing this type of work. Crisanta went so as far as to sustain the conventional public perception with her own anecdotal evidence:

“I have to say that most of the women I encounter in this field are lesbians and I don’t know if there’s a reason for that. I would say a good half of them are. The other half who are not lesbians probably are very strong women with strong personalities.”

However and quite interestingly, Crisanta was the only respondent to make such a generalized statement about the sexuality of female landscapers; most of the respondents in the study actually emphasized to me the fact that they were not lesbian but that many people e.g. passersby and customers assumed they were because of their occupation; Yolanda stated that on more than several occasions she was asked the question: “Do you like girls?”

Not only do we all, both men, women and transsexuals, “do gender”, but due to the fact that individuals do not consider socialization and the continual learning and relearning of gender we “just” do it and because it is embedded institutionally it seems
completely natural. Women in landscaping take this process a step further. They are fully aware of their gender and identity presentation and “do it” consciously. Goffman (1959) notes that in order to establish

“a guarantee for safe social interaction, we may usually detect an unofficial line of communication which each team directs at the other…(it) may be carried on by innuendo, mimicked accents, well-placed jokes, significant pauses, veiled hints, purposeful kidding, expressive overtones, and many other sign practices” (121).

It is interesting, the women in my study were constantly aware of the potential interactional confrontation. As Goffman alludes, they have learned what will guarantee them safe passage, they have built in, ready-to-go, conversational cue sheets, scripts that they have prepared and used over time for a variety of situations. In some situations, these women, “do”, “don’t do”, “become one of the boys”, or even “pretend” their gender; hence, the majority of landscaping women in the study are gender chameleons and present their gender in a variety ways to get through their daily routine. Women in the study decided consciously not to use gender, attempting as much of an “a-sexual” presentation, to minimize problematical situations. It is interesting, several women noted going out of their way to not look “girly” at work. I think the uniform and presentation for a landscaping woman is typically un-feminine. It is a usually a standard uniform consisting of a work shirt, usually a t-shirt, jeans and boots, there is not much that you can expand or accessorize to “feminize” the attire. There was one interesting rule-breaker that expressed in great detail that she did not dress like the “normal” landscape gardener and went on to say that you have the “real landscape dress and then you have the real dress, dressy dress…and if I’m going to a client’s garden, if I’m going to lecture. I’ll wear dresses and high heels and I’ll have, the old fashion floral dresses and it doesn’t bother me in any way.” The rest of the women kept a very distinct separation between
their work attire and personal fashion preferences, and in a very real sense the landscaping woman for the majority of her day is truly a social “actor”.

A woman in a nontraditional job such as landscaping is therefore forced into complex role situations, actively negotiating identity within the male milieu. She may present herself in overt ways to minimize social contact by men. Twelve women noted that they would intentionally wear their “wedding band” to stave off unwanted advances; five of them were NOT married but had been asked out so many times at work, they wished to deter courtship rituals. Most often, the presence of a ring did not prevent the women from unwanted interaction with men. They then had a contingency plan; a script to crush the attack from predatory men, many women in the study decided that they would pretend to be homosexual. As in the case Sharon recalled when she and a fellow worker were confronted by a “creepy guy,” they told him that they were lesbians, which caused him to finally leave them alone to do their work. Women found this presentation much easier than attempting to explain to the men that they were married, dating, or not interested.

Furthermore, it deserves note that most of the women that I interviewed, were what I will call the “center-continuum”, in that they have very different on and off the job presentations. There is the also the “burly-girl”, the masculine female landscaper, that does not need to actively negotiate her identity; she personifies the assumptions and stereotypes of the landscaping woman. Several women that I interviewed were this archetype, they did not call themselves or identify as masculine women but through the analysis of their data it was very clear. They had very little difficulty assimilating early in their careers, as they did not have trouble with the masculine culture or men at work. I
hypothesize that they experienced a lower frequency of sexual advances from men as these were potentially minimalized by the woman’s overtly masculine persona. Therefore, the burly women were very much the same all of the time and two were indeed lesbians as well. The center continuum women made note that these “butch”, “brute” or “burly” women were different, strange, stood-out, and several women paralleled Sharon’s statement that even though she had masculine qualities, she was not one of these other women: “I am strong and confident, my work keeps me in shape too, and I don’t feel like I’m getting manly, burly like we were talking about before”. Following the twenty first century standards for women, it is alright to espouse masculine traits and long as you are still feminine according to cultural standards of beauty. As was previously noted, women are fully aware of what the gender standards are and for the most part abide by them, and recognize, acknowledge and “do” difference. Even the landscaping woman, though in a “masculine” occupation, asserts her femininity in other contexts, just not at work, or in a very minimal sense.

As previously discussed, landscaping women being aware of their gender, not only “do” it but in some cases “use” it; they present their gender “appropriately” (so to speak) or even made sure to emphasize their gender in order to positively influence interactional outcomes. Female landscapers found that female customers preferred their work as they could connect with the client, as well as their being negative experiences with some male customers, once they proved their abilities, it was also perceived that the men may “like” their female presence. Yolanda notes there is an active role negotiation in her statements: “I do play my part” and that she does “try to connect with them” and if she has to do that “I can be just as dirty as they are”. Flirting and innuendo was a
common way for women to get what they wanted, being able to assert themselves and to take control of the interaction to their benefit; knowing that men and even women may prefer a female incumbent for their sexuality or the safety of a same sex interaction (or both in the case of a lesbian customer). This exemplifies a Marxian class consciousness, women understanding that as a group they may make capitalistic gains by using their gender. Lukes’ (1974) essay highlights the covert nature of manipulation of situations by the power holder, such that the contest may be won absent of overt contest. Hence, women possess not only a viable asset in the market being women but in their presentation may use this to obtain desirable outcomes\textsuperscript{107}.

Moreover, age intensifies or augments the gendered perception of women by men in the workplace. There is a shift from the sex object to the mother figure. The older women recognize and think of themselves as mother or grandmother. Accordingly, with age come enhanced expertise, knowledge and subsequent respect from customers and coworkers. As I attempted to inquire about any negative reception Camellia may have currently experienced, I received an unexpected response.

“I haven’t had any negative response at all if that’s what you’re wondering. People think of their grandmothers’ as gardeners for some reason, you know they take very easily to, in my experience to a woman on the other end of the phone. It has been a very long time since I sounded like I didn’t know what I was talking about so I don’t really have a problem with respect at all.”

And later in the interview, with a chance to think about her early experiences, she extended this commentary with a recollection:

“I, Ooh, when I was in the nursery it was a difficult experience. I was younger and they were closer, the laborers were closer to my age. At that age they had

\textsuperscript{107} What is incredibly interesting is the potential power that is held by women in the twenty-first century. Accorded affirmative action, preference and the changing heteronormative structures, where male masculinity is under scrutiny and attack, represents the opportunity that a few women in my study have capitalized on.
trouble with the woman as a supervisor. I don’t find that so much now, I think more because I’m older, I’m more like the mother to them. I have had a few experiences with different aged boys and men who it took a while for them to realize that I really am the boss when I’m on a job.”

Not different from other fields, but for the older women in the study, it seems that less emphasis is on their gender and it serves less as a discriminating factor than for their younger counterparts. It is almost as if they have grown into the occupation and vice versa—allowing them to be secure in their identities.

The entire sample of women interviewed for the study actively negotiated their gender and successfully navigate their workday; albeit some were more successful than others depending upon their position on the gendered continuum. The identity negotiation is a complex process for the landscaping woman. Another notion to consider, is that we must consider that landscaping may have qualities sui generis, as organizational structures construct gender in different ways depending upon how within that occupation (Ridgeway 2009). Moreover, a female landscaper is exerting more psychic energy compared to her male counterpart every day. Enarson (1984) aptly documents the complicated nature of the intersection of sexuality and work in her study of women in the forestry service.

“This ambiguity and uncertainty is the most important point. Neither women nor men are of one mind about the proper relationship between sexuality and work or about the most effective model of accommodation. It is a puzzling time. Many women—and some men—are rethinking what femininity and masculinity imply and what they want from work. Though she wants to be ‘accepted as myself,’ one thoughtful woman is not so sure what that acceptance means: ‘I’ve probably tried to be one of the boys, which is a good way to get the work done but it is not good for myself...because I lose half myself. I lose the feminine part of

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108 A longitudinal study would be the only way to understand who makes it and does not in the field, to investigate the girly-girls first hand, instead of the anecdotal evidence provided by my respondents.
myself...anyway, I would like to see women working in the woods and men accepting how we would work in the woods, as women” (85).  

