

**“Is that sexism?”: A Thematic Analysis of the
Labour Experiences of Women Working as
Producers, Directors and Writers in New Zealand
Television.**

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Abstract

During the 1980s, New Zealand's Fourth Labour Government implemented a number of economic policy changes under the international influence of neoliberalism which resulted in major deregulation and reform to New Zealand television. Despite a wealth of literature on this organisational reform and its effect on television content (Horrocks, 2004; Spicer, Powell & Emanuel, 1996; Farnsworth and Hutchison, 2002; Baker, 2012), very little research – if any – has attempted to explore the effects of these changes on employees. Additionally, while the study of gender discrimination in the screen production industries has drawn considerable academic attention overseas (Lauzen, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Conor, 2014; Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015; Steele, 2013; et al), there is a dearth of research in this area in New Zealand. This exploratory study intends to establish a starting point for research on gender and labour experience in New Zealand television, guided by the question: What are the gendered labour experiences of women working as producers, directors and writers in New Zealand television?

In order to answer this question, one-on-one interviews were conducted with three women who have worked for five years or more as producers, directors, and writers of television in New Zealand. Despite a small sample size, a rich data set was gathered and this was interpreted using Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process, resulting in the identification of thirteen themes under three categories. The first category was that of working life, which included assessment of the industry as a place for women to work; how the industry has changed over the last thirty years; how the population of creative individuals in the industry might affect gender equality; the importance of support from male colleagues and superiors; and the relationship between parenthood and television careers for women. The second category encompassed opportunity structures and included the glass ceiling; exclusion as a tool of discrimination; and the gender pay gap. The final category was gender differences which included the supposed differences between men and women; the different standards for male and female behaviour; and the gendered division of labour.

Despite revelations of gender discrimination, it was found that overall the participant's descriptions of their labour experiences were characterised mainly by contradictions and difficulties in distinguishing overt or systemic sexism after the 1980s. Borrowing from a discourse analysis approach, the thesis then considers how conflicting ideologies, including those of neoliberalism, feminism, and meritocracy, might work to mediate the participants' social reality. The research then recommends that further research focus on discourse production in the television industry to uncover the extent of the relationship between hegemonic discourses and ongoing covert sexism.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.



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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the working lives of women in key creative or leadership positions in the New Zealand television industry. The central research question that informs this study is:

What are the gendered labour experiences of women working as producers, directors and writers in New Zealand television?

In this research question, I have used the term *labour experiences* to refer to interactions with and opinions about the social world at work; *gendered labour experiences* then refers to a focus on the influence of the subjects' gender on their labour experiences. This study is isolated to the New Zealand television industry, not only because this is the researcher's resident nation, but also because New Zealand has a socially egalitarian national identity (Liu, 2005; Sibley et al, 2011) and I am interested to explore whether this translates to a positive outlook for women workers. Additionally, the dearth of research on gender equality¹ in the screen industries in New Zealand warrants an exploratory investigation at least, since studies in this area in other Western countries have found gender inequality in multiple forms (see the literature review chapter). Producers, writers, and directors were chosen as subjects of this study as these are roles which contain key creative or leadership responsibilities, tend to involve long-term (rather than freelance) employment, and which are most prominent in the international literature on gender equality in the screen production industries (including film and television). Some research suggests there is a correlation between the gender of directors, writers and producers and the gender of the total staff on a film project (Lauzen, 2015a; 2016; Dozier & Lauzen, 1999) and further understanding

¹ Throughout the thesis, the terms "equality" and "gender equality" are used to refer to issues of gender imbalance and discrimination, particularly as an aspiration in opposition to demonstrable inequalities between the genders. It should be noted, however, that "equality" per se is not the unanimous goal of all feminist inquiry. Thornton (2013) has discussed the problematic nature of a quest for sex equality, particularly as it tends to be framed androcentrically, and proposes that an acceptance of inherent difference between the genders does not preclude feminist progress.

of the experiences of women working in these roles might provide a foundation of knowledge in order to investigate gender equality in the screen industries more broadly.

This research will investigate the way women perceive their everyday experiences working in the New Zealand television industry and how they conceive the relationship between their gender and their working lives. It will investigate this topic through the analysis of three qualitative interviews conducted with women who have worked for five or more years as television writers, directors and/or producers in New Zealand.

1.2 The Situation: Gender In Screen Production

In the last few years, popular media has paid much attention to issues of gender equality in the screen production industries and particularly to the television workplace. Research institutions like the Geena Davis Institute, use social media such as Facebook (facebook.com/GDIGM) and Twitter (twitter.com/GDIGM) to broaden their reach and raise awareness of workplace inequalities. Meanwhile, news outlets and online magazines increasingly report on issues like the Hollywood actors' gender pay gap (Berg, 2015; Adamczyk, 2016; Ruiz, 2016) and on the overrepresentation of men in creative roles in filmmaking and television (Goldberg, 2016; Lang, 2015; Smith, 2016). High profile "scandals" such as the 2016 sexual harassment lawsuit against former Fox News CEO Roger Ailes (Grynbaum and Koblin, 2016; Redden, 2016; Bellware, 2016) and the account of United States President Donald Trump speaking degradingly about female actors (Fahrenthold, 2016; Jacobs, Siddiqui, and Bixby, 2016) have highlighted the ongoing mistreatment of women in media occupations. This consciousness-raising culminated in 2016 in an eye-catching protest at the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Awards (AACTAA) in early December, which caught global media attention. Members of the Australian branch of Women in Film and Television dressed themselves as sausages and walked the red carpet with placards to protest the awards (Sebag-Montefiore, 2016; "Gender inequality protesters", 2016). Their costumes were intended to reflect the colloquial term "sausage party" meaning a majority-male gathering,

and WIFT Australia's president Sophie Mathison described the AACTAA to press as "Australia's biggest sausage party" (Sebag-Montefiore, 2016). The protest was intended to raise awareness of the overrepresentation of male writers, directors, and producers of Australian film and television.

As well as increasing attention in popular media, the literature on gender and the creative industries is a rapidly growing research area. Research areas relevant to this study include creative industries studies, organisational studies and gender studies. In studies of the creative industries, it has been shown that gender imbalance exists both horizontally, between different types of work, and vertically, between senior and junior positions (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015) and that across the screen production industries, women are especially underrepresented in creative-decision-making roles and leadership roles (Lauzen, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Steele, 2013). This appears to be a result of stereotypes that manifest across various areas of creative work (Conor, Gill, & Taylor, 2015; Wreyford, 2015). Gender stereotypes have been studied extensively, and demonstrate a dichotomous relationship between perceptions of men and women in which women and femininity are associated with communality, selflessness, and emotionality while men and masculinity are associated with agency, leadership, and arrogance (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015; Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Lewis, 2000). Looking at gender in organisations more broadly, it becomes apparent that the relationship between gender stereotypes and occupational inequality is not isolated to the creative industries, with women being poorly received as leaders (Brescoll, 2016) and associated with lower paying jobs (Blau and Kahn, 2000; Leuze and Strauß, 2016; OECD, 2016).

While the issue of gender equality in the screen production industries has been studied extensively overseas (Lauzen, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Conor, 2014; Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015; Steele, 2013; et al) only limited research has been conducted on this topic in New Zealand (Jones & Pringle, 2015), particularly in television (NZ On Air, 2016). This study intends to provide an exploration into the topic of gender and the experiences of women working in New Zealand television, and act as a starting point for further and larger scale research.

Specifically, I hope this study will be the beginning of a wealth of qualitative research into the labour experience of New Zealand television, particularly for women, who are underrepresented as creatives.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins with a background chapter that summarises the restructuring and deregulation of New Zealand television in the late 1980s, providing a context for the working conditions of the New Zealand television industry. This will be followed by a background on the evolution of social attitudes to gender in New Zealand and a brief history of feminism in New Zealand to demonstrate the relevant social context. The literature review chapter looks at key concepts in feminism and organisational studies, and summarises relevant research into gender and the creative industries. The methodology chapter outlines the ontological and epistemological framework for the study and the methods through which the research was completed. The first analysis chapter focusses on the participants' experiences, looking at their working lives and their views of structural issues within the industry, drawing mostly on organisational literature. The second analysis chapter examines their perspectives on the relationship between gender and their careers, drawing on feminist literature and gender studies. Finally, the discussion chapter will summarise the key findings, relating them back to the core research questions, and addresses the contradictions that arose during the analysis.

1.4 Situating the Researcher in the Study

Having majored in the Theatre and Film Studies programme at the University of Canterbury, which had fifty percent theoretical and fifty percent practical components, I have for a long time understood both the creative process and the relationship between storywriters, society and the stories they produce. My awareness of the way media can reflect society as well as potentially influence it led to a mindfulness of on-screen representation, particularly the representation of women and of bisexual people as these were labels I use to self-identify and in which, inevitably but selfishly, I have been most invested. It was this interest that

led me to follow the research at institutes such as the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, which developed my knowledge of gender inequalities both on-screen and behind the scenes.

I grew up with a mother who self-identified as feminist, and was made aware of gender equality issues such as pay equality and the glass ceiling from an early age; this coupled with my interest in screen production might have been enough to result in this research output. However, a particular event provided the catalyst for this study in the months preceding my commencement of postgraduate research, and gave me new insight and interest in the topic. I entered a short film competition with friends, a mix of New Zealanders and exchange students with varied filmmaking and story-writing experience, and was promised a collaborative process. The gender balance of the group slightly favoured women but by the end of production most women voiced a quiet disapproval that despite our experience, qualifications, and personalities, we had had our story ideas dismissed, were side-lined to support roles or fools' errands, and were generally denied any significant creative input. While I would not want to claim that this is a universal experience, and admit there are often road bumps when working with a new team, it certainly made me wonder how often women in the professional world might share such experiences.

While these experiences may cause me some bias as a researcher, the standpoint feminism approach that I have taken instead means I must take my own experiences into account and recognise how these influence my research decisions. During the research design and interviews, I paid attention to the distinction between my own limited experiences and the far broader experiences of my research participants and made sure that their knowledge was privileged over my own, and made sure I did not assume my particular experience is a universal one.

Chapter 2

Background

2.1 Television Industry in New Zealand

During the 1980s, New Zealand's Fourth Labour Government implemented a number of economic policy changes under the international influence of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a capitalist ideology which places the onus of economic success on the individual, its influence in New Zealand and internationally during the 1980s being a move in opposition to a more socialist post-War "organised capitalism" (McGuigan, 2014). Neoliberal policies realise this focus on competitiveness and individualism by effecting changes that relinquish government control of the economy and increase reliance on a free market system (McGuigan, 2014; Goldfinch, 1998). The majority of such policy changes in New Zealand were implemented by the Fourth Labour Government between 1984 and 1990. These included the State Owned Enterprise Act of 1986, the Labour Relations Act of 1987, and the Reserve Bank Act of 1989 (Goldfinch, 1998). The Fourth National Government continued these changes with policies like the Employment Contracts Act of 1991 which destabilised the collective negotiation of trade unions and provided for individual contracts of employment (Goldfinch, 1998). Neoliberal policies during this time had a major impact on the structure of the broadcasting industry in New Zealand as it transitioned from a publicly owned entity to a commercial business.

Background: Deregulation and Reform

Since 1976 both New Zealand television channels as well as New Zealand radio had been controlled by one publicly owned body: the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand (BCNZ). Although the Third National Government had considered introducing privately-owned television broadcasters in the early 1980s, television remained publicly owned until major reforms in 1988 were made by the Third Labour Government. Contemporary laws had prevented governments from making alterations to the broadcasting environment with

sufficient haste; major deregulations were a solution to what were seen to be restrictive formalities. The objective of the 1988 reforms was to establish “an environment in which broadcasters would be able to compete by introducing new technologies and services in response to consumer demand” (Powell, Spicer, & Emanuel, 1996, p. 10). The resulting television reform removed numerous legislative barriers and restrictions in order to allow freedom of market entry and allow the introduction of new broadcast technologies.

Following the deregulation of the broadcast industries, the government initiated a marketed-oriented restructuring by separating the radio and television industries into two state-owned enterprises (SOEs), Radio New Zealand Ltd (RNZ Ltd) and Television New Zealand Ltd (TVNZ Ltd), and introducing structures to prevent anti-competitive behaviours. Restrictions on overseas investment were raised from five percent to 15 percent at this time, and in 1990 abolished completely (Powell, Spicer, & Emanuel, 1996). Deregulation and the resulting reforms reshaped the New Zealand broadcasting from a public service-oriented configuration to a commercially oriented one.

The Effect of Reform on Employment at TVNZ

As per the State-Owned Enterprises Act of 1986, SOEs are entities which are government owned and whose interest is in generating profit. A key guiding principle of the new SOE environment was “competitive neutrality”, which meant implementation of legislation to allow new competitors was introduced in order to prevent monopolisation and provide a way to assess managerial performance. This was particularly significant for TVNZ, which to that point in history had had no competition. SOEs were to be governed by a board of directors who had similar privileges to a board in the private sector, for example, able to make decisions regarding human resources decisions and investments and having the right to internal audit (Powell, Spicer, & Emanuel, 1996). Below this board of directors, much of the senior management system remained.

Senior management staff were transferred over from the TVNZ division in the BCNZ to TVNZ Ltd, including the director-general and managers of finance, marketing, programming, and more. The government consequently decided to transfer all staff from the TVNZ division to TVNZ Ltd, which prevented TVNZ Ltd from immediately overhauling the staffing structure and also caused the enterprise to be significantly overstaffed. Due to incoming competition from private broadcasters and overstaffing, TVNZ Ltd was required to make changes to the staffing terms and conditions in order to become a competitive employer.

At the time of the dissolution of the BCNZ, human resources was “characterised by a centralised bureaucracy with a ‘career’ service approach to staffing, linked pay scales between TVNZ and RNZ, a history of maintaining all its operations and support services in-house, rigid job demarcation barriers, and strong union involvement with management” (Spicer, Powell & Emanuel, 1996, p. 56). This meant that TVNZ would have been unable to make any major staffing changes without union involvement, consultation, and support. However, the requirement for change coincided with the passing of the Employment Contracts Act 1991. This law change reoriented employment law to focus on the individual, placing the onus of negotiation on individual workers in order to promote individual rights and destabilize the authority of trade unions (Anderson, 1991). The law change strongly affected remuneration policy, with the introduction of flat-rate contracts, emphasis on individual employment agreements and the reduction of overtime and penal rates. One consequence of these changes was a reduction in collective employment agreements and the proliferation of individual and freelance employees. This law change made it possible for TVNZ Ltd to increase its use of individual contracts, resulting in the introduction of multi-skilled employees and increasing job role flexibility, and the severing of links between TVNZ and RNZ staffing agreements, eventuating in an increase in project-based and freelance working agreements (Spicer, Powell & Emanuel, 1996).

Another outcome of an increasingly competitive broadcasting environment was an adjustment to the role of programme producers. As well as a focus on cost

reduction, there were improvements made to internal accounting systems and an emphasis on allocation of responsibility and accountability in the new broadcasting environment. The function of the producer shifted from the accommodation of artistic vision at any cost, to the containment of budgets and cost-effective production. Additionally, due to major cultural and attitudinal changes within TVNZ Ltd, authority was taken away from programme producers and placed with programme schedulers and marketers to further align with the new focus on marketing and revenue (Spicer, Powell & Emanuel, 1996). Thus, the deregulation and reform of the broadcasting industry during the late 1980s and early 1990s caused drastic changes to the employment environment as well as the focus and rigidity of job roles including programme producer (Spicer, Powell & Emanuel, 1996).

2.2 New Zealand Gender Equality

This section of the thesis will give a summary of the history of gender equality issues in New Zealand, beginning with the granting of suffrage in 1893, and summarising the current state of gender equality in New Zealand. While change is a core theme of this history, progress peaked and troughed throughout the twentieth century. Through the timeline, and as different legislative milestones were achieved, the focus of feminist agendas shifted to different aspects of equality, from the elevation of the citizenship status of women, to the role of women in the workplace, to cultural inequalities and the persisting gender gap despite legal equality. This section of the thesis has been included to provide a social and historical context for the research findings, mapping changes in time that can be connected to the participant's responses. Additionally, as previously discussed, there is a scarcity of research on gender in New Zealand television, and a background on the history of gender equality issues in wider New Zealand society provides necessary context that informs the analysis.

First Wave Feminism and Legislative Equality

The New Zealand national identity is associated with egalitarian values, due in part to the increased class flexibility of early colonial New Zealand, and the

passing of egalitarian legislation early in New Zealand's history (Sibley, et al., 2011; Annabell, 2016). One of the core legislative changes that contributed to this sense of egalitarianism, particularly for gender, was the Electoral Act of 1893, which granted women the right to vote in a parliamentary election (Ministry for Women, n.d.). This was largely the result of a successful First Wave Feminist movement that was characterised by a desire to elevate the status of women to have equal citizenship status with men. Particular to New Zealand, women desired the right to vote for the prohibition of alcohol as early New Zealand drinking culture amongst men was seen to contribute to domestic violence against women (Schuster, 2014). New Zealand was the first self-governed country to grant suffrage to women, with Australia allowing women to vote in federal elections in 1902 (Australian Electoral Commission, 2015) and Britain not granting women equal voting rights with men until passing the Equal Franchise Act in 1928 (UK Parliament, n.d.). This pioneering of gender equality has been strongly imprinted on the national imagination (Schuster, 2014).