The common assumption is that there is a simple identity modification between on the job and off the job; when roles, responsibilities and beliefs regarding her gender also shift. However, it is much more complicated than the gender identity manipulation posited by Goffman’s (1959) front versus back stage presentation of self. If we think deeper about this relationship, nontraditional women have not only their gender questioned, but often their sexuality. The gender issue being the front stage and back stage presentation, however, the public is actually pressing to get into the dressing room. The dressing room adds a third dimension to Goffman’s identity theory. The dressing room denotes a much more personal and intimate space than backstage. Consequently, for the blue-collar woman there is a complex multidimensional aspect to her social identity, the intersection of biological sex, gender and sexuality. The issues experienced in the third dimension, the dressing room space, were explored in the previous section as women experience sexual harassment. Women in the study as I have noted have altered their presentations to stave off unwanted advances by men. The female landscaper (the nontraditional blue-collar woman) has to present herself in many different ways throughout the day. It is a conscious, planned and active manipulation of identity.  

All interviewees repeat the tale that very traditional role assumptions are held by both men and women that produce a trying set of circumstances as nontraditional women landscapers negotiate their workspace. Will it get easier in the future for these women in  

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109 Emphasis added. This intersection was seen in every blue-collar field I read about in my literature examination: construction, firefighting, police, corrections, and mining.  

110 There are differences between interaction with male versus female coworkers, customers and the public and those presentations will change with time as well.
landscaping, perhaps? To encounter a nontraditional woman, especially a female landscaper is an infrequent occurrence. Ridgeway (1997) building upon this notion, cites the need for ‘gender disconfirming situations,’ which are circumstances that counter the conventional wisdom (e.g. women in nontraditional occupations). These disconfirming situations, if they occur frequently enough, will change what is commonly thought regarding a person, job, etc. As Berger and Luckmann (1967) note, “In the dialectic between nature and the socially constructed world the human organism itself is transformed. In this same dialectic man and woman produces reality and thereby produces himself or herself” (183). Therefore, in order for women or anyone to be accepted in unconventional settings, there must be enough situations and brave individuals that challenge the status quo. Stereotyping is real, everyone has internal biases that guide our behavior and assist with decision making. It is not always automatic as there are models that assert “social perceivers categorize or stereotype others initially, but can avoid stereotypic biases by replacing such categorical processing with more individuated processing” (Devine and Monteith 1999: 341). The value of this research is that it helps to identify social relational contexts that in their current state may help to not only maintain the system of gender, but through its exposure and identification has the potential to change that very system (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). I find an interesting parallel with Marx and Engles classically noting that inherent in the system of capitalism lie the seeds of its own destruction, here we have that possibility for utopia.

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111 I have altered the quote to include women, as it was originally androcentric.
Chapter VII
After the Harvest: Conclusions, Speculation and Forecast

This dissertation topic literally spawned from a tiny seed, a small idea that expanded into a qualitative research project. This dissertation set out to explore the lives of women in the landscaping profession and throughout the investigative process themes and associations to the literature on women and work emerged. In this final chapter, I will: review the overall findings of the dissertation, discuss directions for future research and illuminate the budding path that exists for women in the blue-collar sector.

Can Seasons Change?

Can seasons change within the male dominated blue collar professions? I think a broader question is to be asked first: Can seasons change for women period. We can see by this study and in other occupations that once excluded women are indeed open without exclusion; however overt sexism and gender related issues continue. We are well into the twenty-first century and women continue to be under-everything: appreciated, paid, rated, valued, etc. with the notable exception of being under-educated, at least within the first-world; though the position of women has advanced over time, it continues to be a subordinate one in a predominately patriarchal world.

So, can seasons change within the male dominated blue-collar professions? The answer to the question is not only a relative one, when placed in a historical context, but both loaded and complicated for the reason stated in the previous paragraph. I will first discuss my overall findings and conclusions in summary.

My findings were not earth shaking, but are ground-breaking, such that I feel that my project has added another occupation to the list within the literature on both nontraditional and blue-collar work that women engage and there are many points that
future researchers may utilize in their own feminist work. I have found that in accordance with conventional and popular assumptions virtually all but several of the female landscapers interviewed were tomboys growing up; they all enjoyed the outdoors and respective activities and interestingly the majority were members of the girl scouts and 4H clubs. Delphine exclaimed her discontent with “traditional stations” and that she “hated housework, always wanted to be outside and was jealous of my brother getting to mow the lawn and I had to do dishes…I just gravitated to wanting to work outside”. Dirt was not in the blood of the majority of the respondents per say\textsuperscript{112} as only five of the women had lived on farms growing up. Secondarily, just about one-third of my sample noted that home gardening was an important chore growing up and a few women had mentioned their relatives participating in gardening clubs. As well, there was a broad range of parental careers, with nearly a fifty percent split between white and blue-collar occupations.

In the gender case of their self and personal identity, for most of the sample their job simply highlighted one aspect of their personality. Many people would assume that these women were masculine women or that masculine women would be drawn to this work, but based on my sample, the majority of my sample were both heterosexual and off the job enjoyed being “feminine”.

The landscaping occupation is very diverse, there are many different sub-sectors that exist and in some cases women find themselves ghettoized or segregated to the “female” and or subordinate tasks within a company if they are working for others.

\textsuperscript{112} Perhaps it existed in their DNA? A few respondents noted their grandfathers had been farmers. And two respondents married into the landscaping business; Linnea’s husband owned the company she began working for after the marriage and Nerola’s noted that her father-in-law had a significant impact as he was an estate gardener by trade.
Educationally, these women, as is highlighted in the white-collar literature, tend to be over-educated for their profession, e.g. the dilemmas of the token. All of the women had some college education, three-fourths of my sample of women had a bachelor’s degree college education at the bachelor’s level and just about half studied within the area of horticulture. Working in the area of landscaping for about a decade, I only met a few men who went to college for horticulture and one was the owner of a multi-million dollar landscaping company. Though many women (as well as the author) note that most knowledge could be had on the job and in the context of field experience, all of the women with degrees in horticulture that were interviewed stressed that their education and knowledge set them apart from their competition and they used their superior knowledge to both solidify clientele and to put naysayers in their place. Most women, regardless of their levels of education, were involved in adding to their knowledge in the field through seminar attendance and or certification courses.

Out of all the blue-collar work discussed in the literature currently, there is a profound opportunity for entrepreneurship for women, especially due to extremely low startup costs. Several women proved, during the duration of this study, that it could be done, and they could move forward with their own companies successfully. What I found to be the most difficult roadblock to female entrepreneurship within this occupational context is the faith and confidence that they will be able to do it. A few women noted that they wanted to start their own companies but feared the unknown and the security of the fringe benefits of their current employers and perhaps they would undertake their own businesses in the future.
All of the women were extremely satisfied with their career choice, as they all had a great appreciation for being outdoors, even on rainy days and most pointed out their overwhelming disdain and negative assessment of white-collar / indoor office work; they did not like the constraint of being chained to a desk or cubicle. In addition, it was not only the physical freedom of being outside but the daily autonomy of the work, they completed tasks the way “they” wanted and they enjoyed that their job was free of Marxian alienation, such that jobs and tasks were always changing and they had a sense of accomplishment when a project was completed.

The overwhelming satisfaction was present even after and while continuing to experience unwanted advances and sexual harassment on the job. The women in their own ways and on their own terms figured out how to both cope and deal with these situations. I use the term Situational Identity Management to describe the adjustments these blue-collar women engage to avoid negative interactional outcomes and in some cases using their gender for personal gain. Further, I discovered a cohort effect to exist with respect to “harassment” whereby men in a variety of ways let women know they thought of them as desirable; the older women did not have the same negative associations as they previously had in their earlier work lives, and that younger women in the study continued to loathe. Ultimately, it makes perfect sense in a society that devalues all that is old, especially older women, these types of experiences and acknowledgements for this cohort are both less frequent and entwined with a concurrent potential desensitization put them in a state to not be influenced or in several cases actually appreciate feeling attractive.
I have discovered that women have made significant inroads into these types of jobs relative to only a couple decades ago. However, both white and blue-collar women in the nontraditional occupational contexts are viewed with raised eyebrows and skepticism. Female landscapers are rare “flowers in the trenches,” they are a spectacle to be observed and subject to constant scrutiny. What is more important is that significant inroads into landscaping have been made, but it is still less than fifteen percent female. The most recent statistics from the United States Department of Labor note that the grounds maintenance profession is only seven and one half percent female (2005a). Many women in these fields may be working in the informal economic sector, so overall participation may be greater; but I hypothesize that this is insignificant and would not break the nontraditional threshold of twenty five percent female. I posit there is a significant conundrum posed by women’s presence and work in the informal economy. First, there is a likely under-estimate of working women in the occupation. Many women (and men) that I have met engage this type of work in and within the context of the underground sector. Second, work in the informal/underground economy has many career and long term implications for the incumbent such as lack of fringe benefits, health care, retirement, job security and stability.

This research forwards and highlights women’s integration into the blue-collar occupations, and helps to debunk the stereotypes and myths surrounding the “blue-collar” woman. Ultimately, women’s growth in this field has been at a snail’s-pace; the most important longitudinal statistical theme is that the inroads by women have been constant and consistent. It has been more than a half-century since Rosie-the-Riveter, and the stereotypes regarding blue-collar women still prevail. There still remains “men’s work”
and “women’s work”; we are caught in a cultural mire that still socializes our children in very gendered ways, which has social (and occupational) consequences.

**Ripe (and Fallen) Fruit: Future Research**

Due to the exploratory nature of the research, there are several limitations of the study and questions that remain to be answered. However, the contributions made to the nontraditional blue-collar literature and the potential for future research outweigh the methodological shortcomings\(^\text{113}\); as there were several new paths that emerged during the course of analysis that I was unable to pursue at more than a superficial level.

Methodologically, I was fortunate to have a large database pool of respondents to select my sample but it was limited to the Northeastern United States and I utilized non-probability sampling procedures. There are two related issues that are implied by my sampling methods that deserve consideration here. First, the limited scope of my data may be critiqued as different regions of the country involve completely different landscaping tasks; for example, in some regions homes have grass lawns and other regions these areas of the home may be replaced by rock gardens. However I hypothesize that beyond the labor\(^\text{114}\), the actual experiences of female landscapers would be similar to those of the women in my study\(^\text{115}\). The other sample related issue is that my sample selection unintentionally yielded an entirely white sample, with only one woman of mixed race. I do not feel that this was solely by chance but perhaps related to the occupation itself. It would be interesting to explore more deeply the intersection of race and gender, to understand why perhaps racial ethnic minorities do not become

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\(^{113}\) Discussed in Chapter 4

\(^{114}\) I would also hypothesize that women would be ghettoized into the “female” branded and lower status tasks as they were in this research.

\(^{115}\) One of my respondents was from California and noted similar issues for women in the industry there.
involved in this type of work, and if indeed that race is the case, the subsequent question would be if this distinction exists for both women and men in the landscaping industry\textsuperscript{116}.

In addition, this research supports a deeper analysis of the intersection of sexuality; I did not directly address and probe the sexuality of my respondents, though their personal sexual preferences were mentioned during the course of the interviews. The women that mentioned they were lesbian and bi-sexual found the occupation to be “freer” relative to the traditional spheres of employment and it was a reason why they preferred landscaping over more traditional white and pink-collar work. Although the majority of my sample was heterosexual\textsuperscript{117}, the public and workers themselves assumed that women working in landscaping were more likely to be lesbian. Whilst they were involved in a nontraditional occupation, it is a powerful finding that landscaping women viewed their world largely through a conventionally gendered lens; with a few women in the study stating that “there are a lot of lesbians that do this”\textsuperscript{118}, and that only a few women mentioned having a feminist / pro-woman orientation.

Another theme introduced in this dissertation was the identification of a female archetype and corresponding traits that were perceived as necessary to have greater success in landscaping. I was able to identify this by virtue of the women who had prospered; this understanding was based on their interpretation for why others did not thrive and blossom in landscaping. Therefore, it would be useful to understand the dynamics in greater detail that occur early on in a female landscaper’s career. I would suggest both participant observation and longitudinal research methodologies which

\textsuperscript{116} Anecdotally, I spent 5 years in the field as a landscaper and I cannot recall ever coming across a minority female and I did come across more than a few minority men.
\textsuperscript{117} And perhaps landscaping women are more likely to be heterosexual.
\textsuperscript{118} My data again speaks to the contrary.
would help to yield, specify and clarify my data not only on these characteristics and if an actual archetype exists but it would also be fruitful in examining and understanding employee turnover, an applied sociological research goal. The data in this research also illustrate that landscaping women experience a tremendous level of harassment, especially early on in their careers, as do other women in blue-collar occupations. Thus again supporting the call for applied sociological and state sponsored research to understand in greater detail the needs of this population and to ultimately provide support and oversight to protect these women; especially if it is harassment that compels them to leave their job and or their career period\textsuperscript{119}.

This research addresses identity through a dramaturgical lens; in particular I noticed that there are a variety of performative strategies landscaping women employ to cope and survive within the nontraditional blue-collar (and stereotyped masculine) workspace. I suggest (as I do in the previous paragraph) utilizing complete participant observational research in the field to expand the understanding of the codes of gender that exist within landscaping culture. It would be effective to have a researcher fully engaging the field with a critical lens, thus having the potential for generating a profound understanding of the gendered performance; understanding the gendered workspace first hand, not through recollection and filtered memory as is the case with qualitative interviews. I feel it would be important to have a detailed and complete understanding of the situational demands that affect the female landscaper and exactly what she has to endure as she attempts to fit in to the “masculine” culture.

\textsuperscript{119} Every single respondent noted harassment being problematic, but not enough to leave the job they love. However, it may be that some women equally love the work but are driven out by the conditions that only some women tolerate.
Finally, the data for this dissertation was obtained solely from female respondents and it is their interpretations that provide the lens through which men are presented. I have two final suggestions for future research that include utilizing data from male landscapers. First, I propose the use qualitative interviews with men; this would assist in understanding more fully the dynamics of the gendered workspace and more specifically the dynamics of chivalry that were explored in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. Moreover, it would be enlightening to understand the “true” male perception of women as they infiltrate “their” workspace\textsuperscript{120}. Lastly, I suggest the use of status characteristics theory\textsuperscript{121} which would provide complementary quantitative data to assist in understanding interaction. This study explored as noted above, identity and its influences on situational interaction. The benefit of this particular technique is that it would facilitate a deeper understanding of how gender\textsuperscript{122}, and in particular how sex-stereotypes influence the rules for interaction by influencing the expectations of competence and performance on task abilities and outcomes in small groups. Status characteristics theory is a social psychological method that can be used in this case to understand the specific nature and the processes through which gender operates (among other important statuses) ultimately and as we have seen in this research, in a self-fulfilling way\textsuperscript{123}. What is interesting about landscaping, which sets it apart from other types of work, is not only the small task group nature of the job but also the presence of women in both high and low status positions

\textsuperscript{120} As a landscaping male, anecdotally I can attest to the existence of a misogynistic and uncomfortable workspace for women maintained by men. It would be interesting to understand if this behavior is engaged purposefully or simply a result of “boys being boys” devoid of women and the need and requirement to self-censor and be politically correct.

\textsuperscript{121} For more on status characteristics theory see: (Berger et al 1977; Berger, Wagner and Zelditch 1985; Wagner and Berger 1993, 1997; Wagner, Ford and Ford 1985)

\textsuperscript{122} In addition, the intersections of race and sexuality and could be explored.

\textsuperscript{123} This particular methodological technique was used by Gerber (2001) in her study of police departments and that research serves as a potential model.
(e.g. owners/supervisors and laborers), thus small groups research data would be easy to obtain and likely to yield rich data. This exploratory research project has helped to document the lives and the experiences of women in landscaping, provided a basis for future research and likewise as I document in the next section, a rewarding and viable career option for women.

**Opportunity in Camouflage: The Blue-Collar Option**

To close this project, I will put forth the applied sociological implications of the research and my concluding thoughts on the blue-collar option for women as we continue to move forward in the twenty-first century.

Nontraditional blue-collar occupations, especially landscaping provide a gainful alternative (monetarily, on-the-job training, job security, opportunities for advancement and entrepreneurship) compared to comparable jobs in the white or pink collar sector (United States Department of Labor (2000b). In addition, nontraditional occupations tend to offer higher wages than many of the occupations where women are in the majority (United States Department of Labor (2000b). As documented above, landscaping provides a greater opportunity for entrepreneurial women and especially for those entrepreneurs with children; it gives flexibility for family not present in other occupations.

However, women by definition continue to be statistical minorities within nontraditional occupations. One underlying reason is that equal rights and affirmative action legislation have done little to remove the disparity between men and women in the workplace, except in larger corporate industry and state employment where the laws
apply. Yoder and Anaikudo (1997) note a survey conducted by Armstrong et al. (1993), which documented that women firefighters utilized equal opportunity disputes to solidify their employment. There are many occupations outside the realm of the public sector that make legal means of entry less possible, e.g. landscaping, construction. As well, their small numbers in landscaping make unified worker solidarity much more difficult as compared to firefighting, police work and the military. The blue-collar sphere continues to raise barriers for women while concurrently possessing an untapped universe of tremendous opportunity for women.

Why are women not moving in droves to pursue these opportunities? Lillydahl (1986) posits five explanations for women’s comparatively lesser interest in blue-collar jobs than men (controlling for age and education)

1. Women may prefer white-collar employment to blue-collar employment. In neoclassical economics jargon, men and women may have different ‘tastes’ for blue-collar versus white-collar work, because of the inherent characteristics of each type of employment.

2. Women may seek out only ‘socially acceptable’ employment. They may avoid jobs that they believe may result in negative feedback and harassment from family members, friends, male coworkers, and employers. Although there are federal laws against discrimination, these are often not adequately enforced and thus many women expect to be denied admission to training programs and/or employment, and hence rule out the possibility of blue-collar work.

3. Some women may have previously experienced sex discrimination in hiring and employment, or harassment on the job. These women may no longer desire blue-collar employment because of actual discrimination. Numerous lawsuits have been filed by women, and major companies…have been found to engage in discriminatory activities.

4. Women may feel ill prepared for blue-collar work. They may be unaware of job requirements and the existence of job training programs and apprenticeships.