Although New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote, other equality legislation has been slow to catch up to other Western nations. It was in 1919 that the Women's Parliamentary Rights Act granted women the right to run for parliament in New Zealand. In comparison, Australia granted this right alongside suffrage in 1902 and American women could run for government even before being granted suffrage by the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 (Salmans, 1984). Similarly, gendered pay discrimination was abolished in the United States with the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (Equal Employment Opportunity commission, n.d.), and in the United Kingdom with the Equal Pay Act 1970 (The National Archives, n.d.), while New Zealand's legislation was only passed in 1972 (New Zealand Legislation, n.d.). So, while New Zealand might maintain a feminist self-identity, the speed with which the legislation has been passed did not necessarily continue to reflect the trailblazing nature of the suffrage legislation.

Neoliberalism and the Second and Third Waves

With the rise in political action during the late 1960s, a Second Wave of feminism came to prominence in New Zealand in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This movement was focussed on reproductive rights, educational opportunities, and labour market equity and was characterised by its adoption of decentralised and non-hierarchical organisational structures (Vanderpyl, 2004; Schuster, 2014). During this time, the Equal Pay act 1972 came into effect as well as the Human Rights Commission Act which legally ended discrimination due to sex (Ministry for Women, n.d.). Through the 1970s, the Second Wave movement achieved the establishment of women's liberation groups, raised awareness of the continuing gender wage gap, and enacted protests that helped raise the issues of gender equality in the social conscious (Schuster, 2014). However, just as the rise in neoliberal policy affected the structure of the creative industries in the 1980s, so too did it affect the feminist movement in New Zealand. The increasing influence of neoliberal ideology generated a range of policy decisions which predominantly affected economically vulnerable groups, including women, and their effect on feminist advocacy is pertinent to the way Third Wave Feminism developed in New Zealand.

A strong women's voice was established during the Fourth Labour Government, with the establishment of the Ministry for Women's Affairs in 1985 intending to provide advice on the gender impact of all incoming legislation (Ministry for Women, n.d.; Shuster, 2014). The MWA did lose some of its agency and community-driven approach after the appointment of Judith Aitken to its CEO position in 1988. Influenced by neoliberal ideology, Aitken placed emphasis on performance indicators and the ministry's accountability to the government and decreased the ministry's pre-existing community consultancy practices (Schuster, 2014). The increasing influence of neoliberal policy also affected government funding models leading numerous advocacy and service groups to adopt more bureaucratic and less community-driven working styles in order to maintain solvency (Schuster, 2014). This led to the quietening of feminist advocacy voices in New Zealand, particularly as some agencies were forbidden from political protest as part of funding agreements (Schuster, 2014).

In the years following, a Third Wave of Feminism began to form internationally, characterised by pluralism and intersectionality, and celebrating individualism and empowerment (Lorber, 2012; Snyder, 2012). However, this Third Wave movement took shape in New Zealand through the movement of feminist agendas into institutions and the state, differentiated from previous feminist progress by a shift to partnership and community involvement (Schuster, 2014). Since the 1990s, progress for women's rights has wavered, with the introduction of paid parental leave legislation in 2001 (Forbes, 2009) and the Prostitution Reform Act of 2003 protecting the rights of sex workers being positive additions to the legislation. Conversely, changes to social welfare support in 2013 negatively affected women and the Fifth National Government has demonstrated a general disinterest in women's rights since taking office in 2008 (Schuster, 2014).

Gender Equality in New Zealand Today

Currently, although women have considerably more rights than before the rise of the First Wave of feminism, there are still inequalities and binary divisions between men and women. As of 2015, the gender pay gap in New Zealand was measured at 11.8 percent, which is similar to other developed nations (for comparison, the 2010 gender pay gap in the United Kingdom was 10.2 percent), but has remained stable for at least fifteen years (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2010, 2016; Government Equalities Office UK, 2011). Using the full-time median hourly rate to measure the wage gap yields a slightly different number, of only eight percent, indicating that occupational segregation and the distribution of genders in non-traditional full-time work may be to blame for a significant proportion of the gap (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2010). Additionally, women are underrepresented in senior management and chief executive positions in the private sector, and there is still evidence of gender segregation in educational fields and occupational roles (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2010, 2016).

To conclude, there have been two themes of change in New Zealand's relationship with gender equality. While in the last 120 years, there has been a

positive trend of increasing rights for women in New Zealand, with legislation giving women equal citizenship with men, and preventing discrimination in the workplace, since the mid-1990s there has been a deceleration in progress with stagnation in the gender gap and remaining gender segregation in paid and unpaid labour. Although New Zealand might self-identify as an egalitarian and feminist nation, the slowing of progress in the last 30 years is indicative of continuing gender inequality and a reminder that gender equality should continue to be a national focus. Moreover, despite legislation around gender discrimination and equal pay, inequalities still exist between men and women, indicating that while legal equality is at its peak, the patriarchal systems upon which New Zealand society was founded and the rise of neoliberalism from the 1980s onwards, may still permit covert systems of discrimination to facilitate inequities.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review will discuss the theoretical context for the research methodology and provide a background on the state of gender inequality in the creative culture industries, as well as exploring some of the key issues facing women in the wider workplace. The intention of this review is to demonstrate how the existing literature informs the research question, and to indicate where gaps in the literature exist in order to justify this investigation. Additionally, the literature review will provide the theoretical background for data analysis and comparison in the later stages of research.

To begin with, I will discuss the theoretical background that informs the means of inquiry. This will include an introduction to Socialist Feminism and Social Construction Feminism, as well as a brief history on Third Wave Feminism and how these three movements of feminism influenced the development of Standpoint Feminist theory. I will then provide a brief quantitative background on gender inequality in the creative culture industries, summarising the major reports that have been published which confirm the existence of gender inequality in creative culture industries overseas. These reports demonstrate the underrepresentation of women working in key creative roles in the screen production industries in the United States of America as well as the United Kingdom as well as the horizontal gender divisions within the workplace. Following this, literature which attempts to explain ongoing gender discrimination will be described and evaluated. The first issues to be addressed are the breadth of inequality and discrimination in the creative culture industries, particularly film and television, and the nature of the sexism which leads to this discrimination. Following this, gender stereotypes will be discussed as they relate to various roles in media production and the culture of the workplace generally. The final sections will look at the institutional aspects of gender discrimination, including the effects of the structure of the industry and the relationship between employer discrimination and the attitudes of women workers. Finally, the review

will summarise the key concerns discussed by the literature, and identify areas that require further investigation.

As will become apparent through the literature review, there is a notable absence of existing literature regarding gender in New Zealand television. The literature review draws on relevant academic sources from both domestic and international studies in feminism, gender studies, and organisational studies, to provide an academic background for this research project. While the researcher recognises there are limitations comparing the New Zealand industry to those that exist overseas, it is necessary to discuss international studies in order to provide a background of understanding and to demonstrate that this is an area worthy of academic attention.

3.1 Theoretical Background

This research draws on a feminist theoretical background to inform its enquiry and shape its methodology, with a particular focus on standpoint feminist theory. The following section of the literature will describe some of the theoretical and political movements of feminism from which standpoint feminism was constructed, first considering socialist and social construction feminism, then explaining the purpose of standpoint feminism, followed finally with a brief introduction to the recent political movements of third wave feminism.

Socialist Feminism

One of the tenets of socialist feminism is the recognition of the way in which race, class, education, and other types of inequalities *intersect* with gender inequalities to produce *complex inequalities* (Lorber, 2012; McCall, 2012). Socialist feminism arose during a time of post-second wave feminism, in which inequality between men and women had significantly decreased but other inequalities were increasing. The new economy of the 1980s, with the expansion of the female-dominated service and care industries (the “pink collar” workforce) and a decrease of overall median wage led to a stereotype of the “angry white male” as working class men felt their labour market worth devalue (McCall, 2012). Socialist feminists recognised that new inequalities affected women more than

men, and were concerned that the new disenfranchisement of working-class white males, combined with public discourse and policy that aimed to remedy increasing inequality between the classes and within racial groups, had the potential to reinstate gendered hierarchies by devaluing both women's market and home labour and raising the status of new forms of men's work (Folbre, 2012; McCall, 2012). Socialist feminists instead argue that the focus of public policy should be the upgrading of both men's and women's jobs, and the valorisation of women's unpaid work (Lorber, 2012; McCall, 2012). The denigration of women's unpaid care labour and the exclusion of men from participating in it were seen as barriers to both class and gender inequality. Policies which intend to promote social democracy by encouraging women to combine paid work with parental work are problematic as they both devalue the unpaid labour that must be done, and continue to burden only women with it (Folbre, 2012). Instead, the socialist feminist agenda encourages the redistribution of paid work, family work, and community work evenly between men and women. It also promotes the redefinition of kinship to terms other than the nuclear, heteronormative family (Folbre, 2012). This recognition of the significance and reality of women's unpaid care work contributed to the developing standpoint feminist theories by strengthening the validity of women's work and women's experience.

Social Construction Feminism

Social construction feminism has contributed considerably to feminist academia by proposing that gender is a categorisation constructed through cultural identity and social interaction. While it had been previously assumed that the structural arrangements of society were a response to inevitable, biologically-induced gender difference, social construction feminists argue that female and male are "cultural events" which are produced and reproduced through sociality (Butler, 1988; Risman, 2012; West and Zimmerman, 1991).

Theorists argue the validity of this argument by giving examples of people who successfully "claim membership in a sex category even when the sex criteria are lacking" (West and Zimmerman, 1991, p. 14) and claim that children and adolescents are separated by gender due more so to behavioural characteristics

than to physiological ones (Lorber, 1991). In the social construction theory, sex is defined as the biological categories assigned at birth according to particular physiological criteria, while gender is the psychological, cultural, and social practices and displays that supposedly correspond with the sex category (West and Zimmerman, 1991). Crucial to this definition of gender is the understanding of the interactional nature of gender and gender display, and the cross-situational nature of gender. We are framed, and frame others by their gender instantaneously and independently from other social information, and our subsequent categorizations (race, profession, class, status) are nested in the male/female dichotomy (Ridgeway, 2012), in this sense as social actors, we are first and foremost male or female. This categorisation is assumed to be welcome: “Not only do we want to know the sex category of those around us... but we presume that others are displaying it for us in as decisive a fashion as they can” (West and Zimmerman, 1991, p. 21). This categorisation applies at both the individual and the institutional level: when organisational activities are gendered, this framing becomes more relevant as gender biases help people know how to behave and what roles to assume (Ridgeway, 2012). Because social organization is so built on the presupposition that individuals are either male or female, and thus have essential natures and roles, “doing gender is unavoidable”, “but doing gender also renders the social arrangements based on sex category accountable as normal and natural, that is, legitimate ways of organizing social life” (West and Zimmerman, 1991, p. 32)². This theory of the social construction of gender is relevant to research on gender in the workplace as it disestablishes the notion that women’s and men’s roles in society are due to the inherent nature or abilities of either sex. It then allows researchers to consider the ways socially expected gender behaviours influence the ways men and women manage their gender and job role identities within organisations, particularly when these roles are in conflict.

² Recent criticisms of a constructivist viewpoint have been levelled by new materialist feminist thinkers (Braidotti, 2007; Grosz, 2004; Wilson, 1998), who recognise constructivism’s failure to consider a possible multilineal mode of causation between the cultural and the material, and its reluctance to move away from the mind-body binary of Cartesian epistemology (Frost, 2011). While constructivist viewpoints discredit biological determinism by fixating on the social construction of gender, new materialist feminism recognises the possibility of an ecological relationship between mind and body, and between culture and matter: “a model in which causation is conceived as complex, recursive, and multi-linear” (Frost, 2011, p.71) that acknowledges complex bonds between culture, biology, power and gender.

Third Wave Feminism

Third wave feminism originated in the early 1990s as a movement of empowerment and individualism (Lorber, 2012). Its core ideology is rooted in rejecting the universality of female experience that was perceived to have been a tenet of second wave feminism (Snyder, 2012) and locating a voice in youth and popular culture, political spontaneity, and the fragmentation of gender identities (Heywood and Drake, 2002; Lorber 2012). Particularly in this latter point, it contributed to the evolution of standpoint feminism through continuous emphasis on intersectionality and the social location of the individual. Drawing on the “personal is political” slogan of second wave feminism, and continuing traditions of self-publication, third wave feminists utilised zines, art, music and the internet to question the grand narratives of social organisation through personal experience stories (Lorber, 2012; Heywood and Drake, 2002; Snyder, 2012). Since this research is focussed on the experiences of women involved in art and culture production, it draws on the third wave’s praise of popular culture as a “pedagogical site that materializes our struggles” (Heywood and Drake, 2002, p. 52) and its desire to promote female-produced popular culture and art in order to tell the stories of women.

Standpoint Feminist Theory

In their justifications for the establishment of a feminist standpoint, feminist sociological scholars such as Harding, Smith, and Jaggar first describe the idealistic concept of sociological objectivity as it had been previously accepted by social scientific thought (2004; 2004; 2004). Objective knowledge was seen to exist external to the social actor, as a universal truth to be abstracted from unattached social surveillance. Smith describes sociological objective observation as creating a “bifurcation of consciousness” in which the mind of the social actor is separated from the body in social space, and in which true knowledge exists outside of social experience; in other words, sociologists are encouraged to use pre-existing sociological theories and concepts as ways of thinking in the “sociological way” with a focus on objectivity as the separation of the self from the academic work (Smith, 2004). However, this view of objectivity has been criticized as gendered male, of benefitting male social dominance, and of being an inaccurate description of “truth” resulting in two major issues for

female sociologists. The first is that the social realities of women do not align with the social realities described by men (or at least, by male sociology), and the second is that, were one to include engagement in the bodily mode in the conceptualization of social reality, women's perspective might be considered epistemically privileged.

Feminist scholars describe the social experiences of theoretical men and women as different primarily in their modes of mind and body. While men work in the conceptual or abstract mode through their participation in capitalist production, women work in the concrete, bodily mode through reproduction and care work within the family and through support roles such as clerical work in their careers (Jaggar, 2004; Smith, 2004). Smith (2004) further argues that the work of women facilitates the work of men, and that women operate within the bodily mode while understanding and observing the function of the abstract mode: "at almost every point women mediate for men the relation between the conceptual mode of action and the actual concrete forms in which it is and must be realized, and the actual material conditions upon which it depends" (p. 26). This disjunction between the production of objectivity through the abstract mode and women's experiences in the bodily mode means that female sociologists are required to "suspend our sex, and suspend our knowledge of who we are as well as who it is that in fact is speaking and of whom" (Smith, 2004, p. 27) in order to develop sociological theories of reality.

Secondly, the world of women and the world of men are not equal: women are subordinate to men, and women's world is subordinate to men's world. Drawing on Marxist theory, feminist standpoint theorists and socialist feminists recognize that in any classed social system (including the patriarchy), the production of knowledge comes from the ruling class, even though it is said to be objective. Knowledge produced by the ruling class means "the suffering of the subordinate classes will be ignored, redescribed as enjoyment or justified as freely chosen, deserved, or inevitable" (Jaggar, 2004, p. 56). The ruling class's interpretation of social reality justifies their privileged position within it, while claims to objectivity oppress the voices who disagree; with regards to patriarchal notions

of reality, “men legitimate their behavior through ideological and theological constructs that justify their domination” (Epstein, 2012, p. 30). Since sociology actually informs the way people process social information and therefore how sociality is governed, the exclusion of dissenting voices from claims to truth reproduces oppressive social configurations. This reality problematizes sociology’s claims of knowing a universal, objective truth by both disrupting its truth claim and questioning the motivations of its source. A construction of social reality through women’s way of knowing might be considered more universally applicable than through men’s way of knowing as women do not have the motivation to cloud reality to justify their position of dominance (Jaggar, 2004).

Socialist feminist ideas of sociology recognise that the historical idea of what constitutes knowledge does not take into consideration that the social reality that produces that knowledge is different for different social actors, therefore sociology should recognise the “standpoint” of social actors as its starting point for developing theories of social truth. While acknowledging that the socially constructed world can only be truly known from a specific location within it (Smith, 2004), feminist sociologists claim that women’s familiarity with both the conceptual and the concrete modes provides unique access to information regarding the organisation of social reality (Smith, 2004; Jaggar, 2004). By basing the conception of sociological theory in the social experience, and recognising that social actors have differing experiences in these ways, standpoint feminism allows the validation of women’s perspectives and of women’s ways of knowing.

However, feminist standpoint theory does not just require the establishment of a social location from which to posit social theory. Critics of standpoint theory have questioned the assumption of women’s empirical privilege and its perceived exclusion of all but a particular type of women (white/Anglo, middle class, educated). In response to these criticisms, the theory has developed to incorporate third wave feminism’s concepts of intersectionality, so that class, racial or other privilege intersect with gender privilege to inform a complex social location (Smith, 2012). Theorists have also clarified the concept of standpoint as separate from social location alone. Smith’s (2012) standpoint sociology considers the

standpoint of women “not as a given and finalized form of knowledge but as a ground in experience from which discoveries are to be made” (p. 186), emphasising the standpoint as a starting point for sociological exploration, rather than an absolute truth itself.