5. The working hours and work schedules of some blue-collar jobs may prevent women, especially women with young children, from seeking blue-collar employment (321).

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124 See chapter 2, regarding equal employment opportunity.
125 “Neoclassical” added.
My research of the landscaping field attempts to portray the positive aspects of blue-collar work, as there is a need for vocational training and dissemination of information regarding the benefits to blue-collar employment (Lillydahl 1986). In order for women (or anyone) to take advantage of opportunity, they must be aware of its existence. Stewart’s (1989) study of nontraditionally employed women in the State of Delaware found that “when women are provided with appropriate on-the-job training and when good relationships among supervisors and co-workers are established; women believe they can perform effectively in nontraditional roles” (34). What the literature also suggests is that gender appropriate training is important. Prokos and Padavic (2002) noted that police academy training encourages and is based on standard of hegemonic masculinity. Many of my respondents cited that they tackled tasks much differently than their male counterparts. They were trained in a particular way but figured out ways that worked out better for them. Not only do women need to be made aware of these blue-collar options but alternate appropriate job training for women.

Fertilize and Nurture Growth

This presents deeper quandary. What can be done to boost interest and integrate more women into these types of jobs? A central problem is that individuals in society take different roads to ultimately get to their career destination in the work world. The women in my study each had a unique introduction to the landscaping field. As Walshok documents, “the process of moving into jobs is a complex interaction of personal

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126 As noted in chapter 3 a similar example using the prison guard profession (Britton 1997; Yoder and Aniakudo 1997; Zimmer 1987)
127 This also represents a theoretical paradox, if we wish for the future world to be free of gender difference; and women are supposed to be treated as equals, does different or alternate training recreate and support differences? However, without gender appropriate training full integration within particular occupations may not be possible.
orientations, structural opportunities and events, and probably a certain amount of luck” (1981: 134). It is women’s work experiences and the consequent presentation of opportunities, which “…seemed more crucial to the development of their vocational interests than advance planning, preparation, or reinforcement from a teacher, parent, or counselor” (Walshok 1981: 132). The hope is that this research will help to disseminate to women that blue-collar nontraditional work is not only an option but a significant avenue and career opportunity, especially within the landscaping profession.

It is difficult to determine if the future of landscaping will be one of genuine integration; a condition of complete equity or ultimate gender resegregation of the occupation (Reskin and Roos 1990: 71). If history serves as our almanac, I posit the latter prediction for the future of women in the horticulture industry. Present actuality is already exhibiting signs of gender segregation. Hence, once again the social structure will reorganize according to gender standards and expectations; all will return again to what is both the normal and natural\textsuperscript{128}.

Within the landscaping profession women are successful when they choose horticulture as a career. As laborers, the potential for higher income relative to the female-dominated occupations and pink-collar sphere is present. However the real potential lies in entrepreneurship. As business owners, these women are able to permeate the industry and build a strong and consistent client base. In my observations, women are able to provide their clients with something that many male-owned companies are not providing their customers. As noted by my respondents, they provide a level of care that is not present in other companies and this is recognized by their clientele.

\textsuperscript{128} Resegregation does not mean back to the “old” classifications, however as I see it, it is the equivalent of taking one step forward and two steps back, and a gendered workspace ultimately prevails.
Despite experiencing uncomfortable and upsetting times at work, women continue to overcome the negative and adverse environment. The irony is that, not only within their everyday work environment do they experience this negative affect, but also socially as well. During the course of their entire day, whether it is before work, after work at the supermarket or in between, these women are bombarded either positively or negatively with comments from both men and women; three examples summate these responses: “Since when did girls start having shovels?”, “I can’t believe you girls, you look like you’re having so much fun”, and “Why are you so dirty?”.

As long as they continue to enter into landscaping work (and other blue-collar occupations), plow forward, and inspire more women to break the stereotypes, the stereotypes “will” ultimately change. As Ridgeway (2009) suggests that

“the forces for change come from political, economic, and technological factors that alter the everyday material arrangements between men and women in ways that undercut traditional views of status differences between men and women. The initial impact of such material changes is often blunted because people reinterpret the meaning of these changes through the lens of their existing, more conservative gender beliefs” (157).

According to Deutsch (2007), not only do “words matter” but she posits the possibility of undoing gender. This research embodies her suggestions and has a focus on interactional processes, which may contribute to the ultimate dismantling of the gendered system\textsuperscript{129}. It is nevertheless a long road ahead; we need to continue to force the members

\textsuperscript{129}What I believe researchers often ignore is how focus on the interactional level can also illuminate the possibility of change. The study of the interactional level could expand beyond simply documenting the persistence of inequality to examine (1) when and how social interactions become less gendered, not just differently gendered; (2) the conditions under which gender is irrelevant in social interactions; (3) whether all gendered interactions reinforce inequality; (4) how the structural (institutional) and interactional levels might work together to produce change; and (5) interaction as the site of change. One of the important contributions of West and Zimmerman (1987) was to highlight the importance of the interactional level for understanding the persistence of unequal gender relations. My plea is that we shift our inquiry about ongoing social interactions to focus on change. (Deutsch 2007: 114)
of society to think outside of the gender box; to get beyond conventional wisdom and the natural nature of things.
Chapter 8
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137


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Appendix A
In Their Own Words

A basic tenet of feminist research is to provide a forum by which participants may have their say, to have power within the academic arena that they may otherwise have been voiceless. At the end of my interviews with each research participant I asked a special question: “If there was something that you could tell the world about your occupation, about the job or perhaps anything that you think may be useful to someone else thinking about entering this type of work what would you say?” Here is that commentary:

Hanako

Women can, definitely can do anything that we do in our industry. Modifications sometimes have to be made, different tools. I know personally myself I’d rather use a hand trowel than a humungous piece of motorized equipment. I think it is also important to keep in mind when you work in a male dominated society that you almost have to be one of the guys, as far as your attitude goes. You…in order to fit in, I think you have to be able to relate to them verbally, not take so much of what they say too literally. Yea, just how you’d relate to a classmate, male female, not get too emotional about things.

Linnea

That’s a tough one. If you like gardening and you like being outdoors, I don’t think you can beat it. I read a quote somewhere that if you pick a job that you love, you won’t work a day in your life. And as far as I’m concerned, I don’t work for a living, I play for a living. You know I’m like those athletes that get paid um-teen million dollars, just without that kind of an income. Cause I really do, I love what I do. This winter I’ve been working all winter long, I’m out there in the mud, I’m still pruning and weeding and it’s like this is so incredible, I just love it. I hate winters’ because there’s nothing to do, other than the bookwork stuff. But this winter that we haven’t had, I’ve been able to stay busy, I was out there pruning all day yesterday. I just, I don’t know, I’m happy out there.

Ione

Because it’s a very easy field to get to whatever level you want. That you can do part-time minimum wage work, you could do part-time highly paid consultant work, you could do full time work, you could become an owner of you own business, you could get to, in two years I’ll be the president of the state association; you could get anywhere you want in this field. There doesn’t seem to be that glass ceiling problem at all. And I don’t get less respect, I almost, I think because there are so few women involved, I get a lot of positive attention.

Alyssa

I really just think it’s an advantage for women in the landscaping business because it is highly detailed, it’s a service business which means a lot of communication and women
tend to have those qualities over most of the guys. We can excel and it’s fun and it’s
great way to make a living.

Delphine

I get the impression that, that women in nontraditional jobs such as landscaping or
owning your own construction company, you have an easier time with smaller residential
type jobs than they would with, than they would bidding on larger, more commercial
type, type jobs. I think that those are barriers that need to be broken and seed . . . I think
that more and more women are going into nontraditional, I read an article not too long
ago in Newsweek or Time about a woman who owned her own construction company
and all she did was hire women and she bid on some big job in New York City and got it
because her reputation was good and I think that’s, that’s a thing that people need to keep
in mind that you’re only as good as your last job, you’re only as good as your reputation.
You have to start small and built and if you built everything on your reputation, put in
some good work and being on time and provide good customer service, that’ll make a
difference whether a man or woman.

Forsythia

Well, there’s lots of opportunities today in this field of ornamental horticulture, even
being, for women to go into the field of landscape architecture that were not open to
women back in the fifties. It was very rare that a woman thought about being a landscape
architect or landscape design, there is many more opportunities out there to do things in
this field that were not there before, in the whole field. Look at the Cooperative
Extension agents that are now in agriculture there, we have excellent schools and women
are going to them, Cobleskill has both a two and a four year schools, there are women
coming out of there that are going on. One of the gals that I know of . . . she was one of
the one who went back to school, went to Cobleskill and graduated from the two year
course and became a writer at a garden magazine like Horticulture . . .

Blossom

I think the whole; this whole business of, of agricultural as opposed to landscape
architecture is something that you have to have sort of a passion to get into and to survive
in it. It’s hard work and, you know, I’m glad that I took the road that I did and even
though I’ve worked in different areas of it, I worked in two private offices, I worked for
the State of New York, I own a business with my husband and now I’m working for
someone else in sales, so I’ve been in all different, you know, retail, wholesale, design,
construction, I mean the whole bit and I’m very happy that I did it, but I think that, I
mean we’ve had people working for us and you would say, “You want to go to this
conference with us?” And they’d say, “Oh, I don’t think so.” Well, you obviously
they’re not as excited as we are about it. And so I think it’s something that if you have a
calling for it it’s much better than if you don’t. I think it’s like any job. You know, my
daughter is at the University of Michigan, she’s getting her PhD in genetics and she
spends all day in a lab. I couldn’t do that. That to me would be torture, you know, to not,
cause I need to going and talking to people and doing things and, you know, not sitting still, but yet she’s fascinated by looking through her microscope and cutting up little *. I think with any profession, you’ve really got to be, have a passion for it. If you don’t, then the things, you know, you can’t get passed the bookwork and the paper work.

Jasmine

Okay. Well I, I guess one thing I would like to say is that this is a real profession and that people who do it well work very hard and it should be, I feel, taken just as seriously as some of the professions. You know, we study constantly to keep up with the information whether it’s new plants, new cultivars, new techniques, that it’s a very alive and very serious profession and, you know, we do it intelligently as well as artistically and sometimes people seem to diminish it or think its not worth as much money because, you know, I’ve been referred to, you know, it’s just yard work and, and it’s not. It’s a profession and there’s a right way, wrong way, smarter way, better way of doing things.

Q. That’s excellent, that’s an interesting point.

A. And if they want yard work done, they can hire that, let people who are trained at that level, you know, if they want somebody to run a weed whacker, fine. They want somebody who’s going to really look at their property and understand all the different diseases and, I mean there’s so much to know about horticulture and then if you couple that with doing it artistically and doing it organically so that you do not have to outweigh and use and lean on pesticides or herbicide or artificial fertilizers. You know, you get somebody who really knows what they’re doing.

Q. A point about . . .

A. Point about if you own your own business, running your own business. It has to be something you love and your passionate about because it really, it does become your whole life and it’s almost like, you know, instead of buying jewelry, you’re going to get excited about buying a new set of loppers. It’s like you are always, it’s like your whole life and it’s, and all your money. It just seems like it’s all, there’s not a lot separation between your work and other life. It is your life. That’s one point I would probably forewarn somebody going into their own business and if it matters to them to have things be, I’m sure people can do it differently, I just know what it looks like in my life and a number of other people who do it. It, it seems more similar to what I’m talking about.

Dahlia

Well I think that when I started studying horticulture, I really did not know anything about plants at all and it wasn’t really like I had this great green thumb or something. I feel like it really taught me a lot about my environment around me and I think that that’s one thing that was really nice about it, it kind of put me in touch with nature more than I had ever been before. So, it kind of opened up some new areas of understanding for me and also just being aware of what certain plants are, knowing the names of the plants,
knowing the kind of conditions they need and things like that was a real, just opened a whole new world of information that I had never really thought about much before I chose to go into landscape design. I went into landscape design because, really I’m an artist and it’s a very creative field to go into, but it takes a long time to learn what you need to know and two years of college, getting out with two years of college, I was not prepared to go out and design gardens. You don’t learn that way, you have to learn, like I said, I was fortunate to have somebody who took me under his wing and kind of taught me over the years and I really think that that’s the best way to learn. You have to learn on the job so to speak. It’s not something you can learn in school. Now, of course, if you went on for landscape architecture degree, it might be a little bit different. I never really went that far with it. I find that people that graduate with landscape architect degrees seem to have a level of confidence that’s higher than a two year degree so I’m sure that they know a lot more than, obviously because they’ve studied more, but also because just, I think the whole perception of a landscape architect and that the professionalism that goes with that and the level of instruction that you get, so you know I would go for a higher degree in it in terms of that, but I would encourage women to go into the field. I think it’s a great field, but like I said before, I just think you really really should want to go for it all the way and be the owner of a business.

Elisa

I can’t think off the top of my head, but I’m sure there is, I just, I don’t think that it’s that important, I don’t think it’s really that much of a male dominated area anymore, you know, as far as the design goes. I think, I think that if there were more women designers, things would look prettier, you know what I mean. Not the same, men tend to, even I tend to do it now just to be lazy, use the same plants over and over again because you know they work and you know they’re available. I do, you know tend to use, I know my plant material is a little more to it than the guys because I love it so much really. As far as, you know, certain colors. They just use yellow. That I find they just use yellow and purple, you know, I like pink more or just different colors of a variety. I don’t know unless the guy is gay.

Blanche

The only thing about this job that I would tell people, and not necessarily even people trying to get into this job, is that landscapers are people too. We’re not just peons, everyone looks down on them. I don’t know as I ever felt that from any specific person, but you do sometimes, you know, everybody, nobody wants their kid to be a ditch digger, but we do need ditch diggers to make the world go round. We’ve even caught ourselves saying it about our daughter, you know, “Oh, we don’t want her to have to, you know, we don’t want her to be a landscaper.” Well, somebody has to be a landscaper so that somebody else can be a lawyer so that somebody else can be a pool guy. It takes, you know, it takes everybody to make the world go round, but, and you see it, I hear it a lot from my mother cause she’s a high school teacher that, you know, everybody thinks their kid is a genuine and they’re going to go and start making $80,000.00 a year in some tech job as soon as they graduate from high school. Well, I think the world needs a little
reality check that, you know, we still need people to plow the roads, we still need people
to maintain the roads, we still need people to mow the grass and that kind of stuff and
those people are people too, so, they’re working just as hard as you are, you know, they
desire to be pretty much respected is all. So that’s about all I would say to everyone.

Reseda

I think, I think what’s important at this stage of the game in this country is people should
really pay more attention to their environment and their immediate landscape and what’s
happening to their farmlands and, you know, we get so involved in the corporate end of
it, in the business end of it that you forget that if, if the earth gets contaminated and, and
over produced and over worked with chemicals and fertilizers and sprays that we’re all
going to be in big trouble and I’m not really a tree hugger and I don’t belong to a lot of
environmental organizations, but if everybody could just look carefully at their own
space and their own property and start to do things a little more in tune with the
environment and Feng Shui, then we’ll all be better off in the end.

Danica

I guess I love it so much that I don’t believe I get paid for something that I love so much.
To be playing, it’s basically playing, praying, same thing. To be down in the dirt and to
be up in a person’s face talking to them, to be on the board doing a design. I love the
variety. I love the hibernation aspect in winter because it seems like a natural cycle for a
human being to go through that. I don’t like the lack of money in the winter, but we’ve
dealt with it so far. I guess if you can tolerate the fatigue that happens during the height
of the season and deal with your family issues, you’re all set and it’s a very exciting thing
to get into because you’re with other people of like mind and that’s a perfect mix for
happiness. Corny, but it’s true. I guess that’s it.

Zinnia

I don’t know, I wish more people, more women knew that they can do anything they
want in the gardens. You know, in my own case, I wish I was more outgoing with the
heavy duty equipment. I know that I could drive a backhoe if I wanted to. And I wish I
wasn’t so hesitant about it, but for whatever reason I am and I don’t think that it really
matters at all if you’re a man or a woman. If you want to be out in the garden or in this
industry, there is, you know, every job is open for a woman.

Crisanta

I think that if you have a love for plants and you have a love for people this is definitely
the place to express those things. It will be challenging, it will be time consuming, but it
will also be rewarding on the other end because it won’t just be a job. It, and that it has
two sides to it, you know, if it’s just a job you can leave it and go home and, you know,
have a more balanced life, but if you want to immerse yourself in a career where you
really sleep and drink something, this is where it is, where you could do it.
Elodie

Well, one of the things I like to do and I think that, I don’t know if it’s, if it’s just because of my background, but I think sharing the knowledge, sharing your passion and your knowledge with the people that you garden with and for is one of the most important things that I think I like to share. I like to share my knowledge with the people that work for me and I like to share my knowledge with my clients. I love to, you know, walk them through their gardens and say, “Look at this, this is going to do this, this is going to bloom now, and this, and then, you know, after this it’s going to turn red in the fall” and that’s, I really think that that is like an important part of our job as gardeners, as landscapers and as people, as sharing information and I think that that has a lot to do with my background at, you know, after having answered millions and millions of questions for people, you know, in my various positions with different companies, I did that a lot and I liked doing it, you know, I liked giving people something that they can learn from. You know, you create a garden for someone and they watch it through the seasons and then they call you and they ask you about it and they become intimately connected, you know, so, you know, trading, I feel like we create personal spaces for people, especially for people who are very busy, who don’t have a lot of time, a lot of free time after they work or after they take care of their families, you know, so it’s, it’s very nice to create something that people will enjoy and learn from.

Lillian

I do think it is an absolutely wonderful job and women can do whatever they want. As far a women not being able to do what they want has never crossed my mind. Women should do whatever they want, to do what they enjoy and to not necessarily, not consider a job just because it is predominantly male, to be discouraged. Women have a lot to give, to this job and just any job that is male dominated.