3.2. Quantitative Background

This section of the literature review will briefly outline some of the statistics that have been gathered regarding gender inequality in the screen production industries, including how gender segregation exists between higher and lower status occupations, as well as between different types of work. As is evident throughout the literature review, there is an abundance of academic material available for the industries in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and a dearth of research in New Zealand itself. The overseas statistics are included to provide background knowledge for this research project and to illustrate why instigating this research in New Zealand may be necessary.

Inequality Exists

In film and television globally, women are underrepresented on screen. Annually published statistics show this to be the case, notable reports including the *It's a Man's (Celluloid) World* report commissioned by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film (CSWTF) and the *Gender Inequality in Top Grossing Films* report produced annually by the Media, Diversity and Social Change Initiative of the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. The 2015 CSWTF report looked at the top 100 domestic grossing films released in the United States in the previous year, analysing the representations of genders on screen and reporting on the demographics of fictional characters. The report found that only 12% of all clearly identifiable protagonists (defined as the character from whose perspective the story is told) were female, while 13% were female/male ensembles and the remaining 75% were male. This was a trend downwards of three percentage points since the previous year (Lauzen, 2015b). The USC Annenberg study reported only on what the researchers considered “lead characters”, showing that only 20% of the top 100 films of 2014 had female leads. As well as analysing the last year's film

releases, the report compared the 100 top grossing films from 2007-2010 and 2012-2014, and found only 11% of the 700 films had gender balanced casts, with 30.2% of all 30,835 speaking characters being female (Choueiti et al., 2015). Additionally, a meta-study published in 2011 concluded that not only were women under-represented across media, but also consistently sexualized (Collins, 2011).

These statistics provided a primary motivator for investigating the research question of this study: the above reports also demonstrated a link between the number of women working in key creative roles in film and television production and the number of female characters appearing on screen. The CSWTF's annual report on employment in the film industry, *The Celluloid Ceiling*, shows this correlation in its dataset: in films with at least one woman director or writer, 39% of protagonists were female, whereas in films with exclusively male writing and directing teams, this figure dropped to just four percent (Lauzen, 2015a). These findings were also evident in a broad inquiry published in 1999 that showed a relationship between the number of women producers and the number of women writers on a film, which in turn influenced the number of women characters and the strength of their voices (Dozier & Lauzen, 1999).

While we can see a correlation between the number of women in behind-the-scenes creative roles and the number and strength of female protagonists portrayed, studies have also concluded that inequality exists behind the camera as much as it does on screen. *The Celluloid Ceiling* report found that women made up just 17% of all directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors and cinematographers on the top 250 films of 2014 (Lauzen, 2015a). The Writer's Guild of America reported recently that in the television industries, during the 2013-2014 television season, only 29 percent of staff writers were female, with staff on programming such as talk shows and late night programming being only 18% female (Hunt, 2015). These statistics aren't exclusive to Hollywood: as reported by the British Film Institute, women made up 11.4% of directors and 16.1% of screenwriters on the 372 UK independent films released between 2010

and 2012, and of the UK-USA studio titles analysed, women made up 6.7% of directors and 4.9% of writers (Steele, 2013).

While there is adequate literature available discussing gender inequality in the Hollywood and British film and television industries, there is much less discussion available regarding New Zealand. A seminal study conducted in neighbouring Victoria, Australia used a survey to demonstrate that inequality exists in the region (French, 2012). These numbers were then compared to a similar study conducted in 1992 to look at trends over time (French, 2014). The author concluded that not only does inequality exist and there has been little progress made in the last 20 years, but in fact there has been some, unexplained, decline in women's participation across production roles in television.

With regards to New Zealand itself, statistics are limited, although a report released this year sheds light on the percentage of women working on television projects funded by NZ On Air in the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 financial years. Mirroring overseas numbers, women are particularly successful in the area of television producing and less so as directors and writers, with 55% of producers being women, 33% of directors, and 38% of writers (NZ On Air, 2016). While these numbers are higher than that of overseas industries, the report also reveals a gendered division within genres of television, with the majority of female directors working in documentary and special interest programming, and with 89% of television drama directors being male.

Vertical and Horizontal Inequality

Inequality exists on multiple levels in the creative culture industries (or CCI). Jones and Pringle (2015) describe the inequality as horizontal as well as vertical: while males dominate the more prestigious creative roles as described above, there exists a segregation by sex across the industry, with various departments and roles seemingly divided by traditional gender roles. This is supported in various literature, with reports that in the British media sector in 2012, women represented 13 percent of the sound and camera departments and five percent of

lighting while being overrepresented in wardrobe, and makeup and hairstyling, at 73% and 81% respectively (Gill, Randle, & Wing-Fai, 2015). These findings have been further supported by researchers who have found sexism and gender stereotyping to exist at both the systemic and conversational level in film, television and other media production (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015; Jones & Pringle, 2015). This is of concern as it indicates not only a gendered division of labour within the hierarchy of television production, but also suggests that gendered systems permeate the screen production industries' entire organisational structures.

3.3 Gender and Stereotypes

My research enquiry will assume that once coded as “masculine” or “feminine”, certain acts and characteristics are generally applied to men and women by social convention, regardless of evidence in either opposition or support. This section of the literature review will describe how these gendered assumptions about the character of men and women are present in the sexism that pervades the CCI. This methodology is supported by other researchers in the field.

Anker (2001: 139) claims that feminist gender theory ‘makes a valuable contribution to explaining occupational segregation by sex by showing how closely the characteristics of “female” occupations mirror the common stereotypes of women and their supposed abilities. (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015).

Baker et al. advise the use of the term “stereotypes” be applied with “critical vigour”, and in this research the concept of stereotypes will be defined as characteristics that have been coded as typical of men and women as they commonly appear in the discourse surrounding women in the workforce. As will be demonstrated in the following analysis of literature, stereotypes surrounding women are that they are nurturing, organised and others-oriented, whereas conversely, stereotypes surrounding men are that they are strong leaders, more likely to break rules and to act selfishly. The literature also suggests that these masculine stereotypes relate to the stereotype of the creative auteur in ways which may discourage women's involvement in creative media roles.

Dissonance Doing Gender at Work

Stereotyping and similar exclusionary practices are reflected in the wider workforce, with women being disadvantaged by dissonance between expectations of certain occupations and expectations of women generally (Rutherford, 2011; Reskin, 2000). In certain organizational theories, workplace organizations are described in the context of “culture”: workplaces allow social groupings to form, and these groups develop a culture which gives them their identity (Rutherford, 2011). While culture has an inclusionary function: allowing individuals to identify as members of the group; it has an exclusionary nature: in order for there to exist an “us” there must also be a “them”. Since the dominant cultural group in contemporary society as well as many organizations is male, and since radical change needs to be in the interest of the dominant group to succeed, the gendered cultural hierarchy in many organizations hinders the success and progression of women (Rutherford, 2011). Members of outgroups in the workforce (such as women seeking non-traditional television production roles) face “micro acts of unintentional discrimination” which accumulate to create disparities as “consequential as those of intentional, overt acts of discrimination” (Reskin, 2000, p. 388). These micro acts can range from the denial of credit to unintentional stereotyping.

One of the ways the stereotypes of gender characteristics impact the careers of women in the CCI is in the horizontal distribution of jobs. Through a combination of participant observation and interviews, a study by Baker and Hesmondhalgh (2015) of the music, magazine publishing, and television industries demonstrated a distinct segregation between men’s and women’s work in the CCI, particularly a trend of creative work being dominated by males and production roles being dominated by females. It was also noted that the creative roles were perceived as more prestigious. One particular stereotype detailed in this study was that women are better communicators, more sympathetic and more likely to work “towards consensus”. These characteristics were attributed by the study participants to the dominance of women working in public relations roles as well as working in documentary and factual television in which the ability to put others “at ease” was considered a desirable skill. This quality of “self-lessness” is cited in another

study as a barrier not only to women's employment in creative roles but also with their self-identification as creative workers (Taylor, 2011).

Another stereotype that the Baker et al. (2015) study uncovered was that women were presumed to be more organised, and to take more care with procedural work, or as one participant stated, "women are often very steady, solid and organised" (p. 31). This stereotype was connected to production and organisational roles, such as production manager, production co-ordinator and production assistant, which were viewed by participants to be female roles. These assumptions about women as organisers and nurturers were shown to contrast strongly with discourses surrounding creative leaders, particularly directors, as disorganised risk-takers, with one participant stating:

Your good director, the one that's different, is actually the one who is going to want to put a wheel off the wagon and see what happens and take a risk. ... That is something you notice more with reckless males than you do with incredibly well organised and nice women (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015, p. 32).

These examples show one way masculine and feminine stereotypes may contribute to the division of labour by sex in the CCI, and is supported by related studies which conclude that the role of creative auteur conflicts with the natural character of women:

Creative working, as unbounded immersion and personalized, emotional labour, demands the masculine selfishness of the conventional creative artist and this conflicts with long-established gendered positionings of women as other-oriented, attending to the needs of others and heeding their preferences (Taylor, 2011, as cited in Conor, 2014, pp. 44-45).

Another aspect of performative gender types that the Baker et al. study looks at is the masculine identity of technical labour in the CCI. A similar ethos of new masculinity is discussed in a study of 80 young creative industries workers (Morgan & Nelligan, 2015). Both articles describe a conflict between old masculinities, the post-Fordist "shop floor", and the ideal of the creative auteur. The combination of masculine identities and the new working environment have led to a culture of "laddishness" in CCI. In a study of gender performativity by female faculty members in traditionally male roles at a community college, the

researcher makes more in-depth conclusions about the more masculine or feminine personas women may need to present in order to get ahead in masculine coded workplaces (Lester, 2008) – a similar parallel can be drawn here as women feel required to negotiate the shop floor culture by acting as “one of the boys” in order to strengthen social networks.

Gendered Identities and Combined Creative Work

A factor that may contribute to gender biases and discrimination is the stereotypical gendered identity of certain types of work. Studies have found screenwriting, for example, to have a reputation as fraternalistic, homophilic and masculine, with these traits being embedded in the discourse surrounding this type of work, from screenwriting manuals that describe the “Hero’s Journey” to the stereotyping of screenwriting work as a pioneering, arrogant, and selfish profession. It is noteworthy that these traits are incompatible with the caregiver type that has been attributed to/is expected of women (Conor, 2014).

Conor writes separately of the “fetishization” of screenwriting work and lore and the consecration of masculine representations of the work and workers in non-fiction and fiction depictions (Conor, 2015). The effect of this discourse is the promotion of the belief in a meritocratic system in which male and female screenwriters’ successes are due to natural inclination rather than systemic discrimination, working with existing stereotypes of women as others-oriented to exclude women from the screenwriting profession.

[W]omen are not only distinguished from more negative masculinised notions of ‘compulsive bums’, ‘social misfits’ and ‘geeks’, but also from genius, passionate, heroic, focused and successful workers. (Proctor-Thomson, 2013, as cited in Conor, 2014, p. 16).

This gendered typing is seen in other creative work, with a study of a Scandinavian design school demonstrating a gendered split in subjects as well as a gendered assessment process: men’s assessment questions focussed on technical processes while women’s focussed on imagination and ideas (Sommerland & Strandvad, 2015; Nixon & Crewe, 2004).

Gender stereotypes also affect leader evaluations since women are societally expected to display more emotions but only rewarded for emotional displays that align with feminine-coded attributes of communality such as warmth and compassion, and not for emotional displays that align with masculine-coded, agentic attributes, such as pride and anger (Rink, Ryan, & Stoker, 2013). There is a conflict between social expectations of emotional display for leadership roles (which are coded masculine and agentic) and for females in general which mean female leaders and managers are in a “no-win” situation (Brescoll, 2016). Specifically, the display of anger in particular has a negative effect on the assessment of female leaders, and a positive effect on the assessment of male leaders (Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Lewis, 2000). The consequences of these stereotypes is that roles that combine leadership and creativity (such as television director) are particularly affected by gender stereotypes.

3.4 Structural Inequalities:

Research demonstrates numerous structural issues within the screen production industries and the wider workforce that work to disadvantage women. This section of the literature review examines these structural issues surrounding gender inequality. Firstly, the conflict between women’s unpaid labour and the employment structures of the screen production industry are examined; again due to a gap in research in New Zealand television, these studies concern the New Zealand film industry and overseas screen production. Following this is a discussion of how discourses surrounding creative work can function to naturalise inequalities. This section then concludes with an introduction to the concept of feminisation and the relationship between this and the devaluation of women’s work.

Structure of the Industry

A prevailing theme through the literature on gender discrimination in the CCI is the influence of an informal employment structure, hiring practices, and the inability of bureaucratic policy to have a meaningful impact. Jones and Pringle argue that due to the project-based nature of the workplace, the subject is perceived as and acts as an “entrepreneur” rather than an employee (Jones &

Pringle, 2015). Their study, based in the New Zealand film industry, consists of interviews with “below-the-line” workers on film crews, as opposed to “above-the-line” creatives such as the directors and writers who will form the basis of my enquiry, and provides an insight into the difficult conditions of the industry in which all workers act as independent contractors and are therefore not offered the same protections and guarantees of work that would be offered to a unionized employee.

Supporting this claim, a 2015 study reported that the majority of those surveyed from the film production workforce (87 per cent) were recruited to their most recent job through “word of mouth, including 23 per cent directly by the producer or director, 40 per cent by the head of department or supervisor and 20 per cent recommended by an individual or company that they had worked with before,” (Gill et al., 2015, p. 56). Although the worker was considered to be at risk in this labour environment, the study found a mythos surrounding creative labour that implied one must make sacrifices in order to pursue one’s “dream”. Creative work retains some of its elite associations as positive and special; it is understood to offer the possibility of personal fulfilment or self-actualization, albeit in return for considerable hard work and an absence of financial security (Conor, Gill, & Taylor, 2015).

Two aspects of this new creative work environment were particularly prominent in benefitting men over women. The first is the informality of hiring practices, which require networking even between projects and the need for workers to become a part of the department directors’ social networks in order to secure further employment. It was noted by interview subjects that it was a requirement that workers be “easy to get along with” particularly for female workers in an environment described as “really, really competitive” and “really blokey” (Conor et al., 2015). These findings are further supported by a study of over 100 interviews of workers in the UK film and television industries, in which networking was found to be a crucial, albeit time consuming practice for those wishing to secure employment (Gill et al., 2015). The affective labour required in order to maintain one’s place in the workforce was considered a major factor in disadvantaging women in both studies, with women who also take on carer or

family roles outside of the workforce being the most disadvantaged. Of course, this is precluded by the assumption that women are more likely to be primary caregivers, which leads to the second aspect these studies focussed on.

Not only does the fragmented and project-based nature of the industry mean many parents are unable to claim maternity or parental leave due to lack of organizational support, but even women who do not have and do not wish to have children claimed to be discriminated against based on their potential to be mothers. A further study indicates a discrepancy between studio executives who believe the conflict between work and motherhood is a “wrenching decision” and the willingness of women able to interconnect working and family life whenever possible (Lauzen, 2012). These findings are also supported by an interview-based study conducted in the Wellington, New Zealand film industry, in which women expressed a need to choose between career and children (and that men did not need to make this choice) and in which employers stated they would prefer to hire men or childless women to mothers (Rowlands & Handy, 2014). Similarly, many women in the Gill et al. study stated it was generally difficult to reconcile childcare with abnormal working hours and respondents of both genders tended to make an “automatic connection” between women and parenting responsibilities. It was also assumed by some interviewees that the acts of motherhood distracted from potential creative energy, also feeding into the mythology of the single-minded, masculine, creative auteur.

Discourse and Opportunities

Much of the literature on women in the workforce considers the impact of discourse on the visibility and legitimacy of gender inequality. Discourse, a way of shaping the social reality through language (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000), is instructive as it demonstrates how talk about social and organisational phenomenon informs our experiences:

...people can only interpret their own experiences through the discourses available to them. Some discourses become so powerful that they appear as common sense, and these may be described as *hegemonic discourses* (Rutherford, 2011, p. 56).

One example of organisational hegemonic discourse is meritocratic discourse, in which success is conflated with ability. Meritocratic discourse has been attributed to creating low visibility of gender and class inequalities by increasing their legitimacy and decreasing their visibility (Acker, 2006; Wreyford, 2015): workers are seen to have earned their status through competence, not social privilege, and to claim otherwise threatens the legitimacy of the most successful workers.

Meritocratic discourses work to make inequalities seem natural in the creative industries, while research has begun to expose that employment is affected by gender, ethnicity and class (O'Brien, Laurison, Miles, Friedman, 2016). Drawing on Acker's theories of inequality regimes, Handy & Rowlands write:

[M]any facets of organisational life which appear on the surface to be non-discriminatory working conditions or practices, designed to simply facilitate effective organisational functioning also have the less apparent effect of privileging some organisational groups and disadvantaging others (Handy & Rowlands, 2014, p. 24).

One way these inequality regimes manifest in the creative industries is in the hiring of screenwriters for film and television. Media production can be a high risk industry, which leads employers to seek out writing staff and other personnel who are well-established in the industry or recommended by trusted colleagues. Combined with a pervading meritocratic discourse, and a tendency for homophilic networking habits amongst established screenwriters, these hiring practices can cause cumulative disadvantage over the career of screenwriters, disproportionately affecting women (Wreyford, 2015).