Daisy

I think I would honestly tell them to be persistent because the doors are opening and they will continue to be opened. Cause I think that’s something that really, it’s happening in a lot of fields these days, but you can very much get washed under that, “Oh, okay, I’m not going any farther cause I’m a female,” and I think, personally I think that’s an excuse and it’s a poor one because there are plenty of other people have different handicaps and they overcome them. Just cause you’re female doesn’t mean you can’t do this and that’s the way I look at it, you know.

Iris

I guess I don’t, I mean as far as telling other women something about this job, I think it’s a great job, depending on what you’re interests are. And I guess what I would say is you can do it. It’s not; if you really, you can do it and it’s not like you’re going to be great at it right off the bat. I mean and I’m talking physically, it’s something that you have to sort
of build yourself up to. I know a lot of women are afraid of physical work because they think they can’t do it and you can. I mean you can’t do, obviously you can’t do as much as a man can, but you can do a lot. And for the, the amount of gratification that I get out of it, you know that’s what I would; I would want someone to try it for. Just, I mean I just, I just love what I do. It’s so great to be outside and to be, to be improving the way things look to other people. It’s just very gratifying.

Joquil

Probably just, um, you know, a lot of the things that I’ve harped along the way and all the questions that you asked me are just that it’s, it’s a wonderful profession. It’s a very enriching profession that one can really feel good about that, you know, that they’ve chosen, but it’s not for the faint of heart that, you know, if somebody has a very realistic sense about what real work is all about, but that in itself can be three words. In itself, hard work is it’s reward. That there are many avenues for women in this and nothing can hold anybody back. Sort of like having *, but I mean there’s not many women arborists, you know, tree climbers, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t some. So, I mean there aren’t any obstacles any more that, you know, * into anybody, but it’s hard work and public gardening work can be frustrating and I really don’t, you know, people can’t be motivated about going into the profession by the money. They’re going to get a lot of self-satisfaction from it if they do, in fact, love plants and working with them and creating things and, you know. I think it’s a, it’s a good feeling that you’re always doing something good for the world. You’re working with the organic world, you know, it’s not that, it’s always, there’s nothing inherently bad about it that you’re giving back to the world, giving back to the earth, but the same time, in one respect or another, now I work in a public garden, but even if you’re in a nursery, you’re providing a product, you know, that makes people happy. You know, it’s the, the nation’s number one hobby is, you know, gardening and, and it’s, you’re doing something good for people. So deep down, you can get out of bed in the morning because you can feel good about what you’re doing. Nothing inherently bad about, unless you’re dumping a bunch of pesticides down the drain or something like that, you know. You know, but that’s, I think that’s like what I could impart upon somebody really thinking about that.

Kaeya

Say to other women? You know what I would say, I would say that if you really like it just do it, just do it. I mean it’s just, start out small, you know, practice on your own yard and read a lot and just go around and ask for work. It’s basically what I, what I did to start and so far so good and it’s great when you have kids because you have the flexibility. I mean yeah okay, the busy time is the spring and the summer and everything, it’s still, you can still, it’s not nine to five, you can, you can, you have to organize your time and you can still be with your kid, you know, but you can be as busy or as slow as you want. Just try it. What the hell, you got nothing to lose. And that really goes with anything I think you want to do in life, you know. It just really goes with anything. I mean cause I wound up getting, I mean I couldn’t, I was, when I took speech in college I was petrified, you know, now I have no problem getting up and giving speeches, you
know, and it’s, it still just that you can’t worry, another thing is you cannot worry about
what other people think. You have to do what you have to do and if there’s one thing I
want to teach my kids is that it doesn’t matter what other people think because they’re not
you and they’re not feeding you, clothing you, worrying about you, you know, you have
to do what’s in your heart and * to do and if you don’t try it. That’s one thing my father
always told me. Another thing is if you, if you try it, he who tries and fails is better than
he who doesn’t try at all.

Roselaine

It is the kind of business that if it’s your passion and it’s something that you love to do,
then you should just do it. Find, you know, you can start anywhere in this business. You
can start easily in either the retail or the wholesale greenhouses, you know, nobody’s
going to start as the CEO. The best way to start is at the bottom and learn everything and
work your way up, but there’s nothing more rewarding than getting dirty every day and
touching life and creating life, you know, taking seeds and sowing them and watching
them grow. There’s nothing more rewarding. And then the happiness that the flowers
create and the beauty; there’s nothing, you know, there aren’t really even words that can
describe that.

Kalina

I can’t think that I’d ever be happy doing anything else. I don’t think I can ever be
happy. I can’t think of anything else I’d rather have done. I was very lucky to have come into this. And I would encourage women to get into the business now. A lot of
women have. A lot of daughters of nurserymen have grown up and are now a part of it,
but the family problems that come into a lot of it to. You know, did you get to talk to ET. She’s part of the nursery family dynasty thing, you know, so and she’s, I think she’s
having a wonderful time at it, you know, but I can’t imagine having another job and not
doing what I’ve done cause it’s been very helpful to me in my, you know, learning about
people, learning about egos of men sometimes and how you deal with that and so that
you still have friendship with them and I just think it’s been a great experience for me
and it’s afforded me all these 18 years of working in it to be able to start up this little tiny
business here that I’ve got going, that’s going to be a very profitable one for me soon,
you know, so and I miss people though. I miss people. I don’t have the people in the
office with me like I did before. That’s the only thing I miss and I miss that I have, that I
don’t get dressed in the morning like I should. I just keep working, you know, but I do, I
can’t think of anything else I would rather have done.

Marigold

I don’t need much time to think about it because I talk about it when I teach it. And one
of the things that I work on very hard when I teach it is having to do with women valuing
themselves and making sure that they value themselves instead of value on what they do
and I think women are taught to undervalue themselves and that gets back to that belief
that you’re going to be cheaper and you’re going to be the flower girl. A lot of women
lack self-esteem, lack self-confidence and under value themselves so if there’s anything that I try to talk about to women going into the field. And that’s why I teach the course that I teach because I want them to be incredibly professional and incredibly good at what they do so they can value themselves and value themselves properly in, you know, in the, in comparison to the other people that are out there doing this.

Calantha

I think it’s a payoff cause it’s providing, I think the landscape in the whole provides so many benefits to us as far as calming, oxygen, shade, protection, just beautification, it just seems to me, it just makes such sense to be a part of that because it’s everlasting, provide for it and that way, to me it’s, it’s probably the association of being a part of, you know, these magnificent trees and the benefits they provide for us, it’s nice knowing that I’m a part of introducing more of them and maintaining the ones we do have. And that’s, it’s for a reason and I think that’s why I love what I do.

Ayanna

Boy, you could go a lot of directions with that. What I think is that it’s, the thing that’s been really rewarding is seeing how women in landscaping have a, something really particular to contribute. I think, you know, I hate to work in stereotypes and I spent a lot of years studying feminism and stuff like that and, you know, getting on these band wagons of wanting men and women to be equal, but I’ve come to believe that we’re not the same creatures and that’s for a purpose and it’s neat to see what kind of impact we have out there in the landscaping world as women. A certain kind of talented energies and skills that we have as part of who we are and how we relate differently to gardens and I think, you know, I’d love to see more women out doing that cause I think that there’s a, oh boy, the only term I that comes to mind, feel dangerous to use because they’re so cliché, but, but there’s a lot of truth behind them. I think that there’s a kind of a, at least on my crew, I’ll speak more for my crew than anything else and the people I’ve worked with, we are, we have a high level of concern for care taking the gardens and for nurturing the plants and also for nurturing the people whose gardens they are because the gardens we work in really impact some people’s lives. It may be their only connection to the natural world, but they have much time to experience and maybe it’s only on their way in and out the door or maybe it’s someplace that they spend time themselves, but we just sort of help them keep up with it. But I know that as gardeners, you know, as landscape gardeners, we have an impact on people’s lives and so this is really one way to impact people and nurture a sense of well-being and balance in a relationship with nature that is affecting people’s sort of everyday life.

Nerola

I don’t put things together so eloquently on the spot, but something about how important it is to be able to watch things grow and to be in touch with the cycles of the seasons. It’s a very grounded feeling and it really helps one on a spiritual level to know where you are in the world. I know that sounds kind of out there, but every year you are reminded of
what was going on when the little fiddleheads were sprouting up or when the little like buds were forming on the tulip bulbs or something and I think that’s always like something that when you see every year, you see those things happen it resonates just like one more level of feeling in tune with the world.

Philanthia

I would say and I’ve actually thought about this a lot, I would say that gardening is a process and it changes with the seasons and the temperament of the gardener and I think that’s kind of allegorical to life. I think if you see your life as a garden, capable of change, you know, due to a whole variety of factors, water, you know, environmental things, money, you know, some years you have a great garden because you can afford to. Other years, you know, you just don’t have any annuals and you just got your bare green trees and grass, you know. I think you’ve got to be flexible.

Samantha

Well there are two things I think of. One thing I think of is that the world is fabulous. It really is a, a wonderful thing that, you know, being in the, in nature and planting nature. I mean it just is a wonderful, it’s very satisfying. I mean whatever, I mean growing in a, I mean I’ve done all those aspects. I’ve grown in the field in a nursery situation. I’ve sold, I’ve bought, so it’s, it’s a, to me I find this very gratifying. The other thing that I think that I love about this business is there is never a day that’s the same as the other, of, there’s something that’s different going on all the time and, and, you know, you’re not doing the same repetitive kind of work. I mean if you were working for an insurance company, you go in and you work on job things and you’re sitting at a desk and, you know, when you’re in this industry or at least for what I’m doing, I’m out and about doing different things every day and it, and it’s so, I never get bored. I never ever get bored of this job and, you know, there’s always new plants to learn about. There’s, you know, somebody who’s growing something that has a sport of something that, you know, is unusual. I mean it’s just fascinating. The people and I have to say I, the people that gravitate towards this industry are wonderful people. I mean I just, they all love nature and they all have a healthy respect for it, you know, I can’t say enough about going into this industry.

Bryony

I don’t know, I think that this is a really rewarding job; they would be able to put their heart into. Definitely a combination of work and desire to be creative and doing that through, you know, having the outlet of gardening and doing that through working through nature is, can be a pretty spectacular thing and, you know, through all, all of the stuff that I’ve dealt with on the job and I’m thinking about, you know, like whatever, you know, hardships might, you know, come about or whatever problems might arise on the job, it’s just like, it’s always nice to just turn around and look at your garden and to know like, “Huh, I did that, I designed that, I allowed this thing to take place and to grow become what it is,” and that can be the ultimate, you know, experience.
Christiana

Let me just put it this way. Unfortunately, I always look to the ideal and the way I look at it is when you’re living and working with plants, one of the things you learn is the only means of communication is through thought because they’re silent and therefore thought is truth and integrity and that’s really what brings me into this field. It’s something that you can’t hide and they always sense, plants will sense that. Unfortunately, I would like to say that’s the one thread that makes me continue on in the field, but I find that’s the ideal and the human element runs through it and it doesn’t always ring true with the humans that you’re working with. So if you could have the strength to still go on and maintain that integrity despite what else is going on and not be naïve about it, then it’s the type of job you need to do because we live as humans being human centric and if you’re a plant lover, sometimes it’s hard when people step on or destroy what you’re doing and it takes a lot of strength. I would say that overall we’re not highly paid because we work with plants and plants are not considered higher beings. I would like to live in a world in which plants are considered in a more benevolent light. I mean even people that are spiritually evolved are vegetarians and what they’re doing is dismissing that plants have feelings. So it’s all life force and it’s all good so you have to be, I don’t want to dismiss them on a level that’s lower. And I don’t know if that’s the statement you want to use, but it’s really what I’m about.

Violet

Well as far as my customers, I, I’ll tell you what, from people driving down the road and looking at a landscaper working, it looks easy, but until you go in their shoes and do it yourself, it is a totally different thing. I mean like don’t judge, a lot of people consider landscapers dirt bags. But don’t misjudge those people because they’re hard workers and number two they’ll work you under the table or however you want to word that. That’s the main thing. People like down grade landscapers, but it’s good money if you do it right. It’s not hard like I said, but you just got to be faithful and you got to stay on it and be reliable and you could really make it, succeed out of it.

Eliza

I’m happy to see that women in landscaping are getting more respect and I think starting to get some of the same pay that men are cause they’re able to get the same prices and that’s one of the equitable things that I think in landscaping exists is that women have the ability to make the same pay.

Calantha

Into landscaping and this is what you want to do, just do it, roll with the punches, but it’s very, very rewarding. To me I just love my job. I mean how many women or how many people; you don’t have to be a woman, to say they love their job. There’s not very many
people who can say this anymore. I don’t compromise and this is my first job that hasn’t been a compromise. I love it.

Stephanie

I would say tough it out if you can. Stick it out long enough, you might like what you are doing. I think it is just complicated, you could do landscaping and grounds keeping and all those things but can you deal with the few jerks you have to deal with every day.

Q: Do you find that, it seems that it’s a sore note dealing with these people; does that diminish your job satisfaction?

A: Yeah because no matter what I do or no matter how much work I get done or whatever, my boss for example doesn’t want me to get promoted. Yeah I’m bitter, I am but if I walk in with this attitude like “I won and you didn’t” that’s not exactly great work atmosphere either. So that part’s not good.

Brenda

For someone who is looking for this kind of work. Someone who likes the outdoors, likes nature, likes gardening. I think it’s a great job. It’s unusual, if someone is trying to get away from having an office job and something that’s just very regimented. It’s not that, you have a lot of variety. I think it is enjoyable for the right personality.

Malva

To the public in general it would be nice if people did not discount someone automatically as soon as they see they’re a woman.

Lana

It’s kind of tough; I really love what I do in the summertime. Now, I love the job I do, I love everything about it and looking at bugs and trying to figure out what they are and how to get rid of them. I enjoy that aspect, one of the things I really get the most enjoyment out of at work, right now, is when somebody will walk up to me and say CX I wanted to ask you about, and they ask me about some plant or some condition they’ve got going on at home or one person has asked me to help him do some design stuff. I just really enjoy being able to pass on anything I know to somebody else. You know, a bunch of us were out weeding and I have a couple of college kids there, that are doing the work study program and the first thing I start chanting is root, tip, cambium, this where all new growth comes from in a plant, it’s the root tip, the shoot tip and cambium, which is the stem cell of the plant, the area just right inside, on a microscopic level. This is just something I have always enjoyed, I love pulling weeds out an inspecting the roots. The whole idea, the idea of me being able to say OK yes I designed that area and you can see the colors and how they flow and how the plants are tall and small and the different textures, what happens in the winter time when all the leaves are gone and what happens
in full summer, when there at full bloom. The differences that you can come up with in design, I love doing that, it’s a very wonderful feeling to me.

Yolanda

Besides the harassment and bullshit you deal with; I do not want to change what I do. I love it! That is just about it!
Note on Objectivity

As a sociological researcher writing my dissertation, I am claiming to be conducting scientific research according to the rules, guidelines and ethics set forth by the American Sociological Association. In studying research methodology we learn to be detached, disinterested, and objective. In reality, we are interested, subjective and have a vested interest in conducting research. We are making claims about the world in the name of sociology and the name of science in order to sustain our careers within the academe. These claims to truth inexorably support the “ruling apparatus” and consequently a system of inequality. So as researchers we must assess our position within the system and assess the potential effect of the said knowledge and truth on the world.

Second, it is critical to be aware of one’s particular worldview when generating knowledge. It is especially important for this exploratory study, which will be pioneering into a new research area on landscaping. I assert that our ideas about the world are going to:

- be stamped by ways we are in the world,
- stem from the way we are in the world,
- be part of the making of the world, and
- ultimately shape and form the world.

These ideas ultimately cannot be outside the conflicts of the world, which situates these ideas. Academicians may have their origins in unprivileged statuses: gender, race, class, sexuality, and age; however, as academics they are a privileged sort, becoming a part of the ruling apparatus, a part of the very power structure they contest, demean and urge to reconstruct. Though my standpoint and writing aims to be sociologically feminist and woman-centered, this will be masked and ultimately questioned by my social identities of: male, white, middle-class, educated, heterosexual. I must be cognizant that mine can be viewed as a socially ‘privileged’ perspective, which implies that I must also be particularly critical of my assumptions and analyses made during the course of this study. Social theory and social analysis are generally situated, we are always thinking about the world and analyzing the world from a vantage point in terms of certain traditions, understanding, and certain questions that make problems or perspectives central to us and for those who are thinking about the world from a different vantage point those same problems and perspectives are not going to be so central to them (Smith 1987a; Collins 1990, 1998).

Appendix C

130 Disinterested, in the sense that our hypotheses and research are falsifiable by the evidence and data; that they may be contradicted by the results of study.
Initial Contact Script

Hello, my name is Paul Calarco. I am a graduate student working on my Ph.D. at SUNY at Albany. My thesis is a study concerning the lives of women in the landscaping industry and the story of the worker involved in this type of work. I will attempt to gain insight into the types of work sustained in terms of assignments, wages and experiences during the course of employment. I am looking to interview approximately 40 women landscape workers like you for this project.

✔ Are there any women landscapers at your company, or would you happen to know of any?