An article by Martha M. Lauzen (author of *The Celluloid Ceiling* reports) looking specifically at the discrimination preventing women from entering directorial roles takes a discourse analysis approach (Lauzen, 2012). The first explanation, called Human Capital Theory, posits that certain groups, in this case women, "self-select" out of certain careers or occupations by "not investing their human capital to perform at levels equal to members of other groups, such as men" (Lauzen, 2012, p. 310). As has been discussed above, there are many reasons women may be incapable of investing to the same extent as men, especially when

the affective labour of networking is seen as vital and we presume that women are primary family caregivers with limited time available for social networking activities. The second, Discrimination Theory, suggests that members of a certain group are preferred regardless of ability. Discrimination Theory has two branches: Occupational Discrimination, in which a group is discouraged from entering an entire employment field; and Employment Discrimination, in which employers prefer to hire one group over another and in which “imperfect knowledge of a potential employee’s skills and abilities prompts employers to consider other characteristics of potential employees in the hiring process” (Lauzen, 2012, p. 311). Discrimination Theory can be applied to the way the unstructured working environment and informal hiring practices of the creative culture industries disadvantage women.

The 2012 Lauzen study analysed popular media publications seeking out quotations from women who work as directors to compare with the heads of studios to uncover which discrimination theories dominate the discourse. The study describes women displaying a willingness to make room for both family and work commitments and expressing a desire to explore various film genres despite being almost exclusively offered female-centric scripts. This is compared with the views of the studio representatives who described motherhood as a major conflict of interest for women which leads to an “opt out” attitude, an unwillingness of women to direct “rowdy” genre films, as well as a denial of the existence of inequality in the industries despite statistical evidence to the contrary (a trend also noted in the Jones et al. study). The Lauzen study concludes that both theories can be used in conjunction to explain the inequality in the industry, recommending that management and studio representatives acknowledge the existence of underemployment of women in order to open the discussion as well as encouraging women to invest further human capital. An interesting recommendation also made by the researcher is for further research comparing the career trajectories of male and female directors, presumably in order to look at the effect of gender on directorial careers at the level of the individual.

Feminisation of the Workforce and Devaluation

Much research has documented a wage gap between men and women across the workforce and throughout the world (Blau and Kahn, 2000; OECD, 2016) which is less evident within jobs – for example, within nurses working at the same hospital – and more evident between occupations – for example, between nurses generally and doctors (Peterson and Morgan, 1995). Much of the gender wage gap can be accounted for by occupational segregation as both men and women working in occupations that are predominantly female are paid less than those working in occupations which are predominantly male (England, 1992; Preston, 1999). This is true even for occupations that were once gender-neutral or male-dominated that have become female-dominated in the time since their establishment, a process known as feminisation (Mandel, 2013).

Several theories have been put forward to attempt to explain occupational gender segregation and how it relates to the gender wage gap, each relying either on the assumption that women workers are valued less than male workers or that female-typed work is valued less than male-typed work. Queueing theory, for example, posits that due to gender bias, employers prefer to hire males, and therefore a decrease in median wage would cause the feminisation of an occupation as men gravitate to more desirable high-paid occupations (Reskin, 2001). Devaluation theory posits that, alternatively, employers' decisions about how much an occupation should be paid would be affected by an influx of female labour. This approach argues that an increase of female labour into an occupation would cause the median male wage to decrease as the occupation becomes less valued (England, 1992). Several studies utilising longitudinal data have shown devaluation to be the most likely cause of the occupational gender wage gap (England, Allison, Wu, 2007; Levanon, England, Allison, 2009; Mandel, 2013) and that the effect is particularly significant for high-paid and male-typed occupations (Mandel, 2013).

A correlation has also been demonstrated between female-type working arrangements (such as part-time work and flexible working hours), female-dominated occupations, and lower median wage (Leuze and Strauß, 2016). The

authors suggest that women may work part-time as a self-fulfilling prophecy; within heterosexual couples it would be logical for the worker with highest earning potential to work full time, causing the woman to work part time to take on greater childcare and homecare responsibilities, thus perpetuating the dominance of women in lower paying, part-time occupations. While the authors were unable to explain why occupations with a majority of part-time workers would have a lower median wage, Acker (1990) suggests that because the abstract ideal worker is assumed to be available for full-time work, part-time work may be undervalued and thus lower paying.

While the process of devaluation demonstrates a causation effect between predominantly-female occupations and low wage, it does not explain why particular occupations become female-dominated, as queueing theory does. As yet, there is no universal theory as to why some occupations are feminised and others are not, although it is possibly due to combinations of gender stereotyping, economic climate, and institutional changes (Blau & Kahn, 2016).

Conclusion

While information regarding gender inequality in the New Zealand film or television industries is limited, there is sufficient literature from overseas to demonstrate the existence of inequality and gender discrimination and to indicate this as an area worthy of further investigation. The lack of research that has been conducted in the New Zealand industry specifically in regards to women directors, writers and producers, indicates this is a particular area in need of examination.

The literature discussed examined the trends across the industry to describe and attempt to explain the underemployment of women in key creative roles in film and television production. Several significant areas of concern are noted repeatedly in different studies, and these include the unstructured nature of the working environment; the requirement of workers to participate in affective labour and social networking; the perception by studios and managers that women

are unwilling to direct a wide variety of genres; the perception that motherhood is incompatible with creative work; and the negotiation by women of new masculine cultures in the workplace. These issues, specific to the creative culture industries, then combine with broader opportunity structures that disadvantage women.

Further research into gender diversity in media organisations needs to look specifically at how these issues of gender discrimination affect the careers of writers, directors and producers at the individual level. The most insightful studies described above utilised first person narratives of varying kinds to generate their analyses – these included autobiographical interviews, qualitative surveys and document collection and were similarly successful in gaining the perspective of the workers in the industry themselves. Accordingly, it appears that a data collection technique in which first-person accounts of the effects of gender discrimination on the individual would be the most useful method of enquiry to investigate the status of gender equality in New Zealand media industries.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

This research aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of women working as producers, writers and directors in New Zealand television. The guiding theoretical models for this research are social construction feminist theory, which argues that gender is socially constructed through behaviours and interactions (Butler, 1988; Risman, 2012; West and Zimmerman, 1991) and standpoint feminist theory, which argues that knowledge is both socially situated and gendered (Smith, 2004; Jaggar, 2004). Since this project wishes to explore a social phenomenon grounded in experiences, it uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative approaches to research are ideally suited to learning about social reality and to unpacking the meanings people ascribe to various activities and situations (Leavy, 2014). Qualitative research approaches also allow for some flexibility through the research process and methodologies that can be adapted “to facilitate new learning or new insights or to adapt to unanticipated challenges, obstacles, or opportunities” (Leavy, 2014, p. 4). The data collection method is semi-structured interviews which allow for focussed but conversational, one-on-one interactions between researcher and participant and provide the researcher the flexibility to expand or diverge if considered necessary (Fylan, 2005). This method also allowed for the collection of a depth of data despite the limitations of a small eventual sample size. The data collected during these interviews was analysed using an abductive thematic analysis approach to explore the responses thematically and ensure theory was generated from the data produced (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012).

4.1 Conceptual Framework

The research question for this project is:

What are the gendered labour experiences of women working as producers, directors and writers in New Zealand television?

To answer this research question, this project intends to identify and understand the labour experiences of women in the television industry in New Zealand from their own perspectives and in their own language. The conceptual framework for this research draws its ontological and epistemological assumptions from social construction feminist theory and standpoint feminist theory. Social construction feminism argues that gender is socially constructed through action, reaction and interaction (Butler, 1988; Risman, 2012; West and Zimmerman, 1991). Utilising this viewpoint, it has been further argued that since gender transcends and then informs all other forms of social categorisation, society and all social interactions are intrinsically gendered (Ridgeway, 2012). Since ontology is concerned with the nature and form of social reality (Leavy, 2014), a social construction feminist approach to the ontological framework of a research project must prioritise the gendered nature of social reality.

Standpoint feminist theory acknowledges that an understanding of social reality must come from a place of critical, situated knowledge (Smith, 2004). The standpoint feminist researcher is aware of their position in the social order and uses this position to critique and strengthen their knowledge while recognising that the research participants also bring situated knowledge to the research. Drawing on the social construction feminist philosophy, standpoint feminism also recognises that if social reality is gendered, then socially situated knowledge must also be gendered. Additionally, due to an assumption that oppressed social actors must understand repressive social systems in order to navigate them successfully, standpoint feminist theories “map how a social and political disadvantage can be turned into an epistemological, scientific, and political advantage” (Harding, 2004, p. 8). Therefore, using a standpoint feminism approach in a study of women’s experience in a patriarchal system, it is imperative that the perspective of women be considered and not men or people of other genders (even those who have experienced the same workplaces and working cultures), as for them the experience and knowledge possessed will inherently differ. In accordance with this approach, it was imperative that this study would investigate the experiences and perspectives of women through their own voices.

4.2 Strategy and Research Design

This section of the methodology will outline the research strategy and how this was influenced by existing literature on qualitative research methods. It will begin by discussing the process of sample selection, including the difficulties in sourcing a sufficient sample and addressing the limitations of the sample size. It will then describe the strategy behind the decision to use in-depth interviews as the data collection method, including the suitability of this method to the research population, and how the use of in-depth interviews helps to overcome the limitations of the sample size.

Sample

The task of deciding on and finding a sample for this research was not a simple one due to the size and nature of the research population, as well as the issues that arise generally in qualitative research. Sample selection for qualitative research is complicated by the impossibility of pre-emptively calculating the minimum sample size to reach theoretical saturation (Sandelowski, 1995) as it may be in quantitative studies. Additionally, qualitative research recognises that the data to be collected is dependent on the engagement and reflexivity of participants and that random or probability sampling techniques may not necessarily garner the depth of data required (Marshall, 1996). The challenge in finding a suitable sample therefore consists of acquiring a large enough sample size to provide generalisability and external validity while not being so large as to impede proper in-depth analysis, and to recognise that some participants may be able to provide more valuable data than others (Ruane, 2015; Sandelowski, 1995; Marshall, 1996). For this research project, it was impossible to pre-empt the sample size that would be required as this would depend on the quality and quantity of data collected in each interview.

The criteria for selecting participants for this research was as follows: the participants must be women who have worked for five or more years in the New Zealand television industry as either writers, directors or producers or a

combination of two or more of these positions; they may have worked in fiction or non-fiction programming. There were two key reasons for choosing producers, directors, and writers. The first was that these occupations require both creative and leadership qualities. Previous research has found these two qualities to be coded masculine (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015; Gill et al., 2015) and has found occupations requiring these skills to be male dominated (Lauzen, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Steele, 2013). The second reason for choosing these occupations was that they appear often in the existing literature on women in film and television, especially in international statistical reports on gender diversity in screen production, such as those published by the Center for Research on Women in Television and Film (see the literature review chapter for further information). This means that despite limited research in New Zealand, there is existing literature on these occupations to provide some comparison for data analysis. Five years' minimum experience was chosen so that participants would have had considerable familiarity navigating the opportunity structures of the New Zealand television industry in order to maximise data collection from each participant. Due to a lack of research in this area, there was no literature to draw this timeframe on and it was decided with input from the research supervisor that five years was sufficient workplace experience.

Participants were sought through social networking, online advertising and industry guilds and organisations. Advertisements were placed on Facebook groups for film and television networking, such as "Film Community NZ" which has 2,000 members and "Film Production Group NZ" which has 1,700 members (although there is likely to be an overlap in membership). Additionally, custom emails were sent to several television studios, and the following organisations: Women in Film and Television NZ; The Directors and Editors Guild of New Zealand; The Screen Production and Development Association; and the New Zealand Writers Guild. I also employed personal networking, providing my contact information to friends who work in the screen production industry. Any interested parties who approached me were sent a Participant Information sheet and a copy of the interview guide questions to review before consenting to participate. All respondents were also invited to pass on my contact details to any interested potential participants.

The voluntary participation was a crucial aspect of sample selection not only due to the ethical requirement of fully informed consent, but also due to the role of self-selection bias in providing rich data for analysis. It was an assumption of the recruitment process that those who volunteered to participate in the research may be able to provide depth and breadth of information since “informants differ greatly in their intelligence, knowledge, and ability to reflect” (Johnson, 2011, p. 10) and because those who have volunteered to discuss the topic may be more likely to have ruminated and reflected on their relevant experiences.

The search for participants spanned approximately two months, and only three respondents of six who were willing to participate fit the research criteria. The final sample included an executive producer/director, a producer, and a writer/director. All three women had worked in the New Zealand television industry for a significant time period, with the shortest time being fifteen years. All three women had worked in very different fields of television production and in different working situations: one worked for a private production company, one as a freelancer, and one in a public broadcasting company.

This small sample size is indicative of some of the difficulties of researching this subject. The research population itself is likely to be small, with the only available report showing 55% of 145 television producers, 33% of 129 television directors, and 38% of 153 television writers in New Zealand in the 2015 and 2016 financial years were female (NZ On Air, 2016). Additionally, these occupations and their surrounding obligations are time consuming: it took numerous attempts to contact the guilds alone due to their teams being “busy” or “hectic”, and one participant also described herself as “super busy” with limited time available. This means that of those who do fit the criteria, many may be unable or unwilling to participate due to work and other commitments. These issues have been described in previous literature on research involving elite women who may have less discretionary time even compared to their male peers (Reinharz & Chase, 2011). An additional speculation is that the small nature of the New Zealand television industry may have discouraged potential participants who were

concerned about being identifiable in the findings and seen as critical of their own workplaces. These factors mean finding a representative sample is difficult, or potentially impossible, and this may have contributed to the lack of existing research on this subject. While the small size of the sample might be seen to problematise the results, the research was designed to ensure sufficient data was gathered that would allow for valid conclusions to be drawn. These research design components will be described in the remainder of the methodology chapter.

Data Collection Method

A qualitative approach is best suited to understanding social reality and the complexity of social actors' interpretations of it (Leavy, 2014). Since the research question for this project is concerned with the gendered social reality of work in New Zealand television, there was no hesitation that a qualitative approach was the most appropriate means of answering this question. While numerous qualitative data collection methods exist, the qualitative interview was chosen as it can function to "uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view or reflection or to penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature of that experience" (Johnson, 2011, p. 6). A semi-structured interview guide approach was utilised due to the type and depth of information needed, the lack of relevant literature available, and the size and attributes of the research population.

While previous research on this topic has used surveys to gather data (French, 2012), this method was not considered appropriate due in part to the small research population and the possible lack of discretionary time available to potential participants, as it was not expected that enough respondents would participate to garner the quantity of data needed to make valid conclusions. Additionally, as New Zealand literature on the research topic is limited, and due to the standpoint feminism approach to the methodology, this project has been designed to avoid making too many assumptions about the social experience, instead intending to be guided as much as possible by the contribution of the research participants. Due to the fixed nature of survey questions, qualitative

surveys may limit the opportunity for dialogue and rapport, which instead are the cornerstones of the qualitative interview approach (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). By using one-on-one in-depth interviews, the participants are provided the opportunity to inform the researcher of the relevant issues in as much detail as desired, limiting the researcher's preconceptions on the topic from controlling the dialogue and consequently restricting the data gathered.

Focus groups were also briefly considered but dismissed for many reasons. Anonymity of the participants was a crucial aspect of the ethics agreement and lack of anonymity in a group setting had the potential to limit participants' freedom to speak openly about their working experiences. Additionally, the small research population was seen to be a limitation to the quantity of data that could be collected from focus groups. Finally, a component of focus group research usually involves the analysis of interaction and discussion between participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The research question was not interested in social dynamics or how women who work in New Zealand television respond to one another – that may be a question for another research project. Rather, the purpose of the research question is to shed light on the labour experience of the individual, and since in-depth interviewing is well suited to the discovery of conceptual and experiential knowledge (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Johnson, 2011) the in-depth interview was chosen as the most appropriate data collection method.

A semi-structured approach to the interviews was adopted in order to collect a depth of information despite the small research population and to allow the researcher adaptability during the interview process (Fylan, 2005). The interview design was based on the general interview guide approach as described by Rubin and Babbie, and Patton (2009; 2002) in order to provide some structure while allowing adaptability depending on the responsiveness and comfort of the participants. The general interview guide approach involves drawing up a template of core topics and guide interview questions which ensure the interview will cover the key research topics but allows flexibility during the interview process itself (Patton, 2002). As has been described in methodology literature, “as

an interview progresses, it often takes unexpected turns or digressions that follow the informant's interests or knowledge. Such digressions or diversions are likely to be very productive so the interviewer should be prepared to depart from his or her prepared plan" (Johnson, 2011). Using this interview guide approach allowed an element of control over the issues and limitations described above, while the guide questions assisted the researcher, as a novice interviewer, a starting point to initiate dialogue with the participants.

A consultation process was undertaken with a woman who had worked for over 25 years in the New Zealand television industry as a screenwriter and producer and who also has a background in academia. Her first-hand experience in two of the occupations to be studied meant that she had unique insight into the likely desires and requirements of potential participants, while her academic knowledge meant she was able to understand the practical and theoretical requirements and limitations of the research. During the consultation, it was advised that an interview process would be an appropriate and worthwhile approach to this research topic.

The key topics covered in the interview reflect the research question as well as common themes in the literature. These topics are: perceptions of gender equality in the industry as a whole; perceptions on the role of affective labour and social networking; thoughts on the effect of parenthood on creative work; perceptions of the workplace culture; the perceived effect of gender on the career of the individual. The interview guide has key questions that can be covered as well as follow-up or prompt questions where further information might be required. The interview guide is available to view as an appendix to this thesis.

Each participant was also allowed some space to speak freely, this was done in two interviews with a wide-open question, such as "is there anything else you would like to say?" In one interview, the interviewee requested to speak openly about the topic of gender and her experiences as the interview began so a further wide-open question was not required. The inclusion of the wide-open question

recognises the limitations of the researcher, who does not have first-hand experience of the topic of inquiry, and allows the participants to include anything they felt was significant and not covered by the guide questions, providing an avenue for productive digression from the guide topics (Johnson, 2011).

Audio of each interview was recorded on a small, handheld voice recorder, and written notes were made after each interview. Two interviews took place in person, in a location chosen by the participants, while one interview took place over telephone. Interviews were between 30 and 70 minutes long. The interviews were transcribed using simple transcription software called Transcribe. This software eased the transcription process by playing the audio recordings at a slower rate and pausing the recording at intervals. Due to the interpretive nature of transcription (DiCiccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) each completed transcript was sent to the respective interviewee for approval. This gave participants the opportunity to include any information they felt they had omitted in the interview, and allowed the participants control over the data they contributed to the project. This was crucial to the ethical codes of participation and partnership that guided the research design. Only very minimal adjustments were made at the request of participants, such as the inclusion or exclusion of named colleagues. Once the transcriptions were finalised, the analysis process could begin.

4.3 Method of Analysis

A thematic analysis technique was used to analyse the interview transcripts as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This analysis technique involves an iterative, step by step process of coding and thematic grouping. Thematic analysis is a useful analytical tool due to its malleability and its independence from theory, meaning it can be used alongside numerous philosophical and theoretical assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, thematic analysis allows the researcher the possibility of searching for both semantic and latent meanings, that is “the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.13). Therefore, by using thematic analysis to analyse interview data, the researcher is not only able to search for themes within the

content of the interviews but also to uncover some discursive or ideological similarities amongst the data. This differentiates a thematic analysis from a content analysis approach which does not allow for this additional depth of inquiry (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Thematic analysis is suited to this research project as it allows for the identification of semantic and latent patterns within qualitative data, thus corresponding to the research's aim of describing the shared experiences and opinions of the research participants.

Along with Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, an abductive approach to theory construction was used, the purpose of which is to produce theories from the data rather than to apply existing theories to the analysis (Timmerman & Tavory, 2012). Abductive reasoning particularly suits a standpoint feminist approach as it recognises the significance of the situated knowledge of the researcher (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Abductive approaches depend on familiarity with existing theories, but do not depend on the theories themselves, so part of the analytical process was to consider the thematic groupings in relation to literature on gender theory, organisational theory, and creative work.

The interview transcripts were firstly read and annotated for interest and thematic potential. This process was then repeated to ensure familiarity with the material. The following step in the process was to extract and sort the data into smaller units for analysis, described as thematic units by Ryan and Bernard (2000). These thematic units varied in size but were generally a few sentences which expressed a single idea or event. The units were then grouped into categorical codes and organised into a spreadsheet with one column for the speaker, one for the data unit, and one for the code. Once the narrower coding process was complete, the codes were organised into broader themes, which was an iterative process. In keeping with the abductive approach, these themes were informed by, but not dependent on, the related literature. This process resulted in three themes with thirteen sub-themes, as per below.

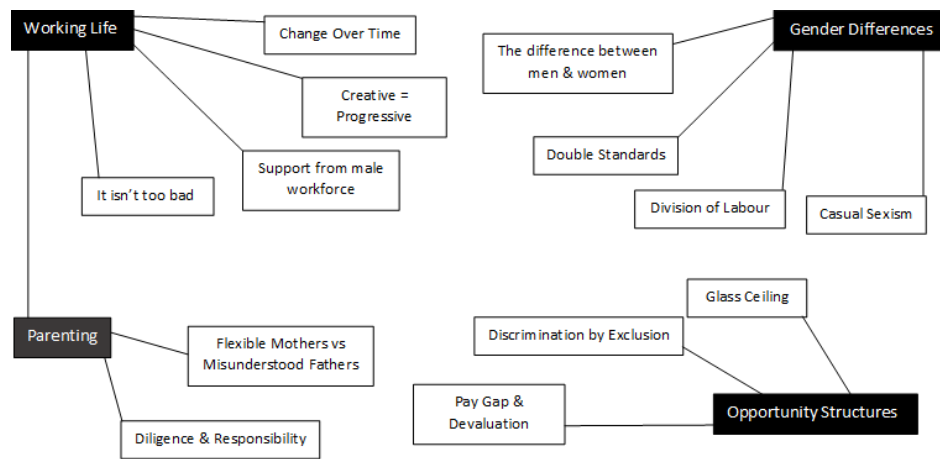


Figure 1 Map of Thematic Analysis

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Due to the use of one-on-one interviews discussing personal experience, several ethical concerns were raised and addressed. These concerns included issues of privacy and confidentiality, reduction of discomfort to participants, and researcher risk management. As well as the following considerations, and to fulfil requirements by the institution, ethics approval was sought and gained by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Participants in this research were informed during the recruitment process that anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the small and tightly networked nature of the New Zealand television industry. To provide the maximum possible confidentiality, no real names of participants or their workplaces are used in the analysis without the explicit, written permission of the participants. Signed consent forms as well as the interview transcripts are to be stored in a secure, locked location until their destruction six years after the completion of the analysis.

Reduction of Discomfort to Participants

In order to reduce the risk of discomfort to participants, it was ensured all potential participants were fully informed of the purpose and scope of the research

before agreeing to participate. Further steps to reduce harm included allowing the participant to select the location of the interview; ensuring the interviewee understood they were free to end the interview at any time; ensuring the interviewee was given the opportunity to read and approve their interview transcript. These measures gave the participants control over the situation of their interviews as well as the content of the data collected.

Researcher Risk Management

As the interviews took place in private residences, a researcher safety protocol was established to protect the researcher from any potential harm. This involved notifying the research supervisor of the interview location and advising the estimated start and end times of the interviews, followed by a further notification when the interview was complete and the researcher had left the location.

4.5 Validity and Limitations

This study was limited to a specific industry and geographic location. The consequence of this is results that relate very specifically to the New Zealand television industry and answer the specificities of the research question, however the opportunity to draw generalisations to overseas industries or other industries within New Zealand is limited. A further limitation to the study was that the nature of the research population caused the sample size to be restricted to only three participants. The three participants had extensive and varied careers as writers, producers, and directors of New Zealand television and provided a reflective and insightful responses to the interview questions. While the small sample size must be taken into consideration when considering the generalisability of the results (Ruane, 2015), sample size was factored into the research design and the choice to use in-depth interviews to gather a wealth of data from each participant validates the results and the conclusions drawn. Although studies pertaining to gender and work in the creative industries are a growing area of academic interest, research on the New Zealand television

industry is very limited and this study provides an adequate starting point for further research.

Chapter 5

Findings and Analysis

5.1 Working Life

In this section, participants describe, discuss and evaluate various aspects of working life in the New Zealand television industry. This section is divided into five main themes looking at: an overall assessment of the industry as a place for women to work; how the industry has changed over the last thirty years; how the population of creative individuals in the industry might affect gender equality; the importance of support from male colleagues and superiors; and the relationship between parenthood and television careers for women. This section is characterised by contradictions and demonstrates evidence of competing discourses in the television industry in New Zealand.

It Isn't Too Bad

This theme covers the comments that participants made evaluating the industry as a whole. Rather than assessing one-off events or experiences, these extracts only include comments that gave an overview of the working experience. There was considerable contradiction in opinions within the interviews about whether the television industry in New Zealand was a good place for women to work. Participants described the industry as “sexist” and expressed doubts about the perceived validity of women’s voices but at different times within the interviews also described the industry as accepting and liberal. When participants praised the current industry, it was often done through comparison to either their own experiences of the past or to what they inferred about overseas television and film industries.

Participants were cautiously optimistic in their appraisal of the television industry, making a point to state that New Zealand was not “too bad” as far as gender and sexual discrimination were concerned, in particular comparing the workplace to similar industries overseas.

I don't think in general it is terrible, um, but it isn't perfect, and it's changed a lot over the years. (Participant Two)

This extract is a typical example of the comments in this theme, with a sentiment of contradiction in which the industry is neither “terrible” nor “perfect” and an emphasis on progress over time. Participant Two repeated this sentiment later in the interview, particularly after describing some negative experiences she had had through her career in television, saying TVNZ in particular “isn't too bad” and that the television industry “might be slightly better than other industries in NZ.”

As well as cautiously positive statements, comments in this theme included outright negative ones. Consistent with Participant Two, Participant One compared the New Zealand television industry favourably to other (unspecified) creative industries in New Zealand and to the television industry in Australia. However unlike other participants, she was very critical when evaluating the New Zealand television industry as a whole.

There's never going to be an easy pathway in this industry for women who want to be, you know, get to the top, in NZ, because it's a small industry, it's very competitive, you've got to be very good, and it's just, and there's never going to be any, "Oh, let's try and get the gender balance working," that's never going to happen in this industry, I think it's probably a lot more sexist than a lot of other industries, certainly in the public service and areas like that. (Participant One)

These comments are of particular interest as the conflation of industry size and competition with sexism is scarcely researched. Queuing theory suggests that occupations with more competition for staff are more likely to be male dominated (Reskin, 1991) although no longitudinal data has shown this to be accurate. The participant also highlights the importance of affirmative action to achieving gender equality, using the phrase “let's try” to indicate an active rather than passive process. She suggests this is not something that has been prioritised in New Zealand television. This connection between change over time, and the emphasis on affirmative action is also notable because it appeals to the idea that progress in the industry has been the result of social progress and changing attitudes to gender in wider society, rather than because of conscious action on behalf of the industry.

In summary, the responses in this theme were loaded with contradictions, both within interviews and between participants. While the contradictions exist, the participants all used comparative framing instead of judging the industry in isolation, reinforcing their sense that the television industry is much better than it has been in the past and “could be worse”. The participants made reference to shifting attitudes towards gender that have resulted from the social and political feminist agendas in New Zealand, while their awareness of the importance of affirmative action resonated with their feminist self-identities. Their conflicting evaluations of the television industry as a good place for women to work might be suggestive of a discomfort labelling the industry either way, particularly as their awareness of historical sexism flattered their experiences in comparison. Their mixed responses might also indicate the use of different discourses to negotiate similar experiences, including feminist discourse around organisational responsibility and neoliberal discourse on individual responsibility. The notion of contradictory discourse is evident throughout the participants’ responses and is explored in depth in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

Change Over Time

This theme looks at comments that participants made about the extent to which the New Zealand television industry has changed in the time they have been working in it. The overall sentiment was a positive one, with all participants saying that change in the last 15-30 years was in a positive direction. Areas in which participants described positive change were the number of women working in the industry, and the atmosphere of the working environment. Although participants talked about improvements in the industry, they did not imply that the New Zealand television industry had reached gender equality, or that no further improvements were needed. For example, one participant stated that “the [gender] imbalance has probably righted itself” which does not necessarily imply that the balance is *equal*. One interpretation of their statements is that although the industry has not reached a state of gender equality, increasingly positive gender attitudes and increases to the number of women working in a variety

television occupations, means that the industry is a more accessible and pleasant workplace than it was in the past.

While participants used phrases like “it’s changed a lot over the years” to describe progress, they also used historical social context to emphasise why change occurred. In the following extract, the participant describes the gender balance of creative workers on television series in the 1980s:

[C]ertainly the last two series that had been made on film before my one was [...] they were heavily, heavily male oriented. All of the main characters were male, all of the writers were male, all of the directors were male, it was a really, really male viewpoint, to a degree that I think people would be shocked if they looked back on them today, they were, you would notice how extreme it was. But back then, unless you were a young feminist like me and my friends, it wasn't extreme. (Participant Three)

Participant Three’s description of the historical industry as “heavily male” is contrasted with an expectation of how such attitudes would be received today: she believes the modern person would be “shocked”. This communicates an appreciation of the current industry climate as more accepting of women in a variety of occupations and jobs. Comparing accounts of change to existing literature and statistical accounts of the division of labour is problematic. There are insufficient statistics or literature specific to the New Zealand television industry to ascertain the trends over time, and although there is data available for overseas media production industries it does not extend back to the late 1980s, the time period referred to by the participant. That said, the change described reflects a change in attitudes more so than a quantifiable change in the gender balance of occupations within the industry.

Participants also used phrases such as “it was partly the times”, and “how far we’ve come”, whether talking about the past or the present, to indicate progress over time while drawing a connection to changing attitudes towards gender in wider society. In post-industrial developed societies (including New Zealand) gender roles converge after the introduction of women into the labour force (Inglehart & Norris, 2003) while studies in the US indicate that both men’s and women’s attitudes to gender issues such as gender roles and family

responsibilities liberalised significantly from the early 1980s through to the late 1990s (Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004). The participants' draw a connection between a change in "the times" and industry changes that are indicative of wider societal trends regarding the acceptance of women in the workplace. Therefore, the changes they discuss are reflective of changes in attitudes to gender in wider society and not due to active shifts in industry practices or regulations.

In terms of major shifts in New Zealand television practice and how this might have affected gender attitudes, Participant Three attributed the most significant changes as occurring after the deregulation of broadcasting in the late 1980s and the shift to a more precarious, individualistic workplace model. Below she describes the sexist climate on her first job as a television writer for a female-centric drama series that was produced in the late 1980s.

[The crew] weren't having to hustle for their next job. They were very comfortable in their situations, they'd been there for a long time [...] you know, "Who was she to be coming in here and being in charge? Why do we have to make her thing?" Whereas in a more freelance environment people just aren't that lazy or rude [...] everybody's on short term contracts and there isn't that sort of, "I'm inside, you're outside, I don't want you coming in," you know, that whole mind-set doesn't even really exist anymore. (Participant Three)

This explanation accounts for an attitudinal change over time without any mention of equality of job distribution. It also accounts for the overwhelmingly positive view of the progress in the last two to three decades, as participants are comparing the present industry climate to an overtly hostile one of the past. Instead of focussing on opportunities for women, the participant is again focussed on attitudes, which is an interesting perspective and contrasts with studies which have shown that the switch to a precarious market disadvantages women (Jones & Pringle, 2015; Gill, Randle, & Wing-Fai, 2015; Conor, B., Gill, R., & Taylor, S. 2015). It is likely that as deregulation and increasingly precarious working conditions coincided with changing social attitudes to gender discrimination, freelancers were required to outwardly express less antagonism towards women in order to continually gain employment. This led to a less hostile working environment, even though it might not have obviously affected opportunities for women. So, while changes in industry practice may have had an effect on the

working experience of women in New Zealand television, this was an unintended consequence rather than the result of affirmative action.

Liberal, progressive-thinking, creative

This theme encompasses the descriptions of creative people as liberal and open minded. Participants described a correlation between creative workers and progressive thinking, and noted that the television industry was populated with these kinds of people. This was connected to a perceived acceptance of women, and was said to contribute to gender diversity in the television workplace despite participants also describing the industry itself as sexist. Stereotypes of different kinds of people in the creative industries were used by participants to divide the working experience into creative and financial labour, an established conceptual division in Western culture (Bilton, 2007). In organisational literature, the perceived open-mindedness of creative workers has been considered a discursive technique to camouflaging inequity issues and maintaining the illusion of meritocracy (Wreyford, 2015). The meritocratic discourse claims that discriminatory hiring practices are incompatible with creative work and that the most suitable individual is hired for the work, despite the majority of successful screenwriters, directors and producers globally being male (Lauzen, 2015; Hunt, 2015; Steele, 2013; French, 2012; Wreyford, 2015). However, in this research, rather than claiming that the creative industries were intrinsically progressive, participants drew on stereotypes mainly to distinguish creative individuals from others, and described comfort working with creative people. This may help account for the contradictions in their assessments of the industry, as their everyday experiences working with creative people contrasts with occupational barriers perceived to have stemmed from non-creative workers. There was an awareness throughout the interviews that while discrimination might exist, it did not stem from creative individuals, as discriminatory thinking was seen as incompatible with creative thinking.

I think broadcasting might be, I suppose because it is to some degree populated by fairly liberal, progressive thinking, creative people, it probably is slightly better in terms of gender diversity, and other diversity. (Participant Two)

The above example illustrates the tendency of participants to correlate creative culture industries with creative and open-minded thinking, and open-mindedness with gender acceptance and diversity. The participant qualifies her claim by stating that the industry is only this way “to some degree”, indicating a hesitance to generalise about all members of the television workforce.

In the following extract, the participant specifically described screenwriters as being open-minded. This example is of particular interest as research into the screenwriting profession overseas describe it as ostensibly meritocratic but fundamentally “fraternalistic” and “homophilic” (Conor 2014, 2015), in stark contrast to the interviewee’s opinion of New Zealand screenwriters. Rather than discourses of meritocracy and individualism, the participant conflates creativity and open-mindedness to describe a collaborative working process.