The benefits of the study are that the information discovered may enlighten others about women who are employed in this setting. The interviews will be entirely confidential and all published data will not disclose any traceable information.
Oral Consent Script

I would like to obtain your permission to tape record this interview and to inform you about the research that I am conducting. My name is Paul Calarco Jr., and I am a doctoral student of Sociology at the University at Albany. The study itself is a look into the lives of women in the landscaping industry and the story of the worker involved in this type of work. I will attempt to gain insight into the types of work sustained in terms of assignments, wages and experiences during the course of employment. The scholarly investigation of this topic will require you to answer questions regarding your experience with this type of employment and it will take between 30 to 60 minutes to complete. I am looking to interview approximately 40 women landscape workers like you for this project. The benefits of the study are the information discovered may enlighten others about women who are employed in this setting. There are no potential or foreseen risks in your participation or administration of this research. Your participation is totally voluntary and if you do not wish to answer any of the questions you may choose to do so, as well as you may withdraw from the interview and study at anytime with no penalties. I will guard your confidentiality. The interviews will be entirely confidential and all published data will not disclose any traceable information. I might need to retain a record (name and Telephone #) for further contact and possible elaboration of responses; but all of this information will be available only to me (Paul Calarco Jr.) and no one else. I may need to contact you in case significant new findings have opened up additional areas that we had not thought of prior to this interview, if that would be OK? In addition, it is possible that your responses might not be used in the actual study publication; but your cooperation is extremely important. You will also be provided by request a copy of the final/finished product of the research. Was this information clear to you? Can I explain any of it again? If you would like to contact me in the future for results of the study please feel free via e-mail at XXXX@albany.edu or by phone at 518-XXX-XXXX. In addition, if you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at: (518) 437-4569 or toll free 1 (800) 365-9139 or via email orc@uamail.albany.edu.

If agree to terms:

I would like to thank you for your participation in this research project. I will begin questioning now. (Proceed to questionnaire.)

If disagree with terms:

Thank You for your consideration; If you choose to participate in the future you can contact me via e-mail at pc1353@albany.edu. I apologize for any inconvenience my soliciting has caused; have a good day.

Appendix E
Interview Guide
1. Like to get a little background on your family?
   i. Where you grew up?
   ii. What your parents did for a living?

2. What type of home environment
   i. Brothers or sisters
   ii. What did you do for fun?
   iii. Organized activities, Sports, Girl Scouts?
   iv. What other things did you do?
   v. (if the situation allows) Might you say you were a tomboy?

3. Early work experiences—First job?

4. How long have you been doing this kind of work?
   i. How did you get into this type of work?
   ii. Why? What put you in contact with this area of work?
   iii. Did you have any role models or mentors within this occupation?

5. Have you been employed doing this kind of work anywhere else?

6. Are there differences between the employers?

7. Are there any differences between landscaping and other work that you have done?

8. What kinds of skills are needed to do the kind of work you do?

9. Have you learned new skills as a result of your working here or at your other jobs?

10. What do you like best about your job?

11. What do you dislike the most about your job?

12. Describe an average workday?

13. Do you have Children? Ages of children?
   i. How is the balance between your work and family responsibilities?

14. Are you cohabiting (roommate) or married?
   i. How are the household duties divided?
   ii. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, child activities, etc.

15. Have you been able to move up in the ranks to better jobs as a result of your employment?

16. Would you recommend this job to other women?
17. What qualifications do you have for this job: courses, education?
   i. Do you feel overqualified?

18. How have you been received by the other (male) workers at your job?

19. Have you ever supervised women during the course of your employment?
   i. Can you tell me about your experience?

20. Have you ever supervised men during the course of your employment?
   i. Can you tell me about your experience?

21. How are you received by people at the
   i. Job sites
   ii. On the street
   iii. Friends of yours
   iv. Family reaction to choice of occupation

22. Does it take a particular kind of woman to be involved in this type of work?
   (This is where I key in by probing towards female binary)
   i. This work is dirty and somewhat stereotypically unfeminine.
      i. How do you deal with this?
      ii. Is this an issue at all

23. This may be uncomfortable; I would like to ask if you have experienced any instances of sexual harassment?
   i. Advances at work?
   ii. Gestures by bosses, coworkers
   iii. Customers or
   iv. Passerbys?
   v. Horn beeps?
   vi. Have you been exposed to pornography on the job?
      *ii-iv (probes) what happened, why do you think it happened?

24. Future career plans.
   ✓ Now if there was something that you could say to people about this type of job or anything, this is a free form open ended question, if you could have in print somewhere about the job about anything to do with this type of employment, what would you say to other women doing this or the public to know about this—think for a moment?

Appendix F
Sociodemographic Questionnaire

1. Age _________
2. Highest Level of education
   a. Some High School
   b. High School Diploma
   c. Some College
   d. Associate
   e. Bachelors
   f. Some Graduate
   g. Graduate Degree

3. Last year of formal education. Four-digit year

4. Race
   a. White
   b. Black
   c. Asian
   d. Latina(o)/Hispanic
   e. Write in_________________
   f. No Info

5. Marital Status
   a. Married
   b. Domestic Partnership
   c. Ever Married
   d. Never Married

6. Number of Children
   a. 0
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4 or more
   f. No info

7. Approximate Annual Income (from Landscaping) ____________

Appendix G
Charts and Data
Code Families
Code Family: Entrepreneurship Family
Created: 08/06/07 05:09:08 PM (Super)
Codes (4): [Entrepreneurship] [mentor----] [Mobility] [On-the-job-training]
Quotation(s): 56

Code Family: Family Benefits Family
Created: 08/06/07 05:02:19 PM (Super)
Codes (5): [advantages-parenting] [Autonomy] [Balance-work/family] [Housework]
[Parenting-children at work]
Quotation(s): 25

Code Family: Hostile Environment (Sexual Harassment) Family
Created: 08/06/07 05:10:36 PM (Super)
Codes (7): [Advances-coping] [Advances-instances] [Dislike about job] [Lesbians?]
[Risks] [Sexual harassment] [Sexual Harassment-coping]
Quotation(s): 95

Code Family: Identity Family
Created: 08/06/07 05:05:24 PM (Super)
Codes (12): [Burly Girl] [crying] [Dislike about job] [Employment] [Enjoy about work]
[girls do it better] [Girly Girl]
[Identity-center continuum] [Identity-feminity] [Lesbians?] [Minority-positive] [Only Woman]
Quotation(s): 130

Code Family: Skeptical Family
Created: 08/06/07 05:00:43 PM (Super)
Codes (8): [A woman can't be in charge] [competence] [Men versus women customers comments] [prove ability] [Public Perception] [Qualifications-opinion] [Reception-public] [skeptic]
Quotation(s): 55

Code Family: Work Environment Family
Created: 08/06/07 05:03:44 PM (Super)
Codes (15): [Alienation] [Be one of the guys] [Boy's Club] [Chivalry] [Coworker-assistance] [Difference] [Different Assignments] [Entrepreneurship] [Issues] [mentor----] [Minority-positive] [Mobility]
[On-the-job-training] [Paid Less for Same Work] [Problems]
Quotation(s): 99

Sociodemographic Questionnaire Data
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TABLE 6.1  
Items on the Bipolar Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ideal Woman Pole</th>
<th>The Ideal Man Pole</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very home-oriented</td>
<td>Very worldly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very strong need for security</td>
<td>Very little need for security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly needful of others' approval</td>
<td>Indifferent to others' approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings easily hurt</td>
<td>Feelings not easily hurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cries very easily</td>
<td>Never cries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very excitable in a major crisis</td>
<td>Not at all excitable in a major crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all aggressive</td>
<td>Very aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very submissive</td>
<td>Very dominant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: For each item, one pole is characteristic of the ideal woman and the other pole is characteristic of the ideal man.

TABLE 3.1  
The Gender-Stereotyped Personality Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality Traits</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentally Oriented and Expressive Traits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>Socially desirable, self-assertive, agentic, or goal-oriented characteristics that are more typical of men than women, for example, decisive, active, independent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominating</td>
<td>Socially undesirable, instrumental, or dominating characteristics that are more typical of men than women, for example, dictatorial, arrogant, egotistical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Interpersonally oriented, communal, or accommodating characteristics that are more typical of women than men, for example, helpful to others, aware of others' feelings, warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Gender-Stereotyped Traits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal-Agressive</td>
<td>Verbally aggressive qualities that are more typical of women than men, for example, complaining, nagging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive</td>
<td>Characteristics reflecting submissiveness and a lack of sense of self that are more typical of women than men, for example, subordinating self to others, servile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar</td>
<td>Characteristics for which one pole is believed to be ideal for women (a low score), and the other pole is believed to be ideal for men (a high score), for example, home-oriented (female pole)—worldly (male pole).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gerber, 2001)
Fastest growing industries

Wage-and-salary employment growth in selected industries, projected 2000-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer and data processing services</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home healthcare services</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services, residential care facilities</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable and other pay TV services</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel supply services</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices of health practitioners, except dentists and physicians</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public warehousing and storage</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply and sanitary services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices of physicians, including osteopaths</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterinary services</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and horticultural services</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous equipment rented and leasing</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and public relations</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social services, child day care</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood buildings and mobile homes</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local and interurban transportation</td>
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<td>Freight transportation arrangement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research and testing services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wastewater treatment plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Railroads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total, wage and salary</td>
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</table>

Chart 1 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics 2001)

Not only are industries in the services division projected to gain more jobs by 2010, they are expected to be among the fastest growing industries, accounting for 40 of the 20 fastest. All of the industries shown here are expected to grow at least twice as fast as the average.