[Y]ou know, I've worked with a lot of male writers and I've never worked with one that I've thought, "That guy's sexist, I don't like his ideas, he doesn't like women," it just hasn't, it hasn't come up because they tend to be people, you know, if your ideas are very fixed and your imagination can only see things in a narrow way, how likely is it that you're going to be a writer? [...] You know, some producers and network executives and people like that: they're different. But, they do, they have different kinds of minds [...] they're much more likely to think stereotypically.
(Participant Three)

One explanation for the dissonance between this response and existing literature is simply that different countries have different working environments and different gender policies. However, this dissonance might also be the result of Participant Three negotiating sexism in the workplace by not attributing blame to her colleagues. Sexism still exists, but the blame is deflected onto “producers and network executives”, individuals with whom she does not have to work collaboratively. It is also interesting to note that this response demonstrates how stereotypes of open-minded creatives are constructed in binary opposition to those in senior roles who (ironically) are only able to “think stereotypically”. This goes some way to providing an explanation for the dissention between this response and other studies. Perhaps rather than a different experience altogether, Participant Three simply employs different discursive strategies to those used by participants in Conor’s work (2014, 2015).

Support from the male workforce

This theme includes participants discussing the importance of supportive and positive experiences with males in the workplace. The literature on this topic is complicated. Collegial support like that which is described by participants has been shown to have a limited effect on job satisfaction compared to other types of social support, like mentorship (Engdahl, Harris, & Winskowski, 2007). Also, while an inverse relationship between social support and job stress has been found for men, the same is not necessarily true for women (Geller & Hobfall, 1994). These studies looked at the relationship between various types of workplace satisfaction and social support at work and failed to find a positive correlation for women workers. However, the interview participants did place emphasis on the support they received from their male colleagues and so it should therefore be considered a significant factor in their working experience.

Comments from participants about supportive behaviour include descriptions of its presence and its absence. Participants tended to mention supportive males while describing a negative experience or situation: sometimes this was to provide evidence that the overall working experience was positive, while at other times it was to emphasise how the negative experience might have benefitted from positive support. Despite the literature, respondents spoke of the significance of support from their colleagues, and placed equal weight on supportive colleagues and male superiors. The following is an example of the juxtaposition between good and bad behaviour.

And I noticed - and again, I stress, that many of my male colleagues were completely fabulous, and totally excellent human beings - but, there were a few who did not like that this young woman person was just jumping a- nipping at their heels a bit much. (Participant Two)

At other times, participants described the need for positive support when it was not received, for example one participant stated she did not receive vocal support in meetings when one colleague continually shut down her suggestions. In the

following example, the participant describes the lack of support from her workplace on being turned down for a role on a co-production with another company.

I mean, this is a tricky one, but yeah, and I felt like, I did actually ask the question in here, whether they backed me up, and I don't believe they did, I actually think they just went, "oh ok, alright then". (Participant One)

In this instance, Participant One believed that the lack of support from her own company legitimised the sexism from the partnering company by failing to recognise or oppose it. It is interesting to juxtapose this with her statements elsewhere in the interview that tenacity and personal investment are key factors in career progress for women as it appears that even with immense human capital investment on the part of the individual, support and approval from colleagues is still a requisite to success. Rutherford (2011) discusses the need for radical cultural changes to stem from those who benefit from hierarchical systems; participants echoed this sentiment that progress is impossible without the cooperation and endorsement of the men who work in the television industry.

Parenting

The way that participants talked about the relationship between parenthood and work was very complicated and consequently this theme is divided into two sub-themes. The first includes the way participants describe the relationship between different types of workers and flexible working arrangements. The second sub-theme looks at how participants explored the idea of the personal responsibility of working parents. To provide crucial context, Participants One and Two did not have children of their own, while Participant Three did. The non-parent participants utilised their experiences working in leadership positions with parent staff to explore parenthood whereas Participant Three drew on her own experiences as a parent. These different perspectives provide slightly different viewpoints, although all participants drew on the notion of individual responsibility and had markedly heteronormative ideas about parental responsibility, assuming that women by default would be primary caregivers of children and conceding that men's parenting responsibilities were the exception.

Flexible mothers and misunderstood fathers. One theme that emerged involved discussion of mothers and fathers in regards to flexibility in the workplace. When discussing parenthood, flexibility was a subject that occurred frequently, perhaps as there is a view of incompatibility between parent workers' need for some malleability in their working hours and the time and budget constraints of television production.

You see, when you're on a production and the way the budgets are structured, it's very difficult to have flexible working hours. You've got 50 hours a week [...] if you go over then you're gonna start, your budget's going to be impacted and so [...] the family issue in this sort of television production can be tricky, I mean this particular environment that I work in is actually, I don't think it's - we don't have an overt policy about being family friendly but I think generally speaking we are. (Participant One)

The above extract deconstructs the ways that parenting responsibilities are seen to be unsuited to the strict organization of television production, while the mention of a “family friendly” policy is indicative of an unease toward talking ill of parenting that was present throughout this theme. For example, non-parent participants talked about a perception of disadvantage in which parent workers were allowed greater flexibility at work but they were careful to distance themselves from this opinion:

I feel like, personally, I've always bent over backwards for people with families and in fact I have read about this in other research that's been done about this gender thing is, that often people that don't have kids feel it's not fair because it's the ones that do have kids that actually end up getting a lot of the advantage – [...] It's more flexible for them because of that, and that is probably true because that's what, I've certainly filled in for a lot of extra work for people who've had to go off and deal with family issues and I guess that's, I see that as part of my role as an executive producer, that that's what I have to do. (Participant One)

In this extract, the participant describes this perception of disadvantage, at first distancing herself from the viewpoint by saying it is something she has read elsewhere. However, she then legitimises this opinion by saying it is “probably true” and substantiates it with her personal experience of filling in for people who cannot work due to parenting responsibilities. The other non-parent interviewee used phrases such as “we’ve got to kinda make it work” to describe the necessity

of workplace leaders accommodating parent workers. It is interesting that both addressed this idea that the workplace accommodates for mothers, and did so with some discomfort, particularly as the literature suggests that motherhood (but not fatherhood) disadvantages career progress (Gill, et al, 2015; Rowlands & Handy, 2014; Leuze and Strauß, 2016).

Participants also keenly asserted the existence of male parent workers and mused that the flexibility offered to mothers might not be available for fathers. Participants distinguished between male parents (who were sometimes assumed to have a female partner taking on childcare responsibilities), and “solo dads” who were assumed to have full parental responsibilities.

[...] it probably is a little bit easier for men, because there is probably someone taking that greater role in parenting. That would have exceptions though, because there are solo dads, and I suspect that they could probably tell some stories, because they may in fact get treated worse when they are trying to get time- [...] I think that they would probably tell you that they've possibly, actually, get a worse deal, because there's probably that thing of, "well, why do you need time to be going off," and, so maybe there's a reverse thing there. (Participant Two)

This participant assumed that male parent workers would have lesser parental responsibilities than female parent workers, regardless of their marital or relationship status. This is backed up by literature that suggests even non-normative family arrangements reinforce gender binaries through the assumption that women default to primary caregiving duties (Nentwich, 2008). This appears to be related to a wider assumption about gendered parenting and earning responsibilities – a phenomenon that adversely and disproportionately affects the careers of women – and a begrudging acceptance of the flexibility parents need at work. It is also further evidence of a resentment from non-parent workers towards female parent workers. To draw on these perspectives, one might argue that mothers requiring flexibility in the workplace put a two-fold burden on other female workers by apparently increasing the workload for them, as well as reifying the discourse that motherhood and female biology are inconvenient to the workplace and consequently legitimising discrimination against women. This might help account for the different views held by non-parent and parent participants.

Diligence and reputation. This theme includes commentary on the negotiable difficulties in balancing a career in television with parenting. Participants produced conflicting ideas about parenting in the television industry in New Zealand. Although participants described difficulties in balancing parenthood and television work, they tended to place the onus with the individual, rather than implying that the workplace should accommodate caregiving responsibilities. This perception of parenthood implied that difficulties could ultimately be overcome through personal adaptation. This viewpoint, with its focus on individuality, reflects the neoliberal discourse that influenced both the feminist movement and the radical changes in employment structures in the early 1990s (such as the reduction in union influence and increase in individual employment contracts). For example, participants discussed the long working hours, but would describe making a choice to either work fewer hours or make provisions for childcare. Participants also mentioned having to take a break from work to have a child, but countered this by claiming the industry is concerned about the work you *have* done, not the work you have not.

[H]aving small children doesn't stop you from having opportunities or pursuing opportunities, you just have to be a lot more diligent about thinking, "Well if I did get that, if that did go ahead, how would I cover the bases at home so I could do it?"
(Participant Three)

In the above example, the participant acknowledges that the way to negotiate the difficulties of parenting is through personal attributes, and states that having children “doesn’t stop you”. In contrast, the same participant also mentioned that her husband works as a director and that should she have wished to direct television full time, “it would put our home life in jeopardy”. This indicates a dissonance between the lack of choice the participant feels she has and the belief that the only hurdle she faces is the willingness to be “a lot more diligent”. This again communicates a neoliberal sentiment that individual responsibility is key to negotiating the difficulties of working parenthood.

Another opinion expressed in this theme was that the break in work for maternal leave is insignificant in the wider context of a television career, in which reputation is ostensibly favoured above all else:

[I]f you've already made a really good reputation for yourself I think, in this industry in some ways it could be more forgiving, in that, if you're out for a couple of years and then you come back, and people look at your CV and go "oh my god that person did this show" well then, they would be like, "sure, that's great, come on back!". There wouldn't be any of that, "oh you've got to start again" type thing. (Participant One)

This extract appears to be an example of meritocratic discourses concealing the disadvantages that exist for mothers in the creative culture industries: previous studies have found that consistent social networking between jobs (Conor et al., 2015), negotiation of abnormal working hours (Gill et al., 2015) and resistance to the hiring of mothers (Rowlands and Handy, 2014) are major barriers to the preservation of employment by women in international film and television industries after having children. However, this idea of good reputation as a guarantee of employment masks the reality that discrimination against mothers does exist.

The studies mentioned focused on contract workers, but there was evidence in the interview responses of systemic discrimination against mothers even in permanent work: despite the claims that parenthood was a *navigable* obstacle to career success, participants clearly indicated cultural and institutional constraints to career optimization for women workers with children, mirroring findings in research overseas (O'Brien, 2014). Participant Two described occurrences of women losing their jobs during maternity leave, in a kind of barely lawful termination.

[A] woman would go on maternity leave for x months, and end up losing her job, because for convenience's sake, somewhere along the line, she'd get restructured out.[...] that's very uncomfortable that you get restructured out because you've gone to have a baby. And unfortunately I have known of that to happen, a couple of times. (Participant Two)

The participant uses a tangible example to refute the idea that reputation or individual effort are enough to ensure job security for mothers who work in television. It is important to note that the example she has given cannot explicitly be described as gender or parenthood discrimination since the process of “restructuring” is a lawful practice at the discretion of senior management. This might be considered an example of a covert institutionalised sexism, in which the employer is acting around the law to discriminate surreptitiously. This is evidence of the negative effect of neoliberalism on women at work. The culmination of individual employment agreements, lack of unionisation and meritocratic discourse creates an environment in which a new parent can involuntarily lose their employment without any claims of sexism being verifiable.

5.2 Opportunity Structures

Participants identified numerous structural and systemic issues which worked together to prevent the success and career progression of women in New Zealand television by increasing available opportunities for discrimination. Some of the structural and systemic issues mentioned included the demographic of senior management; confidentiality surrounding pay practices; and a discourse of meritocracy. The suspected discrimination that arose from these issues included a gender pay gap at high ranking positions; difficulty being hired or promoted; and unequal treatment at work. Participants found it difficult to definitively state that they had been discriminated against as these structural issues caused a lack of transparency that made discrimination both easier and more difficult to verify. This phenomenon has been described in the literature as “opportunity structures” (Petersen and Saporta, 2004). This section is organised into three thematic groupings: the glass ceiling; exclusion as a tool of discrimination; and the gender pay gap. Participants described their experiences of these structural issues not only as action but also as attitude, and tended to make note of the difficulties of negotiating subtle or intangible sexism in the workplace.

The Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling is a phenomenon previously described in gender and diversity research in which gender disadvantages and discrimination are at their most resilient in the upper tiers of a career path, for example in senior management (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia and Vanneman, 2001; Black and Rothman, 1998; Oakley, 2000). As a theme, The Glass Ceiling includes statements from participants about resistance to promotion, and hostile environments beyond a certain level of career advancement.

Participants who worked in more structured, leadership roles contributed the most to this theme. One participant described an “upper echelon” of senior management which is dominated by men, and a time period of “a couple of years” between the promise of promotion by her boss and the fulfilment of that promise. She also describes being promoted simultaneously to a male colleague as she “had to be crowded in with somebody else, to make sure that it didn't stand out too far”, indicating a discomfort with the promotion of women in her workplace.

Another participant described a hostility once she reached a certain level of seniority that she also felt was obstructive to her progress beyond that point. She stated repeatedly that she felt had she been male she may have stayed with the company longer and been promoted further.

I definitely did notice a subtle change when I went up to the fifth floor to that middle management level and suddenly, yeah, that useful, capable person that you'd been where you were useful to people, suddenly, actually, maybe you were a little bit of a threat now, maybe you were just getting a little bit too good. (Participant Two)

As with the above extract, participants weren't necessarily able to articulate a reason for the resistance, or provide concrete examples of how they felt disadvantaged, instead they described an intangible sense of opposition.

Considering the relationship that was previously drawn between the independence of TVNZ Ltd and improved working conditions for women, it's important to note that the incidents described in this theme occurred well after the establishment of TVNZ Ltd as a State-Owned Enterprise. Despite improvements in the everyday working experience, and an increase of women working in some production roles, a glass ceiling apparently still operates that prevents women from ascending to more prestigious occupations, like executive producer or senior management.

Discrimination by Exclusion

This theme included instances in which participants described times they had been excluded in the workplace. These acts of exclusion included rejection from jobs as well as exclusion from workplace functions in which the participants believed their gender was a major contributing factor. As with the Gender Pay Gap and Devaluation theme, this theme was small but characterised by passion. This passion was particularly evident as the participants were compelled to tell these anecdotes without prompt from a specific interview question.

Below is an example of the rejection from a work opportunity due to gender on an international coproduction:

But then I did actually recall a certain situation which is sort of, and this is really very much tied into our international connection [...] I actually did have a situation where I found that my being female did have a lot to do with the fact that they were not that keen on me being an executive producer on a show that we were doing together. (Participant One)

When describing this incident the participant blamed both the domestic and the international production companies involved, stating that while perhaps workplaces in other countries have different values around gender, it is the responsibility of New Zealand companies to maintain a meritocratic system. The participant was unable to claim outright that she had been discriminated against because of her gender, and did not state any evidence to suggest this was the case,

but felt strongly that it was the reason for her exclusion from the job. Participant One said that it was “tricky” to blame her gender but felt that she had earned the right to the job through her “credits” and “reputation”. Since the employers were able to choose whomever they felt was the best fit for the role, she felt it was difficult to argue her case without sounding conceited. What the participant is expressing is the meritocratic discourse described by Acker (2006) and Wreyford (2015) that can act to disguise sexism and other forms of discrimination. Through a discourse of meritocracy, employers are able to work to exclude women from certain jobs while outwardly appearing to be egalitarian, as the only supposed criteria for promotion or employment are skill and experience.

Another participant gave an example of her omission from an important work-related event. This was seen by the participant to be a result of a poor workplace relationship which she believed to be caused by her gender.

There was one producer that I worked with recently and our relationship just became like a really bad marriage, you know, he would do anything to avoid speaking with me or communicating with me. There were things like, you know, when the drama that we had made had its first screening just before it went to air, there was a screening in parliament and various government ministers were invited and, but he didn't invite me[...]when a relationship goes that badly wrong, you do look at it and go... I think there was an element of sexism in it. In that I think, basically, he didn't know how to deal with a woman who was not subordinate to him and didn't have to do what he said. (Participant Three)

Once again, this is an example of a more covert sexism, in which the participant was hesitant to fully blame sexism and yet mentioned it as a factor in the event. While literature on the creative industries emphasises social networking and informal industry events as crucial to career success, and addresses women's exclusion from such events, it is usually framed as a result of women's obligations in other affective labour like household and caregiving work (Lauzen, 2012; Gill et al, 2015; Conor et al, 2015). The active exclusion of an individual from a formal networking event is an additional barrier those studies do not investigate or discuss. Whereas other industry practises such as hiring are at least ostensibly protected by anti-discrimination laws, the more informal nature of these types of events means that legislation or regulations are more difficult to implement. As a

result, this kind of exclusion is less explicit in its sexism, more difficult to identify, and therefore also more difficult to draw attention to or rectify.

Gender Pay Gap and Devaluation

One participant contributed to this theme, in which the gender pay gap was discussed as it pertained to women working in salaried positions in New Zealand television. The passion exhibited on this topic necessitated its inclusion as a solitary theme. The participant spoke about the perceived devaluation of jobs dominated by women, the gender wage gap in her department, as well as the gender wage gap in the wider television industry and the attitudes of the public towards wages. Participant Two described the feminization and consequent devaluing of certain roles within the television industry, particularly the increase in women working in middle management in broadcasting in the early 1990s. She not only described a subtle sense that the jobs became less prestigious, but also offered some of the reasons this was evident, such as the job titles given to these roles, and the way female heads of department were depicted in the media.

When women started getting the jobs, coz actually we were really good at them, it felt to me like the jobs were devalued. They suddenly weren't such big deal jobs, they suddenly weren't quite so high up the kudos scale, and I think the money might not have been so good. (Participant Two)

In the above extract, Participant Two had begun to describe a positive trend: that women were being promoted from production managers to producers and being permitted to achieve positions as heads of department. However, she expresses frustration that these achievements in progress were undermined by the devaluation process that followed. While she is unable to provide tangible proof of this devaluation process, and describes it as “subtle”, she was able to provide some of the ways this process was measurable:

It was- how do you put it into words? I just, even just things like, how that person would be represented in the media, or interviewed in the media. [...] And I bet they were getting paid a lot less as well. [...] Yeah, how do you put that into words, because it is quite subtle? Sometimes they even slightly change the title, to, you know from things like "General Manager" to

"Head of". [...] You know, just little subtle things like that.
(Participant Two)

Her description aligns with the literature on feminisation, which shows that an influx of women into an occupation is usually followed by a devaluation of that occupation which is measurable by its median male wage (England, 1992; England, Allison, Wu, 2007; Levanon, England, Allison, 2009; Mandel, 2013). It is notable again that the participant struggles to quantify her conviction that this process occurred and not knowing of any actual change in pay rates, is only able to list "little subtle things" to make her point. This is further evidence that the discrimination being experienced is covert and difficult to measure and identify. When Participant Two is able to describe an actual monetary pay gap, it is through her own personal experience:

[...] I found out, and I wasn't really meant to find out, but I did find out in a roundabout way, that the male person who got my job got a significant amount more money, and when I say significant, I mean tens of thousands of dollars, I don't mean like two thousand dollars. Now, he was older than me, so you could argue he had more industry experience but it was exactly the same job, and that made me think, and again you have to look a little to yourself, and you go, "Well, hang on, did I just not be assertive enough?" in terms of what I asked for, for my pay. But what makes women conditioned to not do that? (Participant Two)

In this example, not only is her description of a monetary devaluation significant, but also the way she uses discourses of individualism to reduce the incident to personal responsibility, despite also providing evidence that this was likely a trend and not an isolated incident. This is also evident in the amount that she notes – a few thousand dollars might be evidence of negotiation, tens of thousands indicates a serious revaluation of the job.

Participant Two also discusses the known pay gap between some of New Zealand's male and female television presenters and in particular, in reference to the way it was presented in the media:

So, is the message from that, women can do anything, except earn as much money? And that annoyed me at the time, I thought, you know, you're protesting that Susan gets this amount of money but she gets way less than the male who used to do this job, and nobody ever said anything. (Participant Two)

In this instance, it is of particular interest that the participant's focus is not on the phenomenon of the pay gap itself but on how the salaries of men and women are presented in the media and received by the public. Her frustration is in the attitudes she has perceived in regards to remuneration, and this reflects her recognition of the symbiotic relationship between remuneration practices and public attitudes to men's and women's worth at work.

5.3 Gender Differences

In this section, the interview participants explicitly discuss expectations about gender in the New Zealand television industry and in wider society. Gendered expectations of behaviour have wide reaching effects, specifically on the way people in leadership or management positions are perceived, and on the way social dynamics provide justification for the way labour is divided between men and women. Consequently, this section is divided into three core themes: the supposed differences between men and women; the different standards for male and female behaviour; and the gendered division of labour.

The Difference Between Men and Women

Only Participant Two contributes to this theme, in which she describes the ways that men's and women's personalities and skills are different from one another. This theme is included because a pattern of mentioning differences between men and women emerged through this interview transcript. Participant Two talked about several qualities as being innate in women, although she was critical of these as she used them and did not indicate whether she believed these were biologically or socially produced. These qualities were that women are good at working in a team; that women have nurturing characteristics; that women are more understanding of the demands of motherhood; and that men and women are different, whether through inherent traits or socialisation. The traits she attributed to women were reflective of studies of persistent prescriptive gender stereotypes in general (Carranza and Prentice, 2002) and in the CCI specifically (Baker and Hesmondhalgh, 2015).

[...]I'm always a little bit nervous about saying this, but you might say that women's multitasking and human nurturing skills, if there's those traits in us - again, generalising - are good for television production. (Participant Two)

With this comment, the participant is attributing characteristics that are supposedly inherent in women as the reason for women's success in the television industry. As discussed by Baker and Hesmondhalgh (2015), the naturalization of gender differences is problematic because assumptions about women's and men's essential differences help maintain the gendered divisions of labour which exclude women from the more prestigious television occupations such as directing. It is significant to note the hedging language that Participant Two used when describing gender stereotypes, using them as a tool for communication while claiming to be "a little bit nervous" to do so; this might be indicative of a dissonance between existing discourses on gender stereotypes and uncertainty about their acceptability of use. This contrasts with other studies in which there was no hesitation to use gender stereotypes (Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015). The participant's simultaneous acceptance and critique of gender stereotypes reveals a complicated attitude towards them, suggesting an awareness that stereotypes can help to maintain regimes of inequality by naturalising gender segregation, while also revealing that individuals disadvantaged by the system can still accept the rhetoric as truth.

The perception of women as less competent than their male counterparts, or as unsuited to the jobs they wish to do, has an effect on the emotional well-being of women workers. The same participant talked about her experience observing what she described as an Imposter Syndrome or Phenomenon in her co-workers, perceiving a distinct difference in the way men and women cope with setbacks at work, resulting in a feeling by women that they do not deserve the job they have.

I have a feeling, watching men and women work in that kind of high level workplace. Men seem better, to me, at claiming credit and deflecting blame. Whereas, women will tend to go, they'll sail along and they'll be perfectly confident and then they'll make one bad call [...] and you know and they'll really have a couple of days of going, "Oh god I'm terrible at this, what am I doing?" you know, that's like Imposter Syndrome, you know, "Do I really know what I'm doing?". (Participant Two)

The participant describes the Imposter Phenomenon almost as a lack of a particular skill: men are “better” at claiming credit, and women’s inability to do so results in self-doubt. Studies have shown the Imposter Phenomenon is as common for men as for women but may more acutely impact women’s ability to succeed (Clance and Imes, 1978; Clance and O’Toole, 1987). The Imposter Phenomenon may work together with external stereotypes of women to negatively affect women’s career progress while disguising gendered practices as a result of either lack of personal confidence or because of the natural way men and women are.

Double Standards

This theme includes discussion by participants of gendered double standards in the workplace. These were situations in which participants described being treated differently compared to the men they worked with, and in which they stated that gender was specifically the reason for this difference. While one participant specifically used the term “double standards”, not all comments included in this theme contain this phrase. This theme was differentiated from discussion about the participants own perceptions on gender, and is instead focussed on the way participants were perceived by others. One example of a double standard that was offered by Participant One was in the way male and female managers are expected to communicate differently with their staff:

I couldn't help but think there was a very obvious double standard at work. [...] Where, it's ok for the boss to talk in this [abrasive] way, and then, you know, but for a female boss to actually be assertive with their team on occasions where necessary, was considered to be, um, a problem. [...] I do see a lot of double standards in that way. (Participant One)

This particular example is supported by literature on the relationship between emotional display and leadership expectations (Rutherford, 2011; Brescoll, 2016). The conflict between the expectations for female emotional display and for the emotional display of leaders negatively affects women working as managers: to act correctly as managers essentially means to fail at doing femininity (Brescoll, 2016). Mirroring the participant’s critique of the male boss’s

“abrasive” manner, studies show the display of anger in particular has positive effect on the assessment of male leaders and the opposite effect on female leaders (Brescoll & Uhlmann 2008; Lewis, 2000).

Another example of a perceived double standard was the judgment of a worker dependent on their appearance. One participant often referred to her appearance (“I’m very small, and very feminine looking”) and questioned the role of her looks and gender on her ability to progress in her career:

But, would the way you physically looked, as a man, handicap you in the same way? A plain looking man versus a particularly handsome looking man, a big man, a small man, would it make any difference to their professional chances? Maybe? I don't know that it would so much. I definitely got a feeling that - and it was only a feeling, I suppose - that if I'd had the same experience and the same abilities but was in a different package, moving the next steps up would've been easier. (Participant Two)

This correlation between a feminine appearance and potential judgment on competence is supported by studies that have examined the evaluation of individuals and their stereotypically gendered appearance and shown that physical appearance may be more of an influence on perceived competence than biological sex (Sczesny, Spreemann, et al. 2006; Sczesny & Kühnen, 2004). That is to say “physical appearance as part of a global, multifaceted gender stereotype influences the attribution of leadership competence” (Sczesny & Kühnen, 2004, p. 20). While this participant did not describe a specific incident in which she felt judged by her “feminine” appearance, her constant mention of this feature, and claim that in a “different package” promotion might “have seemed less impossible” indicates this as an ongoing, critical concern for her.

Gendered Division of Labour

An idea strongly engaged in by all three participants was a sense that certain roles in the television industry were designated to certain genders. This theme includes all comments about the gendered division of labour by participants, including descriptions of how the roles were divided (such as between creative and

production roles), and the reasons for such divisions, such as gender stereotyping. Participants did not hesitate to answer questions about the gendered division of labour, nor provide their views on why these divisions existed, and all comments in this theme align with one another. Participants tended to describe women as more likely to work in production manager and producer roles, as well as traditionally feminine activities like wardrobe, hair, and make-up, while men worked in creative roles such as directing, and technical roles such as camera, lighting, and sound. This division of labour by gender is reflected in quantitative and qualitative studies of other creative culture industries in New Zealand and abroad (Gill, Randle, & Wing-Fai, 2015; Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015; Jones & Pringle, 2015). The participants consistently provided explanations for gender segregation, for example the high number of female production managers was attributed to women's apparent nurturing, multitasking and collaborative characteristics. Participants also engaged with the idea that support roles in television production were traditionally designated to women. The support role most often identified as being dominated by women was the role of production manager, but participants also described areas like continuity as being female-dominated support jobs.

Participants attributed two main causes to these labour divisions: prestige, and gender stereotyping. Job roles with inherently more prestige (with better pay, higher prestige in popular imagination, and more creative or financial control) were dominated by men while jobs with less prestige (detail-oriented, "one rung below", and support roles) were dominated by women. As reflected in previous studies (Jones & Pringle, 2015), an inherent difference in the abilities of men and women was also reported: for example that men were perceived to be better at technical work, and women better at organising. The following quote is a representative example of a description of the division of labour premised on gender stereotypes:

Costume, hair and makeup were the women. And usually continuity, you know, sitting beside the director and making notes [...]. So, that kind of detail oriented job. There were quite a few female production managers, they weren't the producer, like they weren't the top dog, but they were the efficient person one rung

below, who makes it all happen, a lot of those were women.
(Participant Three)

In this example, there are descriptions of two support roles. The first was the production manager, described by the participant as an assistant to the (male) producer, the second was the continuity role as an assistant to the (male) director. The participant also lists job roles that are aesthetics-based creative work (costume, hair, make-up) as female dominated. These descriptions of the typically female roles (assistant or aesthetics) was typical of respondents.

The division of “below the line” work was described by participants in this study in a way that aligned with previous research. The study by Jones and Pringle of the Wellington film industry (2015) showed a similar horizontal divide, in which technical roles such as camera, lighting and sound were dominated by men, and aesthetics-based work such as hair and make-up was dominated by women. In “above the line” work, there was a distinct separation of creative work from production work. This mirrors findings in the UK creative industries (Baker and Hesmondhalgh, 2015), as well as theoretical work which demonstrates an association between creative auteurship and masculinity (Taylor, 2011; Conor, 2014). Participants did not always give an explanation for why they believed there to be a dearth of female television directors although they strongly stated that such a divide existed.

An explanation for the feminisation of production management is that this is a support roles in opposition to the creative or leadership roles of producer and director. This hypothesis is reinforced by descriptions of production management as a “support” role, and of women’s television jobs as “detail oriented jobs” and “one rung below” the leadership positions. Participants did attempt to describe the advantages and disadvantages of women’s position in the industry. What Participant One is describing in the following extract is a phenomenon in which women might be encouraged to enter the industry through what could be a dead-end support role:

[T]here has always been in my opinion a traditional path in television and roles which have always been sort of more designated towards women. And, so and that has generally been the production manager side of things has always been pop-, considered a good way in for women, but I always warn the young people that I mentor [...] that if they go down that path it is a good way to get a foot in the door in television [...] but if you end up in a role of the production manager you'll find it very difficult to get out of it and you'll be pigeon-holed, because production managers are support roles, and they are sort of like the money management side of things instead of the creative side. (Participant One)

She is describing a potential barrier to women's success as television directors as they are discouraged from this challenging pathway and usually encouraged to take a more secure and gender appropriate, or "traditional", career path instead. A report by NZ On Air examining gender and ethnic diversity in the New Zealand television industry reflects the division described here. The report found that while 55% of television producers in New Zealand are women, only 33% of directors are women (2016). In the following extract, the participant discussed how, even though women had been dominating the support role of production manager, she felt that in the past they were doing the work of the more prestigious producer role, and not being given due credit:

There were these amazing female production managers who were the most capable women on the planet, generally working with male producers. And looking back, they were actually doing the producer job, but they just weren't getting called it [...] And, the male producer - and again, generalising - the male producer was often actually not that strong at organising things, maybe was quite a good director, but it just was the thing that the man was the producer, and the woman was the production manager. (Participant Two)

This extract represents a trend of participants describing women in support roles as being the ones who "make it all happen", "capable" and "doing the producer's job". This phrasing reinforcing the lack of prestige in the occupations held by women, something also found in the Baker and Hesmondhalgh study (2015). It also indicates that women may not have been assigned credit for the work they were completing and highlights that the barriers to women's succession into more prestigious roles were not caused by a lack of competence on the part of women

workers. Instead these barriers may be a result of those structural issues discussed earlier that constitute the “glass ceiling”.

Casual Sexism in the Workplace

This theme includes comments in which participants talked about incidents that might be described in common parlance as everyday sexism. These were incidents that were described by participants as “small” or “little”, were not due to difficult personal relationships and were either part of the everyday working environment, or had been in the past. They ranged from general hostility, characterised by dislike of female-driven content and female creatives, to gender specific micro-aggressions such as isolated sexist or patronising comments. The following extracts are of Participant Three describing the environment of her first television writing job, and Participant Two attempting to give a concrete example of the “casual sexism” she had experienced at work.

For them I think it was like going to work on another planet or something. It was just a world they'd never had to put themselves in and after a while I think it just really got to piss them off. That it was always about these women. They were the main event, it was kind of like they were looking around and going "Yeah, but when's the guy coming along? And when's the car chase? And when's the explosion?" And there just wasn't any of that. Not all of them were hostile, but a few significantly were. (Participant Three)

It would range, you would get the thing where you were with crew guys and they were speaking quite, rudely, as in quite vulgarly and I was, I was always in two minds about whether that really mattered, I mean, I would kind of just go along with it, it didn't really bother me. But you'd also get that sort of patronising thing sometimes, because you were, you know, young, female. (Participant Two)

Some of these experiences were closely connected to gendered expectations about workplace behaviour, particularly that women are to be passive and agreeable. Participant Two described the following incident, in which she felt her success had been attributed to a genial personality, rather than her level of competence:

A comment many, many years ago, that stayed in my mind, and it was actually a male colleague and friend, a peer, you know,

someone equal, and actually he didn't mean this in an awful way, which is the interesting thing, and he didn't say this to my face, he said this to someone else. He said, "Oh, [Name], she just has to smile and every door opens." [...] Now, that's an interesting comment, professionally, isn't it? Because, actually, I think the doors were opening because I was quite clever, and quite good at what I was doing. And perhaps the fact that I was polite and pleasant was also relevant. [...] But, I thought, "oooh, that's a really intriguing..." - not meant in any way nastily, but it's actually at best patronising, and at worst, actually quite sexist. (Participant Two)

Participant Two was willing to recognise the sexism in the comment, as well as a complimentary motive. The comment is described as patronising, but well-intended, and she was able to engage with the subtlety of these attitudes towards women in the workplace. She also expresses a frustration that her aptitude was unrecognised by her co-worker, who praised her gender-conforming work behaviour over her abilities. Again, this is linked to the conflict between expectations of successful leaders in the workplace and the social requirements of women generally. The way Participant Two describes the comment, and her discomfort with it, is indicative of a recognition of the complex stereotypes and discourses used to describe the successes of men and women.

Participants were quick to clear perpetrators of blame and ready to describe incidents as "little things" and "so subtle", demonstrating a struggle to define individual instances as sexist. During the interview, precautions were taken to avoid defining "sexism", so that interviewees could interpret the term themselves and describe only instances they personally perceived to be sexist. The way Participant Two reported an incident in which she was mistaken for her own personal assistant, is a particularly good example of the cautious approach participants took to defining sexism:

I mean, is it, is it someone's fault that on a day when you've got a spare minute, and your PA is busy, so you go down to reception and pick up your guest yourself, and they assume that you are the PA. I mean, is that sexism? Or is it just-? I don't know. (Participant Two)

As with the comment from her co-worker, she is resistant to describing this occurrence as "sexism" even though she recognises her gender as significant. The

participant uses hedging language (“I mean”) and rhetorical questions (“is that sexism?”) to soften the accusation of sexism, although her inclusion of this incident as an example of casual sexism indicates that she believed her gender was the reason for the mistake. There is a complex relationship on display here between the recognition of potential sexism and the willingness to describe it as such. Participant Two was very aware of gender and diversity issues, raising her own concerns about the status of women in her workplaces and describing differences in the acceptable behaviours and attitudes of men and women. For these reasons, it is interesting that she is still restrained in her use of the term “sexist”, to an extent that emphasises how problematic a term it is. A cautious approach to describing sexism has the potential to hinder progress in recognising and preventing sexism in the workplace, and can be indicative of a lacking diversity culture in the workplace (Rutherford, 2011). It is also possible that this is evidence of the insidiousness of workplace sexism, with each incident too small to describe as “sexist”, but the accumulation of such small incidents contributing to an overall sexist working environment.

The reporting of these incidents is significant. Although participants did not report any incidents of overt sexual harassment in the workplace, studies have found low frequency discriminatory acts to be extremely harmful to the mental health of workers. A meta-analysis published in 2016 reported that less intense, high frequency harmful experiences such as those described above are as harmful to mental health as low frequency, more intense experiences such as sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention (Genat, Sojo, & Wood, 2016).

Summary of the Analysis

Overall, most themes produced results that were expected, and which corresponded with the related literature. The themes that most strongly resonated with the existing literature were those that encompassed gendered emotional display, the gendered division of labour, and gendered assumptions of competence. The consistency between the themes of gender difference and previous research suggests that the social, emotional, and behavioural stereotypes

surrounding gender have a consistent influence on the labour experiences of women at work both in New Zealand and overseas. Additionally, there was evidence throughout of the impact of rising neoliberalism. Not only did neoliberal policy affect the organisational structure of the New Zealand television industry, but neoliberal discourses of individual responsibility and meritocratic practice have acted to create opportunity structures that allow sexism to exist undetected.

There were some unexpected results, and a tendency for contradiction within themes as well as across them. The responses related to working parenthood are notable for conflicting with previous studies and for demonstrating a potential contradiction in perspectives between parent and non-parent workers. As with many of the unexpected or contradictory results, these might be explained by considering the differing discursive strategies that the participants employed throughout the interviews. The discussion chapter that follows will explore this concept of contradicting discourses in more detail, and intends to make sense of the dissonance that characterised the analysis.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter will address some of the issues raised during the analysis process, and draw a relationship between the main findings and the research question which instigated this study. While the data that was sourced for analysis was rich, and the process of thematic organisation was relatively straightforward, the results were marked by contradictions and some topics did not generate outcomes that aligned with the researcher's expectations. In order to address these concerns, as well as unite the results to respond to the research question, the results will be further examined using a framework of competing ideologies. Finally, the limitations of this study will be addressed, and recommendations for further study will be made.

6.1 Ideological Conflict

The main findings in the results were grouped into three themes: Working Life, Opportunity Structures, and Gender Differences. The Working Life theme incorporated the everyday working experience; the Opportunity Structures theme addressed the structure of work and the way it might accommodate gender biased activities; and the Gender Difference theme looked at the way the participants conceptualised their work experiences using gender as the foundation for categorisation. Although all three themes were distinct, they all produced similar issues that challenged the analysis process. The first issue was the presence of covert sexism: in the Working Life theme this covert sexism was mentioned as a feature of everyday working life, whereas in the Opportunity Structures theme, participants explored how the structure of work helped to conceal sexism. The second issue was the social aspect of change in the television industry, as all mentions of change or progress towards gender equality were compared to social progress. The third issue was the inconsistency and contradictions that were present throughout the results; both within interviews and between participants

there was evidence of contradiction, such as participants making conflicting statements between questions and correcting or questioning themselves, as well as there being conflict between different participants' answers to similar questions. And finally, many of the answers to the interview questions yielded results that I did not expect as a researcher. For example, in contrast to the literature on the subject (Lauzen, 2012; Rowlands & Handy, 2014; Jones & Pringle, 2015) participants tended not to think there was a major issue combining parenting and a career in television. These issues challenged analysis because as a researcher using a standpoint feminist framework, I need to both recognise the validity of the participants' experiences, while recognising where their social experience affects or limits their interpretations. Approaching this abductively, and considering theories from the fields of gender studies, organisational studies, and creative industry studies, I have found that one way to account for these issues is to borrow from a discourse analysis approach.

While it exists in many forms, discourse analysis generally involves the analysis of the relationship between language and its social and cultural contexts, and the meanings (or ideologies) it produces and reproduces (Paltridge, 2012). Ideologies can be defined as systems of belief: the relationship between the social and the material and how those relations are understood by social actors (Dant, 2013), particularly where they work to maintain "asymmetrical power relations and inequalities between social groups" (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter, 1987, p. 60). This study is of too small a scale to consider analysing discourse production, so instead I use concepts from discourse analysis to consider how my research participants employed available ideologies to make sense of their experiences working in the television industry. I was particularly inspired to take this route by a 1987 study of college seniors' attitudes to gender and work, in which the authors concluded that ideological limitations and conflict should be considered key factors in gendered job selection and the reproduction of the (patriarchal) labour market (Wetherell, Stiven & Potter, 1987). In that study, the authors found conflicts between an ideology of "equal opportunities" and one of "practical considerations". This caused conflict in which the participants' liberal self-identification meant they supported an ideal of equal opportunities while also believing in biologically inevitable gendered inequalities for which they could not be held responsible. This relationship between workers and available ideologies

is also present in Rutherford's claims about the role of hegemonic discourses in her work on gender in organisations (2011). According to Rutherford, people can only make sense of their environment using the discourses that are available to them: she explains that this is the reason that companies with affirmative action and inclusion policies have staff who report more sexism: the staff have the available language to discuss their experiences (Rutherford, 2011). If it is the case that participants in my research are also limited by the availability of discourses on gender and work, then we may be able to better understand their responses by analysing the ideologies and discourses they might have access to.

I found that considering the ideologies present in the participants' answers was an effective way to make sense of the contradictions as well as why their answers were not always what I expected. This approach involved looking back over my results and seeking ideologies that reinforced those present in the literature, looking not only at the events women experienced but also how they might have interpreted them using the ideologies available to them. In this way, I considered how the experience of social reality might be mediated by the language used to construct it. Some of the ideologies I found that the participants used were present in literature from the research areas of creative industries, gender studies, and organisational culture. Particular examples are the meritocratic discourse which implies that the best person will be hired for a job regardless of gender (Acker, 2006; Conor, 2014; Wreyford, 2015); the gender binary parenting discourse which denotes that it is natural for males to be breadwinners, and natural for women to take on the majority of caregiving responsibilities (Nentwich, 2008); the neoliberal ideology of individualism (Wetherell, Stiven & Potter, 1987); the maleness of the ideal worker (Acker, 1990); and a gender binary discourse that designates women and men to be naturally suited to different occupations and social roles (Conor, 2014; Baker & Hesmondhalgh, 2015). As there does not appear to have been any work looking at discourse production in the television industry in New Zealand, these findings are preliminary and speculative, however making comparisons to the overseas literature provides a guideline to account for the contradictions in the results.

While these ideologies do appear in both the results and the overseas literature, it is necessary to look at how the ideologies compete and contradict one another in

order to understand why the results were so conflicting and unexpected. A particularly interesting example from the results comes from the questions on parenting. These results were not expected as they do not appear to align with previous research on parenting, work, and the creative industries, which tend to suggest that managing parenthood and work responsibilities is both an actual issue for female workers and a perceived issue by employers (Lauzen, 2012; Rowlands & Handy, 2014; Jones & Pringle, 2015). The participants used ideologies relating to the perceived gendered nature of parenting, the unattached male ideal worker model, and neoliberalism, to account for their experiences with parenting, parents, and work. These heteronormative ideologies seem to conflict with their self-identification as feminists. As a researcher, I recognise that while these women self-identify as feminists, this is perhaps done so as a political or social identification and not necessarily with a background in feminist academic work. Therefore, they may not be familiar with feminist works that have suggested an overhaul to the gendered social organisation, and changes to the single-breadwinner family model (e.g. Lorber 1991; Folbre, 2012). One might speculate that this is the reason they tended to place weight on the responsibility of the individual: in this case the participants are applying their own forward-thinking and feminist identities to the neoliberal, individualist discourse. As the onus is on the individual to “make it work”, the idea that hiring practices could be discriminatory towards female parent workers is discredited since any instance in which the marriage of parenthood and work is not possible must also be the fault of the individual. Not only does this interpretation of the situation help merge competing ideologies, it has the supplementary effect of disguising gender discrimination in hiring practices, since it becomes impossible for employers to discriminate if the obligation to adjust is on the individual and not on the workplace.

Another particularly problematic example was the conflicting declarations that the television industry is both “a sexist industry” and “not too bad”. Throughout the interviews, participants described incidents of both interpersonal and structural sexism and gender discrimination; one participant also stated outright that it was a sexist industry. Contrastingly, they would also describe the industry as “not too bad”, claim that it was better than overseas screen production

industries, and better than it had been in the past. This dichotomy in the answers might be explained by ideologies such as meritocracy, neoliberalism and gender stereotypes combining to naturalise gender discrimination and make claims of sexism more difficult. For example, the ideology of meritocracy can make it difficult to claim that employers discriminate by gender (Wreyford, 2015), while a neoliberal ideology of individualism places the onus on the individual to work around any sexist attitudes of employers and colleagues. To speculate, the self-identification of feminism might further problematise the participants' identification of sexist experiences by raising their awareness of the rigidity of gendered social and job roles in the past. This might have caused the participants to feel a need to appear grateful to live in a contemporary time and be reluctant to criticise their experiences as they believed them to be better than those of their predecessors or of those in similar situations in other countries. This was particularly evident when participants connected interpersonal sexism to the modern day and described it as "small" (compared to "big" but historical issues such as legislation on gender pay equality) indicating that they either perceived interpersonal issues to be insignificant or that they found it difficult to claim so. Thus, while participants sometimes felt they could assess their working lives as consisting of sexism and gender discrimination, the hegemonic discourses that might appear in the industry make it difficult to make claims that individual instances are sexist. Approaching these results with a standpoint feminist framework, it appears that the standpoint of these participants is limited by their access to ideological and linguistic tools to interpret their social experience.

6.2 Addressing the Research Question

It is imperative that this chapter also take into consideration the research question, and assess how the research has answered the following:

What are the gendered labour experiences of women working as producers, directors and writers in New Zealand television?

In summary, the answer is that their gendered labour experiences are characterised by a covert sexism which is difficult to identify due to the participants' engagement with contradictory ideologies which mediate their experience. The experiences and perspectives of the women interviewed can be thematically grouped by working life, opportunity structures, and gender

differences, and it is apparent that gender and gender stereotypes have affected the experiences of each participant to a significant extent. The participants' responses showed evidence of sexism and gender discrimination in multiple forms, although these issues were difficult for them to categorise as such, possibly due to a lack of available discourses to make sense of their experiences. It seems apparent that these discourses stem from a patriarchal system which self-maintains the status quo through a combination of hegemonic discourses regarding gender, work and creative labour.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

While extensive academic work has been conducted on the organisational structure of New Zealand television (Horrocks, 2004; Spicer, Powell & Emanuel, 1996; Farnsworth and Hutchison, 2002), there is a scarcity of research concerning the New Zealand television labour experience. As an exploratory study, this work has provided the beginnings of a body of research on the labour experiences of women working in New Zealand television, however its small scale and methodological limitations mean that it can only speculate on the extent of gender discrimination and the effect of gender on the working experience. This study was driven by a standpoint feminist methodology and since this methodological framework favours the epistemic privilege of oppressed social actors, the perspectives of women were sought for analysis. While the perspectives of these participants has been insightful and valuable, it demonstrates that even those who have privileged knowledge through social experience may have that knowledge mediated by the dominant ideology of a patriarchal society. With this in mind, an investigation of the processes which produce the hegemonic ideologies and discourses in the New Zealand television industry would be a valuable supplement to this research. Another limitation of the study was its size as only three women were available for participation, all of whom having similarly lengthy careers in television. A larger scale study, particularly one that also included the perspectives of women in a younger age group, or who had less experience in New Zealand television, would help either validate or falsify the results of this research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a preliminary insight into the labour experiences of female writers, directors, and producers, demonstrating some of the ideological and structural barriers facing women working in New Zealand television. It provides a foundation for future research into the labour experience in New Zealand television, a research area particularly lacking in light of the wealth of academic thought on television's content and organisational structure after the deregulation and reform of the 1980s. Finally, this study contributes to the literature on gender in creative work and gender in organisational studies, by emphasising the complex relationship between discourse and experience, and how these factors work together to contribute to ongoing covert sexism in the workplace.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is displayed in white text on a black rectangular background.

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
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E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

5 February 2016

Sarah Baker
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear Sarah

Re Ethics Application: **15/405 Perspectives on gender in the workplace by women in the New Zealand television industry.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 5 February 2018.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 5 February 2018;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 5 February 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Connor'.

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
Cc: Aimee Borlase aimeeborlase@hotmail.com, Wayne Hope

Appendix B: Tools

Appendix B (a): Interview Guide

Supervisor: Dr Sarah Baker | Researcher: Aimee Borlase

Interview Template

Introductions & Career Summary

Could you briefly describe to me your career in television thus far?

Gender Equality Generally

What are your thoughts on gender in the industry as a whole? (Prompts: Do you feel there is an equal distribution between roles? Are equal opportunities available for men and women?)

How do you feel about the balance of genders in your workplaces? In the industry as a whole?

Affective labour and social networking

What role has social networking played in your career?

Do you feel that social networking is different between men and women?

To what extent have you felt excluded from opportunities because you were unable to attend social functions?

Parenthood and creative work

What are your thoughts on the relationship between parenthood and the key behind the scenes roles in television? In what ways do you think the effect of parenthood (or potential parenthood) might be different for men and women?

Masculine cultures in the workplace

Of the workplaces in which you spent the longest time, how would you describe the formality of the working environment? Have you ever felt pressure to “fit in”? In what ways?

Broadcasters/Commissioners’ perceptions of women’s willingness to work on certain projects

Have you ever felt that there is a conflict between the type of content women wish to work on and the opportunities offered to women?

The effect of all of the above on the career path of the individual

Can you describe an instance in which you felt advantaged or disadvantaged because of your gender?

Can you describe an instance in which you felt that your gender had any impact on the career opportunities available to you?

Have you ever experienced an incident that you would describe as sexist or discriminatory? Can you describe this incident to me?

How do you negotiate environments that advantage one gender over another?

How do you or would you negotiate sexist or discriminatory practices?

Questions & Thanks

(end)

Appendix B (b): Participant Information Sheet

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMANGI MĀKAU RAU

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

10 November 2015

Project Title

Perspectives on gender in the workplace by women in the New Zealand television industry.

An Invitation

I am Aimée Borlase, a Master of Communication Studies student at AUT conducting research on the role of gender in the careers and workplaces of women in NZ television. Completing an original research project is an essential component of my Master's degree and will form the basis of a thesis document. I'd like to invite you to participate in this research in order to help contribute to the literature on gender in the workplace of television production. Participating in this research is voluntary and you would be able to withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection (Estimated to be March 2016).

What is the purpose of this research?

Reports produced from several countries show that inequality exists between men and women in media production industries like film and television. While the existing literature establishes trends of inequality for women in both career progression and job type as well as tendencies towards gender discrimination and sexism in the industry generally, little academic research has looked at how this affects women at the individual level and how individual women perceive the role that gender has played in their careers.

While no statistics are readily available for the New Zealand film or television industries, there is sufficient literature from overseas to demonstrate the existence of inequality and gender discrimination. The lack of research that has been conducted specifically in the New Zealand industry in regards to women directors, writers and producers, indicates this is an area of enquiry worth investigating.

The key outcome of this research will be a first-person perspective on the role of gender in the careers of women such as yourself, who work in behind-the-scenes roles in NZ television, and we will look at the extent of institutionalised discrimination as well as how you might negotiate discriminatory practices. This research will also contribute to a thesis and may form the basis of other academic documents such as journal articles.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I have contacted you as I wish to speak to women who have worked for five or more years as writers, producers and/or directors of fiction and non-fiction television programming in New Zealand. You have been identified as fitting this criteria and have expressed an interest in finding out more about the research.

What will happen in this research?

This research project involves one on one, face to face interviews between myself and women who have worked as writers, directors and producers of New Zealand television. In these interviews we will talk about your experiences, perspectives and feelings about various topics related to gender in your career. These topics could include individual instances of gender discrimination, the attitudes and environment of your workplaces and how you think gender might or might not have affected your career path. I may take notes during the interview, and the audio of the interviews will be recorded using a small handheld audio recorder. At a later date, these interviews will be transcribed into text documents to make analysis easier. You will be given an opportunity to view the transcript of your interview and to advise if there is anything you wish to exclude or add.

What are the discomforts and risks? How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Since we will be talking about your experiences in the workplace, it is possible there may be some topics or experiences you wish not to discuss. We don't have to discuss anything you don't feel comfortable in doing so. If you feel discomfort and wish to change the conversation or end the interview then it is absolutely fine for you to do so.

What are the benefits?

This research will help contribute to the academic literature on gender in media organisations and the wider workplace, it also provides you an opportunity to speak candidly about your experiences. As previously noted, it will also be contributing to my Master's degree qualification.

Appendix B (c): Participant Consent Form

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMĀKĪ MĀKAU BAU

Consent Form

Project title: *Perspectives on gender in the workplace by women in the New Zealand television industry*

Project Supervisor: *Dr Sarah Baker*

Researcher: *Aimee Rhiannon Borlase*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10/11/2015.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish to be identified in the findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on [05/02/2016] AUTEK Reference number [15/405]

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.